

“I WANT TO BE A BETTER PERSON AND A BETTER TEACHER”: EXPLORING THE
CONSTRUCTS OF RACE AND ABILITY IN A MUSIC EDUCATOR COLLABORATIVE
TEACHER STUDY GROUP

By

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ABSTRACT

“I WANT TO BE A BETTER PERSON AND A BETTER TEACHER”: EXPLORING THE CONSTRUCTS OF RACE AND DIS/ABILITY IN A MUSIC EDUCATOR COLLABORATIVE TEACHER STUDY GROUP

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The way teachers engage with dis/ability and race in their classrooms links to their underlying belief systems (Heroux, 2013; Ryan, 2020). Unfortunately, substantial evidence connects teacher beliefs and perceptions to the reification of hegemonic norms, which upholds barriers for students in educational settings (Annamma, 2015b; Heroux, 2013; Ryan, 2020). The purpose of this study was to examine a music educator collaborative teacher study group (CTSG) focused on exploring and unpacking narratives of race and dis/ability in music education. Research questions were: 1) How do teachers conceptualize issues of race and ability in both their belief systems and stated classroom practices? 2) How, if at all, did participants’ beliefs about race and ability change as a result of participating in the CTSG? 3) What conditions facilitated changes in mindset and behavior for participants?

I designed and completed a descriptive, collective case study (Stake, 1995; Yin 2018) that examined the experiences of eight music educators across the U.S. Participants were public school music educators who varied in age, teaching experience and assignment, personal identity characteristics and geographic location. As the researcher and facilitator, I served as the ninth member of the CTSG. Participants met via Zoom eleven times (every other week from July 27 to December 14, 2021) to share stories, discuss assigned readings/videos, participate in activities, and collaborate on lesson plans. Throughout the study, participants completed three individual interviews (beginning, midpoint, end), took turns leading the group sessions, contributed to a

private social media page, and wrote in their online journal. In addition to my analytic memos, I used transcripts of interviews, planning meetings, CTSG meetings, conversations on Facebook and reflections in journals as data. I utilized two frameworks, Dis/ability Critical Race Theory (DisCrit) (Annamma et al., 2013) and Transformative Learning Processes (TLP) (Salvador et al., 2020a) to frame the study, design the CTSG, and analyze the data.

Initially participants varied in their stated beliefs and described classroom practices. Further, participants displayed a continuum of prior experiences and stated goals, as well as a broad spectrum of agreements and dissonances between their words (stated beliefs and goals) and actions (conversations in the CTSG and descriptions of their teaching practice). By the end of the study, participants described and demonstrated several changes resulting from participation in the CTSG. Participants reported becoming more aware of the ways that racism and ableism operated in schools and in their personal lives. Furthermore, they reported that participation in the CTSG had lit a spark for continued discovery, reflection, and action. Many ended the CTSG by setting personal and professional goals, such as building allyship in their classroom or redesigning their curriculum through an equity-focused lens.

Several conditions proved salient in creating an environment conducive to change. Primary factors that contributed to change were participants building connections with other music teachers, experiencing emotional intensity, having the space and time to grapple with difficult materials, as well as the structures put in place during the CTSG. Based on these themes, I offered several recommendations for practice and policy, including the importance of preservice and continuing education to work with diverse learners, and the necessity of highlighting voices of minoritized students in music education.

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To my children:
Never give up on your dreams, even on days they feel impossible.
This was mine.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES	xiv
LIST OF FIGURES	xv
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	1
Introduction.....	1
Foundations of Dis/ability and Race in Public Education	2
Dis/ability in Society and Education.....	3
Race in Society and Education	4
Dis/ability and Race Connections in Education	6
Need for the Study: Dis/ability, Race, and their Intersections in Music Education	8
Purpose of the Study and Research Questions.....	9
Researcher Positionality	10
Theoretical Framework	11
Disability Studies	12
Models of Disability	12
Medical Model of Disability	12
Social Model of Disability	13
Cultural Model of Disability	14
Biopsychosocial and Complex Embodiment Models of Disability	15
Critical Race Theory	17
Critical Race Theory in Education.....	18
The Primacy of Race in Analyzing Educational Inequity in the U.S.	18
U.S. Society is Based on Property Rights	19
The Intersection of Race and Property Rights as An Analytical Tool	20
Critical Race Theory in Music Education	20
DisCrit: Dis/ability Critical Race Theory	21
DisCrit and Intersections with DS and CRT	25
Utilizing DisCrit as a Theoretical Framework	25
Language Use	26
Language about Dis/ability	26
People-first vs. Identity-first Language	27
Language about Race.....	28
Chapter Summary	29
CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE	30
Introduction	30
Dis/ability in Music Education	30
Teacher Perceptions and Attitudes	31
Recommendations and Pedagogical Practices	31
Engaging in External Shifts in the Classroom and Curriculum	32
Differentiated Instruction	32

Universal Design for Learning	33
Engagement.....	34
Representation.....	34
Action and Expression	35
Collaboration and Communication	37
Unpacking Biases.....	39
Increased Education	41
Synthesis of Research on Dis/ability in Music Education	41
Race in Music Education	43
Facing Whiteness in Music Education.....	44
Critical Lenses to Combat Racism and Decenter Whiteness.....	46
Anti-stances	47
Culturally Responsive, Culturally Relevant, and Culturally Sustaining Education	48
CRE in Music Education	49
Hip-Hop Pedagogy.....	50
Teacher Perspectives on CRE.....	51
Exploring the Impact of Race Across Music Education	51
Practicing Teachers Learning About Race	51
Professional Development	52
Music Education Professional Development	54
Needs and Preferences	54
Quality in Professional Development	55
Effective Professional Development	56
Content-Specific	57
Active Learning	57
Coherence	58
Sustained Duration	59
Collective Participation	59
Music-Specific Design Considerations	60
The Role of Productive Communication in Professional Development.....	60
Critiques of Existing Professional Development	61
Models of Professional Development	62
Professional Learning Community	62
PLCs in Music Education	63
Communities of Practice	64
CoPs in Music Education.....	65
Collaborative Teacher Study Group	65
CTSGs in Music Education	66
Comparing and Contrasting Learning Community Models	67
Teacher PD on Dis/ability, Race, and their Intersections	68
Music Teacher Professional Development on Dis/ability	68
Music Teacher Professional Development on Race	69
Utilizing DisCrit in a Professional Development	69
Utilizing DisCrit in A Music Educator Professional Development.....	71
The Need for a Music Educator PD at the Intersection of Dis/ability and Race	72

CHAPTER THREE: METHOD	73
Design	73
Method	73
Recruitment Strategy	74
Participant Selection	75
Participants.....	77
Conceptual Framework	79
Transformative Learning Processes	80
Building <i>Gemütlichkeit</i>	80
Grappling with Difficult Material	81
Emotional Intensity	82
Course Structures	82
Utilizing TLP as a Conceptual Framework	82
Connecting Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks	84
Data Collection	86
Semi-Structured Interviews	86
CTSG Meetings	87
Researcher Role	88
CTSG Activities and Materials.....	89
Planning the Sessions with Participants	90
Establishing Norms and Having Difficult Conversations	91
Other Data Sources	92
Memos.....	92
Data Analysis.....	93
Trustworthiness	95
Chapter Summary	96
CHAPTER FOUR: PARTICIPANTS	97
Participants.....	97
Blair T.	98
Maybelline V.	100
Annie D.	102
Lydia N. Scala	105
Odette H.....	107
Margaret C.	110
Savannah T.....	112
Cindy A.....	115
Communication in the CTSG.....	118
Self-Expressed Communication Styles.....	119
Participation in Meetings and Journaling	120
Chapter Summary	120
CHAPTER FIVE: INITIAL CONCEPTUALIZATIONS.....	122
Initial Conceptualizations about Race and Ability	122
A Continuum of Commitment	123
Prior Experiences	123

Viewpoints on Future Engagement.....	126
This Is Important Work, and I Am Committed To Doing It.....	126
Keeping Race and Dis/ability Separate.....	128
I Want To Engage But... ..	128
Being At Odds with My Community.....	128
Lack of Training	131
Justification, Fear, and Helplessness	133
The Interaction Between Beliefs and Actions	134
Embracing Growth	134
Using Strategies	137
Navigating White Fragility	139
Deficit Language	143
Self-Awareness	144
Chapter Summary	146
 CHAPTER SIX: CHANGES IN BELIEFS.....	147
Becoming More Aware.....	148
Revisiting Their Past.....	148
The Practice of Noticing.....	150
Defining Terms and Noticing Language.....	151
Acknowledging Challenging Feelings.....	152
Naming Fault Lines in the System.....	153
How Constructs of Race and Ability Intersect in Music	155
The Importance of Representation.....	155
Making Lessons Inclusive with Intentionality.....	156
Lighting a Spark (Fanning the Flame) for Continued Discovery, Reflection, and Action....	157
Asking Tough Questions.....	158
Reframing Language and Thinking	160
Making New Realizations.....	160
Setting Goals and Taking Action.....	162
Beginning the Action	164
Chapter Summary	165
 CHAPTER SEVEN: CONDITIONS THAT FACILITATED CHANGE.....	166
Building <i>Gemütlichkeit</i>	168
Connecting to Other Music Teachers	168
Encountering Discomfort.....	170
Desire to Learn.....	172
Conditions Hindering Change: Building <i>Gemütlichkeit</i>	173
No Prior Connection to Others	173
Being a Homogenous Group.....	174
Comparison to TLP.....	175
Emotional Intensity.....	176
Being Vulnerable and Brave.....	176
Change Requires Being Uncomfortable	177
Embracing Ambiguity.....	178

Conditions Hindering Change: Emotional Intensity	179
Staying in the Safe Zone	179
Justifying Choices	180
Comparison to TLP	182
Grappling with Difficult Material	183
Grappling Internally to (Re)define My Beliefs	184
Grappling with Others	186
Conditions Hindering Change: Grappling with Difficult Material	188
Content Difficulty	188
Falling Back Into Old Patterns of Language and Behavior	188
Comparison to TLP	190
CTSG/Course Structures	191
Meetings and Norms	191
Shared Leadership	192
Journaling	193
Extended Time	194
Conditions Hindering Change: CTSG/Course Structures	194
Technology	194
Other Structural Impediments	195
Comparison to TLP	196
Chapter Summary	197
 CHAPTER EIGHT: SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND SUGGESTIONS	198
Summary of Study	198
Summary of Findings	199
Initial Stated Beliefs and Self-Described Teaching Practices	199
Changes in Stated Beliefs and Self-Described Teaching Practices	200
Conditions Necessary for Change	202
Discussion and Implications	203
Strategies and Tools <i>Do</i> Exist	204
White Identity Development	206
Talking to the Students	208
Balancing Intersectionality: Considering Race and Dis/ability Simultaneously	210
Considering Transformative Learning	212
The Complicated Role of Being the Facilitator	213
Considerations for Practice and Policy	215
Preservice Education	215
PK-12 Music Teachers	216
Inclusive Pedagogies	217
Educational Policy	218
Suggestions for Future Research	219
Concluding Thoughts	223
 APPENDICES	225
APPENDIX A: Recruitment Materials	226
APPENDIX B: Google Interest Form	228

APPENDIX C: Participant Consent Form	232
APPENDIX D: Protocol Options Provided to Participants	235
APPENDIX E: CTSG Schedule and Readings	252
APPENDIX F: Semi-Structured Opening Interview Guide	258
APPENDIX G: Semi-Structured Midpoint Interview Guide.....	261
APPENDIX H: Semi-Structured Exit Interview Guide	263
APPENDIX I: Reflective Journal Prompts	265
APPENDIX J: Group Co-Constructed Norms.....	270
REFERENCES	272

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Group Members and Identifying Characteristics	78
Table 2. Independent Emergent Coding and TLP Framework	167
Table 3. CTSG Schedule, Assigned Readings, and Facilitator	253

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Transformative Learning Processes (TLP) (Salvador et al., 2020a, p. 199)	81
Figure 2. Connecting Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks	85

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

*“Music is the canary... in the educational coal mine,
which can tell us more about society’s inclusive—or non-inclusive—praxis
than might readily be imagined” – (Lubet, 2011)*

Introduction

Music educators often work with higher numbers of students than traditional classroom teachers, giving them the chance to positively affect the lives of more students than their general education colleagues. Considering the racial and ethnic diversity of the PK-12 school-aged population (U.S. Department of Education, 2020) and the fact that approximately 14% of students across the United States have an identified special education need (U.S. Department of Education, 2020), music educators will likely encounter students with a variety of identity characteristics. At the elementary level, when most students take music as a required class rather than an elective (Sloboda, 1996), music educators will likely interact directly with this wide variety of students.

The way teachers engage with dis/ability¹ and race in their classrooms links to their underlying belief systems (Heroux, 2013; Ryan, 2020). Unfortunately, substantial evidence connects teacher beliefs and perceptions to the reification of hegemonic norms, which upholds barriers for students in educational settings (Annamma, 2015b; Heroux, 2013; Ryan, 2020). One contributing factor is a systemic incongruence between teachers and students, creating or solidifying deficit perspectives (DeMatthews & Serafini, 2020). Specifically, the teacher workforce is overwhelmingly white and able-bodied and “lacks prolonged, ongoing interaction

¹ I employ the term dis/ability, as articulated by Annamma et al., (2013), to “1) counter the emphasis on having a whole person be represented by what he or she can do, rather than what he or she cannot, and 2) disrupt notions of the fixity and permanency of the concept of disability” (p. 1). When discussing specific models of disability or Disability Studies (DS) I maintain the original spelling.

with people of color and therefore develops misinformed, deficit social and cultural perspectives of racially, ethnically and linguistically diverse students” (Warren, 2015, p. 573). Likewise, scholars argue that those leading pre-service teacher education programs continue to ignore systemic inequities and teachers’ role in perpetuating them (Annamma, 2015b; Ladson-Billings, 2005). Therefore, elementary music educators, who teach and potentially impact the lives of all children in their building(s), have the responsibility to critically examine their beliefs, structures, and pedagogies, in order to create more equitable and inclusive spaces for all students.

Foundations of Dis/ability and Race in Public Education

Dating back to its foundation, the U.S. public education system has perpetuated injustice and inequity on both students of color and students with dis/abilities (Skiba et al., 2008). While lawmakers have removed the overtly exclusionary statutes that allowed legal segregation by race or ability, injustice remains in schools today. For example, when lawmakers banned school segregation during the Civil Rights movement of the 1950s and 60s, special education became the workaround to maintain exclusionary and discriminatory practices in schools (Annamma et al., 2013). Today, Black students continue to be three times more likely to be labeled in need of special education services than their white peers, but almost always in a subjectively decided category (such as a learning disability or emotional impairment) rather than a category with more objectively or readily apparent diagnostic criteria such as visual or hearing impairment (Parrish, 2002; Annamma et al., 2013). Furthermore, elementary students with dis/abilities, while legally afforded the right to a least restrictive environment,² are often only included with their general education peers in so-called enrichment classes such as music and art, or when it is convenient for the school or teacher’s schedule (Sumera et al. 2014). At the secondary level, students with

² For more information about least restrictive environment (LRE), consult the Individuals with Disabilities Act (2004).

IEPs enroll in music classes at significantly lower rates than their general education peers (Elpus, 2014; Hoffman, 2011).

In the following sections, I briefly discuss the separate manifestations of dis/ability and race in education and then consider the implications of how these constructs both reinforce and support one another. Then I discuss the ramifications these systemic structures have for music education and what educators might do combat this problem. Finally, I utilize the theoretical framework, DisCrit, to frame this study.

Dis/ability in Society and Education

Dis/ability is a part of the variation found in the human experience, and at any given time, people with dis/abilities represent approximately 20-25% of the human population (Disabled-World.com, 2020; World Health Organization, 2020). If someone lives long enough, they will likely experience some form of dis/ability, even if only temporarily. Additionally, dis/ability is a fluid point of identity and is not a homogenous category; each person's experience is unique (Peña et al., 2016). Several models of dis/ability operate in society, with the medical model—steeped in ableism as well as deficit thinking and language—the most prevalent in the US PK-12 educational system. This model often manifests in harmful tropes of dis/ability³, which are the source of most discrimination towards people with dis/abilities (Abramo, 2012).

The majority of dis/ability representation in media and culture is inaccurate and misleading, and these *cultural scripts* (Straus, 2011) are readily apparent in educational structures. Children are aware of differences at a young age and children quickly become

³ Media and culture regularly represent dis/ability in one of several inaccurate yet familiar tropes: 1) the object of pity; 2) the sub-human organism; 3) sinister or evil; 4) the object of dread; 5) the innocent or eternal child; 6) The object of comedy, ridicule, and curiosity; 7) the burden; 8) the victim of violence; and 9) extraordinary or supercrip (Baglieri & Shapiro, 2017, p. 33-34). Each of these tropes serves, in its way, to mark dis/ability as unfavorable and reduce it to an 'other' that is outside normality (Mitchell & Snyder, 2000). These stereotypes continue to show how society socially produces and reproduces representations of dis/ability and reveal the power of such narratives as they interact with real peoples' lives (Wilde, 2020).

socialized into seeing and sorting for difference (Farrell & Mastarone, 2017; Twomey & Carroll, 2018). Likewise, adults regularly engage in educational experiences that rate and rank students, determining markers of success and failure and searching for difference (Watson, 2017). Ranking and sorting processes have long-lasting consequences for students with dis/abilities. For example, only 67.1% of students with dis/abilities graduate from high school nationwide, compared to 84.6% of general education students (National School Board Association, 2019). Furthermore, researchers have connected special education labeling directly to the school-to-prison pipeline, with 24% of inmates in state and federal prisons reporting participation in special education classes during their K-12 education (Maruschak et al., 2021).

If unchecked and unevaluated, ranking processes and sorting for difference can quickly become part of a music education experience, creating exclusionary spaces. For example, students with dis/abilities participate in secondary ensembles at a much lower rate than their general education peers (Elpus, 2014; Hoffman, 2011). In Chapter Two, I give a more detailed account of the research surrounding dis/ability in music education.

Race in Society and Education

Race is an ever-present construct in K-12 classrooms, and racism continues to be a dominant factor in educational inequity (Anderson & Dixson, 2016; Dixson & Rosseau, 2006; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). When the Supreme Court decided *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), state laws establishing racial segregation in public schools were declared unconstitutional. However, legal rulings only had a moderate effect on the realities in schools. While racial integration in schools did increase after *Brown*, it peaked in 1986, and many schools have since begun returning to pre-*Brown* levels of segregation, with 14-15% of Black and Latino students attending “apartheid schools” with 0-1% white students (Orfield et al.,

2012). Furthermore, racial segregation also remained through less overt systemic structures such as curriculum, funding, and assessment strategies, to name a few, and this legacy of white supremacy continues today (Ladson-Billings, 1998; Tushnet, 2016).

Although many civil rights activists have continued to fight against racial segregation in education since *Brown v. Board*, there remains a well-documented history of inequity for students of color in public schools. Such education disparity includes (but is not limited to) an overrepresentation of students of color in special education (Annamma et al., 2013; Ferri & Connor, 2006). In addition, students of color are vastly underrepresented in honors and advanced placement courses (U.S. Department of Education, 2014a) and often attend schools with less qualified or less experienced teachers (U.S. Department of Education, 2014b). Furthermore, there is arguably more race-based segregation in schools than ever before, stemming from white flight, tracking, the cessation of bussing, and voucher systems (Orfield et al., 2012).

There is also evidence of systemic bias towards students of color from white teachers (Gershenson, Holt, & Papageorge, 2015), who make up over 82% of the teacher workforce (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). Black students are nearly two times more likely to be suspended or receive disciplinary action than their white peers (ACT & UNCF, 2015) and 3.8 times more likely to receive out-of-school discipline (such as suspension or referral to law enforcement). Further, white teachers are more likely to look for misbehavior in non-white students. Such inequities increase the education gap, contributing to higher rates of dropout and incarceration for Black students (ACT & UNCF, 2015).

It is not only in general education that racial segregation occurs; it is evident in music education. For example, Elpus and Abril (2011) found significant disparities between who participated in secondary music and the makeup of the overall student population, with

significant underrepresentation from English Language Learners and the Hispanic population. In addition, Salvador and Allegood (2014) found a structural difference in access to secondary music for students at schools where BBIA⁴ students were the majority. In chapter two, I give a more detailed account of the research surrounding race in music education.

Dis/ability and Race Connections in Education

Critical Disability Studies (DisCrit) scholars argue that race and dis/ability are simultaneously co-constructed and interdependent, intersecting in ways that make considering one without the other both impossible and unethical (Annamma et al., 2013). Rulings such as *Brown v. Board* created opportunities for race and dis/ability to intersect in ways that were not as emancipatory as the ruling initially seemed. For example, one result of *Brown v. Board* was that students with dis/abilities were no longer required to attend school in a separate building. However, this ostensibly positive change for students with dis/abilities actually hurt students of color. Bringing students with dis/abilities into a school building did not necessarily mean they would be integrated into a regular education classroom with their same-age peers. Instead, students with dis/abilities often remained segregated into separate rooms. As a result, school personnel could then continue to separate students of color from white students if they claimed that the student of color had a cognitive, emotional, or behavioral dis/ability. Indeed, using special education rooms to continue segregation may be one reason for the longstanding racial disproportionality in special education (Artiles, 2016; National Center for Learning Disabilities, 2020).

⁴ BBIA stands for Black, Brown, Indigenous, and Asian. While many still use the term BIPOC, the terminology has begun to shift as “person of color” still represents a white gaze and some scholars felt that the Asian community was rendered invisible. For more information on this, please see the decolonizingthemusicroom.org.

The exact amount of BBIA overrepresentation in special education varies across dis/ability categories, but disproportionality between students of color and white students is consistent across all federally recognized disability categories (Skiba et al., 2008). For example, Native American and Alaskan Native students receive special education services at twice the rate of the general student population, and Black students are 40 percent more likely to be identified with a dis/ability than white students (National Center for Learning Disabilities, 2020). However, the racial divide between general education and special education spaces is more complicated than it initially seems. BBIA students attending schools with primarily white students tend to be overrepresented in special education but are underrepresented in schools with primarily BBIA students—and the reverse is true for white students (Elder et al., 2021). In both situations, white students and BBIA students remain separated from each other at disproportionate rates.

Race and ability segregation in schools was maintained and perpetuated by policies such as the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) (Individuals with Disabilities Act, 2004) and No Child Left Behind (NCLB) (No Child Left Behind, 2001) (Artiles, 2016), and even though these statutes are no longer in force, the effects remain in updated statutes such as Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) (Every Student Succeeds Act, 2015). Baker (2002) referred to education policies like IDEA and NCLB as *outlaw ontologies*, asserting that the only goal of those crafting these laws was to point out “a way of being or existing that is thought [to be] outside the normal” and to seek to eradicate it, much as one would hunt down an outlaw (p. 674). Indeed, Baker asserts that it is not inclusion or equity at all that drives public school systems, educational laws, and policies; instead, it is a “deep-seated despise” of that which might make someone different or less-than (p. 674). Further, difference continues to be sorted and classified through coded language in school and society (Hess, 2017a), and students of color and students with

dis/abilities are impacted in greater proportion than their white, non-dis/abled peers. Therefore, students who are both BBIA and dis/abled are intersectionally impacted and doubly discriminated (Crenshaw, 1991).

While neither systemic racism nor ableism have to define teacher interactions with students, they are pervasive in culture, educational structures, and society. Therefore, teachers must make conscious efforts to disrupt these narratives in their spheres of influence. Scholars have gone so far as to say that ignoring the ways race and ability operate together in schools is "nothing short of irresponsible" (Annamma et al., 2013, p. 200). Operating under this paradigm, scholars must consider the impact of the intersection of dis/ability and race in music education spaces.

Need for the Study: Dis/ability, Race, and their Intersections in Music Education

Elementary general music may be an important place to study the intersection of race and dis/ability in music education. Music educators often provide the first inclusion site for students with dis/abilities at the elementary level (VanWeelden & Whipple, 2014). Additionally, there does not appear to be a racial disparity regarding student access to music at the elementary level, as nearly all elementary children receive musical instruction (Salvador & Allegood, 2014). However, BBIA students and students with dis/abilities remain underrepresented in secondary music, especially in instrumental ensembles such as band and orchestra, and the disparity is significantly higher for African American and Latinx students than white students and other non-white populations (Elpus & Abril, 2019). Furthermore, there is only minimal research on inclusion for students with dis/abilities in secondary ensembles. Elpus and Abril (2019) posited various reasons for the disparity at the secondary level, including lack of access, appeal, or

familial support. One other possibility might be a lack of attention to elementary teacher biases and praxis surrounding race, ability, and the intersection of the two.

Scholars have linked teacher beliefs to the reification of hegemonic norms (Heroux, 2013; Ryan, 2020). Thus, practicing music teachers must examine their own biases and explore how their biases, systemic structural racism, ableism, and other discrimination may be manifesting in their classrooms (Farrell & Mastarone, 2017; Heroux, 2013). The structural realities of teaching music (e.g., lack of planning time, stress, a large number of students, administrative demands) (Allen, 2011; Knapp, In Press), create challenges for teachers who wish to undertake the work of examining biases and creating equitable classroom praxis. A professional development opportunity specifically focused on investigating belief systems and considering how race and ability operationalize in the classroom may provide an avenue for educators to begin this work. In a professional development setting, music educators have the opportunity to engage in reflective practices that examine and challenge existing beliefs and consider how their beliefs might influence their perceptions, relationships, and classroom practices (Heroux, 2013).

Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

Therefore, the purpose of this descriptive, collective case study (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2018) was to examine a music educator collaborative teacher study group (CTSG) focused on exploring and unpacking narratives of race and dis/ability in music education. Research questions were:

1. How do teachers conceptualize issues of race and ability in both their belief systems and described classroom practices?

2. How, if at all, did participants' beliefs about race and ability change as a result of participating in the CTSG?
3. What conditions within the CTSG facilitated changes in mindset and behavior for participants?

Researcher Positionality

In qualitative research, the researcher is a part of the study they conduct (Roulston, 2010). As Chiseri-Strater (1996) stated,

Researchers are positioned...by age, gender, race, class, nationality, institutional affiliation, historical-personal circumstance, and intellectual predisposition. The extent to which influences are revealed or concealed when reporting data is circumscribed by the paradigms and disciplines under which we train, work, and publish (as cited in Roulston, 2010, p. 115).

Therefore, I aim to be transparent about my lens and role within the collaborative teacher study group and the overall study. I am a white, Protestant, cis female, straight, married doctoral candidate. I have a hidden dis/ability and am the mother of a child with a dis/ability. During my 13 years teaching public school, I taught in three different school districts. In each, I taught a self-contained classroom of children with dis/abilities and worked with students with dis/abilities who attended music alongside their general education peers. However, it was not until I became a mother of a child with a dis/ability that I expanded my perceptions of dis/ability in society and started having to navigate and advocate for my child's dis/ability in public schools. I learned how to better advocate for students in the music room and how to be a better teacher. As a result, I consider myself well-equipped to support other teachers working with students with dis/abilities in music, yet I am always learning new things and eager to continue doing so.

All three districts I taught in were racially diverse, but none as much as my last school district, where, in any given year, students spoke over 50 languages in their homes. As I reflect on my years in public education, I recognize that, at the time, I considered myself to be “colorblind.” Furthermore, I thought of that as a good thing. I did not consider myself someone with racial biases, and I certainly did not believe I enacted any bias in my teaching.

However, in the summer of 2020, in the wake of the George Floyd murder (and many more) and the Black Lives Matter movement's renewed uprising across the United States, I came face to face with my whiteness for the first time. My eyes were opened, and I consider myself at the very beginning of a life-long process of engaging with race, addressing it in my own life, and working towards creating more equitable spaces for BBIA students. Up until summer 2020, my main research interest centered only around students with dis/abilities in music. However, I no longer felt that I would be doing justice to my students, past or future, if I ignored how race operationalized in the music classroom. Therefore, I searched for ways to engage in research that looked at the intersection of race *and* ability. As such, I utilize the framework DisCrit, or Dis/ability Critical Race Theory throughout this project.

Theoretical Framework

In 2013, Annamma et al. developed DisCrit, or Dis/ability Critical Race Theory, a theoretical framework seeking to bridge the perceived gaps between Disability Studies (DS) and Critical Race Theory (CRT). Annamma and colleagues coined the term to bring together dis/ability studies and critical race theory to examine how “race and ability are socially co-constructed and interdependent” (p. 5). It was their view that both DS and CRT fell short, considering that “race and ableism often work in ways that are unspoken, yet racism validates and reinforces ableism, and ableism validates and reinforces racism” (p. 6). In order to

contextualize the nuances of DisCrit, I will discuss the tenets of Disability Studies (DS), including models of dis/ability, and the tenets of Critical Race Theory (CRT). Finally, I will discuss how they merge into DisCrit as a theoretical frame for this study.

Disability Studies

Disability studies (DS) is a body of scholarship that emerged from the disability civil rights movement in the late twentieth century. Scholars critiqued the view that disability is a deficit located in the body, instead arguing for a distinction between an impairment and a disability, where an impairment is within the body, but a disability is created by structures outside the body (Davis, 2017). This premise brought about two conflicting models of disability, the medical model and the social model. Scholars continue to expand DS to include other potential models of disability, and researchers across disciplines utilize DS to examine the meaning and consequences of disability. I will expand on each of the models below.

Models of Disability

Medical Model of Disability. Historically, education, and by extension, music education, has employed the medical model of disability (Darrow, 1999; Dobbs, 2012). The medical model is a deficit-based approach that situates disability in the body and outside what is considered *normal* by medical and social standards. Centuries of historical conceptions about the *ideal* human form have necessitated a conception of the *other*—one that is not ideal (Davis, 2017). In this model, disability is a pathology considered only within the body and as an individual issue that needs fixing. Schools participate in the management and repair of these deficits, and education operationalizes the medical model and deficit language to categorize and sort students in an attempt to accomplish this goal (Dobbs, 2012).

The medical model fails to explain the experiences of disabled people; it also denies a sense of full citizenship by persons with disabilities (Davis, 2017). First, the visibility of difference (in many cases) stigmatizes the person (Goffman, 1974), which often negatively affects other people's opinions of persons with disabilities. Although not readily seen by others, people with invisible disabilities, such as cognitive or emotional differences, are also often stigmatized. According to Sullivan (2011), the medical model, which is still prevalent in schools and society, is the root of most negative attitudes held towards people with disabilities. In this model, disability is deviance from the norm, and those in the dominant group appraise persons with disabilities more for what they cannot do than what they can do (Davis, 2017). The medical model promotes an ableist worldview, suggesting that people with disabilities should strive towards (and want to be) able-bodied, neurotypical, or *normal* and that without repair of the disability, persons with disabilities will not be capable of fully functioning in society (Peña et al., 2016).

Social Model of Disability. Critics of the medical model argue against the binary construction of disabled/non-disabled and argue that disability is not only a more fluid category (Bell, 2017), but that it is socially and culturally constructed (Davis, 2017; Dobbs, 2012; MacDonald, Hargreaves, & Miell, 2002; Peña et al., 2016). In the medical model, disability lives within the body, but the social model argues that a person's difference only becomes a disability when society creates norms or barriers that exclude them. Furthermore, proponents of the social model demand that society take responsibility for its contributions to disabling norms and barriers, espousing that disability is purely a socially imposed category (Wrazen, 2016). Proponents of the social model intentionally separated the term *disability* from *impairment*, stating that an impairment is a bodily condition, cognitive or emotional difference, or physical

limitation, whereas disability is the social discrimination and environmental impact experienced by persons with disabilities (Dobbs, 2012; Lubet, 2011; Titchkosky, 2003). In the social model, the impairment only becomes a disability when society creates the barriers that make it one (Davis, 2002).

The social model provides persons with disabilities an avenue for self-determination and positive identity (Corker, 1998, 1999), yet it is not without critics. Some have argued that the binary distinction of *disability* vs. *impairment* has led to tensions within the disability community (Davis, 2017; Harry, 2018), precisely because disability is not a homogenous category (Peña et al., 2016). Disability is a fluid identity category—one a person can flow in and out of throughout their lives, and disability can be a part of someone's life at any time (Davis, 2002). Disability can be located both within and around the body and is more complicated than a simple binary definition can convey, which causes gaps in understanding surrounding disability and problems with representation of its diversity (Titchkosky, 2003). As a result, several branches have split off from the social model, incorporating some of its tenets, but seeking to “render complex the simple fact of impairment while rendering simple the ideological screen of normalcy” (Davis, 2017, p. 13).

Cultural Model of Disability. Some scholars argue that the social model of disability still relies on definitions based on the medical model for diagnosis and urge consideration of other ways to view disability (Corker, 1998, 1999; Davis, 2013). For example, Corker (1998, 1999) argued that the social model incorporated hierarchical ordering and could not articulate the dynamic and complex nature of the fluidity within disability. Corker instead argued for a dialogic relationship between disability and impairment, rather than a dichotomous one. Similarly, Shakespeare and Watson (1997) argued for a more holistic version of the social model

where "agency and structure are intrinsically knit together" (p. 304). In this model, impairment is located within the body *and* in social interactions.

Out of these ideas came the cultural model of disability, which aims to investigate the “interactional space between embodiment and social ideology” (Snyder & Mitchell, 2006, p. 7). In this model, disability itself is a culture, and proponents of the cultural model argue for disability as a site of minority identity and cultural oppression (Dobbs, 2012; Siebers, 2008). Going further, Davis (2013) proposed a *dismodernism* that begins with disability instead of ending with it. Dismodernism

replaces the binary of docility and power with another—impairment and normalcy.

Impairment is the rule, and normalcy is the fantasy. Dependence is the reality, and independence is grandiose thinking. Barrier-free access is the goal, and the right to pursue happiness the false consciousness that obscures it (Davis, 2013, p. 276).

These ideas all lean towards what Gabel and Peters (2010) referred to as resistance theories of disability, which argue for a more active and complex understanding of how disability is constructed and enacted in social, political, educational, and economic circles.

Biopsychosocial and Complex Embodiment Models of Disability. Several other disability models exist, most notably the biopsychosocial model (World Health Organization, 2001) and the model of complex embodiment (Siebers, 2008). These models argue for a complex interaction between the body and society. The World Health Organization (WHO) (2001) sought to bridge the extremes between the medical and social model by adopting the biopsychosocial model of disability, a well-known model from psychiatry (Engel, 1977). According to the WHO, this model attempts to unify the medical and social models while also adding psychological factors. It balances the contributions of impairment, personal response, and environmental

barriers. Proponents of this model agree it highlights society's responsibilities to the condition of disability (Hosking, 2008; Griffo, 2014). Additionally, the interplay between body, society, and psyche has potential for a more nuanced understanding of disability, but critics express concern for its lack of sensitivity to the *subjective* experiences of persons with disabilities (Benning, 2015). Further, adding in elements of the psyche is potentially problematic as the field of psychiatry remains steeped in the medical model (Burstow, 2015).

Like the cultural model, Siebers' (2008) model of complex embodiment defines disability as a minority identity category. The model operates under three main points: 1) knowledge is socially situated; 2) identities are socially constructed; and 3) some bodies are excluded by dominant social ideologies (p. 33). For Siebers, "the theory of complex embodiment views the economy between social representations and the body not as unidirectional as in the social model, or nonexistent as in the medical model, but as reciprocal" (Siebers, 2008, p. 25). The complex embodiment model attempts to reframe minority identity from a position of strength. However, like the biopsychosocial model, complex embodiment is often criticized for failing to account for how individuals experience subjective meanings in their lives and ignores that some resist disability stereotypes as a part of their self-image (Dobbs, 2012).

While no single model is entirely sufficient to encompass the full complexity of disability and its interplay with society, models that focus on empowerment and agency are preferable to those that essentialize and reduce a person to a series of biological factors. Unfortunately, the medical model remains the most prevalent in education and society today (Abramo, 2012). Music education is not exempt from this (Bell, 2017; Churchill & Bernard, 2020); therefore, it is necessary to consider how disability is socially created and how music education might be limiting students by turning their impairments into disabilities.

Critical Race Theory

Critical Race Theory (CRT) is a well-established body of scholarship that has continued to develop since its inception from Critical Legal Studies in the 1980s. Legal scholars proposed CRT because critical legal studies did not sufficiently account for race in explaining many of the structural inequities in the United States (Delgado & Stefancic, 2013; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Furthermore, they argued that legal policies and practices, albeit seemingly racially neutral, have served to undermine Black efforts towards equal citizenship (Tate, 1997). Over the last 30 years, CRT scholars have explored applications of CRT in multiple settings and proposed suggestions for uniform features of the theory. Although a complete consensus does not yet exist (Laughter & Han, 2019), six of the most commonly agreed-upon tenets of CRT include:

1. CRT acknowledges the systemic nature of racism and the permanence of racism in American society (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Ladson Billings, 1998).
2. CRT offers a critique of liberalism, specifically how legislation is viewed as “neutral” or “apolitical” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Tate, 1997).
3. CRT conceives of whiteness as property, and the ownership of this property equates to social control (Harris, 1993; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995).
4. CRT argues for the use of counter-storytelling or experiential knowledge in challenging hegemonic frameworks (Ladson-Billings, 1998; DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Milner, 2007).
5. CRT is interdisciplinary; it acknowledges how racism intersects with other forms of oppression, while maintaining race as salient (Crenshaw, 1991; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995).

6. CRT works to eliminate racial oppression as part of the broader goal of ending all forms of oppression and works towards empowerment of all subordinated groups (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002).

Critical Race Theory in Education

Although CRT began in legal scholarship, theorists applied it in educational scholarship soon after. In 1995, Gloria Ladson-Billings and William Tate published “Toward a critical race theory of education,” in which they rejected multiculturalism as a means of racial progress and submitted three propositions that justified extending CRT into the field of education. Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) linked their propositions directly to the six tenets of CRT mentioned above. First, they advocated for the primacy of race as a social category in analyzing oppressive conditions. Second, they illustrated how property rights have been and continue to be given precedence over human rights by highlighting how school funding disparities arise from required reliance on property taxes. Finally, they presented the intersection of race and property rights as a tool for understanding other inequities in schools and, citing Harris (1993), detail how even whiteness functions as a form of property (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). I present summaries of their arguments in the following paragraphs.

The Primacy of Race in Analyzing Educational Inequity in the U.S.

Race is a significant predictor of inequity in U.S. schools (NCES, 2019). Understanding how race is a significant predictor only requires looking at longstanding demographic data about high school dropout rates, suspension and discipline rates, and the school to prison pipeline, which clearly demonstrate disproportionality between white students and BBIA students (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; NCES, 2019). Critics have discounted these statistics by questioning the usefulness of race as a category or arguing that other factors such as gender or

class are the cause of the disproportionality. However, Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) challenge those who would discount race as the central feature in explaining inequity in schools by arguing that class and gender-based explanations, while merited on their own account, cannot fully account for the variance found in school statistics, such as the continued lower performance ratings of students of color.

U.S. Society is Based on Property Rights

Despite the possibility that democracy and capitalism could be separate from one another, democracy in the United States is built *upon* capitalism (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). As such, CRT theorists posit that those who argue for human rights through democratic ideals alone are destined to fail if they ignore the structural inequalities built into a capitalist society. Society in the U.S. is based on property rights over human rights. Since the European discovery of American lands, the taking and claiming of property has been built into the fabric of American life, and as such, there exists a tension between property rights and human rights (Bell, 1987). According to Ladson-Billings & Tate (1995)

the grand narrative of U.S. history is replete with tensions and struggles over property—in its various forms. From the removal of Indians (and later Japanese Americans) from the land to military conquest of the Mexicans, to the construction of Africans as property, the ability to define, possess, and own property has been a central feature of power in America (p. 53).

Property directly relates to educational inequity through property tax assessments and the amount of money spent on schools in more affluent property areas, but also in less obvious ways, such as intellectual property and the quality of education that directly stems from disparate financial starting points (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995).

The Intersection of Race and Property Rights as An Analytical Tool

Finally, Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) brought together the intersection of race and property rights to consider inequity in the United States and education specifically. Drawing on Harris's (1993) work on whiteness as property, Ladson-Billings & Tate (1995) discussed how beyond the subjugation of Black people into objects of property, "the construction of whiteness [became] the ultimate property" (p. 58). Whiteness as property, according to Harris (1993), includes (1) rights of disposition; (2) rights to use and enjoyment; (3) reputation and status property; and (4) the absolute right to exclude. Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) discussed how these property rights manifest in education. For example, whiteness as property appears as the rights of disposition by sanctioning and rewarding student behavior according to white normative standards. It manifests as rights to use and enjoyment by offering social, cultural, and economic privileges, including access to educational locations and better educational opportunities. Whiteness as property appears by regulating reputation standards and through coded language that classifies urban, and thus Black, students as a lower standard than their suburban counterparts, giving status and reputation to one and not the other. Finally, whiteness manifests as the right to exclude by denying access. While historically this was through separate schools, it still manifests in education today through white flight, tracking systems into advanced placement classes, and private schooling (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995).

Critical Race Theory in Music Education

Over the last twenty-five years, CRT has developed into a leading frame for inquiry when exploring oppression in schools and other social structures. However, due to the endemic nature of racism that CRT acknowledges, scholars recognize that the work CRT can do to unmask racism is a permanent struggle, and "the insomniac career of critical race theory is without end"

(Headley, 2006, p. 358). Several music education researchers have taken up the call and continue to work on this line of inquiry (e.g., Bradley, 2012, 2015; Hess, 2015b, 2017a; Kruse, 2016a; Lewis, 2021). I give a fuller accounting of race scholarship in music education in Chapter Two.

DisCrit: Dis/ability Critical Race Theory

DisCrit is a blending of Disability Studies and Critical Race Theory, and it seeks to address perceived gaps in each individual theoretical frame. DisCrit seeks to explore the socially constructed and interrelated nature of both race and ability and considers how both are based on invisible norms in society, on the macro and micro level (Annamma et al., 2013). Proponents of DisCrit problematize the process of automatically seeing difference as a deficit. Further, scholars extend this to reject deficit views of students outright, be they race or ability related (Annamma, 2014). There are seven tenets of DisCrit, which are helpful to "interrogate the ways in which race, racism, dis/ability, and ableism are built into the interactions, procedures, discourses, and institutions of education" (Annamma et al., 2013, p. 7). DisCrit:

1. Focuses on ways that the forces of racism and ableism circulate interdependently, often in neutralized and invisible ways, to uphold notions of normalcy;
2. Values multidimensional identities and troubles singular notions of identity such as race *or* dis/ability *or* class *or* gender *or* sexuality and so on;
3. Emphasizes the social constructions of race and ability and yet recognizes the material and psychological impacts of being labeled as raced or dis/abled, which sets one outside of the western cultural norms;
4. Privileges voices of marginalized populations, traditionally not acknowledged within research;

5. Considers legal and historical aspects of dis/ability and race and how both have been used separately and together to deny the rights of some citizens;

6. Recognizes Whiteness and Ability as Property and that gains for people labeled with dis/abilities have largely been made as the result of interest convergence of white, middle-class citizens;

7. Requires activism and supports all forms of resistance (Annamma et al., 2013, p. 11).

Tenet one explores the normalizing practices of labeling that work in tandem to mark bodies by race or dis/ability in an attempt to segregate. Annamma et al. (2013) state, "neither institutional racism alone nor institutional ableism on its own can explain why students of color are more likely to be labeled with dis/abilities and segregated than their white peers with and without dis/abilities" (p. 11). Language about race and dis/ability is coded and implicit and labels students' perceived deviance. These labeling processes appear neutral or invisible when educators use euphemistic terms such as "at-risk" (Ladson-Billings, 2005).

Tenet two challenges a one-dimensional understanding of identity and considers how the matrix of domination (Hill Collins, 1990) interacts to form a multiplicity of marginalization and affects how students interact with their educational experience, often creating further inequity. For example, a white male student from a middle-class background labeled with a learning dis/ability may have the familial social and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986) that ensures he receives outside services. He may have parents who know how to interact with the school system to see that he gets the support necessary (e.g., increased testing time, a paraprofessional, full inclusion into mainstream classrooms). Alternatively, a Black student who has not officially been diagnosed and is labeled "at-risk" might receive unofficial school support (e.g., lower expectations, internal behavior plans, more discipline referrals to support the "case" for

segregation to a special education classroom), but gets denied the complete structure of support to ensure equitable access (Reid & Knight, 2006). Alternatively, educators may push the same Black student into the special education system due to increased discipline referrals.

Tenet three acknowledges that both race and dis/ability are social constructions yet still have real-world consequences. The mutual construction of these two points of identity onto a single body often sets a student outside the norm of acceptability in an US PK-12 educational setting. Instead of recognizing these social and cultural constructions as the site of the problem, educators treat the multiply marginalized student as though their differences are “biological deficits” (Annamma, 2013., p. 33). This treatment often converges with students being labeled and pathologized as behavior problems, ultimately ending in some form of segregation in the guise of support (Adams, 2015).

Tenet four focuses on the importance of counternarratives as a site of power and reclamation. Often students with dis/abilities are spoken *for* and not with (Baglieri & Shapiro, 2017). When researchers ignore the narratives of regularly silenced people, further marginalization and inequity are perpetrated (Titchkosky, 2003). By privileging counternarratives, students have the chance to reauthor their own stories (Greenstein, 2016) and engage in liberatory practice (Freire, 1970). DisCrit privileges knowledge based on the lived experiences of people who are experts in their own lives. However, it is worth considering that, ultimately, research is primarily for other academics and, therefore, potentially not nearly as liberatory in practice as it is in theory. Therefore, engaging in counternarratives requires sensitivity and care.

The fifth tenet of DisCrit recognizes the legal and historical aspects of race and dis/ability and how these categories that shift over time continue to deny citizens’ rights. Annamma et al.

(2013) state, “Without racialized notions of ability, racial difference would simply be racial difference. Because racial difference has been explicitly linked with an intellectual hierarchy, however, racial differences take on additional weight” (p. 15). From pseudo-sciences like the eugenics movement to the normalizing of racism through legal and educational policies, codifying those less worthy of full citizenship is both historical and ongoing—all for the preservation of a supposed white, heteronormative, able-bodied superiority (Annamma, 2013).

Tenet six interrogates whiteness and ability as property, arguing that those who have both whiteness and ability have received, and continue to obtain, economic and social benefits as a result (Harris, 1993; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Education is structured to perceive, promote, and reinforce both whiteness and ability (Broderick & Leonardo, 2016). Leonardo and Grubb (2014) argue, "from choosing school class presidents (therefore who is smart or popular) to homecoming queens (therefore who is beautiful), to targets of disciplinary policies (therefore who is the troublemaker), race is part of how schools perceive students" (p. 149). In many instances, participants in the educational systems that sort for difference couch race as a form of dis/ability (Annamma et al., 2018).

The final tenet of DisCrit is a call for action and activism. The authors conceive of activism in an assortment of ways (Annamma et al., 2018) and argue that intellectual activism (e.g., writing and research) is just as valuable as physical activism (such as a march or sit-in). Constructing a variety of modes for activism coincides with a notion of equity that considers the impact that race and ability have had on those who would desire to engage in activism but have been unable to do so by normative standards of what constitutes activism. Annamma et al. (2018) also argue that by centering intellectual activism as a viable alternative, it breaks open the ivory tower and considers the value of raced and dis/abled students as the knowledge generators

and experts in their own lives (Banks, 2017; Whitney, 2016). However, it is worth considering that if the stories of raced and dis/abled students are mediated by able-bodied, neurotypical researchers, it is simply another form of exploitation, and scholars must pay careful attention to avoid enacting the exact harm this tenet seeks to avoid.

DisCrit and Intersections with DS and CRT

DisCrit intersects with Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Disability Studies (DS) in a few crucial ways. Like CRT, DisCrit has roots in Critical Legal Studies, and its creators consider it an offshoot of other critical theories (Annamma et al., 2013). Despite CRT's claims towards intersectionality, Annamma et al. (2013) did not believe that dis/ability was well-represented in CRT. Other critics of CRT have also argued that it does not address ability and generally ignores special education's role in race conversations (Erevelles & Minear, 2010; Ferri, 2010).

Likewise, DisCrit scholars felt race was not well-represented in DS. DS scholars argue that an "individual cannot become labeled without considering context, culture, and history" (Annamma, 2013, p. 30), yet critics have countered that many DS scholars have employed whiteness to ignore or superficially address how race and ability are intertwined (Bell, 2006; Blanchett Klinger, & Harry, 2009). While both DS and CRT acknowledge the other point of identity, Annamma et al. (2013) argue that CRT always kept the primacy of race while DS maintained priority of dis/ability. DisCrit, in contrast, argues for a *simultaneous* dual analysis formed on the belief that "race and dis/ability are socially constructed and interdependent," therefore, it is impossible to engage with one outside the other (Annamma et al., 2013, p. 5).

Utilizing DisCrit as a Theoretical Framework

Utilizing DisCrit as a theoretical framework may help teachers begin to unpack and consider the role that race and ability (as both separate and intersectional constructs) operate in

their thinking and teaching. Further, this frame might assist educators as they engage in these topics in a music education setting. Utilizing the tenets of DisCrit in a professional development experience offers music educators an opportunity to learn about and critique their beliefs, some of which may be subconscious. Often, scholars and educational leaders present pedagogical practices without much theoretical grounding, so this lens may allow educators to evaluate pedagogical recommendations for underlying values and structures that might be continuing to uphold racism and ableism. Additionally, looking at classroom practices through this lens will allow music educators to evaluate functional and personal interactions of the classroom and consider ways DisCrit can disrupt and shift these relationships towards equity and allyship with those that have been multiply marginalized.

Language Use

One of the most powerful ways that dis/ability and race manifest in society is through language and discourse. The terms “race” and “disability” are often assumed to be fixed terms, but both are socially constructed categories (with real-world realities) that people have defined and redefined over the course of U.S. history. According to Gillborn (2015), both terms have “historically operated to define, segregate, and oppress” (p. 280). Language and discourse have great power and, like education, are political in nature (Freire, 1970/2001). Therefore, it is essential that I placed language considerations at the outset of the study and kept these considerations primary in all phases of this work.

Language about Dis/ability

Dis/ability labels are reductionist (Baglieri & Shapiro, 2017). They tend to overgeneralize or essentialize someone to a single feature, often interact with the person’s self-concept and invite others to reduce them to merely a label. The concept of labeling resembles Goffman’s

(1974) work on *stigma*, where they discussed how stigmas usually surround devalued traits and intersect with specific races, religions, or facets of identity, including dis/ability. This stigmatization results in rendering someone "less than human" (Avery, 2020, p. 51).

The use of derogatory language has a long history associated with the ill-treatment of people with dis/abilities (Avery, 2020). Language usage has shifted away from this history with the implementation of new laws (e.g., ADA, IDEA)⁵, as well as with the continued development of fields like disability studies (DS) and critical dis/ability studies (DisCrit). However, it is essential to note that language structures that might be respectful and appropriate today could shift with time. I intend to use the most current and socially appropriate terminology when referring to any aspect of a dis/ability (National Center on Disability and Journalism, 2021). For that reason, I employ the term dis/ability, as articulated by Annamma et al., (2018), to “1) counter the emphasis on having a whole person be represented by what he or she cannot do, rather than what he or she can, and 2) disrupt notions of the fixity and permanency of the concept of disability, seeking rather to analyze the entire context in which a person functions” (p. 1).⁶

People-first vs. Identity-first Language

How people employ language also extends to how people name dis/ability. While proponents of the social model of dis/ability argue for people-first language (e.g., a person with autism), others feel that identity-first language is crucial to their understanding of themselves regarding their dis/ability (e.g., autistic person). Some in the dis/ability rights community have even argued that people-first language reinforces deficits promoted within the medical model and can continue to marginalize or segregate people (Titchkosky, 2001). Likewise, specific

⁵ The Americans with Disabilities Act, 1990; Individual Disability Education Act, 2004

⁶ While some argue that using such terms are euphemisms to obscure disability, Annamma et al., (2013) argue that “dis/ability highlights the constructed and interdependent nature of both ability and disability and is an attempt to refute deficit constructions of disability and recognize contested boundaries” (p. 65).

dis/ability communities, such as the D/deaf community, value the identity-first language, while other groups prefer person-first. Some people believe that person-first language allows for “speaking on behalf” of people with dis/abilities and continues to foster deficit mindsets (Laes & Westerlund, 2018). In this study, I did not engage with specific people who could share their preference for person-first or dis/ability-first language, which is a limitation of this study. For that reason, I chose to rely on person-first language, even as I assert the importance of asking individual people how they identify and respecting their answers.

Language about Race

Coded language abounds when discussing race; in fact, many powerful mechanisms of white supremacy and racial subordination are never explicitly named. For example, *urban* and *diversity* are often code for people of color (usually Black people), whereas in music, the term *traditional* implies “better” (read: western European art music) and *multicultural* or *world* implies “less than” (Bradley, 2006; Hess, 2015a, 2017a). Despite striking specifically racist references from policies and laws, many forms of discrimination against people of color remain (e.g., housing laws, credit ratings, lending policies). Researchers have often referred to this as “colorblind” racism (Crenshaw, 2019; Crenshaw et al., 2019; Lipsitz, 2019). However, even reference to the phrase *colorblind* uses language structures to place one group under another; in this case, those who identify as blind. Coded language and silence remain pervasive in both education (Ladson-Billings, 1998) and music education (Bradley, 2006; Hess, 2017a). Hess (2017a) argued scholars must name systems and events in order to “come to consciousness” and to name the racism operating daily in schools because “breaking the silence about race and being explicit about our language (instead of masking our language in euphemisms) is crucial for

addressing systemic inequities" (p. 25). I intended to operationalize explicit language in every step of the study.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I discussed historical and current interactions between educational structures, dis/ability, and race, and their possible implications for practicing music educators. I briefly discussed engaging with teachers about these topics using a CTSG, presenting an overview of the purpose and research questions of the study. I then presented a theoretical framework, DisCrit, including its roots in Disability Studies (DS) and Critical Race Theory (CRT) and its application to this study. Finally, in this chapter, I considered the role and power of language around dis/ability and race and described how I approached language in this study.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

Educators often speak about music with blanket statements such as “music is for everyone.” Despite their ostensibly good intentions, such statements do not reflect many students’ day-to-day experiences in schools, where systemic exclusion pervades multiple facets of music education. In this literature review, I draw on two bodies of scholarship, dis/ability in music education and race in music education, to consider the fallacy of such statements in music education settings. Then, I examine research on professional development, both in general education and music education, analyzing facets of effective professional development, models of implementation, and provided examples from music education. Finally, I offer a rationale for a professional development group for music educators that simultaneously considered dis/ability and race constructs in the music classroom.

Dis/ability in Music Education

The research related to teaching music to students with dis/abilities typically centers around teacher perceptions and attitudes, recommendations for best practice, and teachers’ pedagogical practices. Since the passage of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, many researchers have focused on teacher perceptions and attitudes regarding working with students with dis/abilities (Jones, 2015). Although educators in many of these studies indicated that some dis/abilities seem more challenging to work with than others (VanWeelden & Whipple, 2014), most believed in the benefits of inclusion (e.g., Scott et al., 2007; Lubet, 2011). However, teachers shared practical concerns about costs, availability (both materials and time to implement strategies), and a lack of knowledge base on inclusion strategies (Scott et al., 2007; Nabb & Balcetis, 2010). I delimit this section of the literature review to exclude

scholarship on preservice teachers and focus primarily on in-service music educators' perceptions, recommendations, and experiences, as this related directly to my study.

Teacher Perceptions and Attitudes

Scholarship on teacher perceptions and attitudes about teaching students with dis/abilities has been robust over the last 50 years. Jones (2015) completed a sweeping review of literature on teaching students with dis/abilities, and most studies reported teachers feeling unprepared and ineffective, although teachers in these studies still believed inclusion of children into mainstream settings was appropriate (Jones, 2015). In many studies, teachers' attitudes towards students were generally neutral or positive for students with learning or physical dis/abilities but were neutral or negative for students with more complex needs (Jones, 2015).

More recently, Au and Lau (2021) surveyed practicing music teachers on their perceptions of working with students with autism. They found that teachers had a primarily positive perception but remained anxious about adequately meeting students' varied needs. Furthermore, respondents who previously received more education on promoting inclusion reported higher confidence levels and lower anxiety levels. However, some scholars have highlighted that research needs to move beyond considering teachers' attitudes in isolation and focus more on recommendations and pedagogical practices that support inclusion (Jellison & Taylor, 2007).

Recommendations and Pedagogical Practices

Scholars frequently researched strategies, skills, and knowledge necessary for teaching students with dis/abilities in music education, as well as the pedagogical practices of teachers working with students with dis/abilities. My analysis of the literature revealed four overarching

categories: engaging in external shifts in the classroom and curriculum, collaboration and communication, unpacking biases, and increased education. I discuss each of these below.

Engaging in External Shifts in the Classroom and Curriculum

Many scholars offered recommendations for practice that focus on teachers making external shifts in their classroom setting and instruction to support students with dis/abilities.⁷ Authors have used various terms to describe recommended shifts, such as *adaptations*, *accommodations*, *modifications*, *differentiated instruction*, *support strategies*, and *scaffolding*. While each of these terms is distinct, the goal of making changes to support students remains the same. Scholars advocated using differentiated instruction (DI) and Universal Design for Learning (UDL). I describe the scholarship on these two concepts below.

Differentiated Instruction. Scholars and music educators often used differentiated instruction (DI) to support inclusion, even though they did not always explicitly name it as such (Bell, 2008; Draper, 2017; Gerrity et al., 2013; Gilbert, 2108; Laes & Westerlund, 2018; Perlmutter, 2016; Pierce & Abramo, 2012; Thornton & Culp, 2020; VanWeelden & Heath-Reynolds, 2017; Wong, 2015; Wrazen, 2016). DI involves tailoring instruction to individual students in the moment. Teachers in Gerrity and colleagues' (2013) study stated that teachers found that repeating instructions, giving students choices, and increasing response time helped individual students. Students in the same study indicated that when the teacher provided clear directions and expectations, supported them with a behavior plan, provided an environment free of distractions, and promoted a positive atmosphere, they felt more successful. Wong (2015) echoed these findings, noting that verbal repetition and visual supports were beneficial to students. Scholars have explored other forms of DI, including in-the-moment shifts in the

⁷ For comprehensive resources containing accommodation suggestions, see Hammel & Hourigan, 2011b; VanderLinde Blair & McCord, 2016.

environmental structure (Wrazen, 2016), changes in assessment strategies (VanWeelden & Heath-Reynolds, 2017), incorporating popular music (Pierce & Abramo, 2012), utilizing peer interactions and buddy systems (Draper, 2017; Gilbert, 2018), increased playtime and flexible instruction (Bell, 2008; Laes & Westerlund, 2018), and modifications to materials and instruments (Gilbert, 2018; Perlmutter, 2016). In one study, an educator referred to utilizing differentiated instruction and finding new solutions for his students as accruing vital “educational wealth” (Thornton & Culp, 2020, p. 50).

In a critical discourse analysis of 25 years of inclusion research, Dobbs (2012) noted that most prior research presented recommendations through the lens of a medical (deficit) model of dis/ability, and many researchers in Dobbs' review made differentiated instruction suggestions as retrofit adaptations to an existing curriculum. More recently, some researchers have begun couching recommendations under a social model of dis/ability and, occasionally, the framework of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) (Connor & Gabel, 2013; Darrow, 2014b; Darrow & Adamek, 2017, 2018; McCord, 2013).

Universal Design for Learning. UDL is a curricular framework adapted from architecture, which focused on designing buildings to serve a variety of people’s physical needs, primary by eliminating barriers to access (CAST, 2016). When teachers operationalize UDL, they address inclusion from the outset of their planning instead of an after-the-fact component to their classroom design and instruction (Connor & Gabel, 2013; Rose & Meyer, 2002). UDL proponents asked teachers to consider three pillars of instruction to remove barriers to learning: *engagement, representation, and action and expression* (CAST, 2016). Employing a social model of dis/ability and within a constructivist paradigm, teachers applying UDL consider the environment and curriculum to look for ways to make them more inclusive instead of centering

the dis/ability within the person. In doing so, teachers anticipate diversity, seek to take learner variation into account when planning a learning experience, and remain flexible in their pedagogical approach during instruction (Rose & Meyer, 2002). Several music educators have incorporated elements of UDL into their research and pedagogical practices (e.g., Heikkila & Knight, 2012; McCord, 2013; Pickard, 2019). In the following paragraphs, I describe each of the three pillars of UDL along with related research.

Engagement. In the first pillar of UDL, engagement, teachers consider what motivates students to learn, focusing on the “why” of learning (CAST, 2016). As there are various ways that an individual might be motivated to learn, researchers have taken diverse approaches to the pillar of engagement. Some researchers addressed this from a holistic standpoint, considering how extramusical life-skills, such as organization and incorporating elements from the common core curriculum, can support students (Abramo, 2015; Darrow, 2014a; Draper, 2019). Others considered how the idea of wellness, both physical and social/emotional, supported student engagement (Darrow, 2014b; Darrow & Segall, 2015). Finally, scholars encouraged teachers to consider how student interest and motivation affect engagement, suggesting that teachers incorporate popular music, technology, and student choice into the classroom (Darrow & Adamek, 2017, 2018; Fuelberth, 2017). Scholars offered these suggestions to increase student buy-in and support greater engagement in the music classroom.

Representation. In UDL, representation is the “what” of learning, or the different ways that students “perceive and comprehend information that is presented to them” (CAST, 2016). Scholars encouraged educators to consider several representation components in their classroom, including environment, materials, and people (Abramo, 2012; Bernabé-Villodre & Martínez-Bello, 2018; Darrow, 2016; Hammel & Hourigan, 2011b; Melago, 2014; VanWeelden, 2011).

Hammel and Hourigan (2011b) asked educators to evaluate the learning environment for disabling obstacles that might cause challenges for student cognition, communication, behavior and emotions, and things that might exacerbate sensory challenges or physical/medical conditions. VanWeelden (2011) suggested teachers consider modifications to visual materials and utilize icons, color coding, visual aids, and assistive technology to support student success. Similarly, others suggested adjusting modality, pacing, size, and color to support students with diverse learning needs (Abramo, 2012; Hammel & Hourigan, 2011b). Several researchers further posited that teachers consider the arrangement of the educational space and seek to avoid distractions such as ticking clocks, decorations that can be overstimulating, other sensory distractions, and physical barriers (Darrow & Adamek, 2018; Fuelberth, 2017; Melago, 2014).

Similar to how teachers could consider the representation of *musical* material in the classroom, researchers have also recommended educators consider the representation of dis/ability *as a whole* (Bernabé-Villodre & Martínez-Bello, 2018; Darrow, 2016). Representation in curricular materials reveals the power relations of the dominant culture (Koza, 1992, 2008). The current lack of dis/ability representation in music education textbooks sends a normative message about diversity, further marginalizing students (Bernabé-Villodre & Martínez-Bello, 2018). Likewise, Darrow (2016) called for educators to engage role models in their classrooms who represent different forms of dis/ability and for schools to hire more teachers with dis/abilities to challenge these normative representations, and Parker and Draves (2017) echoed these suggestions.

Action and Expression. The pillar of action and expression relates to how students can demonstrate knowledge and participate in the musical experience, otherwise known as the “how” of learning (CAST, 2016). Flexibility is the key to this pillar, and researchers offered several

common recommendations to support this goal. One is for educators to utilize peer groupings as a strategy to support students in musical experiences (Darrow, 2003; Fuelberth, 2017; Hammel & Hourigan, 2011b; Jellison et al., 2017; Poliniak, 2019; Scott et al., 2007). Additionally, researchers encouraged teachers to take a more flexible approach to their assessment strategies and allow for students to demonstrate their knowledge in ways that highlight their strengths, such as shifting to an oral assessment over a written one or asking fewer questions to increase the quality of a student's response (Abramo, 2015; McPherson et al., 2012). Sometimes scholars recommended flexibility needed to extend into crafting alternative lessons or, in limited cases, a modified curriculum (Darrow & Adamek, 2018). In these situations, researchers suggested that music educators work individually with the student (Adamek, 2001; Salvador, 2013), design alternative projects (Darrow, 2014a; Darrow & Adamek, 2017), or utilize assistive technology (Ivanovich, 2010).

Scholars have also considered how specific pedagogical approaches may increase flexibility for students (Laes & Westerlund, 2018; McCord, 2009, 2013; Perlmutter, 2016; Pickard, 2019; Salvador, 2020; Sutela et al., 2020). Sutela et al. (2020) investigated how Dalcroze might support students' social and emotional needs. Several other researchers described teachers who utilized flexible, play-based approaches such as Music Learning Theory, Dalcroze and Orff to consider how to best support students with dis/abilities as well (Laes & Westerlund, 2018; McCord, 2009, 2013; Perlmutter, 2016; Pickard, 2019; Salvador, 2020). McCord (2013) worked with two teachers who used the Orff approach in their classroom and considered implementing UDL alongside it. Educators indicated that the flexibility of the Orff approach allowed them to engage in the three pillars of UDL and make the musical experience more accessible to their students. Pickard (2019) likewise found that incorporating UDL with music

instruction for students with Down Syndrome enabled "music teachers to feel increasingly confident to provide relevant, meaningful and constructive learning opportunities" (p. 12). These play-based approaches offer opportunities to blend both UDL and DI: flexibility is designed into the curriculum ahead of time and enacted by the teacher in the moment with students. Students should be allowed flexibility and choice, and likewise, teachers need to be willing to consider new ideas or solutions reflexively (Fuelberth, 2017; Salvador, 2020).

Collaboration and Communication

In addition to UDL-related recommendations, scholars also suggested collaboration with special educators, classroom teachers, paraprofessionals, and parents to support successful inclusion (Byrnes & Rickards, 2011; Crockett, 2017; Darrow & Adamek, 2017; Gonyou-Brown, 2016; Grimsby, 2020a, 2020b; Hammel & Hourigan, 2011a; Melago, 2014; Salvador, 2013, 2015). Some researchers suggested music educators utilize the specific information a special education teacher or parent can provide and combine this with their musical expertise to develop appropriate goals and delivery of instruction (Chen, 2007; Salvador, 2015). However, scholars cautioned that information must be thorough and student-specific, not formulaic (Fuelberth, 2017). Paraprofessionals also have a wealth of knowledge and expertise on individual children, and Grimsby (2020b) argued music educators need to communicate with paraprofessionals to ensure that they support the student in the best way possible. This team approach can extend to the design and implementation of an IEP. Scholars have argued that educators should consider including musical goals for students as a part of the overall IEP goals, and music educators need to advocate to be a part of the IEP process (Crockett, 2017; Gonyou-Brown, 2016; Hammel & Hourigan, 2011a).

Scholars asserted that communication and collaboration to support students with dis/abilities requires school-wide engagement (Crockett, 2017; Gonyou-Brown, 2016; Hammel & Hourigan, 2011a). Utilizing a school's positive behavior system (PBIS) alongside the federally mandated response to intervention (RTI) across all aspects of the school environment ensured consistency and clarity for both students and educators (Darrow, 2014b; Darrow & Adamek, 2017; Hammel & Hourigan, 2011a). However, implementing these approaches may also be problematic as it could reinscribe a medical model or other deficit-centered ideas and approaches and is something music educators should consider. Additionally, music educators might think about scheduling and how particular curricular offerings could be exclusionary and then advocate within their school for shifts to the schedule, repertoire, ensemble structure, or curriculum to engage in more equitable spaces (Fuelberth, 2017).

The final recommendation regarding communication and collaboration involves building relationships. Teachers often cited building relationships as positively affecting their practice (Lapka, 2005; Levy et al., 2017; Thornton & Culp, 2020). Thornton and Culp (2020) noted that a combination of shifting ideologies about valuing learning over performance also contributed to positive feelings about inclusion. Emphasizing process over product was a crucial element in other studies (McCord, 2013; Power & McCormack, 2012). Levy et al. (2017) cited the saliency of meaningful relationships with students as a critical factor in personalizing and delivering instruction. Teachers who built relationships with their students were more likely to take risks and try new strategies (Levy et al., 2017; Power & McCormack, 2012), including allowing the students to be co-creators in their own education (Ivanovich, 2010; Laes & Westerlund, 2018; Salvador, 2013). Furthermore, scholars encouraged teachers to communicate with the students about their own needs (Crockett, 2017) and remember that students were the experts in their own

lives (Byrnes & Rickards, 2011; Haywood, 2006). Building these personal and unique relationships with students served more than to assist the teacher in providing an inclusive experience for the students. Scholars argued that listening to students provided systemic benefits, including destigmatizing dis/ability and advancing more equitable opportunities for all students (Byrnes & Rickards, 2011; Scott et al., 2007; Thornton & Culp, 2020).

Unpacking Biases

Outside of external shifts in the classroom and curriculum, researchers have called for teachers to make internal shifts by unpacking their biases and evaluating their thinking and behavior surrounding dis/ability (Abramo, 2012; Bell, 2017; Darrow, 2016; Hourigan, 2007b; Poliniak, 2019; Salvador & Kelly-McHale, 2017; Salvador et al., 2020a, 2020b). Researchers have frequently considered teacher perceptions and attitudes towards including students with dis/abilities in the music classroom (Darrow, 1999; Jellison & Taylor, 2007; Nabb & Balcetis, 2010; VanWeelden & Whipple, 2014). Additionally, some researchers discussed how music educator participants made shifts to their thinking and behavior during a research study (Baker & Green, 2016; Dobbs, 2017; Lapka, 2005; Levy et al., 2017; Power & McCormack, 2012; VanWeelden & Whipple, 2005; Walkup-Amos, 2020).

In two studies of educators working with children with visual impairments, researchers found that teachers realized how frequently they used visual metaphors and language, noting how this affected their instruction and social perceptions of dis/ability (Baker & Green, 2016; Power & McCormack, 2012). For example, one teacher in Baker and Green's (2016) study discovered she was using abstract and ableist language such as "bright tone" or "dark timbre" and that this was not serving the needs of her visually impaired students (p. 13). Shifting attitudes for educators also created a positive shift towards inclusive practice, and a teacher's

openness towards students with dis/abilities was a critical factor in their decision-making processes (Lapka, 2005; Moss, 2009). Dobbs (2017) echoed this, stating that noticing internal deficit thinking and making shifts in mindset was critical to educators creating an equitable environment.

Nevertheless, researchers have claimed music education primarily maintains a medical model view towards dis/ability (Bell, 2017; Dobbs, 2012). Educators need to shift their understanding to view dis/ability as an experience instead of a deficit. Salvador and Kelly-McHale (2017) found that many music teacher educators still fell back on "difference-blind"⁸ perspectives that perpetuated inequity when discussing social justice topics such as dis/ability, and this had implications for the type of preparation in-service educators were likely to receive (p. 19). Connor and Gabel (2013) argued that music educators and music teacher educators needed to unlearn stereotypes and behaviors that rendered dis/ability invisible, including those socialized into the fabric of daily life. Furthermore, in developing greater dis/ability awareness, teachers needed to consider how they thought about dis/ability and contemplate how this thinking manifested in language and discourse (Abramo, 2012; Bell, 2017; Poliniak, 2019).

Utilizing person-first language (when appropriate to the individual or dis/ability community), asking a student their preferences (where appropriate), and avoiding labels that serve to "other" were critical for teachers who were committed to seeing their students and dis/ability from a strengths-based model (Abramo, 2012, 2015; Darrow, 2016; Poliniak, 2019). A strengths-based position seeks to highlight what a student can do while mitigating the challenges

⁸ Harry and Salvador (2021) explained Salvador and Kelly-McHale's (2017) decision to use the term "difference-blind" as well as the way language changes over time: "Salvador & McHale explained difference-blindness is not a euphemism for racism, but instead a term they coined to demonstrate that participants expressed a desire to ignore not only race but also dis/ability, gender, sexual orientation, and culture. However, we recognize and agree with Titchkosky's (2017) critique that using terms like "blind" in negative ways is ableist and have chosen different terminology in this article" (p. 20).

they face (McCord, 2009). It requires educators to see students for what they have and experience versus what they do not have or cannot experience.

Increased Education

The final recommendation category involves increased education for music teachers working with students with dis/abilities (Jones, 2015; Salvador & Pasiali, 2017; Whipple & VanWeelden, 2012). When preservice educators engaged in sustained experiences with students with dis/abilities, they indicated increased feelings of confidence and comfort (Hourigan, 2007a, 2007b, 2009; VanWeelden & Whipple, 2005, 2007). In-service music educators likewise should be provided professional development opportunities to increase their awareness and develop successful strategies for inclusion (Salvador & Pasiali, 2017). Dedicated time to work on inclusion might help mitigate teachers' past feelings of time constraints and lack of support for developing successful inclusion strategies (Darrow, 2003; Hammel & Gerrity, 2012; Hammel & Hourigan, 2011b; Whipple & VanWeelden, 2012).

In addition to education, researchers recommended that music educators develop an increased awareness of the laws surrounding students with dis/abilities and their rights as music educators (Crockett, 2017; Grimsby & Knapp, 2020; Hammel & Hourigan, 2011a). Grimsby and Knapp (2020) argued that educators need to understand federal laws and how their specific state interprets them. Other scholars have encouraged music educators to learn about the IEP process, access funds to support potential adaptations in classroom materials, and advocate for the musical space as a least restrictive environment (Darrow & Adamek, 2017; Hammel & Hourigan, 2011a). Finally, scholars suggested educators utilize this knowledge to advocate for the students with their administration and fellow educators (Haywood, 2006).

Synthesis of Research on Dis/ability in Music Education

Educators seem to have incorporated much of the research-based recommendations into their pedagogical practices. Researchers demonstrated several of the ways that teachers differentiated their instructional methods and materials (Gerrity et al., 2013; Heikkila & Knight, 2012; Perlmutter, 2016; Power & McCormack, 2012; Thornton & Culp, 2020; Wong, 2015) and utilized the pillars of UDL to support their students (Heikkila & Knight, 2012; McCord, 2013; Pickard, 2019). Educators used technology to enhance the delivery of the curriculum (Cano & Sanchez-Iborra, 2015) and considered ways to support students' functional lifegoals alongside musical ones (Hillier et al., 2016). Teachers also engaged in flexibility and reflexivity in the moment within their practice by individualizing the experience to support students' unique needs (Baker & Green, 2016; McCord, 2009; Perlmutter, 2016). Educators utilized peer groupings to support student learning (Draper, 2017, 2019; Walkup-Amos, 2020), and some found that these peer groupings also had social benefits (Dingle et al., 2012). Finally, teachers have designed alternative assessments to reflect a strengths-based approach to dis/ability that highlighted what students could do instead of what they could not do (Levy et al., 2017; VanWeelden & Heath-Reynolds, 2017; VanWeelden & Whipple, 2005).

Researchers also explored the effectiveness of building relationships with students (Bell, 2008; Haywood, 2006; Lapka, 2005; Levy et al., 2017) and listening to their needs (Gilbert, 2018). Engaging with students as "self-experts" continued to provide insight to educators and shifted teachers to a more social justice perspective of inclusion (Crockett, 2017; Haywood, 2006). Scholars documented how teachers engaged in unpacking their hidden bias(es) (Dobbs, 2017; Power & McCormack, 2012; Laes & Westerlund, 2018) and the importance of making changes to language and discursive structures for increased equity (Baker & Green, 2016).

Scholars frequently cited fieldwork or professional development as tools that led to feelings of success (Hourigan, 2007b, 2009; Thornton & Culp, 2020), yet scholars did not report details of these experiences, how teachers could access them, or whether they resulted in increasingly effective practice. Salvador et al. (2020a, 2020b) investigated practicing music educators engaged in a summer graduate course on social justice topics and considered the learning processes necessary for an in-service teacher to change their practice. They did note there is a difference between graduate education and professional development and suggested that prolonged guidance that coincided with participants' teaching situations might be more connected to student outcomes. This study (and the follow-up study with the same population) were the only known examples of practicing teachers engaging in unpacking biases from a social justice perspective and considering implications for their practice.

Race in Music Education

I now shift to my second body of literature, race in music education. Racism remains pervasive in the U.S. and is a major factor in the inequity in the PK-12 American school system (Anderson & Dixson, 2016; Chapman, 2013; DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Dixson & Rosseau, 2006; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Yosso, 2005) and, as a result, in music education (e.g., Bradley, 2012; Hess, 2017a). Scholars who have interrogated the ways that racism permeates music education have challenged racism's continued presence through a variety of named lenses, including social justice (Gaztambide-Fernandez & Rose, 2015; Ryan, 2020; Salvador et al., 2020a, 2020b; Salvador & Kelly-McHale, 2017), Critical Race Theory (Dixon, 2012; Gaztambide-Fernandez, 2011; Liu, 2021; Mullen, 2020), critiques of colonialism and calls for decolonization (Bradley, 2006; Hess 2015a; Rosabal-Coto, 2019; Yi, 2021), critical pedagogy (Abrahams, 2005; Hess, 2017b; Hess & Talbot, 2019), anticolonial practices (Bradley

2012; Hess, 2018), and antiracist practices (Bradley, 2006, 2015; Hess, 2015b, 2021b; Knapp & Mayo, 2021). Researchers have also considered issues of access (Griese et al., 2021; Knapp & Mayo, 2021; Salvador & Allegood, 2014) and perspectives of both students and teachers (Abril 2009; Abril & Robinson, 2019; Boon, 2014; Hoffman & Carter, 2013; Hymon, 2020; Kruse, 2020a, 2020b; Mullen, 2020; Parker, 2021; Ryan, 2020; Seaboldt, 2021) to interrogate the ways racism operates in music education.

Scholars have also explored pedagogies that decenter whiteness by prioritizing other forms of musical and cultural wealth, including hip hop pedagogies (Evans, 2019; Karvelis, 2018; Kruse, 2016b, 2020a, 2020b; Kruse & Gallo, 2020); and Culturally Responsive/Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies (Abril, 2013; Dissinger, 2019; Gurgel, 2015; Lind & McKoy, 2016; Seaboldt, 2021; Shaw, 2020a, 2020b). In addition, some have employed the power of counternarratives (Davis, 2021; Hess, 2019b; McCall, 2017, 2021; Thornton, 2017). Others used a professional development format or graduate education to work with practicing educators on race (Bradley et al., 2007; Lewis, 2021; Salvador et al., 2020a; Shaw, 2020a). I first review the research by scholars who have contributed to theoretical perspectives on race in music education (including discussing ways racism continues to operate). Then, I describe alternative curricula and pedagogies scholars deployed to combat racism in music education and finish with a review of research involving access to and perspectives on race in music education.

Facing Whiteness in Music Education

White norms (e.g., standards of behavior and communication, expectations of family units, individualism) serve as a "mechanism that maintains a racist system, and not acknowledging whiteness contributes to the permanence of race and racism" (Matias et al., 2014). Bradley (2006) argued that silence about racism and how white supremacy operates in

music continues to maintain the status quo and that racism often remains through coded language and rhetoric. Several others have echoed the call to remove coded language (Gaztambide-Fernandez, 2011; Hess, 2017a), with Hess advocating for explicit language and rejecting language softeners. Drawing from Vaugeois (2013), Hess (2017a) argued that the relative absence of explicit race talk in music education and scholarship has resulted in "terminal naivety" within the field:

Effectively, “terminal naivety” described the intent to stay unaware or disinterested in world events and the systems that shape our society...There is an implied political disinterestedness too often present in the classical musical world and the culture of silence that politicized individuals often encounter in classical contexts (p. 19).

Examples of such softeners include *multicultural*, *urban*, and *world music*, with Gaztambide-Fernandez (2011) pointing out that such rhetoric has contributed to maintaining oppressive structures and white supremacy in music education.

Dixon (2012) argued for educators and scholars to be brave as they interrogated all the ways that whiteness operates in education structures. However, Hess (2021b) noted that before music education can address whiteness, educators must first recognize whiteness in all its forms. Hess (2021b) articulated six areas where whiteness continues to manifest in music education: repertoire selection and musical traditions, Eurocentricity in the curriculum, the dominance of notation and notational literacy, instrument choices and availability, student expectations and desired behaviors, and secondary ensembles serving a population that is “whiter than the overall school population” (pp. 16-17). Hess (2021b) offered strategies to confront whiteness, including acknowledging positionality, moving away from Eurocentricity in repertoire, curriculum, and

tradition, turning towards aural musical practices and transmission, having challenging conversations with stakeholders, and addressing whiteness in policy work (pp. 17-18).

Critical Lenses to Combat Racism and Decenter Whiteness

In recent years, other scholars have made similar calls to decolonize musical spaces and confront whiteness, advocating for the use of critical lenses, pedagogical changes, and intersections between the two (Bradley, 2006, 2012, 2015; Hess, 2015, 2017b, 2019a; Hess & Talbot, 2019; Karvelis 2018; Yi, 2021). Many music education scholars utilized Critical Race Theory (CRT) as a lens (e.g., Bradley et al., 2007; Clauhs, 2021; Hess, 2017b; Kruse 2016a)⁹. As mentioned in Chapter One, CRT developed from Critical Legal Studies (e.g., Crenshaw, 1991; Tate, 1997) and was extrapolated for K-12 education in the groundbreaking work of Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995). Since then, scholars have used the tenets of CRT (referenced in Chapter one) to “locate how race and racism manifest themselves throughout the K-12 pipeline” as well as use CRT as a tool to “engage these issues in the classroom, in the context of policy, and in community work” (Ledesma & Calderón, 2015, p. 207). Scholars continue to use CRT to examine the experiences of historically underrepresented populations across multiple education experiences and structures (Dixson & Rousseau, 2005; Ledesma & Calderón, 2015).

In music education, scholars use CRT as a lens to “examine the ways race impacts music education students of color” (Dixson, 2012, p. 1). While a variety of music education scholars have leaned on CRT as a theoretical framing, analytical tool, or philosophical interrogation (e.g., Bradley et al., 2007; Clauhs, 2021; Hess, 2017b; Kruse 2016a), scholars rarely make CRT the direct subject of study. In contrast, Lewis (2021) designed and led a PLC of music educators who

⁹ While an exhaustive list of music education scholars that utilize CRT as a theoretical framing is not feasible in this context, please see the works of Bradley (2006, 2012, 2015) as well as Hess (2015b, 2017a, 2017b, 2018, 2019a, 2021b) as places to start, as many music education scholars have built upon their work.

were learning about the tenets of CRT. Participants reported experiencing a shift in their understandings of race and racism and an increased desire to change their teaching practice.

Scholars have often placed CRT in tandem with critical pedagogy (Hess, 2017b; Hess & Talbot, 2019). Hess (2017b, 2019c) argued that critical pedagogy alone might serve to privilege the teacher over the student and reinforce the very power structures that educators seek to dismantle. Instead, Hess (2017b) argues for using both CRT and critical pedagogy in tandem, with each offering a lens to interrogate and critique fault lines in the other. Hess and Talbot (2019) went on to say that critical pedagogies and CRT can be bridged together through the use of antiracist stances, as well as antiracist pedagogical practices.

Anti-stances. Historically, music education philosophies and practices have been rife with producing and reproducing colonialism and racism. Researchers used anti-stances, such as antiracism and anticolonialism, to put critical theory into action (Bradley, 2006, 2012, 2015; Hess, 2015, 2017b, 2018, 2019, 2021b). Scholars used anticolonialism to disrupt colonialism by centering other ways of musicking and knowing in the classroom (Bradley, 2012). Related, Hess (2021b) posited an antiracist stance in music education

orients toward equity and justice and further seeks to address racism embedded in institutions and policies, moving beyond the scope of breaking down individual prejudices. The anti-stance of antiracism requires an action orientation. Rather than a passive stance, the "anti-" of antiracism indicates active opposition to racism and white supremacy (p. 17).

Both anticolonialism and antiracism offer music educators tools for disruption in music education. However, Hess (2018) cautioned that scholars and music educators need to take care when using these stances to avoid reinscribing the very things they seek to disrupt. Hess (2018,

2019a) suggested scholars approach anti-based research and musical spaces with uncertainty and self-awareness, recognizing potential power imbalances and the problems of speaking for others, which might only reinforce colonization or racism. Instead, Hess (2021b) encouraged educators to seek to recenter minoritized voices to promote counterstories that are both "productive for tellers and instructive for listeners" (p. 81). One way to approach this is through alternative curricula and pedagogies, such as Culturally Responsive, Culturally Relevant, and Culturally Sustaining Education.

Culturally Responsive, Culturally Relevant, and Culturally Sustaining Education

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995) is a way of approaching education that centers the learner rather than the content and approaches the learner from an asset-based lens. Ladson-Billings defined Culturally Relevant pedagogy as a "pedagogy of opposition, not unlike critical pedagogy but specifically committed to collective, not merely individual, empowerment" (p. 160). In this educational model, educators meet individual and collective needs by addressing both academic and cultural competence while infusing students with a critical consciousness to engage in broader social and world issues. Gay (2000) expanded on this and argued that neither the teacher nor the learner was neutral. Gay (2000) posited that all teaching was infused with a set of values, specifically that of Western European culture. Therefore, Gay suggested a Culturally Responsive Teaching, which accounted for the values-laden educational environment, affirmed student culture while learning about others, and developed students socially and academically. Paris and Alim (2017) expanded on culturally responsive teaching by arguing that pedagogies must be more than responsive and affirming; they must *sustain and support* the students' culture, offering the idea of Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies. As each of these pedagogies builds upon another, and all seek to disrupt power

structures in education, some reference them collectively as Culturally Responsive Education (CRE) (Bond, 2017). For clarity, I will use CRE to discuss how scholars and educators have explored these various pedagogies in music education.

CRE in Music Education

In a review of literature, Bond (2017) argued that CRE is at the “intersection of the conversation” around social justice issues and has become a prominent theme in music education research (p. 154). Multiple scholars have utilized CRE to design curriculum, consider teachers' perspectives, interrogate repertoire and representation, and consider relationships between students and teachers. (Abril, 2009, 2013; Bond, 2014; Dissinger, 2019; Gurgel, 2015; Lind & McKoy, 2016; JT Shaw, 2016, 2020a, 2020b).

Scholars have explored the experiences of educators as they apply CRE in their classrooms (Abril, 2009; Dissinger, 2019; Gurgel, 2015; Kelly-McHale, 2013; Shaw, 2020a). Abril (2009), Dissinger (2019), and Gurgel (2015) each investigated the application of CRE in a school setting where the teacher was white, and the students were racially diverse. Abril (2009) explored the experiences of a white teacher who sought to engage the Hispanic students in school by starting a mariachi program, while Dissinger (2019) and Gurgel (2015) each investigated applying CRE in a choral setting. Not all teachers were successful at enacting CRE. Kelly-McHale (2013) reported that teachers sometimes failed to employ CRE, even when thought they were successful. In order to become more culturally responsive, teachers needed to develop relationships and heightened cultural awareness, understand that being culturally responsive is context-specific and that it requires breaking down borders between school and outside music, as well as borders between ways of knowing and musicking that some take for granted in secondary spaces (Abril, 2009; Dissinger, 2019; Gurgel, 2015; Kelly-McHale, 2013).

Prior researchers have similarly noted that becoming culturally responsive is a complex process with multiple facets. Bond (2014) and Abril (2013) each gave concrete examples for teachers to utilize if they sought to be more culturally responsive in their classrooms. While each used different terminology geared towards a choral (Bond) or a general music (Abril) classroom, they offered similar advice, including (a) knowing the students and seeing them as part of society, (b) connecting school and home to build on student strengths, (c) connecting beyond the classroom to the broader social and political landscape, and (d) selecting a wide variety of music that embraces alternative ways of knowing and musicking (Abril, 2013; Bond, 2014). Some scholars have investigated developing this cross-cultural competence by employing alternative pedagogies, such as hip-hop pedagogies or activist musical storytelling.

Hip-Hop Pedagogy. Hip-Hop pedagogy is emerging in music education to engage in CRE and decenter whiteness and engage in critical and antiracist pedagogy (Evans, 2019; Karvelis, 2018; Kruse, 2016a, 2016b, 2020; Kruse & Gallo, 2020). Kruse (2016b, 2020a) and Kruse and Gallo (2020) argued for hip-hop as a central theme in the music classroom, and Kruse (2020a) challenged educators to "go beyond teaching hip-hop to *being* hip-hop" where teachers embody its principles (and not necessarily even the music itself) to keep classrooms more relevant and to gain greater buy-in from students (p. 53). Related, in a study of white music educators learning to engage with hip-hop pedagogy, teachers found that hip-hop in the classroom contributed to decentering whiteness in their practice (Kruse, 2020b). Implications from this study included finding ways to open up music learning and music education opportunities for hip-hop artists and the continued need for practicing educators to unlearn biases.

Teacher Perspectives on CRE. Some scholars have investigated teachers' perspectives on CRE and the process of learning about CRE and social justice topics (Ryan, 2020; Seaboldt, 2021; Shaw, 2020a). In Ryan's (2020) and Seaboldt's (2021) quantitative survey studies, participants demonstrated a spectrum of beliefs, attitudes, and stated practices regarding CRE. Both Ryan (2020) and Seaboldt (2021) found significant variation based on demographic subgroups of teachers, including race, potential teacher-student SES match, and years of teaching. Shaw (2020a) facilitated professional development for a set of choral teachers working in an urban¹⁰ district as they learned about elements of CRE. Participants grew in their self-efficacy to implement CRE in their teaching, and Shaw highlighted that the process for growing and learning to practice CRE was not linear (2020a). Instead, growth was "an ongoing process that requires continual effort" (p. 459).

Exploring the Impact of Race Across Music Education

Researchers have utilized the theoretical positions and curricular shifts described above to explore manifestations of race and racism across multiple domains of music education, including K-12 music education, preservice teacher preparation, and graduate education. Throughout these domains, scholars have considered issues of access and perspectives of both students and educators in various settings. For this section, I delimit my review to the experiences of practicing teachers learning about race.

Practicing Teachers Learning About Race

There is little research on practicing teachers learning about race in professional development settings (Lewis, 2021; Shaw, 2020a) or graduate programs (Bradley et al., 2007; Salvador et al., 2020a). Lewis (2021) and Shaw (2020a) both led professional development

¹⁰ I utilized the term *urban* because it is how Shaw (2020a) described participants in their study.

experiences that led practicing teachers in learning about race in music education (CRT and CRE, respectively), with both sets of participants reporting shifts in their thinking. Bradley et al. (2007) and Salvador et al. (2020a) investigated social justice topics in a graduate music education course. Bradley et al. (2007) investigated how students experienced course material that focused on learning about whiteness, and while students experienced a wide range of negative emotions, they also reported a renewed commitment to social justice in their teaching. Participants reported making positive changes to their practice as a result of participation. Similarly, Salvador et al. (2020a) used grounded theory to develop an explanatory framework, transformative learning processes (TLP), for what conditions might support teachers as they encounter social justice topics. However, Salvador et al. (2020a) noted that TLP might be more effective if used in the context of a professional development embedded throughout a school year that included immersive elements to the experience, where teachers could take information back to their classrooms, try it out, and then reflect on those experiences within the PD setting.

Professional Development

I now turn to my final body of literature, professional development. Embracing life-long learning is a crucial disposition of successful educators (Bowles, 2003). Professional development (PD) is a widely accepted method of engaging in this learning and a requirement to maintain licensure. Each year, school districts, educational agencies, and state and federal governments spend tens of billions of dollars on teacher PD (Cornman et al., 2017; Jacob & Parkinson, 2015). However, the myriad of goals for PD and the variety of formats PD takes make defining professional development and determining its effectiveness challenging. I utilized the following definition from the National Professional Development Center on Inclusion for this study. “Professional development is facilitated teaching and learning experiences that are

transactional and designed to support the acquisition of professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions, as well as the application of this knowledge in practice" (Buysse, Winton, & Rous, 2009, p. 239). West and Bautista (2020) suggested the goals of attending PD for a teacher were "to develop: 1) an ethical educator; 2) a competent professional; 3) a collaborative learner; 4) a transformational leader; 5) a community builder" (p. 3). West and Bautista's (2020) list is helpful as it contained crucial elements for a PD experience that focuses specifically on issues of equity and inclusion. While teachers can develop in these ways through formal and informal activities outside of PD, an effective PD experience should serve as an avenue to engage in some, if not all, of these practices.

Some examples of the PD choices available to music educators are national conferences, one-day workshops offered through local music organizations, district-provided experiences, graduate course work, summer certification courses, and teacher collaboration/action-research groups. However, each of these is structured differently, and not all PD is optimized for teachers to engage in reflective and collaborative practice. Most teachers participate in either district-provided professional development or a one-off workshop model (Yoon et al., 2007). Richardson (2003) asserted that school district-provided PD often assumes that teacher learning is straightforward and operates under the assumption that when teachers receive new information about effective teaching in a single (or short-term) setting, they can integrate it immediately. However, the process of teacher learning is much more complicated (Richardson, 2003), and assuming otherwise makes PD ineffective. Additionally, workshop models for PD have been historically ineffective and failed to produce lasting change, with one-shot workshops failing to change teacher practice or affect student achievement (Hammel, 2007; Yoon et al., 2007).

Unfortunately, over 90% of teachers have only accessed PD through their district or at a one-off workshop (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

In contrast, Darling-Hammond and Richardson (2009) reported that inquiry and collaboration over extended time improved both teacher instruction and student achievement. I delimited this review to sustained PD experiences embedded in the school year, and I consider their role in supporting the abovementioned goals for PD. Furthermore, I excluded graduate coursework in this review, as the goals of graduate coursework are often different from that of professional development (Conway, 2008).

Music Educator Professional Development

There is a growing body of research on professional development in music education (Barrett, 2006; Bauer, 2007; Bowles, 2003; Conway, 2007, 2008, 2011; Conway et al., 2005; Hammel, 2007; Schmidt and Robbins, 2011; West and Bautista 2020). Researchers have primarily focused on three areas: teachers' stated needs and preferences (Bowles, 2003; Bush, 2007; Conway et al., 2005; Conway, 2008; Ferrara, 2009; Haack, 2006); quality and equity of professional development (Barrett 2006; Battersby & Verdi, 2015; Madsen & Hancock, 2002); and implementation of specific PD models (Battersby & Verdi, 2015; Grimsby, 2020b; Gruenhagen, 2008; Kastner, 2012; Pellegrino et al., 2014, 2017; Sindberg, 2016; Stanley, 2009, 2011). In this section, I synthesized these three areas focusing on music educator access to content-specific, relevant, and high-quality PD.

Needs and Preferences

Music teachers are often the only ones in their building (and sometimes their district) (RD Shaw, 2016), and PD is often not designed with their needs in mind. West (2019) surveyed music teachers about their PD experiences and found that approximately 20% never received

content-specific PD from their district. Instead, music educators often spent considerable time sitting through professional development meant for classroom generalist educators, such as experiences focused solely on reading literacy or math assessments and are not getting necessary content-specific education (Barrett, 2006; Battersby & Verdi, 2015). As a result, many U.S. music teachers felt that PD fell short of their expressed needs (Schneckenburger, 2004). Conway et al. (2005) stated a direct relationship between the merit of professional development and overall teacher quality and contentment exists. Conway et al. (2005) suggest,

Arts teachers need not only institutional professional development experiences but also a chance to participate in individual chosen professional development activities that may better address specific arts-centered issues. In an effort to provide meaningful experiences for teachers, professional development organizers need to better reflect the needs of arts teachers in the content of their sessions and offerings (p. 7).

While teachers may be intrinsically motivated to do their jobs (Robinson, 2017), PD presented through local districts often fails to validate their goals as music educators and ranges from highly prescriptive to extremely unorganized (Loeb et al., 2009). This may trickle down to affect the quality of the resultant music programs.

Quality in Professional Development

Some music educators believe their school's professional development offerings conflict with their desires and priorities (Conway et al., 2005). To examine the perceived relevance of offerings provided by districts, researchers surveyed educators about their preferences (Bautista, Toh, & Wong, 2018; Bernard, 2009; Bowles, 2003; Bush, 2007; Hesterman, 2011). Music educators often reported seeking PD outside their district and paying out of pocket for these experiences (Bowles, 2003). Hesterman (2011) echoed this concern in their survey of Nebraska

music educators. When asked about issues that conflict with their ability to receive high-quality PD, teachers indicated that lack of money and lack of time often conflicted with their ability to access PD in line with their personal and professional development desires. However, teachers also shared that local convenience did not trump their desire for professional development relevant to their content area (Bowles, 2003). One possible solution is a "bottom-up" or grassroots approach, where teachers craft PD relevant to them (Barrett, 2006).

Schmidt and Robbins (2011) discussed "the need for and importance of professional development for music teachers that is carefully thought out, planned and practiced with special attention to the needs of [their] particular discipline" (p. 95). They found that music teachers needed continuing education specifically centered around their content area. Further, Schmidt and Robbins (2011) asserted that music educators needed to be actively involved in curriculum design, assessments, and building classroom structures and culturally relevant content responsive to their students. Additionally, music educators wanted input, freedom, flexibility, and autonomy when making PD decisions (Ferrara, 2009). Bautista, Toh, and Wong (2018) echoed these findings, indicating that one-size PD does not work and should instead be responsive to individual teachers' motivations and preferences.

Effective Professional Development

Desimone (2009) reviewed literature that discussed effective PD design and synthesized a conceptual framework of five elements that synthesized that characterized effective PD. Although others have proposed different design features (Vescio et al., 2008), Desimone's (2009) model is the most regularly cited by researchers making claims about effective designs (e.g., Bautista, Toh, & Wong, 2018; Bautista & Wong, 2019 NAFME, 2015). According to Desimone's (2009) model, effective PD must:

1. Be content-specific.
2. Involve active learning.
3. Have coherence.
4. Be of sustained duration.
5. Involve collective participation.

While most studies of PD do not include *all* of the components of Desimone's (2009) model, and some have questioned if a causal connection is even possible between design features and effectiveness (Kennedy, 2016; Yoon et al., 2007), it is valuable to consider each component and what meaning it holds for future music teacher PD experiences.

Content-Specific

Researchers widely reference and recognize content-specificity as a crucial component of effective PD for music educators (Conway et al., 2005; Robinson, 2017; West, 2019). Bernard (2009) noted that teachers preferred PD that was content-specific, performance-based, focused on curriculum, and encouraged teacher leadership. Additionally, in a survey of primary music teachers, Bautista et al. (2018) indicated that one-size PD does not work and should instead be responsive to individual teachers' motivations and preferences. It is essential that PD facilitators design experiences that feel relevant; otherwise, music educators may not be motivated to participate. Additionally, administrator buy-in is critical to the long-term success of PD, and teachers must have tools to advocate the necessity of discipline-specific PD to their administrators (West, 2011).

Active Learning

Music education researchers regularly discuss the importance of active learning in PD experiences. Some of the most commonly used strategies include reviewing student work (e.g.,

Kastner, 2012; Stanley, 2009), collaborative conversation (Battersby & Verdi, 2015; Kastner, 2012, Pellegrino et al., 2014, 2017), and reflective journaling (Grimsby, 2020b; Moore, 2009). This process of reflection is essential, and researchers believe that without a reflective component, any form of PD will reduce to a novelty experience and not have long-term impacts for participants (Goodwin et al., 2015). Therefore, the act of problematizing practice and reflecting on it is crucial for effective PD experiences (Damjanovic & Blank, 2018).

Coherence

Desimone (2009) argued that effective PD is coherent when it aligns with policy standards *and* teachers' knowledge. For example, Garret et al. (2001) asserted that teachers who participated in PD connected to other reform efforts and standards were more likely to change their teaching practice. Within the Every Student Succeeds Act (2015), however, the primary responsibility to deliver required PD falls mainly to state and local leaders (West & Bautista, 2020), meaning that coherence may not always exist across the individual, community, and national levels. West and Bautista (2020) identified four interrelated systems that impact the implementation of coherent PD: funding (who pays for PD), standards (what counts as PD), inducements (teacher motivation for PD), and noneconomic support (access to PD and facilitation). These four systems make the implementation of effective PD challenging on the micro and macro level, especially for music educators, who already find themselves an afterthought during PD design at the local level. Teachers who took upon themselves to seek out coherent PD beyond district-provided PD faced challenges such as limited release-time and out-of-pocket expenses (Johnson, 2018; West, 2018).

Sustained Duration

Several researchers and music education groups cited a need for sustained PD (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009; Hammel, 2007; NAFME, 2015), with some also advocating for follow-up post PD (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009; Hammel, 2007). In Desimone's (2009) framework, sustained duration refers to the number of contact hours and the length of time over which PD occurs. Researchers asserted that PD needs to be at least 20 hours in duration and spread over a minimum of four months for teachers to effectively process new information and try out their learning (Bautista & Wong, 2019).

Collective Participation

This feature refers to the idea of collegial sharing, support, and engagement from multiple teachers from the same school, grade level, or district (Desimone, 2009). Collective participation helped develop relationships with colleagues and collective pedagogical content knowledge for teachers in the same content area (Borko, 2004). Most music education PD cannot include the collective participation based on geographic proximity conceived by Desimone's (2009) professional development model. Only two known researchers utilized collective participation in a music education study, bringing together several music educators who worked in the same school district (Battersby & Verdi, 2015; Sindberg, 2011). If music educators were to try to reap the benefits of collective participation as intended by Desimone's (2009) model, sweeping administrative, school structuring, and policy changes would be necessary. Even then, this would not make a difference for more rural school districts where music teachers often find themselves the only ones in their building, district, or in rare cases, county (Johnson & Stanley, 2021). However, Desimone (2009) did not account for the possibility of collective participation

that an online setting might provide, as they were writing prior to Zoom being a commonplace experience for educators.

Music-Specific Design Considerations

The specialized nature of music instruction creates the need for music education-specific professional development design considerations. Desimone's (2009) model on effective PD was not music educator specific, so it did not include the practice of musicking. Since musicianship is a vital part of music educator identity, PD organizers and administrators must recognize music-making as an acceptable form of PD (NAfME, 2015; Robinson, 2017). While not always possible in a PD setting, finding ways for music educators to engage in musicking might offer opportunities to further enact the first two tenets of Desimone's (2009) framework: content-specific and active learning. Furthermore, when people engaged in musicking together, they developed a greater sense of connection to others (Weinstein et al., 2016) and well-being and mood regulation (Salimpoor et al., 2011), each of which might support productive dialogue and trust in a professional development setting (Pellegrino, 2011).

The Role of Productive Communication in Professional Development

While not explicitly mentioned as one of the five components, productive communication is a crucial component to effective PD (Atchinstein, 2002; Dobie & Anderson, 2015; Horn et al., 2017; Lefstein et al., 2020; Nelson et al., 2010; West & Bautista, 2020). Some researchers argued that, in order for communication to be productive, facilitators needed to set up an environment and norms that create a safe enough space for teachers to shift beyond polite conversation towards a discourse open to a diversity of opinions, respectful dissent, and divergent thinking (Atchinstein, 2002; Dobie & Anderson, 2015). Although some participants and facilitators shy away from disagreement or see it as inherently negative, Lefstein et al.

(2020) referred to it as an essential part of what they call "pedagogically productive talk" (p. 360). In order to have pedagogically productive dialogue, discourse needed to be grounded in norms and sequenced in a specific way (Lefstein, et al., 2020). When participants established norms and built trust, educators extended further than micro-politics and polite talk (which also have value on their own) into a space where they embraced conflict to analyze their teaching and beliefs, and only then was change possible (Atchinstein, 2002; Nelson et al., 2010). However, for conversations to have a lasting impact outside the PD space, researchers argued that topics must be grounded in participants' lived experiences (Horn et al., 2017).

Critiques of Existing Professional Development

Many scholars claim to have provided effective PD through Desimone's (2009) model but lacked evidence of effectiveness; instead, scholars have relied on the implication that the design correlates to effective PD. However, Kennedy (2016) argued that design features may be unreliable predictors of PD success and that, despite a large body of theoretical knowledge on student learning, there is not nearly the same amount for teacher learning. It is crucial to consider teacher motivation and learning preferences when planning (Loeb et al., 2009; Robinson, 2017). Teachers must learn about educational theory and spend time applying it in their specific settings instead of participating in one-size-fits-all scripted programming that does not account for the nuances of individual teaching settings. Finally, researchers rarely measured effectiveness outside of teachers' self-reported perceptions (Hill, 2009; Vescio et al., 2008). Despite the potential lack of rigor in self-report, there is value in knowing what teachers found valuable in their professional development experiences. Furthermore, determining effectiveness by observing teacher practices presents challenges.

Models of Professional Development

Three commonly used PD models meet Desimone's (2009) criteria (content-specific, involve active learning, have coherence, are of sustained duration, and involve collective participation): Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), Communities of Practice (CoPs), and Collaborative Teacher Study Groups (CTSGs). In this section, I discuss each and give examples of their use in music education settings.

Professional Learning Community

Professional learning communities (PLCs) are grounded in two assumptions: 1) knowledge is situated in lived experience and best understood through critical reflection; 2) actively engaging teachers in learning communities increases professional knowledge and student achievement (Vescio et al., 2008). Newmann et al. (1996) identified five essential characteristics that define a PLC:

1. Educators must develop shared values and norms.
2. There must be a consistent focus on student learning.
3. There must be reflexive dialogue.
4. Facilitators should focus on deprivatizing practice.
5. There is an emphasis on collaboration.

Bolam et al. (2005) expanded this definition with three additional elements: (a) inclusive membership, (b) mutual trust, respect, and support, and (c) openness, networks, and partnerships. Bolam and colleagues synthesized these additional elements into their working definition of an effective PLC as "a community with the capacity to promote and sustain the learning of all professionals in the school community with the collective purpose of enhancing student learning" (p. 145). While collaborative work is an ingredient for a PLC, it is not the primary

goal; instead, it is to improve teacher practice to enhance student achievement (Ahn, 2017). Supovitz and Christman (2003) found modest evidence that PLCs that engaged in "structured sustained and supported instructional discussions that investigated relationships between instructional practice and student work produced significant gains in student learning" (p. 5).

In a synthesis of research on preparing and implementing PLCs, Ahn (2017) stated PLCs must be teacher-led, have designated times set aside for learning (preferably released time from teaching responsibilities), combat teacher isolation, and build trust. During PLC implementation, educators and facilitators should communicate about core values they want to put into their teaching practice, although Ahn (2017) offered no advice about how to navigate if shared values do not exist. Additionally, there should be joint leadership and teacher empowerment, and teachers need extended time for practice and observation (Ahn, 2017). Ahn also reinforced that PLCs cannot and should not be one size fits all experiences. Instead, Ahn echoed other researchers (Barrett, 2006) that PLCs should be grassroots reform movements initiated by teachers instead of administrative mandates whereby teachers are targets of reform.

PLCs in Music Education. PLCs are a common form of PD in music education, and researchers regularly implement PLCs in K-12 and higher education settings (e.g., Battersby & Verdi, 2015; Kastner, 2012; Pellegrino et al., 2014, 2017; Sindberg, 2016). Researchers used PLCs to develop instructional practices at the K-12 level (Battersby & Verdi, 2015; Kastner, 2012; Sindberg, 2016) and to establish bonds and reduce isolation at different stages of higher education careers (Pellegrino et al., 2014, 2017; Sindberg & Lipscomb, 2005). Some PLCs were within a single school or a single district (Battersby & Verdi, 2015; Sindberg, 2016), while others connected teachers across districts or different higher education institutions (Kastner, 2012; Pellegrino, 2014, 2017). PLC focus ranged from building community and sharing lesson

plans (Battersby & Verdi, 2015) to incorporating specific pedagogical ideas such as informal learning experiences (Kastner, 2012) or comprehensive musicianship (Sindberg, 2016).

Although a few other researchers referred to the PD they studied as a PLC, I excluded articles in which the PD did not match the operational definition or goals stated above or in which the experience started as a PLC but developed into a different form of a learning community. The format of a PLC can be adapted to suit more than one goal for PD (e.g., lesson planning, developing musicianship, or building community) and still provide sufficient boundaries for the experiences to be productive (Vescio et al., 2008). Furthermore, scholars often mentioned a connection between educators as an emergent theme in music education PLC research (e.g., Pellegrino et al., 2014, 2017, Sindberg, 2016).

Communities of Practice

Communities of practice (CoPs) center around three processes: learning, meaning, and identity (Wenger, 1998). CoPs operationalize social constructivism, where knowledge is founded on interactions between people and artifacts, and meaning is socially constructed (Wenger, 1998). Communities of practice are usually informal, and according to Wenger et al. (2002), "communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis" (p. 4). Because of the flexibility of structure, a community of practice can take many forms and serve various functions. What is central to each is that participants go through stages of growth and development (Wenger et al., 2002), participants connect in their desire to belong (Lieberman & Mace, 2010), and the PD contains the three fundamental structures of *domain*, *community*, and *practice* (Blankenship & Ruona, 2007).

The *domain* of a CoP is the set of issues or subjects that brings individuals together. The *community* is the group of people participating in the CoP who create knowledge and develop relationships with one another. Finally, *practice* is the set of specific knowledge that the community develops and operates within alongside each other (Wenger et al., 2002). It is important to note that a CoP cannot necessarily exist at the outset of a professional development experience. Often, a group will organically develop into a CoP as the group members move through a PD experience, although a researcher might still consider it a PLC or a study group. A CoP may develop in any PD experience, but only if the tenets mentioned above are fully met.

CoPs in Music Education. CoPs are relatively common in music education. For practicing teachers, researchers used a CoP to consider a variety of areas such as digital composition (Westerlund, 2006), informal music learning and online communities (e.g., Brewer & Rickels, 2014; Waldron, 2009), collaboration with paraprofessionals (Grimsby, 2020b), and working with music educators on a variety of topics related to their classroom instruction (e.g., Bell-Robertson, 2014; Gruenhagen, 2008). Participants in CoPs often reported feeling less isolated and believed that the CoP supported more content-specific PD (Gruenhagen, 2008; Shin & Seog, 2018).

Collaborative Teacher Study Group

A collaborative teacher study group (CTSG) is a group of teachers who come together to investigate their own teaching practice (Stanley, 2011). Like a CoP, CTSGs are often independently organized and run by teachers but are occasionally facilitated by a more knowledgeable other (Vygotsky, 1978). CTSGs may offer a way to combat the isolation that many music teachers experience (Barrett, 2006; Sindberg, 2011), *and* teachers are encouraged to engage in sustained, reflective inquiry (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009). Stanley (2012)

highlighted six considerations when designing and implementing a CTSG: "the length and quality of commitment; tension between content-area knowledge and pedagogical knowledge; diverse teacher goals and roles; the structures and mechanisms for conversation; teaching assignments within group membership; [and] supports for classroom implementation" (Stanley, 2012, p. 74).

CTSGs in Music Education. Several music education researchers have utilized a CTSG (Stanley, 2009, 2012; Johnson & Stanley, 2021; McNickle, 2021; Shaw, 2020a). In one group initially set up as a PLC examining experiences of elementary music teachers, Stanley (2009) determined the behaviors and practices of the group as it developed became more akin to a CTSG. Participants in the study felt that the CTSG served as an effective professional development as they considered issues in their respective classrooms. They also reported that the CTSG served as a remedy for their self-declared isolation (Stanley, 2009).

More recently, Shaw (2020a) and McNickle (2021) both crafted CTSG experiences for choral educators, while Johnson and Stanley (2021) created a CTSG for rural music educators. Shaw (2020a) worked with choral directors in a CTSG focused on exploring CRE in an urban setting. During this year-long CTSG, educators considered sociopolitical dimensions of their teaching context as it related to elements of CRE while also considering their own positionality. McNickle (2021) explored wellness in music education with five choral music educators as they navigated the COVID-19 pandemic. Teachers in this CTSG shared wellness resources, developed wellness plans for themselves and their students, and collaborated on lessons and teaching ideas. Participants in both these studies reported feeling connection, company, and community with the other participants as they navigated the specific topics of their groups (McNickle, 2021; Shaw, 2020a). Similarly, Johnson and Stanley (2021), working with rural

general music teachers in an online CTSG, discovered that personal connections between participants were vitally important.

Comparing and Contrasting Learning Community Models

Several similarities and differences distinguish PLCs, CoPs, and CTSGs. At least to some degree, each operates within the paradigm that knowledge is socially constructed (Vygotsky, 1978). The experiences and prior knowledge of each participant are valuable. However, goals and implementation differ. Blankenship and Ruona (2007) offered a nuanced comparison of the difference between a PLC and a CoP. In a PLC, membership is usually a foregone conclusion by “virtue of status as a faculty member,” the school principal serves in a leadership role, there is a shared mission, a focus on student achievement, and discussion, while collaborative, is usually limited (Blankenship & Ruona, 2007, p. 4). Sometimes, a cultural shift is paramount to becoming a PLC, and there is an emphasis on reflective dialogue and feedback. In both iterations, the primary goal remains improving teacher effectiveness to affect student achievement (Blankenship & Ruona, 2007).

In contrast, the goals of a CoP are less centered around student achievement than a PLC. Participation is voluntary and based on a passion for a topic of interest; members of the group share leadership, both with formal and informal leaders; the culture focuses on knowledge sharing and building trust, and knowledge sharing is collaborative and socially constructed (Blankenship & Ruona, 2007). The social aspect of forming knowledge and developing trust are of primary importance. However, some have critiqued CoPs as sites that could be exclusive and form cliques and reify existing knowledge instead of producing new knowledge and behaviors (Kennedy, 2016; Vescio, 2008).

CTSGs form a middle ground between PLCs and CoPs. Like PLCs and CoPs, participants in a CTSG socially construct knowledge, membership is optional, and a focus is on knowledge building as a community. Like some PLCs, a shared vision or value drives CTSG work, and reflective dialogue and feedback are paramount to knowledge sharing. CTSGs are different from both PLCs and CoP in several ways. First, CTSGs differ from PLCs and CoPs because the leadership is vertical and horizontal. A PLC operates with top-down leadership, and a CoP utilizes horizontal non-hierarchical leadership, but a CTSG can utilize both. Also, CTSGs differ from PLCs because the primary focus is not only on student achievement. Finally, CTSGs differ from a CoP because teachers can collaborate without meeting the formal requirements of a *community* that a CoP requires. While a community *might* emerge as a part of the process, this is not an explicit goal or requirement. Therefore, CTSGs seem to demonstrate a more realistic approach to collaborative learning from the outset and leave the possibility of transformation into a CoP as an open-ended possibility.

Teacher PD on Dis/ability, Race, and their Intersections

Professional development experiences for music educators have addressed a variety of topics. The following sections describe music teacher professional development experiences centered on dis/ability and race. Then I discuss the need for the study: a professional development experience that focuses on the intersection of race and dis/ability in music education, and I center this need through the theoretical lens of DisCrit.

Music Teacher Professional Development on Dis/ability

Educational organizations and universities often offer PD to music educators about dis/ability, but researchers have little documentation on who leads it, what information leaders present, how effective the PD is, and what teachers do with the information. One researcher,

Grimsby (2020b), examined dis/ability in a PD for music educators and paraprofessionals. Three music educators and three paraprofessionals participated in a CoP to examine instructional processes, perceptions, and practices regarding teaching music to students with dis/abilities. Participants reported changes in their perceptions of their colleagues and moderate changes to their instructional practice.

Music Teacher Professional Development on Race

Like the PD on dis/ability, there is a lack of documentation about PD on race for music educators, especially PD delivered at local and district levels. Again, researchers know very little about who is leading, the content, or if participants change as a result. Some researchers have investigated social justice topics, including race, with music teachers (Lewis, 2021; Shaw, 2020a). While Shaw (2020a) examined CRE in both PD and a CTSG, and participants reported engaging with race alongside the other elements of CRE, race was not the primary topic of the CTSG. In contrast, Lewis's (2021) PLC focused on race. Four educators participated in a semester-long PLC that focused on enhancing teachers' knowledge on five tenets of CRT, both in their teaching and in their own lives. Participants reported experiencing a shift in their understanding of race and racism (Lewis, 2021). Further, they explored how this shifting understanding impacted their teaching and personal lives.

Utilizing DisCrit in a Professional Development

While a substantial body of research in music education utilizes CRT (e.g., Bradley, 2012; Hess, 2015b, 2019a; Hoffman & Carter, 2013; Hope, 2019; Lewis, 2021) or Disability Studies (e.g., Darrow, 2003; Dobbs, 2012; Laes & Westerlund, 2018) as a theoretical lens, no known music education research has specifically utilized DisCrit as a theoretical framework or considered a simultaneous, dual analysis of race and ability in music. The closest instance was

Migliarini (2020), who investigated a Krip-Hop Nation event in Italy during June 2019.

However, the article's emphasis was more on hip-hop pedagogy than considering the intersectionality of dis/ability and race.

Although DisCrit is still in its relative infancy, scholars built it on longstanding scholarships of resistance and solidarity (Annamma & Handy, 2020). Researchers use DisCrit to disrupt systems of power and engage in a liberatory practice (Freire, 1970) that advocates for people who are simultaneously raced and dis/abled by the structures of society and education. Each of the principles of DisCrit can serve as an anchor while grappling with the difficult task of unpacking systemic and generational racism and ableism. Teachers who engage in unpacking biases in their thinking and behaviors often find it more challenging, both ideologically and emotionally, than they expected initially (Salvador et al., 2020a), so utilizing a theoretical lens may provide a tool for educators to encounter this discomfort in a way that proves productive to both self-discovery and classroom application.

Scholars utilizing DisCrit in general education have highlighted that teachers need more education on theories of racism, ableism, systemic inequities, and how each operates in schools (Annamma, 2015b; DeMatthews & Serafini, 2020; Friedman et al., 2020). Annamma (2015b) states, "teacher education must explicitly reject approaches that ignore systemic injustices and instead explicitly connect these racial inequities...with the seemingly race-neutral education laws, policies, and practices" (p. 310). Several researchers have worked with in-service teachers to examine these issues (Fergus, 2016; Friedman et al., 2020; Young, 2016).

Friedman et al. (2020) considered how racism and deficit mindsets inform and limit in-service teacher imaginations for themselves and their students. While teachers indicated a desire to address race and dis/ability in their classrooms, many "snapped back" to a default of using

color-evasive language and operated from a medical mindset of dis/ability that reinforced racism and ableism (p. 16). Similarly, Young (2016) argued that teacher talk plays a prominent role in "replicating and intensifying race, language, and disability oppression" (p. 68).

Fergus (2016) considered in-service teachers through a DisCrit theoretical lens. In this mixed-methods study, Fergus (2016) investigated how social reproduction theory alongside DisCrit could inform the disproportionality of students of color in special education settings and investigated the role of teacher beliefs and ideologies (alongside other components) as a part of the study. Fergus (2016) argued there is a continued need to explore teacher beliefs alongside factors such as deficit thinking, as low teacher expectations contributed to the disproportional representation of students of color in special education.

Utilizing DisCrit in A Music Educator Professional Development

Utilizing DisCrit in music education requires educators to extend their understanding of equity and justice in their classrooms and engage in activism and allyship supporting marginalized students. Music educators have the ethical and moral responsibility to engage in equity work and ask themselves how they might be marginalizing students in the music classroom. To do this, teachers must learn about racism, ableism, and intersecting marginalization to reframe their view of their students and the students' capabilities (Morrison & Annamma, 2018). Music educators can consider rejecting ideas of normalcy, reframing their understanding of "goodness" in their programs (Adams, 2015; Annamma, 2015b), and find ways to engage in activist music education practices that includes utilizing counternarratives (DeMatthews, 2020; Hess, 2019c). Further, music educators must consider how to foster and develop meaningful relationships with multiply marginalized students. Without this, no amount

of theoretical understanding will affect significant change towards inclusion (Annamma & Handy, 2019).

The Need for a Music Educator PD at the Intersection of Dis/ability and Race

Teachers reported a lack of confidence working with students with dis/abilities and a desire for increased knowledge (Hammel, 2007), and increased competence after instruction on inclusion (Hammel & Gerrity, 2012). In addition, unchecked underlying belief systems and unexplored deficit thinking will limit teachers' ability to teach equitably (Friedman et al., 2020). Most educational experiences for preservice teachers ignore addressing race and ableism in meaningful ways (Annamma, 2015b; Ladson-Billings, 2005; Salvador & Kelly-McHale, 2017). Leaving these concerns unchecked in preservice education causes severe deficiencies among in-service music teacher educators. As a result, in-service music educators often use PD to gain further skills and explore changes to their thinking and teaching practice.

Few music education researchers have examined social justice topics for practicing teachers in a professional development setting (Grimsby, 2020b; Lewis, 2021; Shaw, 2020a). Although some researchers have specifically centered issues of race (Lewis, 2021) or dis/ability (Grimsby, 2020b) in a PD for practicing music teachers, no known study has considered a dual examination of both race and ability in a music educator PD experience. Therefore, it is essential to explore how examining beliefs and practices around race and ability can come together in such a way and I based this investigation on the theoretical framing provided by DisCrit.

CHAPTER THREE: METHOD

Design

Method

To explore how a group of practicing music educators unpack issues of race and ability in a collaborative teacher study group (CTSG), I employed a descriptive, collective case study design (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2018). According to Yin (2018), “A case study is an empirical method that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the ‘case’) in depth and within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident” (p. 15). In this study, the phenomenon and context are the CTSG and each teacher’s individual teaching situations, respectively. The boundaries between participant thinking and conversation on the complex topics of race and ability blended into their daily classroom practices and actions. Theoretical conversations in the CTSG evolved throughout the semester, and teachers explored operationalizing this thinking in their real-world classrooms weekly.

Creswell and Poth (2018) assert that a case study is a good approach when the inquirer has identified cases with boundaries and seeks “to provide an in-depth understanding of the case” (p. 96). The case of interest is exploring how music teachers conceptualize issues of race and ability in their thinking and classroom practice and what influence a CTSG might have had on their beliefs and actions. This case was bounded by eight K-12 music educator participants engaged in a semester-long CTSG in Fall 2021. Teachers met every other week from July to December to discuss elements of race and ability in their thinking and classroom practice. In group meetings, teachers reported how they operationalized their thinking within their teaching settings. Descriptive case studies aim to investigate real-world situations facing people or groups and describe them in detail, which, in this case, is unpacking ableism and racism, and their

intersections, in teaching beliefs and practices (Yin, 2018). The construct of *unpacking* involves opening up lines of inquiry on a larger topic and systematically deconstructing the big idea into sets of smaller ideas needed to understand the larger concept (Michael et al., 2017). For participant educators, unpacking large ideas such as racism and ableism required looking at these broader topics from various narrower perspectives to get to the heart of the larger constructs. Then, teachers could place those smaller perspectives back in context.

A collective case study draws together individual cases—in this case, music teachers who teach in different contexts and locations—to consider similarities and differences in individuals. The key element is the coordination between the individual cases (Stake, 1995). While not everyone agrees (Patton, 2015; Yin, 2018), I assert that a collective case study is different from a multiple case study, specifically in how the two are analyzed. In a multiple case study, the researcher examines each person or setting as a case, and then the researcher completes a cross-case analysis (Yin, 2018). In contrast, I treated each individual as a part of a collective case—the collaborative teacher study group—and analyzed it as one unit (Stake, 1995). In this study, I used multiple informants to get a more in-depth picture and diverse representation of the case and considered different perspectives on the same experience. While individual interviews and participant journals were a part of the study, I did not construct a single case for each participant; instead, I focused on the collective, noting differences amongst the participants. By considering how a collective of teachers experienced the CTSG, I focused on the phenomenon of a CTSG as an intervention tool for shifting thinking and behavior.

Recruitment Strategy

Some research on professional development (PD) espouses the merit of having teachers in the same building or district work together (Sindberg, 2016). However, this is a challenge for

music educators since often there is only one music educator in a building or district (RD Shaw, 2016). Moreover, constructing a CTSG of participants from one building or district could create action research instead of a case study, which would have changed the design of the study (Patton, 2015). Therefore, I sought out 6-10 full-time, certified music educators from any U.S. K-12 school setting. Due to lingering concerns about COVID-19, I designed the CTSG in an online format, utilizing Zoom. An online CTSG allowed me the opportunity to open recruitment to teachers from across the country, increasing my potential participant pool.

After securing IRB exemption, I distributed recruitment materials (Appendix A) through social media music educator groups. In addition, I used snowball and network sampling, which "obtains knowledge of potential cases from people who know people who meet research interests" (Glesne, 2011, p. 44). I encouraged members of these social media groups to share the materials with any other music educator they knew who might be interested. Recruitment materials directed interested participants to fill out a google interest form (Appendix B) to determine eligibility. Additionally, the interest form outlined details of the project, explicitly outlining the goals and time commitments of the CTSG.

Participant Selection

I employed purposeful and convenience sampling to select participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Patton, 2015). The goal of purposeful variation sampling is to engage in a non-random sampling technique that utilizes specific criteria for selecting participants (Patton, 2015). Purposeful sampling allowed for a selection of information-rich cases for in-depth study. Patton (2015) states, "Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry. Studying information-rich cases yields insights and in-depth understanding rather than empirical generalizations" (p. 230). While

generalization is never a goal in case study research, purposeful sampling allows for "balance and variety" in collective case studies (Stake, 1995, p. 6). Furthermore, in purposeful sampling, people are chosen for a specific purpose. The number of people is "necessarily limited because of the more intensive, time-consuming character of data collection and analysis" (Remler & VanRyzin, 2011, p. 58).

Specific selection criteria for this study were: (1) a K-12 music educator from the United States who expressed interest in exploring the presence of racism and ableism in their classroom by volunteering to participate; (2) someone who was self-expressed "not an expert" in these topics yet, but could be anywhere on a spectrum of learning (as indicated by google interest form); (3) a diverse representation of personal demographics (e.g., age, gender, sexual orientation, years teaching,) and classroom teaching settings (such as elementary, choral, band); and (4) a diversity of school locales, such as rural, suburban and urban. I did not initially delimit selection based on ability or race.

Scholars recommend four to six participants as an ideal size for professional development of this nature (ACSD, 2017). I received completed forms from 14 people wanting to participate. I purposefully excluded one person as they were not a practicing K-12 teacher but instead taught in higher education. Of the remaining 13 potential participants, I viewed their self-described demographic characteristics and availability to meet. 11 of the 13 were all available to meet on a Tuesday evening. From this convenience sample (Creswell & Poth, 2018), I excluded one additional participant, as they were the only volunteer who self-reported being mixed race (Native American and Black). While I was not specifically delimiting my participant pool by race at the outset of recruitment and had hoped for a racially diverse group, I was also aware that it might be likely that I would have a majority- or all-white participant pool, as this is more

reflective of the teacher workforce in music education (Elpus, 2015). My decision to exclude this one individual was because I did not want them to feel tokenized or forced to speak for a population (Wingfield & Wingfield, 2014), both of which could be possible in a situation where they were the only member of a particular group. I was also concerned that placing someone in that position had the potential to cause harm to that individual (DiAngelo, 2021).

Participants

I reached out to all of the remaining ten potential participants, and nine agreed to be a part of the study, giving written consent (Appendix C). While nine participants were on the cusp of what I felt might be too many people, I was aware of the potential for attrition throughout the study, so I decided to err on the side of more people (Hanover Research, 2017; Marcellus, 2014). One participant, Evonne G., only completed the initial interview and the first group session before dropping out of the study. The remaining eight participants completed the remainder of the study. I invited all participants to choose their pseudonyms; three chose for themselves, and Lydia was the only participant who chose a first and last name. I assigned the rest of the participants a pseudonym, which each approved during member checks.

As race and dis/ability were the key topics of the CTSG meetings, participant self-descriptions of their race and ability identities were important. All participants except one self-identified as either white or White, or Caucasian¹¹; one referred to herself as "Mostly European" descent. All considered themselves to be in the dominant racial group in the United States, and all but one considered themselves in the dominant racial group in their locale/teaching situation. All of them taught students who were BBIA, although the amount of BBIA students differed drastically between teachers. Two participants remarked they taught less than a handful of BBIA

¹¹ I used the exact terminology and capitalization (or lack thereof) that each participant used to describe their race in their opening interest survey and wrote them accordingly in their individual narratives.

students. Three participants discussed working in a majority BBIA school, with two others reflecting on how their current student body was racially quite different from a previous teaching situation, in that they used to teach in a majority BBIA school but now teach in a majority white school. Two reported that they taught in schools where there was close to a 50-50 mix between white and BBIA students.

Participants self-identified their ability status during opening interviews. Two participants identified themselves as having a dis/ability during their opening interview, with a third self-identifying in the opening group meeting, and a fourth discussing it in their mid-point interview; three had immediate family members with lifelong dis/abilities; one participant became physically dis/abled during the course of the CSTG. Every educator taught students with dis/abilities, and six taught a music class to a self-contained special education classroom. While each participant was unique in various ways, including teaching locale, age, gender, sexuality, marriage and parenting status, religion, and ability, to name a few, ultimately, this was a collective case of participants in a single group. This variance adds richness to the collective case, which increases any meaningfulness or insights the researcher generates (Patton, 2015). An overview of each participant is listed in Table 1, and a complete description is in Chapter Four.

Table 1.

Group Members and Identifying Characteristics

Name	Pronouns	Age	Years /Grade Teaching	Self-reported Locale	Self-reported Race	Self-reported Ability
Annie D.	She/her	38	13 th year/ K-5	Suburban public school, Michigan	White	Dis/ability

Table 1 (cont'd).

Blair T.	They/them	25	2 nd year / 6 th -8 th grade	Rural public school, Tennessee	white	Dis/ability
Cindy A.	She/her	45	7 th year/ K-6, choir	Rural public school, Arkansas	Mostly European	Not Dis/abled
Evonne G.	She/her	35	13 th year/ PK-5, 7-8 choir	Rural public school, Alabama	White	Not Dis/abled
Lydia N. Scala	She/her	39	15 th year/ K-5	Rural public school, Tennessee	Caucasian	Not Dis/abled
Margaret C.	She/her	24	2 nd year/ K-5	Suburban public school, Colorado	white	Dis/ability
Maybelline V.	She/her	32	11 th year/ EC, K-5, private lessons	Rural public school, Virginia	White	Dis/ability
Odette H.	She/her	35	11 th year/ K-5	Suburban public school, Michigan	White	Not Dis/abled
Savannah T.	She/her	28	7 th year/ K-5, choir	Urban public school, Texas	White	Not Dis/abled

Note. Evonne G. left the study after the first group meeting. Additionally, people are often unaware of the governmental designation of their locale, and instead self-report based on their own social construction and identity values. Self-determination is notoriously unreliable (Azano et al., 2021; hooks, 2009; Merz & Ferman, 1997)

Conceptual Framework

I employed a conceptual framework in this study. Salvador et al. (2020a) employed constructivist grounded theory to conceptualize a model, Transformative Learning Processes (TLP), to consider how music teachers engaged in examining their “beliefs and practices

regarding inclusion, responsiveness, equity, and justice” (p. 193). I will first explain the model's components and then how I employed it as a conceptual framework in this study.

Transformative Learning Processes

This explanatory framework considers music educators' experiences in a summer graduate class who were working on social justice issues. The authors (Salvador et al., 2020a) chose the word *transformative* because participants self-described the experience using that word and because transformation implies a change in "mindsets and/or actions" (p. 194). The TLP model includes four non-hierarchical, interdependent categories, as depicted in Figure 1. The authors intended readers to "imagine each of the four outer circles rotating, meaning that each component within the categories occurred both inside and outside of [the graduate] class at various times, in various combinations, for various participants" (p.198). Salvador et al. (2020a) considered stories the central component of the model, as stories connected all the components together and allowed participants to grapple with challenging concepts, both alone and together. This model offers a pedagogical lens to frame and deliver a professional development experience based on social justice topics.

Building Gemütlichkeit

The German construct *Gemütlichkeit* means "A space or state of warmth, friendliness, and good cheer, which includes qualities of coziness, peace of mind, belonging, well-being, and social acceptance" (Salvador et al., 2020a, p. 200). The researchers discussed how both course activities and interpersonal relationships embodied this idea. Sub-constructs within this theme were "being with people who understood," "encountering vulnerability and discomfort," and "buying in." Each of these ideas, in turn, worked together to support the others. For example, as buy-in increased, so did participants' feelings of being with those who understood and their

willingness to continue to engage in vulnerability. This process is what Salvador et al. (2020a) referred to as a "virtuous cycle" (p. 200).

Figure 1.

Transformative Learning Processes (TLP) (Salvador et al., 2020a, p. 199).



Grappling with Difficult Material

Discussing social justice topics can be challenging, both academically and personally. The participants in the TLP were analyzing complex material and discussing their ideas and behavior as related to the topics (Salvador et al., 2020a, p. 201). Participants grappled internally

and interpersonally and worked to discover applications that translated theory to practice. Participants found themselves uncomfortable with conversations and topics that did not have straightforward answers yet leaned back on the sense of *Gemütlichkeit* to support themselves and each other throughout the process. An increase in "noticing" and "becoming more conscious" were essential outcomes of this grappling process (p. 203).

Emotional Intensity

The culmination of many of the components of the study emerged for participants as emotional intensity. Participants reported caring deeply about their jobs and their students, and, as a result, they undertook the work of unpacking beliefs and practices seriously. They also discovered they were grappling with parts of their identity that conflicted with new information (p. 204). As a result of their learning, participants were encouraged to problematize their perfectionism and re-define and enact their new beliefs and commitments.

Course Structures

Key features of the course structure in this TLP were establishing "norms, flexibility, teaching each other, and making explicit" structures to examine beliefs and teaching practices (Salvador et al., 2020a, p. 205). Specifically, participants felt the flexibility built into the course structure and the ability to engage in emergent topics was significant. They were also teaching each other, which allowed for sharing power and everyone's voice to be heard. Finally, providing strategies for dialogue and having a shared set of definitions enabled participants to avoid coded language and remain present during difficult conversations.

Utilizing TLP as a Conceptual Framework

An experience centered on considering pedagogical practices of equity and inclusion for multiply marginalized students may also create an opportunity for educators to engage in a

potentially transformational experience. While the transformation of self and teaching practice is a goal that facilitators and participants alike may desire, a PD experience cannot guarantee transformation on the outset; however, facilitators can create an environment that is staged for transformation potentially to occur (Taylor, 2011). By utilizing a pre-established model for exploring and challenging values surrounding inclusion and justice as a conceptual framework, such as transformative learning processes (TLP) (Salvador et al., 2020a), I hoped to support a more successful experience for educators as they explored creating equitable music experiences for their students.

As a conceptual framework, TLP offered a lens to design the sessions. Additionally, I utilized this framework to build rapport between members and to attune to the dynamics of the individuals and the group. Salvador et al. (2020a) viewed this model as the product of a constructivist grounded theory, as they were trying to figure out what had happened during the class that rendered it meaningful or transformative. As such, they considered ways TLP interacted with Transformative Learning (Mezirow, 2003) and other forms of social justice educational perspectives (Freire 1973/2001). However, this model had not yet been applied and required further investigation. Additionally, utilizing it in a PD setting expands upon the work of Salvador et al. (2020a) and considers its usefulness in spaces considering social justice topics outside of graduate coursework.

I utilized several elements of TLP when designing the CTSG. First, I prioritized participant leadership. Just as graduate students each chose readings and led their peers in learning during the TLP (Salvador et al., 2020a), participants in this CTSG acted as teachers and leaders to each other. Participants had the flexibility to choose from different protocols to organize their session, designed activities, led conversations, and in some cases, supplemented

with other readings or videos they believed were relevant to the topic. Additionally, I built in guidance similar to that provided in Salvador et al. (2020a). I picked the topics and readings and met one-on-one with participants to support them as they prepared to lead their sessions. Additionally, I set up the CTSG space by establishing norms and helping participants revisit them when necessary.

Although TLP was the conceptual model for this CTSG, several design elements differed. First, Salvador et al. (2020a) conceptualized TLP as a result of what happened during a summer graduate course, where the same group of music educators came together several years in a row, which differed significantly from a group of strangers who had never met before the CTSG. As such, the participants in the CTSG needed time to get to know each other and develop a bond, whereas students in an intensive multi-summer graduate program might already have those bonds established. Furthermore, another essential difference between the TLP model and the CTSG was that participants chose to participate. In the TLP, some students were frustrated, with one even calling it "bullshit," that they had to take a course on social justice topics as a part of their graduate work (Salvador et al., 2020a, p. 201). It took time for participants to buy into the material and become vulnerable enough to share intimate details. However, in the CTSG, the participants all volunteered to participate and knew the topics ahead of time. For their own reasons, each was ready to buy in, both to the subjects and the structure of the CTSG. In Chapter Seven, I compare the enacted CTSG experience to TLP.

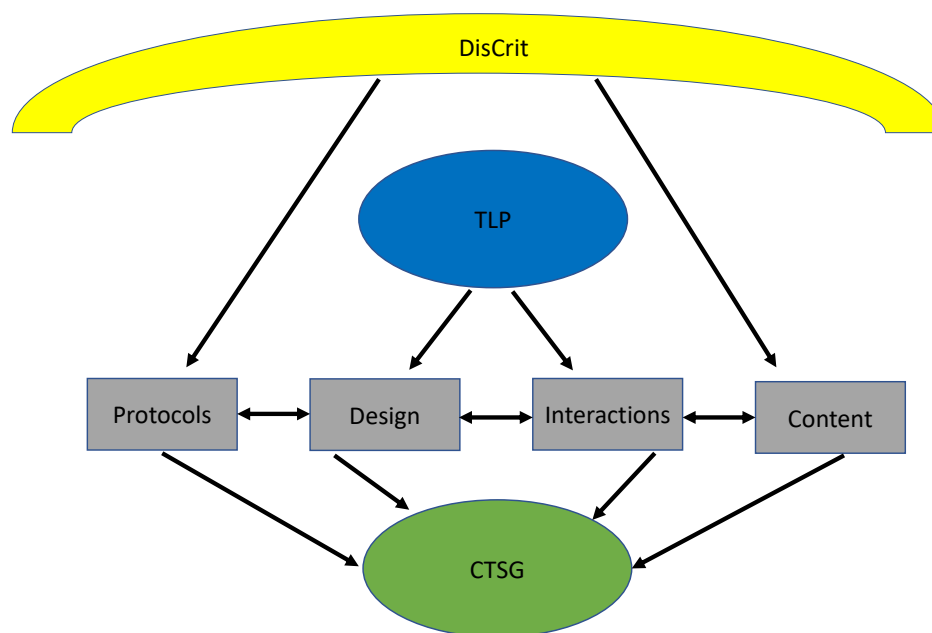
Connecting Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks

Chapter One described the theoretical framework, DisCrit, and how I utilized it as both theory and content for the CTSG. Above, I present a theoretical framework, TLP, which

informed the design and analysis of the CTSG. Figure three offers a model for how I connected the theoretical and conceptual frameworks and other elements in this study.

Figure 2.

Connecting Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks



DisCrit, as a theoretical framework, informed both the content of the CTSG and the protocols I selected from the National School Reform Faculty (National School Reform Faculty, 2021). I chose potential protocols that focused on engaging in conversations about equity, social justice, and diversity (protocols are in Appendix D). I also chose readings, podcasts, and videos that focused on race and ability, as well as their intersection (a list of CTSG materials is in Appendix E). I utilized TLP as a conceptual framework to inform the design of the CTSG and guide the ways that participants interacted. Like in TLP, the group established norms, had challenging conversations around social justice topics, shared leadership, and taught each other. The study's design, protocols, the interactions of participants, and content all worked in tandem to create the CTSG experience.

Data Collection

Semi-Structured Interviews

I began the study by engaging in the first of three semi-structured interviews with each music educator (Roulston, 2010). According to Roulston (2010), semi-structured interviews use a prepared interview guide with open-ended questions, and after each question, the researcher poses probes to extract further details and descriptions from participants. Interview guides "provide a framework within which the interviewer could develop questions, sequence those questions, and make decisions about which information to pursue in greater depth" (Patton, 2015, p. 439).

For PD to directly change teacher practice, facilitators must attune PD to the teachers' needs as learners (Kelly, 2015), which I could not know before the study began. I reviewed data from the first set of interviews and utilized it to finalize the structure and materials for the CTSG. The second interview took place at the midway point of the CTSG, and the final interview occurred the week after the CTSG ended. This process of interviewing allowed for "sense-making through which participants engage in explaining, attributing, justifying, describing, and otherwise finding possible sense or orderliness in the various events, people, places and courses of action they talk about" (Baker, 2002, p. 781 as cited in Roulston, 2010). I based the opening interview protocol on a constructionist conception of interviewing, where I co-constructed data alongside the interviewee. The interview protocol is available in Appendix F (Roulston, 2010).

I drew on techniques from the Interview Protocol Refinement Framework (IPR) during the development of the questions for each set of opening interviews (Castillo-Montoya, 2016). The IPR framework suggests researchers complete four phases when creating interview protocol, including aligning questions with overall research questions, ensuring the interview protocol

feels like a conversation but still obtains information, acquiring feedback on the interview protocol, and conducting a pilot interview (Castillo-Montoya, 2016). The interview protocol for the second and third interviews was emergent, based on CTSG experiences, but I still based each on transformative interviewing techniques, where "both interviewer and interviewee contribute to and are transformed by the interaction" (Roulston, 2010, p. 19). Protocols for the mid-point and exit interviews are in Appendix G and H, respectively.

CTSG Meetings

CTSGs are a form of professional development (PD) that seeks to create knowledge in non-hierarchical ways and to combat the privatization and isolation that many teachers experience (West, 2019) while encouraging sustained reflective inquiry centered around change (Barrett, 2006). During this PD, educators engaged in reflective practices, activities, and conversations to consider ways to unpack their thinking, disrupt harmful stereotypes in the classroom, and consider the value of including voices of marginalized students in their reimagining of the music education space. Consistent with CTSG scholarship and drawn from the TLP conceptual framework, I prioritized shared leadership. I led the opening and closing sessions. Each participant selected a day/topic during our first gathering to lead one of the other group meetings.

The CTSG group met every other week from July to December 2021 for a total of 11 sessions. Participants and I co-constructed a calendar at the end of recruitment based on the availability of the participants, and I distributed this via email and a shared Google drive. Each session lasted approximately 90 minutes and took place over Zoom on a mutually agreed-upon weeknight (Tuesdays). Because participants lived in three different time zones, we met at 8 pm EST to accommodate everyone's evening schedules. Occasionally participants had to miss a

meeting for a prior commitment, and no meeting had fewer than 6 participants. I rescheduled one meeting at the last minute (10/5/21) because most participants were sick/unavailable, but the group made up the meeting the following week (10/12/21).

Researcher Role

For this study, I took on the roles of both facilitator and researcher. As the facilitator, I analyzed the needs and desires expressed in opening interviews to select the topics for each session. I distributed materials to participants through email and a shared Google Drive folder. It was essential that I mitigated power imbalances and that each participant was a co-leader in engaging in complicated material. Further, I set up the experience to have flexibility, inviting the participants to participate in the design process. In addition to shared leadership, one of the goals of this was to create greater buy-in to the content, a key element espoused in the TLP model (Salvador et al., 2020a). I led the opening session in July, a mid-point session in October (due to participant attrition), and the closing session in December, while participants led the remaining sessions. During the CTSG meetings led by participants, I facilitated breakout rooms (if the participant-leader asked me to), ensured the meeting ran for its allotted time, monitored previously established group norms, and assisted as necessary in keeping the meeting in line with the selected protocol. As much as possible, I stepped back to allow each participant to be the primary leader of their designated session as a power-sharing strategy.

While I initially set out to be a participant-researcher, as often done in CTSGs (e.g., Stanley, 2011; Stanley, 2012; McNickle, 2021), it quickly became apparent that this was an impossibility. While I did attend the CTSG meetings, and engage in conversation to a degree, I was never without my analytical lens, and therefore was never just a participant. Further, I prioritized being reflexive and critical about my role and my experiences in the CTSG, as I was

aware that several participants looked to me as the “expert” on these topics. As a result, I tried to remain cognizant of the inherent power imbalance at play and made a conscious effort to speak less than other group members during CTSG meetings to mitigate this. This self-imposed restriction prevented me from participating fully within the group settings. Therefore, it was clear I was always participating as a researcher, and not as a participant-researcher, as a participant-researcher was not realistically achievable.

In addition to my role as a researcher within the group meetings, I also engaged in reflexive memoing after each session, to both document the experience of each CTSG and acknowledge and challenge my own subjectivity. Being reflexive as a researcher requires acknowledging that I cannot separate my own biases or experiences around race and ability from my work. Through memoing, I sought to challenge my judgments and thinking and interrogate how I might be applying my biases to the research (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

CTSG Activities and Materials

Based on the TLP model, I designed the CTSG to be a collaborative experience, with each participant taking equal leadership in running the sessions (Salvador et al., 2020a). Although I chose the overall topics and readings for the sessions, participants needed to understand that I only served as a facilitator and did not have answers to the challenging topics we would cover in the meetings. Instead, I guided each participant as they prepared to lead their individual session by offering protocol options and suggesting materials, reflective practices, and discussion strategies to support their session. Ultimately, participants constructed their session, and I served as an assistant. The selected protocols and readings for each session are in Appendix D and E, respectively.

Planning the Sessions with Participants

I worked with individual participants to organize and design their designated meeting, and I designed and led meetings one, five, and eleven. As resources, we used a combination of three sources: *Courageous Conversations About Race Field Guide* (Singleton, 2015), *The Discussion Book* (Brookfield, 2016), and the National School Reform Faculty (NSRF) (National School Reform Faculty, 2021). The first two sources were books that I was previously familiar with that provide support structures for people engaging in dialogue about potentially sensitive subjects. The National School Reform Faculty organization is a professional development initiative whose stated goal is to "empower educators to create meaningful learning experiences for all, by collaborating effectively in reflective democratic communities that foster educational equity and social justice" (National School Reform Faculty, 2021). The NSRF protocol materials are free to use and are

structured processes and guidelines to promote meaningful, efficient communication, problem-solving, and learning. Protocols give time for active listening and reflection and ensure that all voices in the group are heard and honored (National School Reform Faculty, 2021).

Before beginning the CTSG, I reviewed all the protocols available from these three sources and selected several that seemed helpful to the topics and readings, leaving room for flexibility and options for each session leader. I placed all the potential protocols in a shared Google drive, where participants had full access.

Each member and I met individually to plan their session, and I provided varying levels of guidance and support for them based on their comfort levels. Each of these planning meetings was recorded and transcribed as a part of the data collection. During these planning meetings, the

participant and I would discuss the readings, choose a protocol/order for the session, make adaptations we felt necessary based on the session's theme, consider strategies for supporting productive conversation in the group, and navigate details timing and technology.

Establishing Norms and Having Difficult Conversations

Establishing norms and creating a space that is productive for hard conversations was paramount for this CTSG to result in actual change in the lives of participants (Atchinstein, 2002; Dobie & Anderson, 2015; Horn et al., 2017; Lefstein, et al., 2020; Nelson et al., 2010; West & Bautista, 2020). I wanted to provide an opportunity where educators could grapple with new material and increase their awareness about inclusion strategies (Salvador et al., 2020a; Salvador & Pasiali, 2017). As a result, during our opening CTSG session, I prioritized setting up this environment in several ways. Prior to the first session, participants read Chapter 6 of Brené Brown's (2012) book *Daring Greatly*, which addresses the ability to be vulnerable and how vulnerability and feedback work together. Additionally, they read sections from *Courageous Conversations About Race* by Glenn Singleton (2015), which focuses on the Four Agreements, Six Conditions, and Compass that support engaging in dialogue about race.

At the beginning of the first CTSG, I set up norms and utilized several activities to develop rapport among participants and to establish a space prepared for pedagogically productive talk (Lefstein et al., 2020). Engaging in pedagogically productive talk creates a space where conflict and divergent thinking might facilitate greater understanding (Lefstein et al., 2020). I utilized several protocols from the NSRF (National School Reform Faculty, 2021) to support setting up this environment during our opening meeting and encouraged participants to do the same at the beginning of each subsequent meeting. We utilized protocols specifically designed to establish norms and build a trusting environment (Appendix D). I recognized it was

essential to consider that there might be times in the study when participants may become resistant to conversations or behave in performative ways that shut down growth. Throughout the CTSG, I consistently monitored for these types of interactions and behaviors, and the group revisited established norms and goals of productive dialogue as necessary.

Other Data Sources

In addition to the three individual interviews with each participant, CTSG meetings with the group, the single planning meeting with each participant, and the protocols and artifacts from each meeting, there were several other data sources. I asked participants to keep a reflective journal about the group experiences and any connections they were drawing between the group meetings and their daily teaching practice (Hatch, 2002). I provided open-ended prompts and encouraged participants to reflect on their experiences, inviting them to resist answering prompts performatively or in a way they thought I wanted them to respond (Hatch, 2002). Hatch (2002) states, “the act of writing things down encourages individuals to process and reflect on experiences in different ways than thinking about them or discussing them with others” (p. 140). A list of the journal prompts is located in Appendix I. Finally, participants engaged in a private Facebook group throughout the process. I invited participants to use the Facebook page to share thoughts, materials, or otherwise engage with each other, and I treated this site as an additional artifact in data collection.

Memos

Since I participated in the CTSG as a participant-researcher, I took an analytic approach to my own data collection. It is crucial to “pay attention to how one thinks about thinking” and to “launch a critical self-exploration of one's own interpretations of empirical material (including its construction)” (Alvesson & Skoldberry, 2009, p. 8-9, as cited in Patton, 2015). Therefore, I

engaged in weekly analytic memos (Saldaña, 2016) after individual meetings and group meetings, and “return[ed] to the memos written during the early analysis as a way of tracking the evolution of codes and theme development” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 188). My memos served as both data generation, reflexivity checks, and analysis. I also utilized my analytic memos as support when crafting the second and third interview protocols.

While some argue that different types of memos should have different labels (e.g., theoretical memos, task memos), Saldaña (2016) argues that all memos are analytic, regardless of content, and labeling what kind of memo is secondary to the writing itself. Furthermore, while a variety of suggestions exist for *how* to write a memo, Charmaz (2006) simply states, “do what works for you” (p. 80). Memoing is intended to be “a flexible strategy wherein the process of construction and the nature of content is determined by the preferences and abilities of the researcher and the aims and focus of the specific research study” (Birks, Chapman, & Francis, 2008, p. 68). I chose to keep a running document of all memos together, with each entry dated. In addition, I regularly employed voice memos, which I later transcribed and placed into the memo document in chronological order.

Data Analysis

I separated my data into two distinct sets: the first set was the opening interviews, the first journal entry by each participant, the first CTSG meeting, and my accompanying analytic memos. The second data set was the remainder of the CTSG meetings (10), the second and third participant interviews, further participant journal entries, artifacts from the private Facebook page, and my analytic memos. In doing this, I analyzed the first data set for participants' initial stated beliefs and views and descriptions of their teaching practice, and I utilized the second data set to look for any changes. During each distinct data set, I used constant comparative strategies

(Corbin & Strauss, 1998; Yin, 2018) to guide my analysis and interpretation of data. I examined data through a cyclical and iterative process of coding that involved the repeated reading and reviewing of data using a combination of structured and emergent coding techniques (Saldaña, 2016).

I coded data in two phases within each data set: initial coding and axial coding. I completed both coding phases on the first data set before moving on to the second data set. In initial coding for each set, I engaged in systematic line-by-line coding and applied code names to individual sentences or phrases. During this phase, I utilized both emergent values coding and process coding and allowed for *in-vivo* codes when appropriate (Saldaña, 2016). At regular intervals throughout the first coding round, I subsumed codes as necessary. I then applied and refined the values and process codes for each specific data set to narrow down categories of the data collected. I explored code-to-code relationships and collapsed them into broader categories.

During the second-round axial coding of each data set, I extended the work I began in my initial coding. The goal of axial coding is "to determine which [codes] in the research are the dominant ones and which are the less important ones... [and to] reorganize the data set: synonyms are crossed out, redundant codes are removed, and the best representative codes are selected" (Boeije, 2010 as cited in Saldaña, 2016, p. 244). While often used in grounded theory, axial coding is also helpful for studies with a large amount and variety of data, as was the case with my study, and allows the researcher to create categories from the many codes in the first cycle (Saldaña, 2016). In axial coding, I continued my analytic memoing, focusing on the emergent categories and the codes within them, intending to achieve *saturation* (Saldaña, 2016). According to Corbin & Strauss (1998), saturation occurs "when no new information seems to

emerge during coding, that is, when no new properties, dimensions, conditions, actions/interactions, or consequences are seen in the data” (p. 136).

The final step in my analysis was to consider my larger categories and themes as they pertained to the study's research questions. For the first research question, I utilized only the first data set. I compared the categories and themes between the two distinct data sets for the second research question, looking for changes. I utilized both data sets to answer research question three. I give specifics on the number of codes, applications of codes, and themes for each data set in their respective chapters, Chapter Five and Six.

Trustworthiness

I established the trustworthiness of my data analysis through triangulation of the data, peer review of interview protocols, member checks of transcripts and narratives, and extensive time in the project as a researcher and a facilitator (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In particular, member checks and peer reviews increased the trustworthiness of this project by allowing participants to lend credibility to my interpretation of the data. Participants provided their journals, and I offered each person the opportunity to review the narrative written about them to ensure that I accurately captured both them and their position within the CTSG.

Saldaña (2016) discussed how "values coding is values laden," and therefore, it was critical that throughout the coding process, I accounted for my positionality and perspective through continuing my analytic memoing (p. 135). I engaged in extensive analytic memoing throughout the entire project that deepened my thinking on the data collection and analysis and allowed me to consider my own values and biases throughout the experience”> During analysis, I constantly moved back and forth in my data between my memos and the transcripts from interviews, group meetings, and participant journals. I utilized multiple data points to inform

coding and themes, including interview transcripts, participant journaling, participant conversations via Facebook and the Zoom chat, transcripts from CTSG meetings, and researcher memoing. The depth and breadth of the data allowed for saturation and further strengthened the trustworthiness of the project.

Chapter Summary

This chapter provided a detailed description of the research study design, including method, recruitment, participant selection, the structure for the CTSG meetings, data collection, analysis, and my role as the researcher. The study procedure includes semi-structured interviews (3) with each participant, CTSG meetings (11), participant journaling, a private Facebook group, and extensive researcher memoing. Data analysis used a constant comparative method, going through several rounds of coding (Saldaña, 2016), including values coding and process coding, allowing for in-vivo coding when appropriate, and finally axial coding. Finally, I discussed methods for ensuring the trustworthiness of the data and analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR: PARTICIPANTS

Participants

As described in Chapter Three, I selected participants through purposeful and convenience sampling (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Patton, 2015). Each of the selected music educators worked in different school districts and they were spread geographically across the United States, with two in Michigan, two in Tennessee, one each in Colorado, Arkansas, Texas, and Virginia, and I was in New York. The music educator participants (including myself) ranged in teaching experience from 2 to 16 years, and no one had worked in more than three public school districts during their teaching career. I was the only participant that had taught in a higher education setting. None of the music educators knew each other before participating in the CTSG. I had worked with three of these educators in the past (at separate times and in different settings), but in each of those instances, I did not have the opportunity to get to know them one-on-one and only interacted with them musically in group settings. In addition, I was familiar with Odette by name only because she lived in the same town I used to live in, and she had just started teaching in a local school district.

Although this study was a collective case of one CTSG, each member individually created the collective case. Therefore, what follows is a narrative of each participant, which includes descriptions they provided about themselves during interviews and group conversations. Additionally, I shared their self-described path towards music education and an overview of their experiences and interactions with the topics of race and disability prior to joining the group. Finally, I describe their self-expressed goals for participating in the group.

Blair T.

Blair (they/them) self-identified as an LGBTQ, gender-neutral, omnisexual, atheist white male with a dis/ability. During fall 2021, they taught middle school (6th-8th) choir and general music at a suburban public school in Tennessee and private guitar lessons. During the CTSG, they were in their second year of teaching, and this was their first year in their current school. Before that, they taught in a private Christian school. Interestingly, Blair's new school was in the same community where they grew up. Blair lived in a converted camper in the woods with their wife.

Blair's path towards becoming a music educator was not linear. They reported that they did not always want to be a teacher growing up and instead had envisioned themselves as a doctor or something similar. After high school, they began selling insurance, and while they "made a lot of money," they were unfulfilled and eventually went to college for music education. They reflected that "music was the first thing I remember ever being good at, and when I got back into it, it was what I wanted to do. It wasn't until I actually started working with kids that I really realized that I wanted to be a teacher" (opening interview).

Blair shared openly about themselves both in conversation and within their first journal entry. In the opening interview, Blair spoke frankly about having a dis/ability and how it impacted their daily life. They discussed how having ADHD affected their processing time and interactions, and in the second group meeting, they shared this with the other participants. Blair was a deep thinker, and at times, it seemed as if their mind moved quickly from idea to idea. I noticed that sometimes they would get distracted, and I, or another group member, would need to repeat or rephrase questions. Blair appeared comfortable expressing their needs in those moments. When asked about students they had worked with who had dis/abilities, Blair

discussed teaching a self-contained classroom of special education students and working with several students with dis/abilities in other classes. They mentioned they had all the IEP documents in their classroom, but they had never collaborated with other teachers in the building to support students beyond that. Although I asked in the opening interview, Blair did not provide specific examples of how they had worked with students with dis/abilities in their classroom.

When discussing their community and their experiences with race, Blair expressed they believed the local community has gotten much more diverse over the years, but they still felt as if, overall, there was a racial mismatch between students and teachers in their district. Over half of the students were BBIA, while most of the teachers were white. They talked about how they had begun to recognize that a lot of the ways that they grew up no longer matched with how they now think and gave the example of when they first heard the term ‘Black Lives Matter’ and that they “had no idea what it meant then” (opening interview). Despite their own perceived growth, they remained frustrated by some of the struggles in their community over race, especially commenting that they believed the administration at their school was “doing nothing to work on the problem” (opening interview).

I asked about any connections Blair saw between race and ability. They reported they had never considered that a connection existed before but did mention they have considered issues of both race and ability separately a little prior to participation in the CTSG. Blair expressed eagerness to learn more and apply it in their teaching, stating, "I really just want to learn as much as I can. To be completely honest, this is a great opportunity” (opening interview). They expressed a particular interest in learning what has worked for other teachers to support students with dis/abilities and BBIA students.

Maybelline V.

Maybelline (she/her) self-identified as a white, married, lesbian female who taught early childhood and K-5 elementary music at a rural public school in Virginia. She also taught private guitar lessons and an Orff ensemble at her church. She was in her 11th year of teaching, and this was her sixth year in her current school. In addition, Maybelline reported that she and her wife were adoptive parents of four children, two of whom were children of color. She reported that the majority of the children she taught were white, with only a handful of other races (two of whom being her own children) and languages in her school, and that she did teach a self-contained special education classroom in her building. She grew up living at a Church of the Brethren summer camp and remained connected to the music from that experience, camping, and nature. In fact, during several of the CTSG sessions, Maybelline even logged in from her camper, where they were campground hosts for several weeks over the summer.

Maybelline grew up participating in choir, band, musical theater, and religious musical experiences such as handbells and church camp. She felt that becoming a music teacher to children was a natural progression of her upbringing in music and growing up at a summer camp, and she never really considered a different career path for herself. Since beginning teaching, she got certified in Kodaly levels I, II, and III and expressed a desire to do a world music drumming course sometime in the future. For the time being, though, her focus was on raising her four kids, and so other certifications were going to wait. She talked about loving her job and felt as if she could make a difference in children's lives through her work.

In the opening CTSG, Maybelline shared with the group (while making a connection with something Blair said) that she had a dis/ability, stating, "I have some sort of mood disorder, so I take medicine too" (CTSG 1). She had considered the topic of ability a fair amount but wanted to

do more to apply it specifically to her teaching. Several times, she mentioned “needing tools” to help her, as she felt as if she did not really know “what to do with them [students with dis/abilities]” (opening interview). She discussed “team plans” made at her building level to support students, especially before they had an IEP in place, but did not appear to think it was sufficient or particularly beneficial. She reported feeling awkward when the self-contained class of students with dis/abilities came alone to music because she had "never been trained" to work with that population (opening interview). She preferred when students with dis/abilities came with their general education peers and believed they “assimilated well” in those situations.

She reported that she had been working hard on exploring race in her teaching before joining the group, partially because of being an adoptive parent to children of color. She discussed how, in the past, she had not noticed or understood “racial things” and did not have to think about white privilege. Now she did, and she shared her growth, stating, “my white guilt is not there anymore. It’s more like, okay, if I know better, I do better” (opening interview). At the same time, she expressed concerns about the nuanced and complicated nature of race and that she did not want to accidentally appropriate or teach something wrong, stating, "I want to do more, but I'm scared" (opening interview). She discussed how race issues are not cut and dried in her community and gave an example of two African American people feeling differently about the racial nature of the same song. She reported that she was "doing a lot of listening and a lot of talking with my colleagues" to try to understand and learn more (opening interview).

Maybelline had not explored the intersection of race and ability before joining the CTSG, despite spending a fair amount of time considering race alone. When asked what she hoped to get out of participating in the group, she stated,

just more confidence and resources on how to authentically make sure that children are given the education that they need and how to differentiate that for each age level and readiness. And, I guess, being more comfortable and hearing more stories of what works and what doesn't (opening interview).

Maybelline confided that she felt nervous about leading the group when it became her turn because she reported having a lot of anxiety about being in charge of adults, but also because she was unsure how to lead the conversation around these topics.

Annie D.

Annie D. (she/her) self-identified as a straight, White, hard of hearing, “religiously confused,” married female. She taught K-5 elementary music at a suburban public school in Michigan, and her only child was going into Kindergarten in Fall 2021. She was in her 14th year of teaching, and this was her ninth year in her current school. Her current school district supported the entire hard of hearing and deaf K-5 student population for the county and had a majority Jewish population. Before working there, she worked in an urban public school in a neighboring city that was primarily African American.

Music education was a natural path for Annie. Growing up, she participated in every musical group she had access to, including choir, band, church choir, and a community choir. She said, "it just felt like that was my spot to be, and it still feels that way" (opening interview). Annie went to college for music education, and she later got a graduate degree in theatre. Out of college, she taught high school choir for five years before taking her current job, where she taught K-5.

Recently, Annie was diagnosed with a hearing dis/ability, and she spoke at length about how coming to terms with this has impacted her personal and professional life. She felt as if she

identified more strongly with her Deaf and hard-of-hearing students as a result and stated, "I wanna talk about it and be open" (opening interview). Annie was currently learning sign language, both for herself and her students. She worked with students with dis/abilities in both self-contained classrooms and when they attended music with their general education peers. When I asked if they came with their general education peers, she responded, "if in their words [referencing other decision-makers in her building] they think [kids] can 'handle it' in mainstream music, then they join their peers. It's never me [that decides], but sometimes I try to say, 'they do music just fine'" (opening interview). It seemed clear that she was not happy about being excluded from the music class placement decisions for these students, and she went on to discuss that while she did get 504 plans for students, it was pretty tricky for her to gain access to IEPs and that she has gone years, in some cases, without knowing the specifics of a child's IEP.

Annie's current school was racially quite different than her first teaching job. In her first job, students were 99% African American, but she has a majority Jewish population in her current job. For her, the differences between herself and her students felt less like race and more about a culture shock from the way she grew up, and she attributed some of her shock to the differences between big city living and her more rural upbringing. She also felt unprepared for the cultural and religious diversity she experienced in her second district, and in discussing both experiences, she noted,

It's racial issues, but it's also small town versus city in my mind....and then I went from [district 1] where there's no Jewish people and 99% black to [district 2] where we have major holidays off that I don't even know about or know if I'm mispronouncing. And both are such a huge part of the kids you teach. I just felt really underprepared for making connections with kids [in both situations] (opening interview).

When explicitly asked about race issues manifesting in her classroom, Annie noted that it was less about things with kids and more "I'm noticing uncomfortableness amongst the adults" with things like the current principal saying things such as "we should put all the black kids together, so they have other kids that look like them" (opening interview). While Annie's frustrations were evident in the examples she gave, she also gave examples of her own efforts to combat the problems she saw. She talked about taking restorative justice training and her belief that music should reflect the students she had in the classroom.

She reported that she has been working hard on exploring both the topic of race and ability in her teaching prior to joining the CTSG, but she had not previously considered how race and dis/ability might intersect with each other. When asked about her specific goals for being in the group, Annie remarked, "I guess just a broader perspective of race in the music classroom.... I would like to hear more people's perspectives, actually talking to people [more] than on the internet" where she expressed concern for the vitriol people spewed (opening interview). She also indicated that she was looking for ways to engage in more authentic representation of musics from other cultures. Annie wanted to create spaces where authentic conversations could happen with her students and families as well, commenting, "I want to let people know that it's okay to come to me with these things [referencing talking about their home cultures and musics] and not to be scared to have these conversations" (opening interview). She did not specifically mention any goals related to dis/ability, but this might also stem from her feeling more confident and well-versed in dis/ability issues prior to starting the group. She mentioned more than once that she wanted to talk to other music teachers specifically and hear "real" stories from their classrooms.

Lydia N. Scala

Lydia N. Scala (she/her), a self-identified straight, Caucasian, Christian, married female, taught K-5 elementary music at a rural public school in Tennessee. She was in her 13-15th year of teaching (she could not remember the exact number), and this was her 10th year in her current school. Before working at her current school, she worked at a different rural school district an hour and a half away, but she jumped at the opportunity to work at the local school in her community when the position opened up. She had three children, and in addition to teaching, she and her husband owned several small businesses, including a Christmas tree farm.

Lydia grew up in Tennessee and knew she wanted to be a music teacher since she was in sixth grade. She spoke of an “incredible music teacher” she had in fifth grade and then finally joined the choir in sixth grade. In high school, she joined musical theatre, became involved in competitive choirs, including regional honor choirs, and referred to herself as a “choir brat.” When asked about her favorite part of being a music educator, Lydia replied, “It is watching kids when they have breakthroughs and when they get to create. Watching them be in charge of their learning is just so fun” (opening interview).

Lydia felt as if working with students with dis/abilities was a strength of hers, and she had spent considerable time exploring issues of ability, both in her thinking and her teaching practice. When discussing her teaching practice, she stated, “I feel like if I had a strong point, it would be including those kids” and discussed several formative experiences growing up when she babysat a child with special needs throughout high school and college. Lydia praised the power that technology had given her to better support students with dis/abilities in her current classroom but mentioned that she still felt like supporting students with dis/abilities became more complicated when it was time for a concert or a program. She talked about several

experiences in her classroom where she had to find out-of-the-box ways to support a student with a dis/ability, including inventing the "pillow stick"—a soft place for a child to hit when they have a physical outburst. While the experience she described leading up to that invention was traumatic for her—and probably the child—Lydia remained optimistic about working with students with dis/abilities and believed that “once I get to know a student, it is way easier to help them.”

She has considered issues of race a fair amount prior to participation in the CSTG and reported she was looking to explore it more in her teaching. Lydia mentioned that almost every student she taught was white, which was why she had not spent much time on race issues previously. However, she did contrast her current student body to a competitive choir that she used to teach in the next town over, which was 70% African American. Lydia expressed frustration at not being able to talk about race in her current setting, stating

we don't spend a whole lot of time addressing it specifically because it's a very difficult thing community-wise. I feel like if I was truly as big of an advocate as I'd like to be, that I would be fired. There would be a lot of pushback from the community. So, it's extremely hard (opening interview).

It was clear she wanted to do more with race in her classroom and in her community, but "I just don't know how to address things in a way that's meaningful to my kids that need it and keep my job" (opening interview). She expressed her hope that the CTSG would provide her tools to address race "without getting fired" and gave several examples of conversations where she felt she did not have the tools she needed. Even as she bemoaned a lack of tools, Lydia mentioned several resources she had already utilized to learn and grow, including several Facebook groups and the non-profit website, Decolonizing the Music Room.

When asked about how she saw race and ability intersecting in her classroom, Lydia commented that “I just want it to feel authentic. I would like for it to feel normalized. I just want every student to feel good about who they are regardless of impediments or society” (opening interview). While she did not make mention of race and ability intersecting *with each other*, she did see straightforward ways that both race and ability intersected independently with music education and seemed to consider both topics from a similar perspective of wanting to create more equitable and welcoming musical spaces.

Odette H.

Odette H. (she/her), a self-identified straight, White, atheist female, taught K-5 elementary music in a suburban public school in Michigan. She was in her 11th year of teaching, and this was her 2nd year in her current school. Before that, she taught K-12 in a rural district in Michigan. She was married and had two young children. During the 2020-2021 school year, during the pandemic, she took time off from teaching to be home with her children but was returning to the classroom in Fall 2021.

Growing up, Odette recalled being the only musical person in her family and described multiple home videos her parents made of her singing and making music. In fifth grade, she joined the band and participated throughout high school, including being a part of a competitive marching band. When Odette first attended college, she planned to be a band director, although she briefly considered medicine. However, she found that music, and the music building itself, was “full of joy,” and she could not envision doing anything else. While originally from Michigan, Odette briefly taught in Texas before returning to Michigan when her husband began pursuing his Ph.D. During her previous job as a K-12 director in a rural district in Michigan,

Odette discovered that she loved teaching elementary, so she jumped at the chance when the opportunity came up to teach K-5 in her local community.

Odette's current school had several self-contained classes of students with dis/abilities, and she also knew that there were several other children in the building with IEPs, but she was unsure about the number. She enjoyed working with the self-contained classroom and had read several books on how to serve the students better. She expressed eagerness to learn more about it, but at the same time seemed frustrated at the lack of structural support for students and teachers alike, saying

it fell on the teachers, you know, and I was one of those people...they [the student with a dis/ability] would get kicked out of a class and they'd come into my class and say this happened, but I was teaching another class....and it was just really apparent that those students were not getting the supports that they needed (opening interview).

She recalled having "bare minimum" education in her undergraduate and master's degree to work with students with dis/abilities. Any outside learning she did was on her own, through reading and on the job experience: "I think you learn through teaching, but I don't know if I have ever really felt comfortable or prepared to make more of a difference for those students. And that is something I would love to change" (opening interview).

Odette had thought and learned a lot about race before joining the CTSG. She also appeared to be very aware of her own privilege as a white woman. In each of her three teaching districts, Odette experienced a very different racial makeup of students. In her first district in Texas, she worked on the Texas/Mexico border and had a majority Hispanic student body. In the rural school in Michigan, it was 98% white students, and in her current district, she had approximately 20-30% non-white students, making up a variety of races and cultures.

I asked if she ever had any experiences where race came up at her school. She recalled a time in her rural school when high school students engaged in racist language in the hallways, and she tried to talk to the students about it but felt as if the students still did not see why it was a problem. She discussed another instance where she stopped class to address race, sharing, “You know, when Colin Kaepernick [knelt] we played the Star-Spangled Banner. When that happened, it was like, “Shut everything down. This is what we are going to talk about” (opening interview). However, Odette seemed to believe that the few instances she addressed race were insufficient. She felt as if “the things that have come to light in the media in the last few years have created a push for a lot of people, including myself” and talked about how when she worked in a “very white school,” it was easy to not think about these topics or make them a priority (opening interview). Odette recognized that she was currently in a more diverse school district, and she was eager to “learn more how to address the student needs within a very diverse setting” (opening interview). She had been reading and listening to podcasts before joining the group and was very interested in the ways race and culture operated in the music classroom.

When asked about the intersection of race and ability in music, Odette stated, “culture is music. Music is culture” (opening interview). She expressed a desire to have a more nuanced understanding of navigating issues of race and ability in her classroom. While Odette did not articulate a specific connection between race and ability, she talked about wanting to learn and find tools to support both groups of students, “I want to find music that is written by non-white people, by disabled people, women. I just want to make sure the music that is being used is representative, and that is something I want to learn more about” (opening interview). As she talked about her goals for being in the group, Odette expressed interest in hearing “what

everyone has to say” and was hoping for a collaborative environment to learn. However, she was also nervous that it might be hard for her to recognize her own biases and weaknesses.

Margaret C.

Margaret C. (she/her), a self-identified White, straight, Christian female, taught K-5 elementary music in a suburban public school in Colorado. She was in her second year of teaching, and this was her first year in her current school district/position. Her father, a teacher and administrator, was her inspiration for going into education, as well as an innate desire “to always be helping and supporting people” (opening interview). Her first year of teaching was in a rural, low-income farming community, where she reported serving many students with dis/abilities, and the community was predominantly white. She had a 50/50 mix of Hispanic and white students in her new school and worked in a much larger, suburban school district. Like her first district, this school was also Title I, with more than 50% of the students on free and reduced lunch.

In both her previous and current district, Margaret worked with students with dis/abilities in self-contained classrooms and when they mainstreamed into her other classes. Margaret's younger sister was born with a physical dis/ability, and in interviews and the CTSG meetings, she spoke at length about how growing up with her sister impacted her views on dis/ability. She also wrote in her journal about her struggle with an anxiety disorder. She felt as if she was “pretty good accommodating specific needs, such as reading dis/abilities or other smaller accommodations” for her students, yet also mentioned not feeling as if she had the appropriate tools to support all her students' needs, especially those with more complicated dis/abilities. “I did my best to try...but it was just very hard because I felt like half the time, he was just there, and I didn't know what to do.... I wanted it to be meaningful, but I just don't have those tools”

(opening interview). In her undergraduate experience, she did have some education about 504 plans, IEPs, and how to make modifications or accommodations for students, but she felt it was too generic and not specific enough to music to be of use to her.

When asked about race, Margaret appeared to be incredibly aware of her status as a white person and how race and education intersected. She felt that her opinions on race did not match those of her family members, who were "not outwardly racist, but who still have microaggressions and are unaware of their internal biases" (journal entry- 8/10/21). She discussed an impactful "race in education" class she took in college, stating

something that stuck out to me was how a lot of people treat [children of color] more seriously than other kids because of internal biases that we have. So, I have been researching ways that I can make it equitable when I am doing classroom management and discipline and stuff (opening interview).

She focused on incorporating as much diverse music as she could in her class; however, she shared an incident in which her principal gatekept her conversations during Black History Month. When discussing a book about Josephine Baker she intended to use in class, she stated

It literally talked about the fact that the white people burned down her entire neighborhood and that she had to do blackface. Like it was very real, and it was historically accurate, but of course, tailored for kids, but I had to have a conversation with my principal before reading the book, and she basically was telling me, 'well, you need to make sure you don't use these terms and these terms, so we don't get any backlash and people don't think it's a white versus black thing' (opening interview).

Margaret felt the tension between "not wanting to rock the boat" as a new (and young) employee and addressing things she believed were important. She felt as if "there is only so much you can

do in your own classroom when this is being compounded [in the rest of the school]" but remained hopeful that she was doing the best with the tools she had.

She made no explicit connections at the outset of the group about race and ability intersecting, but it was clear that she had an eye towards overall equity in her teaching practice. As Margaret discussed her goals for being in the group, she emphasized she "want[ed] to feel empowered to make decisions that will benefit students, whether they are of color or not" and went on to mention, "I definitely want more concrete ideas for how to be inclusive in my classroom for kids with disabilities" (opening interview). Margaret expressed mild trepidation in her journal that other members would not take her seriously due to her young age and lack of teaching experience but remained hopeful the group would see she had much to offer.

Savannah T.

Savannah T. (she/her), a self-identified straight, white, Christian, married female, taught K-5 general music and choir in an urban public school in Texas. She was in her seventh year of teaching and had been teaching at this same school for her entire career. Savannah was married and lived with her husband and her four cats, several of whom often walked across her computer during our Zoom meetings. Savannah believed "kids were more fun than adults" and loved how enjoyable they were to work with, commenting, "they're just a more fun version of human beings than anything else" (opening interview). While she loved the joy of teaching elementary music, Savannah noted that one of her biggest struggles was letting go of control in the classroom or letting the lesson take a different direction than she originally planned.

She always knew she wanted to be a music teacher and reminisced about "singing all the time with my grandma, and it's always just something that has come naturally to me" (opening interview). Savannah remembered deciding to be a teacher when she was ten years old "because

I love school. I love learning. I wanna do this forever. I thought my teachers were heroes that were sent from above" (opening interview). One of her favorite aspects of working with elementary children was that she got to be with them for several years in a row, "by the time they are 5th graders...I've literally known them for half of their lives and watched them go from pudgy high voice little babies to young men, or almost young men...I love that aspect of it" (opening interview). In addition to her college education, Savannah was certified in all three levels Orff Schulwerk and had done restorative justice training.

Savannah was intimately aware of dis/ability, as her mother had been in a wheelchair since before she was born. She told of times when she was out at a restaurant with her family, and she and her dad had to take turns feeding their mother, all while other restaurant patrons stared or made insensitive comments. Often, when in public, her dad would help her mom in the women's restroom, so Savannah stood outside the door to tell other people, "Hey, there's a man in there!" (mid-point interview). However, for Savannah, at the time, it did not feel strange because it was the "normal she knew" (mid-point interview). When asked about how her experiences with her mom had affected how she saw dis/ability and handled it in her classroom, Savannah responded,

I think it has given me a little bit more grace with people and grace with my students to be able to talk to them, like, 'Yeah, they learn differently, because their body developed this way, or their brain did this thing that most people's brains don't do.' Or whatever, but we all learn differently when you think about it, so it just made that conversation a little easier (mid-point interview).

In her building, Savannah had a self-contained pre-K special education classroom, a self-contained 1st-5th grade special education classroom, and a "whole binder of other students who

have 504s and IEPs" (opening interview). She talked about her seating charts and how she used them to keep track of student needs since she had so many students. She mentioned that, ironically, one of her biggest struggles was that she often forgot to include the self-contained teacher when sending emails or talking about a mixed group, "it feels weird because my mom is disabled, and has been in a wheelchair since before I was born. So, it's not like [dis/ability] is a blind spot in my brain, but somehow it becomes a blind spot" (opening interview).

Savannah had thought about the issue of race in the classroom quite a bit before joining the group. Savannah reported she was usually "the only white person in the room" in her school building and, as such, "I definitely notice my white-ness" (journal entry- 8/23/21). Her school had almost 100% BBIA students. She commented, "I can count the number of white students on one hand," but mentioned that her district was restructuring due to a building closure, and so her student body might look somewhat different in the next school year, but she did not yet know (opening interview). She talked about a few "tame incidents" in her classroom with students where race came up and how she addressed it playfully.

I had a third grader, she was upset about not getting a turn on something...and she goes 'all the white people in the room got to,' and I just stopped and was like, 'girl, all the white people in the room is me. I'm the only one.' And all the kids busted out laughing.

(opening interview).

Her expression became more serious when she discussed a conversation with students where the children, after seeing some pictures of her friends on her desk, questioned if she had any black friends.

They were like, 'do you not have any black friends?' And I had to talk about how there weren't a lot of black people in the places where I grew up. But then I just moved back to

the lesson. But, I really *want* to be able to initiate those conversations and bring that into my classroom. I just don't feel like I have a first step (opening interview).

Savannah mentioned some small changes she had made in her classroom, including using more diverse books, but felt that, as a white woman, she did not know how to specifically bring in lessons related to race and what was happening in the world.

When asked about her goals for being in the group, Savannah was interested in "hopefully contributing and getting other ideas from other teachers of... what works and what are you doing in your classroom?" (opening interview). She specifically talked about wanting concrete ideas to bring back to the classroom that would directly apply to her students. She was particularly excited about being in a PD that she "wanted to go to" and "that actually applied to me" (opening interview).

Cindy A.

Cindy A. (she/her) was a self-identified Mostly European (white-presenting), married, Christian, straight female. She taught K-6 general music and choir in a rural public school in Arkansas. She was in her seventh year of teaching and had been in this district the entire time she had been a teacher. She grew up in rural Illinois, followed her husband's career first to Missouri, but finally settled in her husband's hometown in Arkansas when her father-in-law passed away. She had three children, all of whom when to school in the neighboring district, where her husband was a teacher. Cindy was active in her church, a girl scout troop leader, and stayed busy taking her kids to their many after-school activities, such as volleyball and football.

Although she grew up in a musical family, Cindy came to music education later in life, and before becoming a teacher, she was a stay-at-home mom for several years. In college, she started as a music education major but then changed to theatre arts, with minors in music and

journalism. She worked for a newspaper for a few years and then was a children's music director at a church while living in Missouri before moving to Arkansas, where she focused on raising her children. However, education was always where she saw herself ending up. After moving to Arkansas, she worked as a substitute teacher until she applied to be a secretary at her husband's school. However, the principal immediately recommended her for the elementary music teaching job in the next district over, and she took it. Her current school is a consolidated district, pulling children from six very different communities, both racially and socioeconomically.

Cindy's school had a self-contained classroom, and she saw them both as a separate group and mainstreamed in with their general education peers. She talked about how she could log into the eSchool system to "see ahead of time who is coming to me with what kind of issues" but also commented that there had been many times where she did not know a student had a special education need "until someone came around with their paperwork." Cindy mentioned the high turnover of special education teachers in recent years that she believed contributed to the lack of communication about students' needs. However, when asked about how she felt she did at supporting students with dis/abilities in the music room, Cindy stated she was "pretty good on the fly with that kind of stuff.... that's probably my specialty. Probably because of my theater background, and improv type stuff" (opening interview). She commented that she believed paraprofessionals were not well-trained or paid enough, and the expectations for them were not high enough, which made it harder for her to do her job.

When asked about her experiences with race, Cindy shared that while the town she lived in was "primarily white," her school was about 40-45% African American and she was very happy about that. She discussed mission trips she had taken in the past to inner-city Nashville, as well as to Ghana, and stated, "I just had a love for these kids, for this other culture" (opening

interview). She told a story of when she first took her job, and when Cindy found out that her school had a large African American population, she was thrilled, saying, "God has placed this burden on my heart for this culture, and now he's brought me face to face with these children and given me the opportunity to work with them" (opening interview). She shared that race comes up often in her classroom and gave an example of how she handles these conversations with students.

I was teaching classical music to third grade...and one student raised his hand. He said, 'it don't matter about that classical music because my people, they didn't get to sing that anyway.' And I said to him, 'What do you mean?' He goes, 'Well, my people, they were slaves. They didn't get to sing no music.' And I said, 'Your people were slaves? What do you mean 'your people?'' Because I don't let them make statements like that without telling them, you know, 'Tell me more.' And he said, 'Well, you know, I'm Black. So, my people, my ancestors were slaves.' I said, 'All right. First of all, you sure they were slaves? Do you know where you came from?' I said, 'Because not every person who's over—who lives in the United States was a slave. You know? But secondly, could slaves not sing? Who played the music for all those fancy parties that the white people had? They made the slaves play that music, buddy.' I said, 'Just because you were enslaved did not mean that you couldn't sing.' I said, 'They even had their own songs and their own things. They had their own heritage in Africa, too. They were African. So, don't say, 'well, my people,' were you Nigerian? Were you Kenyan? There's all sorts of places where these people came from.' I said, 'The problem is, we just don't know about a lot of them because they didn't write it down. So, we have some songs from there. We'll learn

about those later. But right now, we're just learning about what we have that was written down.' And he was like, 'Oh.' But it's so funny because they just make assumptions. She "liked challenging students" to think more critically when they made comments about race and was not afraid to do so to other adults in her family and in the community as well. However, Cindy indicated race was still a challenging topic in her community, and she has worked to reflect on the "social differences" she noticed between different racial groups in order to maintain "balance and fairness in my classroom" (opening interview).

Cindy had not previously considered any connection between race and dis/ability, nor how they impacted her teaching situation. When asked about what she hoped to get out of participating in the CTSG, Cindy indicated she would like to "see how other people are working to integrate students with disabilities in the music room. You know, how you really let them take ownership and not just feel like they're being pulled along, alongside another student" (opening interview). She gave no indication of wanting to learn anything related to race and her teaching practice.

Communication in the CTSG

Although this was a collective case, each participant brought their own unique personality to the group and their own style of communication. While the content of communication *between* group members is a theme that runs through the remaining chapters related to each research question, it is first valuable to note how each person viewed themselves as a group member. Also, it is helpful to consider their self-expressed communication style. Finally, it is vital to acknowledge the level of participation they gave to the CTSG, as it directly impacted their engagement with the other members.

Self-Expressed Communication Styles

In their opening interview, I asked each participant to describe their communication style in group settings. Maybelline, Blair, Lydia, and Annie each expressed a tendency to want to sit back and listen to the opinions of others while they formulate their responses. Similarly, Lydia, Maybelline, Annie, and Savannah all discussed the importance of processing time. Both Maybelline and Lydia also commented that they are people who can see both sides of a discussion, with Maybelline commenting it takes time to "figure out which side of the position I am really on." Cindy and Margaret acknowledged they were more likely to initiate conversations and take the lead, with Margaret even mentioning, "if no one says anything, I will fill the space" (opening interview). However, Margaret also mentioned that she makes intentional efforts to bring others into the conversation by asking questions and seeking others' opinions. Cindy indicated she was not afraid to talk and that while she tended to fill the silence, she "knew when to be quiet." Likewise, Savannah and Odette acknowledged that they could be the talker of the group, but they were aware of that about themselves, and both were conscious about trying not to be the one who always talked or talked first. Odette even commented in her opening interview, "so if I just keep on chattering, just tell me to shut up."

Due to the challenging nature of discussing race and ability, I also asked participants about responses to conflict. Both Maybelline and Savannah said they hated or were terrified of conflict, while Lydia stated that if she felt attacked, she would "just quit talking for a while." Similarly, Annie said she would only speak her mind if she felt safe and implied that she would not engage if a conflict arose. Alternatively, Blair indicated that if they felt challenged, their instinct was to go to "fight mode" and not be afraid to tell someone they disagreed. Odette and Margaret both seemed to acknowledge the necessity of conflict when dealing with changing

mindsets and difficult topics, and Margaret stated, "I'm pretty good at taking criticism, I don't get angry," while Odette remarked, "If I feel strongly, I won't leave it alone. But I can also take it, ya know?" Cindy referred to herself as a "devil's advocate" and elaborated that she knew that about herself and tried to be in control of it. She indicated that if she had a different opinion than someone, she was more inclined to lean into that discomfort than shy away, as she was not afraid to self-examine or consider a different perspective.

Participation in Meetings and Journaling

Overall, the eight members remained engaged in all parts of the CTSG throughout the study. Every member participated in all three interviews and their planning meeting to lead a CTSG. For the most part, participants regularly attended group sessions, and most members were diligent about their journals. Maybelline had perfect attendance at group meetings and wrote in her journal for every entry. Of the other seven members, each only missed one or two meetings, most of which were due to illness or a pre-determined conflict. No one missed more than two of the 11 group meetings. Odette, Margaret, Savannah, Cindy, and Annie were consistent about their journaling and wrote for most, if not all, of the journal prompts. Blair wrote two journal entries, and Lydia wrote one.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I described each participant in detail, including an overview of where they lived and taught, how they came to music education, and their self-expressed experiences and opinions about dis/ability and race, respectively. Then, I shared any connections they saw at the outset of the study about the intersection of race and dis/ability and their self-expressed goals for participating in the group. After describing each participant individually, I considered how the individual members came together to communicate as a collective group and illustrated their

self-expressed communication styles. Finally, I described each persons' level of participation in the multiple aspects of the CTSG.

CHAPTER FIVE: INITIAL CONCEPTUALIZATIONS

In this chapter, I present participants' stated beliefs and described classroom practices as they described them at the beginning of the study. I also detail how they described these beliefs and practices to each other during the first CTSG. This first wave of data came from four sources: participants' opening interviews, the first CTSG meeting, participant reflection journal entries from after the opening interview and first group meeting, and researcher analytic memos.

Initial Conceptualizations about Race and Ability

In opening interviews, I asked participants to articulate any experiences they had with race and dis/ability separately and how they viewed these topics interrelating with each other and their classroom practices. I also asked participants to share any prior thinking or actions they had taken regarding race and ability in their personal and professional lives (see Appendix F for opening interview protocol). Each interview lasted between 40-55 minutes. After the interview concluded, I invited participants to reflect on their opening interview in their journal. Likewise, I wrote an analytic memo after interviewing each participant.

In the first CTSG, the individuals came together as a collective, established norms and goals for their work together, and expressed their initial views about race and dis/ability to other group members. The first CTSG was 90 minutes in length. After the meeting ended, I provided written reflection prompts for participants in their journals. All reflection prompts from this and subsequent CTSGs are in Appendix I. When coding the data, I used a combination of process and values coding (Saldaña, 2016), subsuming codes as necessary, allowing *in vivo* codes to emerge, and engaged in extensive researcher memoing throughout. As new codes emerged, I went back and recoded as necessary. I used 139 codes which I applied 487 times throughout the data. I then thematically grouped codes. The themes that emerged related to participants' initial

views and described behaviors were *A Continuum of Commitment*, *The Interaction Between Beliefs and Actions*, and *Self-Awareness*. I discuss each in detail below. Throughout the findings, I note sub-themes and individual codes in italics.

A Continuum of Commitment

To some degree, each person was interested, or at least expressed interest, in learning and exploring race and ability constructs, simply by the fact that they volunteered to participate in the CTSG. However, each person began the CTSG more knowledgeable about one topic (race or dis/ability) than another. Additionally, participant viewpoints on how they thought about the topics—and the steps they saw themselves taking in the future—varied. I first describe the continuum of prior experiences participants had regarding race and ability. Then, I expand on how the CTSG members described their desire to learn and explore these topics in their current and future teaching practices.

Prior Experiences

In initial interviews, participants had more overall experiences with the topic of dis/ability than race. Margaret and Savannah had immediate family members with lifelong physical dis/abilities and, as a result, grew up with dis/ability as a part of their everyday experience. They both expressed a greater understanding of the daily impact of a dis/ability on someone's life. While neither felt sufficiently prepared to teach music to students with dis/abilities, they felt as if their personal experiences at least gave them unique insight into their students' lives. Similarly, Annie's recent hard-of-hearing diagnosis had changed her perspective on her students with hearing dis/abilities and impacted her own engagement with the topic. Cindy and Lydia identified working with students with dis/abilities as a strength due to either their personal background or their ability to be flexible in the moment. While both expressed the

desire for more strategies, they felt as if what they were doing "was helping, at least I think it is" (Lydia, opening interview). Maybelline and Blake demonstrated the least engagement with dis/ability at the outset of the study. They mirrored the comments of several others, expressing that they "needed tools" (Maybelline, opening interview).

Several participants had independently spent time learning how to support students with dis/abilities in music. Odette had read several books on supporting students with dis/abilities in the music room. Lydia talked about attending dis/ability themed workshops at conferences, and Annie specifically focused on learning about hard-of-hearing students. However, neither had gone any further seeking information about dis/ability. In each of these situations, participants described their learning as a positive experience but remained frustrated that they had to do that work instead of being taught how to support students with dis/abilities in their preservice experiences.

On the topic of race, participants came to the CTSG with a wide variety of experiences and understandings about race and how race interacted with their teaching. Both Maybelline and Odette had spent quite a bit of time self-teaching about race, racism, and their own biases before joining the group. Maybelline mentioned books she had read, attending lectures from guest speakers at a local university, and "reading and listening in some Facebook groups" (opening interview). Similarly, Odette expressed how, for the last few years, she had been doing a lot of reading and learning about race, and she felt it was important for her to learn since she was now teaching in a more racially diverse school than she had been previously. She made it clear she had been working hard on her thinking and was eager to implement her racial learning in her teaching. While neither could name specific materials they had read, the way they spoke and their clarity on their own positionality provided evidence of this prior work.

Other participants described professional development they had attended about race, with varied effects. Margaret and Savannah had each participated in race or equity "trainings"¹² through their school district and were eager to continue their learning in the CTSG. Outside of school offerings, Savannah discussed podcasts she listened to about race while Margaret talked about a class on race she took in college that had shifted her thinking. Similar to Margaret and Savannah, Annie's principal had tried to get everyone in their building to read a book together about race, but she admitted she never read it. Annie mentioned sometimes following social media pages on race and music education. However, she never overtly engaged because "they get intense very quickly," and she did not "feel safe in music groups like that because I'm nervous someone's gonna screenshot it and send it to my principal when I'm just trying to be a better teacher" (opening interview).

Participants expressed confusion about how they had previously used terminology and why they had avoided race conversations. Lydia reported wanting to be an advocate for her few students of color, but that "terminology was confusing," and she was afraid of losing her job (opening interview). She also indicated that she knew that, because of her situation, it had been easier for her not to face racial topics before, stating, "I'm sure I have lots of biases and things I don't consider because it's not brought to my attention in any way" (opening interview). Blair expressed a similar ability to avoid thinking or talking about race in their community but also indicated that not talking about race contributed to some of the problems in their community. Blair described the first time they heard the term "Black Lives Matter" and that, at the time, they

¹² Many people colloquially use the term "training" when referring to PD experiences and treat it as a synonym to "education" or "professional learning experiences." However, "training" implies something vastly different than education or professional learning. In many ways, training implies a banking method of education for teachers (Freire 1970/2001), where educators are empty vessels who get filled with new material that they will then distribute to their students. In contrast, the terms "education" and "professional learning" allow for the teacher to be actively involved in a "liberatory" experience where they can conceptualize knowledge and apply it in unique ways. When I use the term "training," it is only because it is the word participants used to describe experiences.

did not even know what it meant, but that they have changed from how they used to think about race and racism, stating, "I know I have biases. We all do." Even in making these types of acknowledgments, participants regularly missed acknowledging the privilege they had to disengage from racial conversations.

Viewpoints on Future Engagement

I asked participants their motivations for joining the CTSG and what they wanted to get out of the group. In addition, when the group came together, I invited individuals to express their goals to each other. Most participants described a sense of urgency and importance they saw in exploring the topics of race and ability in their teaching. Other participants expressed a similar desire to learn but also listed reasons why taking action was too hard or why they had not yet started the work. A few participants said they were interested in being in the group to "listen to others" but did not display an eagerness to consider how race and dis/ability manifested in their own teaching.

This Is Important Work, and I Am Committed To Doing It. Most participants believed that it was necessary to engage in challenging dialogue, especially about race, for themselves as people and as educators. Odette, when discussing her new job in a more racially diverse school, made her goal explicit when she stated, "I think I can foresee there are things that I [will] need to address, and that's why I am so glad to be doing this study because I need to learn how to address student needs within a very diverse setting" (opening interview). Similarly, when discussing the opening CTSG reading, a Brené Brown chapter on vulnerability, Margaret discussed her desire to be a role model for her students.

I think this chapter really speaks to what we're going to have to go through to start having these hard conversations. We're going to have to shine the light in those dark corners on

our biases that we are subconsciously or consciously having every day. And I picked vulnerability and shame specifically because it ties into music as well. It is an art where you have to be vulnerable. And so, the fact that we are also putting ourselves in this position speaks to how, hopefully, we can all show that to our students as well (CTSG 1). Along similar lines, Maybelline articulated her interest in promoting greater cultural authenticity in her teaching.

I guess with music, I want to make sure that I'm not teaching 'Oh, here's this cute little song from Mexico and all their traditional clothes.' And that's all that Mexico is, is this little old folk song. I want to make sure that it's broader than just piece here, piece there. I want to talk about culture and community first and then branch out and be like, okay, well, I am not an expert in any of these. I'm only an expert in my own culture, but I have met with so-and-so, or I've gone to this workshop with this culture bearer and teach it that way or show a video. And I want to make things as authentic as I can (opening interview).

Other members echoed the desire for more authenticity and for exploring unconscious biases around race and culture. Lydia remarked, “I want to be a better person and a better teacher. I’m sure I have lots of biases and things I don’t consider, so it is important to unpack some of my own biases” (opening interview). In her interview, Annie remarked, “I think [music] should reflect the kids we see,” and described that she had a large Jewish population at her school (opening interview). In the first CTSG, Savannah summed up the group’s conversation on goals by stating,

[We need] to figure out better ways of educating our students. Cause that's always the end goal. Like that's the reason why we're in the classroom. So, anything, like any

opportunity, any conversation that we could have that would better educate our kids, I think would be a positive (CTSG 1).

Keeping Race and Dis/ability Separate. As participants discussed the importance of taking up this work, they either spoke in terms of students of color *or* students with dis/abilities. While they occasionally made generic statements about doing better regarding "diversity" or "equity," the participants continued to silo the two categories of students into separate groups and with different goals. While some participants were broadly familiar with the topic of intersectionality, none had specifically considered the intersection of the constructs of race and ability before participating in the study. Nevertheless, it seemed unanimous that regardless of explicitly stating their goal(s) or their ability to connect the topics of race and ability, each participant was interested in doing the best they could for the children they served. What differed was which topic—race or ability—seemed to matter more to them at the outset.

I Want To Engage But.... Participants gave justifications for their hesitation to act by regularly referencing things they felt were out of their control. They brought up several factors—external and internal—that they saw impeding their ability to engage in the topics of race and ability, both in their personal and professional lives. While *being at odds with my community* was the most robust external factor impacting engagement with race, participants cited that *a lack of training* impeded their actions when discussing ability. Internally, participants expressed feelings of *fear and helplessness*.

Being At Odds with My Community. While no one mentioned a disconnect between their community and themselves on the topic of ability, participants spoke at length about challenges they faced when they tried to address race in their classrooms. This was especially true for participants who lived in places where they perceived their personal values as contrasting with

those of their school and the local community. Such participants frequently cited *being at odds with their community* as a reason for their inaction prior to the study. When I asked about how she saw race operating in her classroom, Lydia remarked, "we don't spend a whole lot of time addressing it specifically, because it's a very difficult thing community-wise to address" (opening interview). She elaborated, "I live in an extremely white town, and even my black students are just used to, you know, keeping quiet and keeping their heads down" (opening interview). Similarly, Blair brought up that they live in Tennessee, "which is a state that just banned the teaching of critical race theory. Like fine, whatever, I wasn't gonna teach critical race theory anyway, but the message is clear—they don't want us talking about race" (CTSG 1). Blair went on to comment, "the legislators and administrators clearly have no idea what Critical Race Theory really is, and they have no idea we don't teach that." Cindy and Lydia echoed Blair's comments. They also lived in a state that banned CRT, making talking about race difficult. Blair further expressed their frustration about the racial mismatch between students and teachers at their school, commenting that the student body was racially diverse while the teachers were predominantly white. When they took their job, they replaced one of the few Black teachers in the district. Furthermore, they believed "the administration was doing nothing" to work on changing the teaching demographic (opening interview). Lydia was concerned that engaging in race topics in her school would result in her being fired, which she mentioned more than once. The fear of retaliation coupled with laws and policies that discouraged open dialogue at school to persuade each of these teachers that race was an untouchable topic.

Some participants felt as if their efforts were futile because their entire school was not working towards similar goals, especially about confronting racially inappropriate language. For example, Margaret discussed the struggle she had when she brought up race and equity

conversations in her classroom, stating, "there is only so much I can do when [racially inappropriate language] is being compounded during recess or stuff like that" (opening interview). Odette mirrored these feelings when she discussed confronting students in the hallway for using racist language. She remarked, "There was often hallway talk that was not appropriate. I would find myself often—too often for what I felt comfortable—[saying] ‘you can’t say that you know.’ And [the students] were like, ‘well, nobody’s here’" (opening interview). Lydia recalled one time she tried to stand up for a child who was being teased and called racial slurs, saying,

I talked to the kids that were calling her names a little bit, but just that feeling of absolute helplessness, like there was really nothing I could do about it. You know, there was really nothing that I could say that was gonna change these kids' minds, because the kids that were calling her names, honestly, like I was trying to explain to them why it was not okay, and they just didn't get it. Like there was no, no empathy for it (opening interview).

Racially inappropriate language came from more than just students. Margaret and Cindy talked about witnessing inappropriate language from other educators, parents, and administrators. Cindy recalled a parent conversation at a football game where her school's team was playing a team of almost all African American children. Another parent, when commenting about the size of the football players on the other team, stated, "What are they feeding those kids over there? Those are some big boys. If they didn't have to flunk them for four or five years, they wouldn't be so big." After relaying this parent comment, Cindy remarked, "I mean, some of that is sports smack, you know, but some of it is underlying racism" (opening interview). A lack of concern for racially inappropriate language in their community and schools left these educators feeling alone in their efforts to make a change.

Outside of school, several participants discussed that their belief systems, especially around race, were at odds with their own family members, making addressing race more complicated and challenging. Savannah, Maybelline, and Margaret each mentioned family members who had underlying biases in their thinking, but none of them had ever confronted their family members about it. Alternatively, Cindy discussed a time when she did confront her grandfather, but even when she described it, she excused his behavior. She said, "My grandpa said, 'Oh guys, I saw a colored man playing the piano the other day. And he did such a good job.' And I looked at him and said, 'Are you nuts?' He said, 'Well, I didn't know that those colored folks could play the piano like that.' I said, 'Have you ever heard of Scott Joplin? Who are you?' But you know, he was very closed off [growing up]" (opening interview). Cindy was not alone in excusing her family, as several others brushed off things their family or friends did that were inappropriate or racist, ultimately avoiding conflict.

Lack of Training. There was consensus across the entire group about a lack of education and training on both race and ability, but more so ability. Many expressed frustrations about the lack of preparation they received in their preservice experiences. Blair and Margaret both talked about the only education they received in college was a single general education course on special needs, with Blair mentioning "they tried to cover a lot from the laws all the way to technique. It was a very rushed course, and I don't feel like I got very much out of it" (opening interview). However, Blair and Margaret had received more education on students with dis/abilities than some of the veteran teachers in the group. Maybelline, Cindy, Annie, Savannah, and Odette all commented they received no education on working with students with dis/abilities in their college courses, and they instead had to rely on "on the job experience" (Annie, opening interview), "readings I have done" (Odette, opening interview), or "skimming articles here or

there" (Savannah, opening interview). In each instance, the educators felt that their educational experiences had let them down.

For others, a lack of training caused negative emotions. Annie talked about her feelings of embarrassment due to her lack of training on students with dis/abilities, saying,

I never got his IEP, but he's in a wheelchair, eating through a tube, but cognitively very smart and non-verbal. I have zero training, and I don't know anyone else like that [who's in a wheelchair]. So, it felt embarrassing as a teacher not to know how to talk to a student when he's probably bored out of his mind in the special needs music class (opening interview).

Similarly, Lydia felt helpless when a student in her class had an outburst, and she did not know how to calm him down. She discussed how she tried to implement support for her students over the years, but she was never sure she was doing the right thing. Lydia recalled a time she invented a calm down tool for a student, commenting, "You know, there is no proof that me working with them had anything to do with it [the child's improvement], but I'd like to think it was somewhat helpful" (opening interview).

Related, teachers believed a lack of school-wide supports impeded their overall ability to be successful in assisting students with dis/abilities. Odette commented, "They [students with dis/abilities] didn't have much help... there weren't enough support systems like with school psychologists or counselors or anything. There just weren't enough people and adults in the building to help them" (opening interview). Similarly, Cindy discussed a high turnover of special education staff in her district that contributed to a lack of communication regarding students with dis/abilities across her building. Perceived lack of training and building-wide support furthered participants' insecurity working with students who had dis/abilities in their classrooms.

In many instances where participants described situations they referred to as a *lack of training*, I noticed an accompanying lack of motivation to change something about their situation. Although several participants did seek out information past their collegiate degrees, others seemed to balk at the idea that the information was not already a part of their prior education to become teachers and preferred to bemoan the state of things. However, educational trends are constantly changing, and continuing education is a central component of the teaching profession. Even if participants received sufficient *training* on students with dis/abilities in their collegiate education, they would most likely still need to seek out further education.

Justification, Fear, and Helplessness. During initial conversations, participants justified their positions, claimed helplessness, and demonstrated their fear. Participants talked about being at odds with their community's attitudes and a lack of "training" as reasons for their lack of action. It is possible they were seeking some form of absolution from me as the researcher since I was asking the questions, although I tried to reassure them there was "no blame to be had" (analytic memo, 7/24/21). When discussing race, participant justifications for inaction most often fell along community and cultural lines. Participants expressed disagreement with their community at large or said that outside influences were tying their hands. Also, when discussing race, fear was clearly present: fear of messing up, fear of losing a job, fear of conflict, fear of saying the wrong thing or being judged unfairly, or fear of parents whose culture they did not understand.

I also identified helplessness pervading responses. When discussing dis/ability, participants commented they felt unprepared and "without a place to start" (Maybelline, opening interview). Participants' expressed helplessness about how IEPs were being gatekept by the office (Annie) or that they were never invited to IEPs or asked for their opinions (Savannah).

Savannah commented that the only reason she was there "was to be a warm body in the room" and not because she was going to contribute as the music educator (opening interview). Furthermore, they expressed helplessness about the overall teacher turnover and lack of personnel to support students with dis/abilities (Odette and Cindy). While they did seem eager to learn new skills or strategies for their classrooms, it was apparent they did not believe a solution existed that could combat the structural limitations of their jobs.

The Interaction Between Beliefs and Actions

In the opening interviews and the first CTSG meeting, some participants made comments, discussed prior actions, and demonstrated behaviors consistent with their stated beliefs and goals, while others did not. The spectrum of agreements and dissonances between participants' stated beliefs/goals and their conversations with others or descriptions of their classroom practices revealed themes including *embracing growth*, *utilizing new strategies*, *navigating white fragility*, and *deficit language*.

Embracing Growth

Some participants had already begun the work of noticing and verbalizing interconnections among music, race, ability, and schooling. In the opening CTSG, Maybelline articulated how she had already grown in her thinking by sharing a quote from one of the NSFG protocol entitled *Equity Perspectives* (Appendix D),

'Systematic mistreatment, such as racism, prejudice against people with disabilities, classism, or sexism, is more than the sum of individual prejudices. Thoughtful action about curriculum, pedagogy, school policies, and school organization is necessary to overcome the effects on people and institutions with a long history of prejudice and discrimination.' I didn't see that three years ago. Like, I didn't see any of that. After

reading and really digging into a lot of things I was like, oh my gosh, now I understand, but we still need to do our own work, too (CTSG 1).

Likewise, Odette commented on how her thinking has shifted because of cultural events of recent years and the ways it spurred her to learn.

So, I think the things that have come to light up front and center in the media in the last five, six, seven, eight years have created a push for a lot of people, including myself. And I'm just going to be honest because I was in a mostly White school for most of my career. And that was not something on my mind. Now with what is going on in our country and with the students that I teach, this is something that really needs to be looked at more. So, this last year, I did a lot of reading, mostly for myself (opening interview).

For both Odette and Maybelline, taking the time to learn and read had shifted their mindset dramatically. Similarly, Annie talked about "doing as much research as I can" about teaching Deaf or hard-of-hearing children (CTSG 1).

While some had focused on reading and self-teaching in recent years, others were actively trying to notice their students and their work environment. For example, after discussing a negative incident from the past regarding race in her classroom, Cindy commented, "that has caused me to really reflect on the social differences and try to understand" (CTSG 1). Similarly, Blair recognized that while they did not currently teach as many students with ability differences as other participants, they knew it was important to learn, stating, "I really want to learn any techniques or anything anyone has to offer because even if I don't have that challenge right now, that doesn't mean that it won't show up my entire career" (CTSG 1). Each of these examples reflects how participants had already changed their thinking and a sense of purpose moving forward.

Most of the participants discussed their desire to choose music that better reflected the cultures of their students, as well as their interest in learning the history of the repertoire. In a group conversation about researching song history, Annie commented, "I think [music] should reflect the kids you see" (CTSG 1). Savannah echoed this statement, saying, "I want [the students] to see the music of their own cultures in my classroom, and I was able to do this a little bit with my 5th graders this year" (CTSG 1). Similarly, Odette remarked, "Culture is music. Music is culture. All these pieces that American music teachers have been teaching for 50, 100, 200 years, you know... a lot of those we just can't teach anymore, and I have lists, and I can understand the reasoning behind them, but then it's also like, there's a lot of fine lines and, I don't know where those lines are, but I want to" (CTSG 1). Likewise, Maybelline wanted to understand the nuances better,

I think history is important. I don't want to get rid of all the old songs, and I do understand a lot of these songs were originally from the African American community, but literally everything has been appropriated in America with music. Pretty much everything. So, where do we draw the line? (opening interview).

While participants described a pervasive confusion regarding navigating the racial history of songs, and authentic representation of cultures in music, several participants shared strategies they used with success to support greater equity for their students in other ways. For example, Blair mentioned that drawing from students' home cultures had helped them in their classroom, "I've done a number of pieces in different languages where students have been able to contribute to the discussion. I even had one student teach us the actual song because she knew it from her home culture, from the Dominican Republic" (CTSG 1). While Blair's suggestion was representative of a positive moment from their classroom, and others seemed encouraged to

connect to their students' home cultures, I wondered if participants understood how to avoid harmful tokenization of students.

Using Strategies

Participants were eager to share successful strategies, particularly regarding including students with dis/abilities. Savannah talked about being solution-oriented for her students with dis/abilities and how she had her aunt 3D print an adaptive recorder for one of her students with a physical disability. Margaret shared about a unit she did with her self-contained classroom that involved learning ukulele with the help of a Chromebook. She recorded herself giving a series of five lessons, creating an independent study that children could take at their own pace, and repeat the lessons as often as they wanted. Each lesson included learning a chord, doing a play-along, and learning to read notation. Lydia also praised technology for allowing her to move around the room more and use proximity to support students by "tapping their shoulder or whatever they need because I can take my clicker and be anywhere in the room" (CTSG 1). Savannah shared her classroom seating chart strategy where she had all her students listed, including notes about how to support them marked on it so she did not have to remember every child's need every time. Participants seemed unaware that these successful stories contrasted with their claims of *needing more tools* to teach students with dis/abilities.

As of the initial interviews and first CTSG meeting, participants shared fewer strategies about how they had made shifts in their practice regarding race, but some shared how they were trying. For example, Savannah had shifted representation in her classroom.

I've tried really hard, and I felt pretty successful this past year in bringing in a lot of things that look like my kids, like we did a musician of the week, and I tried to be very conscious of representation. And so, when I looked back on the year, I had a lot of

women performers and singers and composers, and we had lots of black artists. We had lots of like, I had a few Middle Eastern artists and some East Asian, and I was like, I got a couple of Native American, and I was like, yes, did it. And then I've been trying to buy books with the characters that look like my kids (opening interview).

Margaret talked about being more intentional about her classroom management strategies and shifting her focus from equality to equity for her students of color, as well as removing barriers to learning.

I don't want to say I'm colorblind at all because that's not the case. You have to be equitable, not equal, in the classroom, and so if I have a student, I'm always telling my kids that you won't treat a broken arm with a Band-Aid. You'll treat what needs a Band-Aid with a Band-Aid, you'll treat a broken arm with a cast. And so, I have to make that very clear to my students...just trying to make it equitable and then also like removing as many barriers as I can remove in my classroom from them participating, you know? (opening interview)

More than sharing specific strategies, however, participants expressed eagerness to gain "tools," "strategies," and "resources" that would help them move forward with their goals for students of color. Even participants who explicitly named strategies they were already implementing in their classroom, like Savannah, Margaret, and Maybelline, still expressed fear that they did not know what to do next or where to learn more. Furthermore, when discussing strategies that had been previously successful for participants, insecurity remained, especially when it came to addressing race. Savannah summed up her racial timidity, even amidst making changes in her classroom, by saying,

I've tried to, not purposely on the DL, but just bring things in so [students] see themselves [in the materials]. It was easiest not to bring attention to it, but at least they could see themselves in the media and the things we were learning about. But I haven't brought any specific lessons related to race or related to what's happening in the world or anything just 'cause I don't know what to do with that as a white woman (opening interview).

Participants expressed eagerness to engage in these topics with others and with more intentionality. It appeared, at times, that participants were seeking some magic strategy or tool that must be just out of their reach or one that someone else must possess. They expressed a desire to connect with other music educators to "hear what they are doing" (Cindy, opening interview), which may have been less about learning, and more about combating the isolation they felt as the lone music teacher in the building. At other moments, participants seemed to look to me as the researcher to have answers to their questions or solutions for their fear, making comments like "you're the expert" (Lydia, opening interview), despite my assurances to them "expert" was not my role in this study or this group. Overall, the participants seemed not to realize the amount and variety of tools already at their disposal to support students of color and students with disabilities. More than once, participants said phrases like "I just need somewhere to start" (Maybelline, opening interview) despite having just shared a strategy they had used with apparent success.

Navigating White Fragility

Conversations in opening interviews and the opening group meeting bounced back and forth between dis/ability topics and race topics. When the conversation centered around race, I noticed participants exhibiting white fragility. DiAngelo (2018) described "white fragility" as a

set of defensive feelings and behaviors that white people engage in when confronted with race, racial discomfort, and how racism permeates society. Further, DiAngelo, a white woman herself, posited that white people engage in these feelings and behaviors—such as anger, defensiveness, arguing, fear, and guilt—to "reinstate white equilibrium as they repel the challenge, return our racial comfort and maintain our dominance within the racial hierarchy" (p. 1). The "antidote" to white fragility, according to DiAngelo (2018), is "to build up our stamina to bear witness to the pain of racism that we cause, not to impose conditions that require people of color to continually validate our denial" (p. 127). In this group of all-white music educators, conversations and behaviors in opening interviews and the opening group meeting occurred that demonstrated a spectrum, from moments where individuals leaned into their racial discomfort and were working through their feelings of fragility to others where participants embodied white fragility when race came up.

Participants who had done more reading and learning before joining the CTSG came to the group with a greater understanding of the role of race in society and their classrooms. For example, Maybelline discussed that after becoming an adoptive mother of children of color, she joined several multiracial motherhood groups and began "listening and reading and researching all the things I could." She later commented, "I finally think I've wrapped my head around the understanding of it, and my white guilt is not there anymore. Now it's more of, if I know better, I do better. And I'm not going to feel bad about what I did in the past...but I do understand how I've been part of that privilege" (opening interview). Savannah echoed this sentiment in the opening group meeting, stating that learning about race was

not about laying blame but about figuring out better ways of educating our students. I mean, we all want to push against that blame, and it's really not the end goal anyway. The

end goal is to learn, to teach and learn, so we can get rid of things that are harmful to our students and can bring in more things that will help them thrive (CTSG 1).

Margaret, when discussing a racial equity training she had attended the year prior, said, "this isn't about trying to make white people feel guilty, it's to acknowledge our own privilege, and that is going to bring more attention to privileges that don't exist for other people, so we can start to dismantle it" (CTSG 1).

Even at the outset of the study, Margaret and Savannah regularly demonstrated ease discussing their understanding of racial topics, including acknowledging their own positions of privilege. For example, Margaret stated, "because of these internal biases we have [I'm] just researching ways I can make it really equitable" (opening interview). Savannah discussed a professional development on culturally responsive teaching that her district provided and how that had shaped her "racial noticing," saying,

I think a lot of seeing, as stupid as it sounds, seeing the things that people talk about online and pointing out my own blind spots. A lot of it was people talking about how you can't just not be racist. You need to be anti-racist and being quiet is just as hurtful as being a loud yee-haw. You know, silence doesn't help anybody. So... you're either being actively [helpful] or you're being actively detrimental (opening interview).

Some participants described their desire to, or experiences with, speaking out about race. Annie stated her desire to "no longer be quiet" and was looking for ways to explain why certain songs were no longer appropriate to her colleagues, even when it was uncomfortable (opening interview). Odette and Lydia both described situations where they called out racially inappropriate behavior they witnessed, although both expressed feeling unsuccessful at their attempt because they did not see their efforts changing anyone's mind about race. Despite this

insecurity, Odette expressed that she was not afraid to continue pushing back in conversations and demonstrated that in the first group meeting. Likewise, Blair demonstrated speaking out when they questioned something Cindy said in the first meeting, and they did not attempt to sidestep the conversation when it got uncomfortable.

Just as there were times when participants leaned into tension and engaged with racial conversations, other times, participants fell back on conversational strategies that embodied white fragility. One of the most prominent ways white fragility manifested for participants was conflict avoidance. In each opening interview, I asked participants to reflect on their "conversational style" and how they responded when they felt their ideas were being challenged. Overwhelmingly, participants expressed trepidation at conflict, especially racial conflict. Savannah remarked, "conflict absolutely terrifies me," while Maybelline stated, "I'm not the kind of person that confronts people, and I hate conflict" and expressed fear about leading the conversation with the group when it was her turn (opening interviews). Lydia expressed similar reticence about leading the group for fear of misspeaking. Similarly, Annie discussed her overall fear that things she might say would be taken out of context, which is why she chose not to engage in any social media groups on music, race, and culture. In these moments, participants demonstrated the enormous privilege they had as white educators to avoid racial conflict, a privilege that BBIA educators (and students) do not have.

Interestingly, no one brought up fear of conflict or demonstrated avoidance behaviors when discussing dis/ability, only race. Instead, participants displayed greater ease when discussing dis/ability. While participants continued to bemoan their lack of training, they were not afraid to talk about their students with dis/abilities or experiences with dis/ability in their

classroom. Although fear did not play into the conversations around dis/abilities, deficit language occasionally did.

Deficit Language

There were times throughout opening interviews and the first group meeting that participants used terminology that did not match their stated goals towards equity for students with dis/abilities. As discussed in Chapter 2, deficit language is a way of speaking that reduces a student to only their disability and positions the blame for the reduction *within* the student (Laes & Westerlund, 2018; Titchkosky, 2001). Some participants made remarks such as "I have a couple with severe disabilities" (Maybelline, opening interview), while others used dis/ability-first language instead of person-first language, such as "an ADHD kid" or the "self-contained kids" (Cindy, interview). Similarly, participants were quicker to discuss students in their classrooms with dis/abilities that were either physical or whose dis/ability was "disruptive to the class" or "made the concert harder," (Lydia, interview) while they rarely mentioned hidden dis/abilities, such as dyslexia or mental health issues. Only Margaret drew connections between dis/ability, mental health, and trauma, remarking on the overlaps and how each "can affect how you learn" (opening interview).

While deficit language was occasionally present, it did not manifest in ways that demonstrated participants were aware of it, nor was it ever used maliciously. More commonly, participants used deficit language in attempts to accurately describe their student(s) or teaching situation. Language structures change over time and across regions of the United States, and participants used the words available to them. For example, Margaret, Savannah, and Blair were a whole generation younger than other participants and therefore experienced a different preservice educational culture that clearly promoted the use of updated discourse surrounding

dis/ability. Alternatively, Cindy and Lydia both lived in the (self-described) rural south and spoke about student ability differences in plain and concise language that was often identity-first. Nevertheless, regardless of region or age, teachers have the responsibility to consider impact over intent when describing students in deficit terms.

Self-Awareness

As with any group of unique individuals, there was little uniformity in how participants approached the topics of race and ability, in either their belief systems or described classroom practices. Participants also varied greatly in their levels of self-awareness. Self-awareness is the ability for a person to look within themselves and reflect on the meaning behind their thoughts and behaviors (Duval & Wicklund, 1972; Morin, 2011). Some were self-aware, looking inward to explore and challenge the ways they thought and acted, while others seemed to only look outward, with less recognition about how their beliefs, words, and actions interacted with the world around them. In addition to a continuum of self-awareness in general, this self-awareness also differed within participants based on whether the conversation was on race or ability. That is, individuals tended to have one area (race or dis/ability) in which they displayed stronger self-awareness.

Some participants appeared to be self-aware across both constructs. As mentioned, Margaret and Savannah had an immediate family member with a lifelong dis/ability that impacted their understanding of ability. In addition, both had participated, through required experiences and personal choice, in furthering their learning about race and their own biases intersected with their classroom. Odette had taken it upon herself to engage in learning and re-learning on both topics and expressed an urgency to learn that she had not had in years prior.

Other participants varied in their self-awareness based on the topic and from moment to moment. Maybelline, Blair, and Annie seemed self-aware about their own dis/abilities and how dis/ability impacted their lives. However, of the three, only Annie seemed to draw the connections between her own dis/ability and students with dis/abilities. While Maybelline and Blair were open to talking about their own dis/abilities, neither seemed to connect to how that impacted them as a teacher or how that might inform how they engaged with students. Racially, Maybelline and Annie seemed aware of their whiteness and the systemic privileges that provided. Maybelline approached race topics with a sense of urgency and fear for her adoptive children's safety. In contrast, Annie approached race from a less personal place, saying she wanted "to have more knowledge of why [certain songs should not be used anymore] and be able to say that to someone" (opening interview). Although Blair was willing to acknowledge that they had racial biases and could recognize a disconnect between student and teacher populations at their school, their self-awareness about how race operated within their classroom was not readily evident. Lydia seemed to be in a similar place, admitting she wanted to advocate but did not know how and that she did not see race manifest in her classroom often. In contrast, Lydia was very focused on learning and "doing better" for students with dis/abilities (opening interview). Generally, Lydia displayed a sense of fear that she was doing the wrong thing or was messing up, but when she talked about dis/ability, she demonstrated a greater sense of self-confidence and awareness than when discussing race.

Cindy remained the outlier in many ways from the other group members. Cindy spoke in ways that indicated she cared for her students, both those with dis/abilities and those that were BBIA. She spoke of wanting to learn and have strategies to take back to her classroom that "worked for other people" (opening interview). Yet, she often used language with the opposite

implications. She seemed to have no idea that her words implied a deficit view of both students with dis/abilities and especially students of color. During the first CTSG, it became quickly apparent that Cindy's views, and lack of self-awareness about how she spoke on them, were quite distinct from the other members.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I described participants' initial conceptualizations about race and ability in both their belief systems and their described classroom practices. Participants displayed a continuum of commitment to the topics of race and ability, both in their prior experiences and in their plans going forward. Sometimes, participants' words revealed their desire to explore race and ability in their thinking and teaching, while other times, they made excuses for inaction. Participants were eager to share how they had already made changes, embraced growth, and utilized strategies in their teaching.

The topics of race and ability brought out different types of responses in participants. Participants' emotions and language choices were markedly different when discussing dis/abilities than when addressing race. When discussing race, each person was at a different stage of navigating emotions and behaviors associated with white fragility. When dis/ability conversations took place, veteran teachers occasionally used deficit language to describe their students, while younger teachers seemed more comfortable and practiced with updated terminology. Furthermore, veteran teachers reflected this deficit view in their description of their classroom practices. Finally, participants displayed a range of self-awareness and willingness to interrogate their own thinking and behavior.

CHAPTER SIX: CHANGES IN PARTICIPANTS' BELIEFS AND SELF-DESCRIBED ACTIONS

In this chapter, I consider how, if at all, participants' mindsets or described practices changed because of participation in the CTSG. As described in Chapter five, participants' initial conceptualizations of race and ability in their teaching practices reflected varied knowledge and continuum of commitment towards the topics. Additionally, participants displayed a broad spectrum of agreements and dissonances between their stated beliefs/goals and how they interacted with each other, as well as described their classroom practices. In tandem with this, participants presented varying levels of self-awareness about how their conceptualizations, beliefs, language, and described classroom practices either did or did not align. Participants then engaged in the semester-long CTSG, which included 11 group meetings (every other week for 90 minutes each time), two additional interviews (one midway through fall 2021 and one at the conclusion of the study in December 2021), weekly reflective journaling, and participation in a private Facebook group. Each participant also led one of the CTSG meetings and met with me to plan their session ahead of time.

I analyzed all the data for this chapter separately from the initial data set. I used a combination of process and values coding (Saldaña, 2016), subsuming codes as necessary, allowing *in vivo* codes to emerge, and engaging in extensive researcher memoing throughout. As new codes emerged, I went back and recoded as necessary. I used 113 codes, which I applied 1,667 times throughout the data. I then thematically grouped and compared against the coding from the first data set, looking for changes in participants' language, behaviors, thinking, and stated beliefs. The themes that emerged from this process were *Becoming More Aware* and *Lighting a Spark (or Fanning the Flame)*. I discuss each in detail below. Throughout the findings, I note sub-themes and individual codes in italics.

Becoming More Aware

Throughout the semester, participants completed readings, wrote reflections, and engaged in conversations and activities with other group members that contributed to them *becoming more aware*. Indeed, in exit interviews during December 2021, five of the eight participants used the exact phrase “more aware” when describing self-perceived changes. Themes related to their increased awareness included *revisiting their past* and *the practice of noticing*.

Revisiting Their Past

In recalling stories from their past, I noticed participants making realizations about the ways that racism and ableism were operating that they had not noticed before. Reflection-on-action is a commonly used tool in teacher practice and is recognized by some as its own form of intelligence (Boud, 2010; Schön, 1983). In one-on-one interviews and CTSG meetings, participants reflected on their upbringing and formative experiences related to race and dis/ability to consider what, if any, impact the experiences had on their current thinking and behavior. For example, in the mid-point interview, I asked participants to recall the first time they could remember becoming aware of their own race or the ways racism operated. I asked a similar question about their understanding of ability. In recounting these experiences, participants shared sentiments that displayed their growing understanding of how racism and ableism operated in their lives. Additionally, recounting those experiences appeared to give participants the necessary space to acknowledge their positions of privilege as well as demonstrate shifts in their thinking. For example, Savannah said,

I definitely wasn't aware of the level to which racism is still a thing, up, at least until college and even further into adulthood, a lot of my awareness of it was from people I met after I started teaching who were advocates and would post things or say things that I

hadn't thought of before... I mean, I knew there were stereotypes, but I was like, "Oh, I know this is a thing that people think, but that's not actually how people are." It was really not in my field of vision at all, which is kind of cringy to think about (mid-point interview).

Similarly, Annie realized that there was a difference between merely accepting difference and celebrating it when talking about her family upbringing, "I just think in the area we grew up, we didn't talk about it. We didn't know anything... there was an accepting nature, but there was not a real celebration of culture. We just tolerated differences, I guess" (mid-point interview). Odette summed up how she was rethinking her past by saying, "It's just being aware of some of the things I should have been doing that I haven't been doing. And then taking that awareness, and now I need to make it a habit" (CTSG 6). These realizations differed from the outset of the study where participants, even those who were already more committed to engaging in race and ability conversations, seemed hesitant to interrogate their thinking patterns and prior behavior.

Participants also relayed stories from their classrooms throughout the group meetings and interviews. Often, participants speculated about what they might have done or said differently. For example, Blaire shared a realization they had about an individual student that shifted their view on all their students:

I had a student in my GarageBand class this last semester who has severe autism, right? And so, she was mostly there just to do peer interactions and interact with the people around her, but now I am asking, "how much could she participate? How much could she be a part of everything that we're doing, but also, what are her specific needs?" And at first, I was only looking at it as a "how much can I get her into everything?" and not necessarily looking at "what does she necessarily need out of this experience? What is

she looking for?” And then doing that for all of my students in the same way, not just, “How much can they do? How much can they get done? How much can I show off to the admin? Look at how much they're doing.” But really looking at “what do they need out of this experience on an individual level?” (exit interview).

Similarly, Cindy talked about how she felt her eyes were opened about how she enacted classroom behavior management in the past, stating, "I have really had to stop and examine that about myself. Do I have a bias there because I let that kid slide or because I picked on a kid that's more hyper? (exit interview). While reflecting on one of her lessons, Maybelline shared "I had a couple of kids that just couldn't join in, and then I realized I should have thought ahead of time about their ability and where kids could feel successful [in this lesson]" (CTSG 9). These types of reflections did not occur in opening interviews or the first CTSG meeting. At that time, participants did not outwardly process their motivations or rethink their lessons, nor did they seem to know what questions to ask. However, by the end of the CTSG, participants seemed more eager to question and challenge both themselves and others.

The Practice of Noticing

Participants increased their awareness by engaging in exercises and conversations that encouraged *noticing*. First, I curated materials that asked participants to look inward and interrogate their own privileges, prior thinking, and biases. Then, CTSG materials began to take that noticing into their current lives, their teaching situations, and their communities. Finally, participants engaged in conversations and activities that encouraged them to practice noticing on systemic and structural levels. A complete list of activities, readings, and videos used to facilitate these experiences are in Appendix E.

The practice of noticing involved participants making explicit the things they saw in themselves and in their daily lives. Participants worked to *define terms* and *notice their own language*, as well as *acknowledge challenging feelings* like shame and guilt. They also began to discuss the United States' systemic racial and discriminatory systems, articulating where they saw *fault lines in the system*. Finally, they worked to *notice how race and ability intersected with music education*.

Defining Terms and Noticing Language. Defining terms was a crucial part of several meetings. Participants, individually and collectively, did not have uniform ways to talk about terms like bias, equity, racism, ableism, systemic, normal, and more. Co-constructed definitions became crucial to understanding each other throughout the rest of the meetings, and participants regularly referred to these definitions in moments of uncertainty. I provided options and facilitated conversations through this process but refrained from presenting myself as the expert. Instead, I encouraged the participants to navigate finding working definitions together via the readings provided. The process of defining terminology gave participants a vocabulary to work with throughout the semester, and this increased knowledge mitigated confusion that I noticed in opening interviews.

At the beginning of the study, participants would hesitate or express uncertainty about their words when trying to talk about race or ability. For example, Annie said, "I struggle to be able to use the correct reasoning and language when sharing my viewpoint" (first journal entry). However, through building a shared vocabulary, participants began to articulate their thinking more clearly. Participants referenced this growth in their vocabulary as a positive outcome, as when Odette said, "I feel like I have a better handle on what I want to say, and how to say it" (exit interview) or Blair realized, "I know I am more mindful of the things I say now" (exit

interview). Cindy wrote in her final journal entry, "I feel as if I can approach the subject with more confidence because of it, and this is much different than at the beginning! At the beginning [of the CTSG], I didn't really know how to begin the conversation" (journal entry, 12/10/21).

Acknowledging Challenging Feelings. Throughout the CTSG, participants sometimes expressed experiencing challenging feelings such as shame, fear, and guilt. While participants occasionally implied difficult feelings in some of their opening interviews, no one explicitly named them or interrogated why they might be feeling a specific way. Throughout the CTSG, participants began naming these moments for themselves, articulating moments of discomfort, shame, fear, and guilt, especially as they sought to uncover their own biases. Often this process of naming their feelings took place in participants' journals. For example, Maybelline indicated, "I have a lot of guilt that I should be more intentional about living in an area with more POC for my [Black] children to feel included" (journal entry, 9/21/21) while Cindy wrote, "I find myself feeling uncomfortable in a group of unknown people discussing [these topics]. I know I can make mistakes in front of them with what I say" (journal entry, 10/12/21).

At times, participants went beyond simply noticing and naming the emotion to interrogating why they felt it and wondering what purpose that emotion may or may not serve for them. This was especially true when conversations centered around race. In the third CTSG, Margaret interrogated her own need to apologize. "I think we keep wanting to apologize because we want to feel better. It's not focused on 'I'm sorry for hurting you.' It's 'I'm sorry, please forgive me so I can feel better about myself,' because I'm feeling bad." Similarly, Savannah questioned the discomfort she often felt when having conversations about race by stating "Unlearning racist behaviors can be hard and being called out for those behaviors doesn't feel good even though it's good growth. I think it's this fear, and the potential for embarrassment and shame, that is what

keeps me from speaking out about racial issues more" (journal entry, 10/12/21). Participants began to work through these feelings, and in naming them, they were able to start to work past them towards more productive feelings centered on taking action.

Naming Fault Lines in the System. At the outset of the study, participants gave reasons for their lack of prior engagement on topics of race and ability, often citing being at odds with their community, school, or other family members. They also lamented a general lack of training, particularly about ability. However, as the CTSG progressed, participants began noticing and naming *fault lines in the system*. They started to connect their noticing to both their own schools and the larger system present in U.S. education. As participants began to make realizations about how race and ability operate in schools, they started to question structures behind what they saw, such as funding disparities, lack of leadership, and a lack of communication about student goals. For example, when talking about a lack of funding to support students with dis/abilities, Lydia commented, "It does just come down to the time aspect and down to funding... When I think of school funding my heart gets weird. I get a lump in my throat because there is just not enough, not just for music education, but for education. It is so low on the list, and it makes me sad" (CTSG 7). Related, Cindy commented on funding and how she saw funding contributing to racial disparities, remarking how private schools are enabling further segregation in her state:

There were four private schools and two public schools. When I visited the private schools, they were all white kids. And I went to public school, and they were all black kids. And one of the black teachers there, I kind of, I looked at her, I was like, "Wow, this is a little different population in this school than I was at last time." And she said, "Yeah, private schools are the new... are just how the south..." well, she didn't say the south, but

she said that it's how the south segregates now, more or less, that's what segregation is.

It's private school versus public school (CTSG 7).

Later, in the same CTSG, Odette and Cindy began commenting on the challenges of working with self-contained classes of students with special needs as well as mainstreaming the same students in with their general education peers during music time. Specifically, they noted the lack of conversation at the district or building level regarding setting goals for special education students. Cindy remarked

Yeah, I remember we had our self-contained come to us by themselves one year, and it was kind of cool because we could work on getting them to respond to things, or like work on stuff that was more specific to them... And then they started coming with gen ed instead, and I asked the principal about it, and she was like, "Well, it's their inclusion time." And that's the reason that I've been given, is it's their inclusion time. And now that you say, "Okay, well, what's the goal?" And I'm like, "Okay, so are they just in my room just to be around gen ed average people, just like to be out in the world, or do we have an actual academic musical goal for them?" 'Cause I feel like that's kind of maybe a bit of a low standard, just to be, "Hey, I exist, and that's the reason that they're in my room" (CTSG 7).

Odette continued this conversation by asking,

Do we have goals for a grade level or for our curriculum, or is there a way that we can have goals based on each student's ability? Who decides this, and when do we have these conversations? If they don't want the challenge of performing with others, do we focus on something else for them? Or if they want to just be a music appreciator, do we like... are lenient with some things and focus on others? How do we quantify that? With that many

bodies in the room? And I don't know if there's an answer to that. But no one is talking about it (CTSG 7).

Participants were willing to challenge the status quo in their schools and education in general.

They also began to see how existing systems operated in musical spaces.

How Constructs of Race and Ability Intersect in Music. Participants began this CTSG with varying levels of prior knowledge about how race and ability intersected within music education. None of them had considered how the two topics might be related to or reinforce each other. As a result of participating in readings and activities during CTSG meetings, participants grappled with how the constructs of race and ability were operating in music spaces, and specifically in their own teaching. Participants discussed *the importance of representation* and *making their lessons inclusive with intentionality*.

The Importance of Representation. In opening interviews, participants barely spoke of representation. The only person who brought up the topic of representation was Maybelline, and it was not about representation in the classroom. Rather, it was in the context of being an adoptive mother to children who are BBIA. The group first discussed representation during the second CTSG meeting, where participants considered how they did or did not see themselves represented in mainstream media. Although most of the group were white-presenting women, only two participants felt well-represented by mainstream media. The remaining six participants shared feelings of marginalization based on their less-visible identity points, such as sexual orientation, weight, religious beliefs, or having a dis/ability. After meeting in small groups based on how well represented they felt, Margaret shared,

While visually and on the surface level, we saw a lot of representations of ourselves—white, cis, hetero women playing traditional roles—it's only one piece of our identity. But

we recognize that we see ourselves a lot more than probably other groups do. But there are layers that we talked about to our own identity that are pieces that aren't represented that are equally important, I think (CTSG 2).

Reporting from the group who did not feel well-represented, Maybelline elaborated,

Yeah, in our group, we talked about sexuality, we talked about fertility and miscarriages, and we talked about weight and religion...all things that we felt like we didn't fit into the stereotypical representation in the media and maybe never even saw it at all. And how difficult it is to watch a TV show that you don't feel you can relate to (CTSG 2).

This led to a conversation about representation in the classroom. Teachers began acknowledging the *importance of representation in musical selections*, their use of *inclusive language*, and *visual representations in their classrooms*. Participants noticed areas where their students' characteristics did or did not match the things they taught and discussed how important representation is for student success. More than just realizing that representation mattered, participants understood they should not make a snap judgment about what they thought represented someone, but instead, they should take time to understand nuances that went beyond a single identity point. In particular, Odette wrote in her journal on the importance of taking time to learn about her students, "I can blend in/stand out as much or as little as needed. There is space for me to succeed in most places. Some of my students don't have this privilege. I hope to create a space in my classroom where all students can feel this way. I think listening and taking time to explore and further understand their identities will be very helpful" (journal entry, 8/23/21).

Making Lessons Inclusive with Intentionality. In addition to considering the value of representation for students, participants demonstrated increased intentionality when designing

lessons. In the first few sessions, participants often discussed inclusion in their lessons as a modification or accommodation for a specific child or as something they changed about a pre-existing lesson. For example, Savannah reflected in her journal, "I think ableism has been the unconscious default [in my classroom] because I find myself focusing on my 'regular' lesson first, then seeing how my students with disabilities can fit into the 'regular'" (journal entry, 10/12/21). In addition, in the beginning, participants did not readily equate inclusion issues with the broader topic of equity and viewed inclusion as a term that only related to students with dis/abilities.

By the end of the semester, participants had expanded their definition of inclusivity to have a wider equity lens. Instead of framing inclusion as a modification done after the fact, participants began talking about lesson planning that involved intentionally considering inclusion at the outset, using tools like UDL to guide them. Lydia posed a question to the group during CTSG 10 that summed up her shift in thinking. "What if, instead of a micro-adjustment in the moment, we tried to make macro adjustments while we were planning? What would our lessons look like then?" Similarly, Cindy started considering what inclusive planning might mean for BBIA students when she reflected, "If I am using [culturally responsive teaching] to provide an inclusive learning space that validates their presence, then they can connect to lessons. They can tap into power they already have.... that's awesome, that's an awesome thing to do" (CTSG 9). These examples demonstrate how participants saw inclusion differently from the beginning of the CTSG and felt empowered to start enacting it in their classrooms.

Lighting a Spark (Fanning the Flame) for Continued Discovery, Reflection, and Action

One of the most robust findings in the second wave of data analysis was participants' desire to continue learning, discovering, and reflecting about race and ability in both their

thinking and teaching. At the outset of the study, participants expressed a lack of direction for what to do or how to do it. However, by the conclusion of the CTSG, participants described and demonstrated confidence to *ask tough questions* of themselves and each other, which led to *new realizations, setting goals*, and, for some, *taking action*.

Asking Tough Questions

From the beginning of the CTSG, participants asked many questions—of themselves, of me, and each other. What shifted, however, was the type and direction of the questions. At the outset, participants asked unfocused, generic questions and questions that implied there was only a single answer. Further, they primarily directed their questions at me, despite my efforts to de-center myself as an expert. Examples of initial questions included asking “where can I start,” “what I do with a [dis/ability label] kid,” as well as requesting absolution for negative feelings or fear, and desiring clarification for confusion. Sometimes, participants framed their questioning more as a reluctant acceptance or an excuse than an inquiry, such as “I just don’t know where to start.” For example, Savannah questioned how to bring challenging conversations into her classroom, stating, “I want to, but I don’t feel like I have a first step” (opening interview), while Maybelline stated, “I just want a starting point, I guess” (opening interview). Similarly, Annie stated, “I just feel really unprepared to do this, and I need practical tools” (opening interview).

However, by the end of the CTSG, almost all the participants were asking radically different questions. Not only were they asking more productive and challenging questions, but they were also asking of themselves and each other instead of me. Margaret shifted her questions regarding helping students with disabilities in music, stating,

In music education, disability has often been excluded from real goal-oriented music education. Even though this goes against inclusive policy and practices. I thought that

was interesting to think about and think about, what is our definition of real music education? Like what are we trying to teach these kids? And how inclusive is it if it doesn't align with the abilities or disabilities of our students? (CTSG 7).

Further, participants occasionally recognized the shift in their questioning. Odette remarked on her shifting thinking, stating, "I was asking 'how do I work with students with disabilities,' but now I am asking 'how am I unconsciously missing it within my classroom, and operating as if ability is the default'" (CTSG 6). The questions participants asked continued to shift in both nature and direction as the CTSG progressed. By the end, most were asking them in ways that demonstrated they felt empowered and were embracing non-closure over a "right" answer.

Further, they took it upon themselves to seek answers and keep questioning. Lydia remarked,

It makes me more careful every time I teach a lesson. I'm definitely asking myself 'why?' more than I used to. And looking up more about every song and making sure it's worthy. Just because it's in *Purposeful Pathways*¹³ does not necessarily make it this amazing thing" (exit interview).

Similarly, Odette expressed her growing comfort with non-closure, stating, "I don't know the answer yet, but I am focusing more on just spending time loving kids and slowing down [with them] as I figure out how that [inclusivity] looks in my classroom" (exit interview). Embracing non-closure was a crucial shift for several participants. They began to understand that there was no endpoint or a magical solution that could signify they had completed this work. Instead, they began to see that this was a lifelong journey.

¹³ *Purposeful Pathways* is an elementary general music curriculum series by Roger Sams and BethAnn Hepburn.

Reframing Language and Thinking

As participants progressed through the CTSG, they began to reframe their language and thinking. Often this came in the form of asking for advice or sharing suggestions with peers during group meetings. For example, in the fourth meeting, Maybelline was sharing a story and struggled with what word to choose when Margaret stepped in to help:

Maybelline: So, I was saying how normalcy is described as whiteness and ... (paused)

Margaret: Able-bodied?

Maybelline: Thank you, I was suddenly like, how do I even say this without saying the word 'normal,' you know? (CTSG 4).

Throughout the semester, participants shared how an experience from one of the sessions had "stuck with them," and they were reframing their thinking as a result. For example, Odette reflected on a session where the group spent time considering hidden biases in their teaching. She remarked, "I shared in the group how I hadn't really included other cultures much in my lessons (mostly because I hadn't learned about them in-depth). I think this plays into my implicit bias that European-based music is the "superior" music. I think the way I have to reframe this is to dive deep into learning some history of other musical genres. I think this shows how ignorance can exacerbate bias (journal entry 8/29/21). In a later meeting (CTSG 9), Odette shared a lesson with the group she created about Diwali, which she mentioned she designed as a direct result of this self-discovery.

Making New Realizations

Participants made *new realizations* during the CTSG, especially about how the constructs of race and ability interact with the musical space. Through the course of the CTSG, participants began making connections between music and each construct independently, as well as how race

and ability intersected with each other, both in music and in their lives. Participants struggled to maintain an intersectional look at the two constructs and balance discussing race and ability simultaneously. Despite the challenge of balancing the two ideas together, which I discuss in Chapter Eight, participants acknowledged they were beginning to see ways the two constructs connected. For example, Odette began noticing trends in her school, remarking.

Yeah, I totally see that I've got a variety of students, and my students of color are in the self-contained classrooms, almost exclusively. They are substantially more likely to have an IEP or a 504 than my white students are. And I've got some white students that definitely need to be on there and definitely aren't getting the services that they should be getting (CTSG 4).

Similarly, Blair commented,

The thing that really sticks out to me, especially in my school district, is the ways that race and ability interplay with each other. I have a school that has biases, and those biases are, I'm talking about my coworkers at this point, are pretty blatant, and sort of just there, and they'll talk about our changing demographic because we don't have as many white kids as we used to, and they think that that correlates to [the fact that] we now don't have kids that perform as well. And that became a self-fulfilling prophecy at my school where they did worse on all our tests.... all our scores were worse last year. I mean, yes, because of COVID, but also because people just sort of had bad opinions about the students that were in our school, and they had lower expectations for the demographic of kids that were there, and because of that, all our test scores went down (exit interview).

Sometimes participants made realizations that opened new questions. For example, because Cindy had started to draw connections between race and ability, she began questioning how fair she was being with discipline. She said,

I've always tried to treat every child with the same love, with the same patience. I tell you, what has been the hardest for me is students who have ADHD. And students who are just, I mean, you can't have a conversation cause they're just, the little boy who acts like a monkey during the class period. And then, looking at a lot of those kids happen to be black. A lot of those kids do, not all, but there is a large majority of my students who act that way, who are black (mid-point interview).

Even in this moment of reflection and growth, Cindy's use of the term "monkey" to describe her student was an example of how deeply embedded she remained in racist discourse, as well as her ignorance of its presence in her speech.

Another example of someone making a realization that led to further questions was when Annie shared she had discovered there was Black Sign Language. She commented, "But I wonder about the students that come into my school that are black. If they come from a deaf family, are they using black sign language? I have no idea. And is it offensive to ask them? (mid-point interview). Each of these moments demonstrated a moment of growth for participants, where they began noticing things and structures at play, both in themselves and in their schools, that they had not noticed before. Yet, as Cindy's example showed, growth and questioning was not always linear.

Setting Goals and Taking Action

In the beginning, participants were vague and unclear about their goals. However, by the end of the CTSG, most participants had set goals for themselves that demonstrated intentionality

and direction. Multiple people expressed their goal to continue reading and learning. Lydia, Savannah, Cindy, Maybelline, and Odette each shared their plan to go back and read more of *Courageous Conversations* and *Equity by Design*, both of which I pulled selected chapters from for group readings. Cindy and Lydia both planned to revisit their lessons using UDL. Both Odette and Margaret talked about making plans to initiate conversations with other teachers and administrators in their building. Margaret shared

I'd really like to lead a session on these things for either a smaller group or just present it to my principal. 'Cause I wanna share some of this information. It was super helpful to me, and I just feel like other people don't... have the same information. And then obviously, really taking that into consideration with my teaching processes as I'm continuing with the year (exit interview).

Some discussed taking their learning directly into their classrooms and their personal lives. Annie expressed her desire to learn about her students' cultures more and work to incorporate that into her classroom. She talked about taking some summer courses and applying for funding. She also mentioned that she felt that the band director in her district was on the same page as her, as well as her principal, so she was looking forward to being in conversation with them in the future. Similarly, Odette felt it was essential to

Keep conversations going with not just people at work but in general. You know what I mean, like in life. I think it's important to talk about things, but at work, I think, once we get this rolling, I'm going to try to take a leadership position to push it further, to connect the community. I really think that each district should have a community or a parent liaison. So, not that I'm going to spend all my time outside of work, doing something like

that for free, but just finding a way to connect more and think about 'how can we create equity within our community?' (exit interview).

Others echoed this sentiment, discussing how they planned to start conversations with family members and friends about what they learned during the CTSG. The urgency, focus, and desire to set goals and enact equitable changes for BBIA students and those with dis/abilities was completely different from the beginning of the study.

Just as some were setting goals, others were still processing. In their exit interview, Blair talked about how they wanted to set goals, but, for them, one semester was not enough time to process and that they needed more time to think about the information. Savannah echoed this sentiment, sharing, "I am trying to be in what I call 'soak mode.' I just need to soak everything that I possibly can and then sit down and spend as much time as I need thinking and processing it out" (exit interview). Each demonstrated self-awareness about their needs and knew that when they were ready, goal setting was next.

Beginning the Action. Two participants took their goals directly into action. After the CTSG ended, I received unsolicited messages from Odette and Lydia, both of whom had set their goals in motion. Odette messaged me to say, "I just wanted to let you know that I started an application for a grant to create equity committees at my school. My administration is all for it!" (text message, 1/12/22). Similarly, Lydia texted pictures of how she had changed her drumming lesson to involve UDL by creating an adaptive instrument for a child in a wheelchair. Both expressed newfound confidence to put in the hard work and a sense of urgency to make a difference in both their classroom and their communities for both BBIA students and students with dis/abilities.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I described ways that participants' beliefs, conversations, and, in some cases, actions changed due to their participation in the CTSG. Participants reported *becoming more aware* of race and ability and how they operated in both music education and education at large. To do this, participants *revisited their past* and interrogated their own biases. They also *practiced noticing*, where they worked to *define terms*, *acknowledge their challenging feelings*, *name fault lines in the system*, and *notice how the constructs of race and ability intersected with music education*. Participants shared that participation in the CTSG had *lit a spark* for continued discovery, reflection, and action. They felt empowered to *ask tough questions of themselves and others* and *made new realizations*, including how *race and ability intersected*. Finally, they *set actionable goals* for themselves, and some even began to *take action* and speak out in their own lives.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONDITIONS THAT FACILITATED CHANGE

This study detailed the experiences of eight music educators as they participated in a semester-long CTSG on the topics of race and dis/ability in music education. I designed the CTSG through the conceptual framework of TLP, which is an explanatory framework that considered the learning processes for teachers encountering social justice topics (Salvador et al., 2020a). In doing so, I sought to create an environment that facilitated changes in participants' mindsets and behavior. Participants both self-reported and demonstrated several shifts in beliefs, language, and behavior as a result of participation. Intending to discover how to replicate conditions in other PD experiences, I considered what conditions facilitated the changes in mindset and behavior.

Even though I designed the CTSG using TLP as a conceptual framework, I used emergent coding to analyze data independently from the content and categories of TLP (Saldaña, 2016). I chose emergent coding over a priori coding for three reasons. First, I wanted to ensure that I coded in ways that appropriately reflected participants' experiences instead of placing a prefigured set of ideas upon the data (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Second, the TLP framework emerged from a grounded theory examination of graduate coursework, and researchers have not yet used it to consider participant experiences in a PD setting. Finally, because the line between PD for inservice teachers and graduate coursework is blurry (Conway, 2008), I was unsure if different categories or themes might emerge from the data. As I completed coding, I noticed that the categories grouped in nearly identical ways to the four content areas described in TLP: *building Gemütlichkeit*, *emotional intensity*, *grappling with difficult material*, and *course structures* (Salvador et al., 2020a). While I initially had different words for categories than Salvador et al. (2020a) (*building connections between participants* instead of *building*

Gemütlichkeit; feeling deeply instead of emotional intensity; dealing with difficult material instead of grappling with difficult material; CTSG structures and processes instead of course structures), I shifted to use the same language as TLP for consistency when writing this chapter. However, I maintained my own words for themes because I often drew theme names from *in vivo* codes and had additional themes that did not fully map onto the TLP framework. I also identified factors that may have hindered changes in mindset and practice, which Salvador et al. (2020a) did not discuss. See Table 2 for how categories and themes from my analysis mapped onto TLP. In the following sections, I examine each theme, considering how CTSG conditions may have facilitated or hindered change in participants' mindsets and behavior. I also offer a synthesis between the CTSG and TLP for each content area and provide interpretation of the data throughout.

Table 2.

Independent Emergent Coding and TLP Framework

TLP Category	Emergent Category	TLP Themes in Category	Emergent Themes in Category	Factors That Hindered Change
Building <i>Gemütlichkeit</i>	Building Connections Between Participants	Being with people who understood	Connecting to other music teachers	No prior connection to others
		Encountering vulnerability and discomfort	Encountering discomfort	Homogeneity of the group
		Buying in	Desire to learn Tucked away from their daily lives	
Emotional Intensity	Feeling Deeply	Caring deeply	Being vulnerable and brave	Staying in the safe zone
		Grappling with identity	Change requires being uncomfortable	

Table 2 (cont'd).

		Problematising perfecting		Justifying my choices
		Defining and enacting what I believe	Embracing ambiguity	
Grappling With Difficult Material	Dealing With Difficult Topics	Grappling internally	Grappling internally to (re)define my beliefs	Content difficulty
		Grappling interpersonally	Grappling with others	Falling back into old patterns of language and behavior
		Discovering practical applications		
Course Structures	CTSG Structures and Processes	Flexibility	Extended Time	Technology
		Norms for dialogue	Meetings and Norms	
		Making explicit	Journaling and Reflection	Idiosyncratic impediments
		Teaching each other	Shared leadership	

Building *Gemütlichkeit*

The German construct *Gemütlichkeit* means “A space or state of warmth, friendliness, and good cheer, which includes qualities of coziness, peace of mind, belonging, well-being, and social acceptance” (Salvador et al., 2020a, p. 200). In the CTSG, participants developed friendships, increased their comfort level discussing challenging topics, and described a sense of safety and belonging, each of which created conditions prime for facilitating changes in mindset and behavior. Themes related to building *Gemütlichkeit* included *connecting to other music teachers*, *encountering discomfort*, and *a desire to learn*.

Connecting to Other Music Teachers

Throughout the study, each participant shared that *connecting to other music teachers* was one of the most valuable parts of being in the group. For some, connecting was about

gaining a window into another music teacher's classroom. For example, Cindy shared, "I've enjoyed being a part of this group, the conversation, learning about different people's backgrounds, and what they do, how their classroom is structured, and different tools they've used. I think I enjoyed hearing that more than just about anything" (exit interview). Others responded that it was just *being with other people who "got them"* and understood the challenges of being a music teacher. This aligns with prior researchers' findings that PD needs to be content-specific for music educators to find it valuable (Gruenhagen, 2008; Shin & Seog, 2018). Odette shared, "I value what other music teachers have to say. I feel like I'm the only person that does what I do in my building. I can pop in and bother all the specialist teachers, but they don't really get what we do. So, I really value everyone's insights. I don't feel so alone on an island" (CTSG 8). Several others commented on feeling isolated in their teaching situation and shared their appreciation for a space just for music educators to connect. This matches prior literature, where music educators often cited feeling isolated (Sindberg, 2011; Shaw, 2016).

For Margaret, it was more than connecting with music educators; it was also the safety of being able to solicit feedback from people outside her daily life. "I'm very glad that I don't really know you all...like I know you, but... to get feedback from a third party in this way is really refreshing" (CTSG 8). Scholars have noted the need for relative anonymity when encountering controversial topics and that anonymity can, up to a point, increase conversation and interest (Chen & Berger, 2013). Connections between participants grew steadily throughout the semester, and, by the end, participants were sharing their contact information and connecting outside of the group meetings. As their connections grew, so did their willingness to be vulnerable and experience discomfort.

Encountering Discomfort

At the beginning of the study, participants seemed eager to remain polite and not upset or offend other group members, often choosing silence over engagement when a moment of conflict arose. Silence is sometimes a necessary precursor (and a possible indicator of internal processes) to engaging in uncomfortable experiences (Boler, 1999); however, as the CTSG progressed, participants' tendencies to stay quiet or fall back on polite conversation diminished. As a result, they often *encountered discomfort* and chose to engage with it. Discomfort is an approach to challenging conversations and topics that invites critical questioning of the self and society (Boler, 1999). Terblanche and van der Walt (2019) argued that it is only when someone moves outside their safe zone and experiences discomfort that they can identify and “challenge dominant beliefs, practices, habits, and prejudices in them and in society” (233), while hooks (1994) asserted discomfort is key to social change.

In mid-point interviews, exit interviews, and reflective journals, participants reported experiencing moments of discomfort and shared how it felt to challenge themselves in this way. For example, Margaret shared

There were definitely times where I felt uncomfortable and that I could tell some people were uncomfortable, but no one got up in arms, and we simply talked through the uncomfortableness. Having that level of trust and respect is key. We also allowed ourselves to experience anger or distress and did not take it as a personal attack, which I think many people do in these conversations (journal entry, 10/19/21).

Participants also displayed behaviors and language during CTSG meetings that indicated they were experiencing discomfort. For example, sometimes participants would raise their eyebrows or furrow their brow, while other times they would turn off their camera so we could not see

their faces. Other times, participants would express their discomfort by saying things like "I'm not sure I understand," or "I don't know what to say here." Each time a moment like this occurred, participants faced the decision, individually and collectively, to lean towards or away from the discomfort and displayed behaviors that demonstrated their decision. Sometimes participants would challenge each other, like when Blair cut Cindy off mid-speech to say, "I completely disagree with that" (CTSG 5). Another time, Margaret told a story that directly contrasted with the experiences of Lydia, offering a different perspective (CTSG 4). However, at times, participants would still fall silent or disengage. Their process of embracing discomfort was not linear, with some people leaning into the discomfort one moment and shying away the next, which was similar to Shaw (2020a), who found that participants' process of growing was also non-linear and ongoing.

When participants embraced their discomfort, they reported discovering new things about themselves or the topic. Cindy shared her burgeoning confidence as a result of stepping out of her comfort zone in a conversation on race, "I do feel as if I can approach the subject with more confidence now. I feel as if I can ask questions and prompt questions [more than before]" (journal entry, 11/13/21). Eventually, participants' embraced discomfort more readily within the group, partly due to the connections participants developed and the feeling of being *tucked away from their daily lives* within the group. Participants expressed comfort with the norms that led to productive conversation, and scholars highlight having norms as a salient component for going beyond polite talk to "pedagogically productive talk" (Lefstein et al., 2020, p. 360). Additionally, participants described an increased sense of safety to question things out loud without fear of being judged. Scholars argue that safety is equally important when discussing challenging topics

(Atchinstein, 2002; Dobie & Anderson, 2015). Participants had named lack of safety and fear as hindering their actions at the beginning of the study, so this change was a stark contrast.

Desire to Learn

Unlike most of the PD experiences that participants had previously completed, each person chose to be a part of this CTSG. Furthermore, participants knew the subjects we intended to cover, and they *wanted to learn* about these topics from the outset. Odette remarked, "this was the best PD I've had...the best ongoing PD hands down.... We had the time and the space to discuss things, and if you think about the group, we all *wanted* to be there" (exit interview). Although motivation is a complex construct that scholars often debate, most agree that perceived personal importance and intrinsic motivation are strong predictors of motivation (Cook & Artino, 2016). Furthermore, scholars have investigated intrinsic motivation and its relationship to effective PD (Bautista, 2020). Having the choice to learn and learn about something they were interested in contributed strongly to an environment conducive to change.

Additionally, teachers felt agency in the CTSG. I sought feedback from them at regular intervals about what topics they wanted to spend more time on, what they felt we needed to discuss that we had not, and what activities were the most valuable to them. Other scholars have noted that teacher agency contributed to meaningful PD experiences (Bautista, 2020; Bautista et al., 2018). Throughout the study, I made reflexive changes to the content and guided the participant-leaders to respond to other participants' self-expressed needs. In turn, this created greater connections between participants and willingness to engage in difficult conversations.

Conditions Hindering Change: Building *Gemütlichkeit*

Just as participants described conditions that supported building *Gemütlichkeit*, other elements detracted from it. Themes that seemed to distract participants from a change in mindset and behavior included *no prior connection to others* and *being a homogenous group*.

No Prior Connection to Others

Participants did not know each other before the CTSG. Desimone (2009) posited that one component for an effective PD experience was collective participation. Collective participation is the belief that members from the same school, grade, or district working together will be more effective due to their ability to develop lasting relationships alongside pedagogical content knowledge (Desimone, 2009). Furthermore, relationships in Desimone's (2009) model are assumed to be pre-existing before participation in a PD. However, as music education scholars have noted (Borko, 2004; Sindberg, 2011), this is difficult for music teachers, especially in settings where the music teacher might be the only one in their building or district.

Nevertheless, the fact that participants in this CTSG did not know each other prior to the study had mixed effects on the impact of the PD. Participants took extended time getting to know one another and developing trust, and while this was necessary, it also took away from the time the group could spend on the content of the CTSG. As a result, some participants might have struggled to get as much out of the content as they could have if they had participated in a group with pre-existing relationships. At the same time, others found safety in the anonymity of the group, so it is worth considering the necessity of prior relationships if the motivation to learn the content and self-selection into the PD are present. It is possible that if participants opt-in and have a stated desire to encounter content, then prior relationships are less necessary.

Furthermore, for some, the controversial nature of the topics made them desire anonymity over prior relationships (Chen & Berger, 2015).

Being A Homogenous Group

All the educators in the CTSG were white, which is not surprising in a profession that is 86% white (Elpus, 2015). Although participants varied regarding other identity characteristics (e.g., ability status, gender presentation, location, religion, sexual orientation), the group had an overarching homogeneity, primarily when the conversation centered around race. While having an all-white group was an intentional decision on my part (see pp. 76-77), some participants expressed concern that the CTSG was not more racially diverse. Annie wondered, “I guess I don't know how everybody identifies, but the majority of the group was white women. So, it would be nice to have these conversations with different cultures represented” (exit interview). While a racially diverse group could have changed the nature of the conversations and provided opportunities for other viewpoints, it also might have caused harm if the group had only had a single BBIA participant.¹⁴ Further, white people have an obligation to inform themselves about racism and reflect on how their racial identities affect their teaching rather than relying on BBIA people to provide this information (DiAngelo, 2021; Sleeter, 2014). Often white people do not see how their racial identity operates in their teaching. Hence, the process of doing what Helms (1995) calls *white identity development* is critical work for a predominantly white teacher workforce (Utt & Tochluk, 2020). At the same time, a homogenous group has the potential to become an echo chamber if left unchecked.

¹⁴ Please see Chapter 3 for my participant selection process and the decision to have an all-white CTSG.

Comparison to TLP

Aspects of *building Gemütlichkeit* figured prominently in both the CTSG and TLP¹⁵. In both situations, participants talked about how they felt as a member of the group but were unable to name this construct directly. For the CTSG, two *Gemütlichkeit* components that stood out were belonging and social acceptance. Participants regularly talked about the importance of being in a PD with all music teachers because they enjoyed *being with others who get it*. Furthermore, many bravely shared parts of their identity and said they felt received and welcomed by other members. For example, in their first journal, Blair wrote about not sharing personal parts of their identity, "It's not something I usually talk about unless specifically asked, because I have had a lot of aggression thrown my way in the past" (journal entry 7/28/21). However, in their exit interview, Blair recalled being pleasantly surprised that they could share with the group about having ADHD and not being treated differently as a result.

A key difference between TLP and the CTSG was that TLP described an experience in which participants enrolled in a graded course that was a requirement to earn their master's degree in music education. As such, some participants did not want to be in that particular class, and "buying in" to the material was an important step to enable transformative learning (Salvador et al., 2020a). In contrast, participants in the CTSG volunteered and knew the discussion topics ahead of time. Embracing their desire to learn and self-selection might increase participant feelings of *Gemütlichkeit* and their desire to change. However, participants in the CTSG did not know each other ahead of time, and most participants in the TLP study did. The longevity of the relationships in the TLP study potentially contributed to more vulnerability and

¹⁵ In Salvador et al. (2020a), participants were in a graduate philosophy course, and TLP was a grounded theory framework meant to identify the processes that lead to transformative learning. Although TLP was not the course itself, I am comparing and contrasting the processes of TLP to the CTSG, so I write TLP and CTSG as parallel for clarity

willingness to embrace difficult moments than in the CTSG, where considerable time was devoted to building relationships. However, the frequency of ongoing interactions over a school year might also garner a similar effect, and several music education researchers have considered this possibility (Salvador et al., 2020a; Stanley, 2011).

Emotional Intensity

Participants identified experiencing intense emotions throughout the CTSG, including discomfort, fear, nervousness, surprise, and frustration, with discomfort standing out as primary. Participants also expressed positive emotions, including excitement, eagerness, and determination. As a result of this emotional intensity, participants found themselves *being vulnerable and brave*, discovering *change requires being uncomfortable*, and *embracing ambiguity*.

Being Vulnerable and Brave

When leaning into their discomfort, participants spoke about feeling vulnerable and, at times, brave. While being brave or vulnerable often felt scary, Odette reflected on its necessity for growth, stating, "it's scary to be vulnerable, but we have to do it if we are going to grow" (CTSG 4). Often, this vulnerability and bravery appeared when participants told stories from their classrooms, particularly if they had not done something well. For many of the participants, they were the only music educator in their building, and sharing their lessons or stories from their classrooms did not come easily. Margaret mentioned, "it really makes me uncomfortable to share lessons with people," as she was worried that she would be judged since she was still a novice teacher (CTSG 8). Similarly, Cindy commented that it took bravery to share her lessons, as she was unsure if she was "doing it right" (CTSG 7). She privately shared with me that since she had taken an alternate path to teacher certification, she constantly questioned herself around

other music educators. Experiencing vulnerability and naming it was an essential condition necessary for shifting participants' thinking and behavior (Boler, 1999; hooks, 1994; Terblanche & van der Walt, 2019).

Change Requires Being Uncomfortable

In the midst of experiencing vulnerability and choosing to lean towards their feelings, participants also contemplated the *necessity of being uncomfortable*. "We might get uncomfortable here, but that's ok" (Margaret, planning meeting). Wilson (2020) noted that in Boler's (1999) pedagogy of discomfort, it is not only the experience of discomfort but the willingness to be uncomfortable that is important for change. Throughout the individual interviews and participant journals, members of the group brought up moments where discomfort occurred and contemplated its usefulness. Margaret was one of the most outspoken of the group when it came to the necessity of being uncomfortable and equally struggled the most in combating her self-described perfectionistic tendencies. She summed up her thoughts on being uncomfortable early in the semester.

It's true that in order to change, we must feel uncomfortable. I wonder where the line is between shutting someone down and making them feel uncomfortable and allowing someone to process their thoughts and making them feel uncomfortable to grow. It's definitely a fine line (journal entry, 7/28/21).

Similarly, Lydia noted that she felt one of the purposes of the group was to make people confront their discomfort, so they would do something different than they always had before. She said, "That was kind of the purpose of the group in retrospect...we're so used to being quiet and not making those waves, but they need to happen" (exit interview). Blair echoed this sentiment when they talked about being uncomfortable contradicting someone, "It's always a challenge...to

contradict people that you consider to be friends... but we have to speak up. I maybe have a little bit of boldness now" (exit interview). As participants bought into their discomfort more over the semester, they also began to accept non-closure to challenging topics.

Embracing Ambiguity

CTSG participants were forced to consider that there was no “correct” answer for anything we discussed. Wilson (2020) argued that the line between ambiguity and discomfort is blurry but is often a necessary part of self-transformation. The more participants read and engaged in conversations around the constructs of race and ability, the more nuanced and complicated the topics became. This came as a surprise and a frustration to some of them, who started the semester looking for specific answers or a linear path to take. For some, locale made finding an "answer" complicated, especially when discussing the construct of race. Each participant’s teaching situation was so unique from the others that it made it hard for some to connect to the conversation or *see it in their own lives*. This was a difficult challenge for some to overcome, and researchers have commented that being able to ground conversations in participants’ own lives is crucial for lasting change (Horn et al., 2017). For example, those who had very few BBIA students in their schools struggled to draw practical applications about race. Annie was shocked to hear that CRT was banned in some other people’s school districts when she felt as if no one ever mentioned it in hers. Savannah was highly aware that she was often “the only white person in the room” at her school (journal entry, 7/29/21); alternatively, Lydia could “count the number of black children on one hand that I have ever taught” (opening interview). While these differences in circumstances were not impossible to navigate, they did require more work for some participants to try to see how a conversation might impact their own lives and teaching situations and to embrace new ideas amongst uncertainty.

Conditions Hindering Change: Emotional Intensity

Although participants were leaning into emotionally intense and vulnerable moments more and more as the semester progressed, there were still times when individuals shied away. It is possible that in these moments, the discomfort extended too far outside the "danger zone" or that participants merely fell back into old patterns of behavior (hooks, 1994). When participants appeared to be leaning away, they often *stayed in the safe zone* or *justified choices*.

Staying in the Safe Zone

Sometimes participants struggled with leaning into discomfort and instead opted for safety in old habits. For some, *staying in the safe zone* sometimes meant silence or complete disengagement. For example, there were two meetings where neither Annie nor Blair spoke in the group setting. Sometimes silence indicated necessary and valuable process time, but for others, it was intentionally pulling away from the conversation to disengage. Cindy reported that one time she stayed quiet because she "didn't agree, but I didn't want to offend them, and it didn't seem like a good time to bring it up" (mid-point interview). Sometimes the safe zone manifested as skipping components of the CTSG. For example, Blair and Lydia almost never wrote in their journal, despite their indications to me that they were planning to do so. However, scholars have noted that reflection is crucial for effective PD (Damjanovic & Blank, 2018; Goodwin et al., 2015). Additionally, almost everyone missed a meeting at the last minute, for one reason or another. While there were times that other legitimate reasons contributed to missing a meeting¹⁶ or a journal entry, it is also likely that this was a form of staying safe.

Other times, it seemed as if participants stayed in the safe zone because they still did not know what they thought on a topic. For example, Savannah said

¹⁶ Not all absences were intentional disengagement (e.g., pre-scheduled events, such as a student concert or a child's activity. Margaret missed one session because she ended up in the ER and had emergency surgery).

I think there were a couple of times where I didn't really know what I felt about certain subjects, and so I didn't want to talk and say something if I didn't, if I wasn't on one side or the other yet. I could see points for both, but for me, I didn't want to broach until I could really solidify where I was, what my thoughts were" (mid-point interview).

Margaret struggled to leave her safe zone as she dealt with her perfectionistic tendencies. As noted in Salvador et al. (2020a), problematizing perfection was a vital process towards transformation in TLP. After she led her session, she shared with me that she felt trapped by the need to make the session "perfect." She remarked that her need for perfection contributed to her not digging deeper into some of the things other participants said as she was leading. Instead, she felt the need to "get through her agenda and get it all right" and that stopping to challenge or question someone's idea might have prevented that from happening (mid-point interview).

Scholars have often explored balancing perfectionism in the teaching profession, noting that individuals who focus too much on perfectionism are more likely to become overwhelmed and leave the teaching profession (B. Jones, 2016).

Justifying Choices

Another way participants leaned away from emotional intensity was to justify their choices, sometimes by making excuses. Often these moments appeared with participants using '*I just don't see it*' thinking. For example, after a session where the group reflected on McIntosh's (2008) article "Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack," Cindy wrote in her journal,

If there are/were privileges denied [people] based on color, it is not the same for all. I am just not convinced of the, not to use a simple statement but "black and white" issue. Is there not more to society than the privileged and the unprivileged? (Journal entry, 8/24/21).

Cindy's unwillingness to consider the primacy of race on inequity in society made it challenging for her to see ways racism operated in her classroom (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995).

Another catalyst for making excuses was the fact that participants each had very *different teaching situations* from each other, and some worked in districts that did not have a large BBIA population or in buildings that did not support a self-contained special education community. As a result, when discussing the intersections of race and ability, especially the national statistics on placement in special education for BBIA students, those teachers who worked in populations that did not reflect the national statistics struggled to see the truth of the information or the relevance to themselves. For example, Maybelline said, "At my school, they're [BBIA students] in the minority of kids that are in special ed. So, it's hard when you don't see it, I guess" (CTSG 4). Similarly, Lydia remarked, "this is the first time I've ever raised my eyebrows and gone "huh" [when thinking about this topic]. But I don't have a lot of black kids in my school, they're just not there" (CTSG 4).

Similarly, participants made excuses about students with dis/abilities, especially when it came to recognizing the depth and diversity with which dis/ability manifested in their classrooms. Often, they struggled to see beyond children with physical dis/abilities or those with visible psychological or behavioral differences, such as Autism or ADHD. Lydia stated, "Well, I mean, I think, this is going to sound really mean to say, but I think the default is ability because you don't have nearly as many disabled kids as you do, able-bodied kids. Like, I've had one kid in my whole teaching career that only had a hand thing where he only had three fingers. And, I mean, it's just not the norm" (CTSG 6). Heroux (2013) noted that teachers are more likely to perceive dis/ability as only visible and physical, which influences how they work with students with hidden dis/abilities.

Occasionally, participants disengaged during challenging conversations by citing external factors, and in doing so, they appeared to be distancing themselves from their potential responsibility. For example, while discussing setting individual goals for students, Odette half-jokingly said, "I am already working 55-hour weeks, like how.... I don't have time" (CTSG 6). Margaret made the excuse that while she felt more confident to speak on the topics of race and ability in general, she still did not believe she had the social or cultural capital in her workplace to do anything that would make a difference (exit interview). Similarly, Annie felt as if she remained unable to enact change in her building due to "a lack of communication among staff that creates chaos. Nobody is having their needs met, and then educators cannot tap into their full ability. Our staff has to get on the same page first" (journal entry 12/14/21). Scholars have noted that teachers need to feel agency if they mean to enact a successful educational experience for students (Biesta et al., 2015).

Comparison to TLP

In both the TLP and the CTSG, emotional intensity was a robust theme. In each setting, participants reported experiencing powerful emotions and navigating through them internally and with others. Like in TLP, participants made explicit that they *cared deeply* about teaching and their students. They also began to *connect to others* in the group, with Savannah commenting, "It's really refreshing. I feel like we have a lot of trust in this group" (CTSG 8). It is doubtful CTSG members connected to the same level of TLP participants, as those educators were together for three consecutive summers (Salvador et al., 2020a); however, CTSG participants did express interest in continuing their connections post-study.

Much like TLP, participants faced problematizing their own perfection and *reconciling personal values* and beliefs with the presented information. Like one participant in the TLP,

Odette struggled to reconcile her religious beliefs and her teaching. "I think [being an atheist] affects my teaching because many students connect their musical experiences to church-going... I feel I can't relate to the students in the same way as if I was a church-goer" (journal entry, 8/23/21). In navigating unclear spaces, just as TLP participants did, participants occasionally struggled with finding a clear answer for themselves, often remarking they were left with "more questions than answers" (Maybelline, exit interview).

One difference that stood out from TLP was that participants in the CTSG practiced enacting their changes at work simultaneous to participation in the group. Scholars have cited that extended time for teacher practice is valuable for effective PD (Ahn, 2017; Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009), and Salvador et al. (2020a) commented on the potential value of embedding a transformative learning experience in the school year. TLP participants described emotional intensity about trying something new at work that they were afraid would fail, but participants in the CTSG expressed excitement and eagerness. One reason for this might be that participants in the CTSG shared lesson plans, and the group provided feedback to support its success in the classroom. In the following session, participants returned to share how it went with each other. Scholars regularly advocated that effective PD must involve teacher collaboration to improve students' achievement (Ahn, 2017; Bolam et al., 2005; Supovitz & Christman, 2003). In exit interviews, there was unanimous agreement that sharing lessons and getting feedback was a positive experience that contributed to participants' feeling emotionally prepared to enact more inclusive lessons in their classroom in the future.

Grappling with Difficult Material

Grappling is the concept of struggling with something and with the belief that the struggle serves a purpose (Sizer & Sizer, 1999). As participants reported changes in their beliefs

and behaviors, salient conditions that led to these self-reported changes were *grappling internally to define my beliefs* and *grappling with others* which *built confidence*.

Grappling Internally to (Re)define My Beliefs

Several participants leaned into their feelings of bravery and vulnerability, which resulted in deep self-evaluation and grappling. Evidence of this grappling often appeared in participant journals or when I asked participants to reflect on an experience in an interview and think about it through a particular lens. hooks (1994) referred to this self-evaluation process as stepping into "the danger zone," where someone engages in the discomfort instead of walking away from it. As participants grappled, this led to realizations about themselves. For example, Savannah said, "I am re-thinking my behavior because of this" (journal entry 11/2/21) while Cindy remarked, "I am checking myself more, and I think this group has made me stop and think, okay, what really am I approaching my students with?" (exit interview). Blair shared a change in perspective, stating, "I am realizing I actually do have biases, and I now wonder what others I haven't uncovered" (exit interview). Similarly, Margaret embraced a new realization about herself. "I am coming to terms with the fact that all the movement I do is unintentionally reinforcing ableism, as well as my expectations for sitting down and listening" (journal entry, 10/12/21). As participants reflected on these moments of grappling and realizations, they described the process as both challenging and rewarding, which was similar to Salvador et al. (2020a). For most, these moments of realization served as a spur to further reflection and action.

Through self-evaluation, participants explored and entertained new ways of thinking about the topics of race and ability, their students, and their teaching. Wilson (2020) called this "unsettling of boundaries," where a person encounters a new idea and the potential it might hold, allowing it to "shift what we think we know" (3). Participants relayed thinking about their

students and their teaching practice differently. For example, Odette discussed talking with her students about topics of race or equity. "I think I have opened up a bit more about equity and race. I've noticed that students are more in tune [with the topics] than I anticipated. I also think I still have a long way to go to keep growing" (journal entry, 11/10/21). Similarly, Savannah wrote in her journal about being challenged.

I think the experience has been challenging but also encouraging. I think it's really helpful to hear different people's perspectives and ideas, but it's challenging because focusing on these issues points out how much work there is to do. It can feel discouraging to think of all that I'm not doing. But I also think it's helpful to see how others are succeeding and to see ideas that are working for them that I could use with my students. After being in this group, I am thinking a lot more about how I plan for my students with disabilities. I am seeing things I'm doing well and things I'd like to improve on (journal entry, 11/10/21).

Some were still in the midst of grappling with ideas as the CTSG came to an end. Blair commented, "I am taking a deeper look at my choices, at least my intentions. I find myself wondering if my biases are so deep that I am still just justifying my choices, even when I am trying to look at them objectively. Am I still just going along with my bias even if I ultimately agree with the decision I've made?" (exit interview). Similarly, Cindy remarked that she contemplated each new idea deeply throughout her day

because I wanted to challenge myself, was I feeling this uncomfortableness, because I disagreed or because it was a new thought, a new way of thinking that I was being shaped into? [I was] trying to figure out what I really felt on some of my reactions to things" (exit interview).

Both expressed being challenged by their wonderings but eager to keep thinking about it going forward. These experiences of challenging themselves and (re)defining their beliefs correlated strongly with the findings in Salvador et al. (2020a).

Grappling with Others

Participants also grappled together, not just alone. As the *connections between participants* grew, members began working through challenging topics and activities together. Together, participants *practiced challenging conversations*. Participants reported that the act of being in a challenging conversation and navigating it with others impacted their *confidence* to have other conversations outside the CTSG group, all aligning with the necessary components of “pedagogically productive talk” (Lefstein et al., 2020, p. 350). Additionally, several commented that they could not recall when they had been in a space to work through what they thought about race and ability before, especially where it was acceptable for it to be messy. Blair remarked,

It's been really great to interact with [other participants] that way. It's been great to have these tough conversations, even if I was really uncomfortable at some points. To be able to sort of say some things that I haven't been able to say before, where there hasn't really been a space, because many things that have been said [in the CTSG] are things that should be said at every school district” (exit interview).

Related, Margaret talked about the challenge of leading a tough conversation when she did not yet feel like an “expert.”

I think it's one of the things that I like so much about the CTSG group is that it's supposed to be collaborative. Everybody's supposed to take the lead even on topics that we're not yet the expert on, and I think it helps push us to be like, okay, well, what am I going to say? And how am I going to guide this conversation? And I wonder how it

possibly, hopefully, prepares us to have more conversations like these, you know, with more people down the road (mid-point interview).

Participants practiced finding ways to challenge each other by using norms, guiding questions, and protocols as supports (available in Appendix D). Likewise, those being challenged practiced (not always successfully) being confronted about their ideas and behavior without getting defensive and displaying fragility. Margaret wrote in her journal about how valuable it was to have a protocol to follow. “It allowed us to keep digging past the surface as we kept asking for the reason why. I think having these open-ended questions can be really helpful” (journal entry, 10/19/21). As cited by several scholars, norms and protocols provided a safety net for participants to have challenging and uncomfortable conversations (Atchinstein, 2002; Dobie & Anderson, 2015; Horn et al., 2017; Lefstein et al., 2020; Nelson et al., 2010; West & Bautista, 2020).

While the group did not always succeed in these moments, at the end of CTSG 8, participants expressed a collective appreciation for the space to grapple together and a reiteration of how important it was that they had a place they could practice difficult conversations, as well as learn from each other. As they talked together at that moment, Savannah remarked, “I feel like we have a lot of trust in this group, and so that's really awesome. 'Cause the feedback I know is gonna always come from a good place, and it's always helpful” (CTSG 8). Later, Annie remarked, “having these conversations has just been so helpful” (exit interview). Similarly, Lydia shared, “I just enjoyed having a safe space to say things and not worry that I was going to hurt someone's feelings while I figured out the right way to say it. I don't have to worry about unintended consequences for my words as I learn” (exit interview).

Conditions Hindering Change: Grappling With Difficult Material

Content Difficulty

Participants reported sometimes struggling with the academic difficulty of the readings. Occasionally, someone would describe the more academic readings as “too heady” or just “too complex” (Cindy, exit interview). Lydia, who reported enjoying the readings, commented that she still felt they were challenging. “It’s just that I have been out of academic reading for so long” (mid-point interview). Participant perspectives aligned with several scholars who argued that academic writing and prose is needlessly complicated (Barkho, 2014; Clayton, 2015). Overall, participants preferred chapters from less-academic books, as well as the videos, podcasts, and TEDTalks. Blair remarked, “I liked the videos... I feel like they are a great way to convey meaning, more so than the readings” (exit interview). Maybelline suggested having audiobook versions available for the readings next time as a support tool (exit interview), which, in retrospect, would have made the CTSG more in line with principles of UDL (Cast, 2016). Despite participants' indications that they were often uncomfortable with the academic readings, each person successfully conveyed the text’s meaning when it was their turn to lead. Their internal insecurity seemed not to affect content or delivery. Related, participants occasionally became frustrated that other group members had not read the assigned text before the session. While I did not ask participants if they read or why they did not (when it was obvious), it is possible they did not read due to insecurity about the academic language or tone of the text, among any other number of factors such as busy schedules or possible avoidance.

Falling Back Into Old Patterns of Language and Behavior

Just as there were times where participants challenged their own (and others) language and thinking, there were also moments where individuals *fell back into old patterns*, such as

avoiding *calling out racism or ableism* when it manifested in a group session. Participants often shared stories from their teaching or personal lives related to the topic at hand or dialogued with each other on a topic. Throughout these conversations, someone would occasionally say something using deficit language or express an opinion that clearly did not resonate well with others due to racism or ableism. Furthermore, they often seemed unaware they had done so, falling back into patterns where they did not even notice that they had missed it. These findings matched Salvador and Kelly-McHale (2017), who noted that participants often failed to notice that they missed differences. In these moments, especially during the first half of the semester, the CTSG often fell silent. The discomfort with what someone had said was palpable, yet no one spoke. Often, I could see an eyebrow raise or a head shift slightly to the side on a Zoom screen, but participants did not speak. I stepped in occasionally at these moments to model, asking probing questions, asking someone to clarify or to restate what they said to ask if that is what they meant. More often, I left space for the participants to step up and tried to remain cognizant of power imbalances that my stepping in might create.

Each week in the planning session, I challenged the designated leader to lean into this moment and avoid glossing over the conversation if another participant said something polarizing in the next meeting. Individuals would practice ways to ask questions or continue the dialogue with me, and yet the first five sessions passed without anyone taking the opportunity when problematic statements arose. I utilized the chat feature of Zoom to invite the person who was cocking their head or raising their eyebrow to speak up, but they would not. At mid-point interviews, I directly asked participants about their refusal to speak when these moments occurred. Drawing from the literature on polite racism (Ng & Lam, 2020), many participant responses fell into what I categorized as *polite white culture*, where they would behave as if they

had not heard the problematic statement or would excuse another person's behavior in their minds. These moments happened much more frequently when participants were discussing race. Such behavior is common among white middle-class women who are socialized in some ways to avoid conflict and controversial conversations (Trepagnier, 2010).

For example, Savannah noted that sometimes she would essentially ignore someone's controversial statement, remarking, "Every once in a while, there's a time where I'm like 'Oh, okay, that was not what I would have said, but okay, sure, whatever'" (exit interview). Similarly, Cindy commented that she was silent during "times where I felt my personal opinion or, my personal beliefs on an issue might offend someone, to the point where it was unnecessary" (mid-point interview). Both these examples mirror what Bradley (2006) argued was silence around racism and how white supremacy operates. Lydia said that while she "did push back sometimes," she often did not because she did not want to "derail another leader's night or have a conflict stop us from getting through the material that night. I feel like we might have run out of time" (exit interview). As the semester progressed, *polite white culture* diminished significantly, but it never entirely disappeared.

Comparison to TLP

Several similarities and differences existed between the two groups as they grappled. In both the CTSG and TLP, participants grappled both internally and as a group. Although some of the methods used for grappling were different (e.g., homework assignments for the TLP compared to optional journaling for the CTSG), participants in both settings found themselves encountering controversial topics, confronting ideas that they had not considered before, or ones did not align with their teaching practices. Participants in both settings discussed talking about

the topics in outside settings, with family and friends, and wrestling within themselves about the fact that there was not a “right” answer.

Something that differed between the two settings was *sharing lessons*. While participants in the TLP reported discovering practical applications, first in their own speech and then in their later teaching contexts, educators in the CTSG were able to discover practical applications around specific lessons and take them immediately back to their classroom. They could then report back the following session about their successes and failures and engage in what participants lovingly called “the hive mind” to brainstorm new ideas. Much of this difference was because the CTSG was embedded in the school year, one point that Salvador et al. (2020a) suggested was worth considering for a TLP experience.

CTSG/Course Structures

Participants self-described several components of the CTSG structure supporting their growth, including elements embedded into *meetings, shared leadership, journaling, and extended time*.

Meetings and Norms

Participants referenced the value they saw in establishing norms as a group and using the protocols from NSRF to facilitate conversations (located in Appendix D). In the first meeting, participants co-constructed norms for dialogue, and I offered suggestions based on previous experience. Norms served as an anchor to guide the conversation and provide a safe space, as well as a productive one (Lefstein et al., 2020). A list of the group's co-constructed norms is in Appendix J. Margaret shared her appreciation for the norms and protocols, stating, “It gave me a framework to work within, and that was really helpful. Just having those [norms and protocols], like how we talk and what we talk about.... it helps me to be unafraid to be afraid if that makes

sense” (mid-point interview). Similarly, Cindy felt that the protocols supported group interactions and gave her a sense of what to do when it was her turn to lead, much like following an outline. Other scholars have noted that norms and protocols were important tools for educators grappling with challenging topics (Salvador & Pasiali, 2017).

In addition to norms and protocols, some participants particularly appreciated the online format, which other scholars have also mentioned as a valuable tool in music educator PD (Grimsby, 2020b). Lydia felt that she could dig deeper with a small group of people and appreciated the moments the group would utilize breakout rooms. Likewise, Odette and Blair both mentioned they were excited to be able to hear from people from all over the country with such a varied set of experiences. No one mentioned the comfort of learning from home, probably because COVID rendered online learning commonplace. However, being in a safe physical environment while simultaneously grappling with challenging and sensitive topics may have contributed to participants feeling willing to stretch themselves further than if they had also been in the same room as a group of relative strangers. The interplay between physical safety and emotional challenge may have allowed participants to remain in their zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1976) without going too far into the “danger zone” (hooks, 1994).

Shared Leadership

Participants described shared leadership as one of the most valuable parts of the CTSG, which directly contrasted with their expressed concerns about being the leader at the beginning of the study. Bernard (2009) noted that teachers preferred PD that allowed for shared leadership. Participants enjoyed hearing other people’s perspectives and found that having different leaders each night helped them remain engaged and motivated. Furthermore, participants appreciated the freedom to put their own personalities into the evening they led. While they relied on the

protocols and took guidance from me, and I chose the readings, each one of them led in a way that made sense to them. Some used PowerPoints, others utilized interactive websites such as JamBoard or Mentimeter, while others simply led conversations. Annie shared, "I like that people chose different ways to discuss the material. I also can take those ideas and do them with my students. So even the techniques, not just the content, was interesting to me" (exit interview). Odette shared, "I like how different people led every night. That helped with engagement" (exit interview). Ultimately, each participant embraced being the leader and found that shared leadership led to increased group interaction and buy-in.

Journaling

Journaling proved salient for several members. Journaling and reflecting are essential to growth, and some scholars argue that without this component, any PD is only a novelty experience that will have no lasting effect (Damjanovic & Blank, 2018; Goodwin et al., 2015). While not everyone utilized their journal, those who did reported that it served as a place to keep working out their thoughts in between sessions. Some participants wrote freely, while others utilized the prompts I gave. Savannah shared her appreciation for having the prompts.

I really liked the journal aspect. I think it's a lot easier, at least for someone like me who needs time to process, to look at each question and have time to be like, 'Hey, how would I answer this specific thing?' Also, it gives everyone time to reflect and think and write down what they're thinking outside of the pressure of conversation (exit interview).

Journaling served as a space to try out thoughts, reflect on previous sessions, and make connections to their daily lives. This space of self-discovery was free from the time limits of the CTSG and, therefore, may have allowed participants space to dig deeper into their thinking and

self-discovery. *Process time* was essential to several participants and often mentioned in interviews.

Extended Time

Researchers commonly cite extended time as a hallmark of successful PD (Desimone, 2009). In the CTSG, extended time served two essential functions. First, it allowed participants the space to process challenging information and to sit with it between CTSG sessions. At the outset of the study, several participants mentioned their need for processing time, so giving this space may have created the opportunity for deeper reflection and change. Additionally, the CTSG was embedded in the school year, giving participants the time to take ideas into their classrooms and try them out. This contributed to active learning between sessions where teachers tried out new lessons and then brought them back to the group for follow-up or feedback from other members. However, not everyone felt that a single semester was enough time—both Blair and Savannah indicated they needed to continue grappling before moving forward.

Conditions Hindering Change: CTSG/Course Structures

Some of the course structures were simultaneously useful and detrimental to participants changing mindsets and behavior. In particular, *technology* was both a help and a hindrance. Additionally, participants shared other individual moments that they believed deterred them from further growth, including technology, group size, balancing race and dis/ability conversations, and processing time.

Technology

At times, technology limited participants' potential for change. Participants occasionally found that "Zoom etiquette" hindered their participation in the conversation. For example, when talking about leaning into the conversations, Odette commented,

I wonder how Zoom affected that because I think there's the Zoom culture of 'Do I unmute to say something?' Also, sometimes you start talking, and Zoom doesn't pick up you're talking right away. And so, how do you talk over someone to stop them? Versus like in person, you can use proximity or more body language to push the conversation.

And those things were not available to the people leading to guide others (exit interview).

Other times, participants actively relied on Zoom's shortcomings to avoid confrontation. For example, Lydia shared in her exit interview that one time she disagreed with another participant and apparently made a face, but was able to have it go unnoticed because of it happening on such a small Zoom box. She remarked that if the group had been in person, her body language would have given away her disagreement, and she would have had to engage in the conversation.

However, because of Zoom, her gesture went unnoticed, even by me, until she mentioned it privately, and I went back and re-watched the video.

Other Structural Impediments

Several individuals brought up unhelpful elements of the CTSG that were idiosyncratic. Nevertheless, as I designed the group to support the learning needs of these specific individuals, it is valuable to point out what individual people shared. Odette expressed frustration that the group often got on tangents in breakout groups, although she simultaneously admitted that she was as much to blame as anyone else in those moments. Lydia said that the breakout rooms were both good and bad because although they could get off task, she felt more "space to share" in a smaller group of people (exit interview). Finally, Margaret and Annie both wanted the conversation to be more balanced between the topics of race and dis/ability, with each thinking that the group did not discuss dis/ability enough. From my perspective, the balance of race and dis/ability conversation did lean more heavily towards race, and I attributed this mainly to the

current political and social climate and the fact that fewer participants had experiences with racial learning prior to the CTSG. Nevertheless, in each of these conversations, participants highlighted elements that they felt were detrimental to their growth. Kelly (2015) argued that PD facilitators must tailor to learners' needs. These idiosyncratic findings highlight that PD cannot be prescriptive or one-size-fits-all, something scholars often mention (Ahn, 2017; Kelly, 2015). Instead, PD facilitators must craft personalized experiences based on teacher interest and need.

Comparison to TLP

As I designed the CTSG through the TLP framework, many of the course structures that supported changes in mindset and behavior were similar. Like TLP, I led participants in establishing norms, each person took a turn leading the group, and participants grappled with difficult materials. Participants initially expressed trepidation but spoke with confidence about their ability to be a leader after the fact. Also, in alignment with TLP, the CTSG was set up with flexibility, so conversations did not always go exactly as planned, and tangents occurred. Tangents were sometimes productive conversations, but other times a source of frustration for participants. Flexibility also included my changing readings at one point to reflect participant desires to cover a different topic.

Structurally, the group differed quite a bit from TLP. The CTSG had 9 participants (including myself), whereas TLP was a graduate course with 26 people and a professor. The smaller group allowed for a more intimate dynamic, and yet some felt that even nine was too large of a group. Time outside the group differed for each setting as well. In TLP, conversations continued at lunch and even during weekend gatherings outside of class. In contrast, in the CTSG, participants wrote in private journals or reported talking to family members about the

topics. What stands out from both experiences is the necessity for connections between participants, and connections to the materials, in order for change to be possible.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I described the conditions of the CTSG that contributed to participants' changes in mindsets and behaviors. The themes that supported facilitating change were *building Gemütlichkeit*, *emotional intensity*, *grappling with difficult material*, and *course structures*. Likewise, I interrogated conditions within each theme that might have hindered their growth. As I designed the CTSG through the conceptual framework TLP (Salvador et al., 2020a), I then compared the conditions to those found in TLP to compare and contrast the TLP framework when used in a different setting for teachers encountering social justice topics.

CHAPTER EIGHT: SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND SUGGESTIONS

In this chapter, I summarize the purpose and method of the study. Then I review findings and offer discussion. Next, I share implications for the field of music education as they relate to PK-12 educators, music teacher preparation programs, and education policymakers. Finally, I make recommendations for future research.

Summary of Study

The purpose of this study was to examine a music educator collaborative teacher study group (CTSG) focused on exploring and unpacking narratives of race and dis/ability in music education. Research questions were:

1. How do teachers conceptualize issues of race and ability in both their belief systems and described classroom practices?
2. How, if at all, did participants' beliefs and behavior about race and ability change as a result of participating in the CTSG?
3. What conditions facilitated changes in mindset and behavior for participants?

I designed and completed a descriptive, collective case study (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2018) that examined the experiences of eight music educators across the U.S. I drew individual participants into a collective group and considered similarities and differences in their experiences. I framed the CTSG through the theoretical lens of DisCrit (Annamma et al., 2013), which informed the content and protocols used. Additionally, I utilized TLP (Salvador et al., 2020a) as a conceptual framework to inform design and participant interactions.

Participants were eight public school music educators—Blair, Maybelline, Annie, Lydia, Odette, Margaret, Savannah, and Cindy—who varied in age, teaching experience and assignment, personal identity characteristics, and geographic location. As a participant-

researcher, I served as the ninth member of the CTSG. Participants met via Zoom eleven times (every other week from July 27 to December 14, 2021) to share stories, discuss assigned readings/videos, participate in activities, and collaborate on lesson plans. The overarching goal of the group was to uncover ways that racism and ableism operated in their personal and professional lives. All the CTSG meetings were held on Zoom. Throughout the study, participants completed three individual interviews (beginning, midpoint, end), took turns leading the group sessions, participated in a private social media page, and wrote in their online journal. I used transcripts of interviews, planning meetings, CTSG meetings, conversations on Facebook and reflections in journals as data in addition to my analytic memos.

Summary of Findings

I utilized both DisCrit and TLP in my analysis of data. I used DisCrit to examine how participants conceptualized race. Ability, and the intersection of race and ability, in both their beliefs and described teaching practices. I also analyzed data through a DisCrit lens to look for any changes teachers displayed (verbally or behaviorally) due to participation in the CTSG. Finally, I utilized TLP as an explanatory framework to investigate what conditions might be necessary to change mindsets and behavior. I summarize my findings from each of the research questions below.

Initial Stated Beliefs and Self-Described Teaching Practices

Participants varied in their stated beliefs and classroom practices at the beginning of the study. Initially, participants displayed a *continuum of commitment*, both in their prior experiences and their stated participation goals. Some had spent considerable time before joining the CTSG learning about one construct—race *or* ability—as it related to their personal life, beliefs, or teaching. However, no participant had in-depth knowledge in both areas, and none of the

participants had previously considered the interaction between race and ability and how that operationalized in their thinking and teaching. At the outset of the study, when I asked about exploring the topics further in the CTSG, some viewed it as *important work* that they were committed to doing, while others avoided total commitment. Instead, they *made excuses* such as *being at odds with my community* or cited a *lack of training*. Participants offered *justifications* and *sought absolution* or expressed emotions such as *fear* and *helplessness* when *making excuses*.

As the outset, participants displayed a broad spectrum of agreements and dissonances between their words (stated beliefs and goals) and actions (conversations in the CTSG and descriptions of their teaching practice). When participants' words and actions aligned, they *embraced growth* and were eager to *utilize strategies*. When words and actions did not align, participants struggled with *navigating their white fragility* and occasionally used *deficit language*. Furthermore, participants' (mis)alignment between their words and actions changed frequently and often shifted based on the topic (race or dis/ability). Finally, participants varied greatly in their *self-awareness*, both about how their words and actions (mis)aligned and about the ways they conceptualized the topics of race and dis/ability in music education and described their teaching practices.

Changes in Stated Beliefs and Self-Described Teaching Practices

Participants described and demonstrated several salient changes resulting from participation in the CTSG. First, participants demonstrated they were *becoming more aware*. In addition to increasing conceptual knowledge about race and ability, and the ways the constructs operate and intersect in school music, participants spent considerable time *rethinking experiences* from their past to interrogate their own biases, and the impact biases had on their teaching.

Participants also *practiced noticing* ways they had begun to see racism and ableism operating, and this practice occurred in CTSG meetings and in their daily lives. They increased their vocabularies by *defining confusing terms* and *noticing deficit language*. They worked to *acknowledge challenging feelings* in themselves and others and started *naming fault lines in the educational system*. Most importantly, they noticed *how constructs of race and ability manifested in their music classrooms*. Indeed, participants highlighted the *importance of representation* and *being intentional about inclusivity* as primary changes to their thinking and stated classroom practices. For some, these were new discoveries, but for others, it was a reaffirmation or growth in perspective. Each participant started in different places with the constructs of race and ability, and therefore, different parts were new to different people. No one was completely unaware at the outset; rather, each had varied knowledge across areas and therefore grew in unique and different ways.

Participants reported that participation in the CTSG had *lit a spark* for continued discovery, reflection, and action. They described feeling braver and more willing to *ask tough questions of themselves and others*. Participants *made new realizations* about their prior thinking and behavior and developed new conceptual knowledge about *how race and ability interested and operated in the music room*. Many participants set personal and professional goals for themselves, such as creating allyship in their classroom and revamping their curricula through a UDL lens. Others even began *taking action* by creating equity committees in their schools, removing barriers to student learning, and speaking out to family and friends (instead of remaining silent) when they witnessed deficit language or problematic thinking.

Conditions Necessary For Change

One of the goals of this study was to create an environment that facilitated changes in participants' mindsets and behavior. Several conditions proved salient in creating such an environment. Participants built *Gemütlichkeit* by connecting with other music educators and combating their self-declared isolation as the sole music educator in their setting. They expressed joy about being in a group with *other people who understood* being a music educator and appreciation for content- and context-specific feedback on their teaching. After building a sense of safety, they *became vulnerable and brave* as they *encountered discomfort* and sought to challenge their thinking and teaching practices through new lenses. They expressed greater confidence moving forward as a result of experiencing discomfort. Participants also built *Gemütlichkeit* in their *shared desire to learn*, as they all volunteered to be in the CTSG with full knowledge of the topics ahead of time. No one felt forced to be in the CTSG and, as a result, were intrinsically motivated to learn, contributing to the development of connections among participants.

Other conditions that contributed to change were *emotional intensity*, including *being vulnerable and brave*. Participants demonstrated being vulnerable and brave by sharing stories of their classroom teaching and working through lesson plans that they felt had not gone well. As each opened themselves up to feedback, others responded with supportive, focused suggestions, which contributed to a cycle of greater vulnerability and bravery. Furthermore, participants shared that they recognized the *necessity of being uncomfortable* and began *embracing ambiguity*. They began to make the connection that they not only had to be uncomfortable in the group to grow, but they also had to be willing to be uncomfortable in their daily lives to affect change in their spheres of influence. Many stopped looking for a specific, algorithmic answer;

instead, they began to embrace the idea that constructs like race and dis/ability are complex, personal, and situational, and no single “right” answer existed. Instead, they began to embrace the messiness of equity work. Within the group, this messiness included moments participants fell back into their *safe zone* with their language or behaviors. However, as the group progressed, these moments became less frequent.

A necessary condition for change was the space to grapple with complex material. Participants *grappled internally to challenge and (re)define what they believed* and also worked through *grappling with others*. When they worked together, participants had the opportunity to *practice challenging conversations*, which for many was something they had never done before. This process, in turn, increased their *confidence* to have a challenging conversation with someone outside the CTSG. The participants had space to engage in these conversations, which directly resulted from the CTSG structure, which included group meetings, shared leadership, and extended time. In meetings, participants utilized norms and protocols to guide conversations, and each person led a meeting, even though they did not feel they were an expert. These structures created safety while leaving room for discomfort and growth. Participants collaborated in the CTSG over a semester, which gave them space to reflect between meetings, try things out with their students, and report back on successes and failures along the way. In combination with this, participants utilized reflective journaling to aid in their self-discovery and growth process.

Discussion and Implications

During this study, participants grappled with race and dis/ability constructs and how these constructs operationalized in music education. As they developed conceptual understandings, they worked together to problematize their own thinking and behavior, as well as make decisions about how to enact their growing understanding in their teaching practice.

Below, I consider several salient points from across my three research questions and emergent findings. I synthesize takeaways for PK-12 teachers, music teacher preparation programs, PD providers, and researchers.

Strategies and Tools *Do* Exist

Participants began the study looking for “strategies” or “tools” they could use in their classrooms to better serve students with dis/abilities and BBIA students. By the end of the study, most participants expressed they felt more confident or had more skills to use, but not all. Some still maintained they were “looking for more practical steps” (Maybelline, exit interview) or “need more things to help” (Cindy, exit interview), especially for students with dis/abilities. Maybelline and Cindy mirrored some researchers, who still claim that music education remains "short on pedagogical tools with which to enhance [their] participation, agency, and functional abilities of students with special needs" (Sutela et al., 2020, p. 71). Music education is not, in fact, short on pedagogical tools in the form of recommended practice—they are more available than ever. However, music education is short on *research* that investigates the effectiveness of said tools. Within the small number of existing studies¹⁷, small group sizes, and the paucity of replication studies mean music education researchers lack sufficient evidence to make claims that would qualify strategies as "evidence-based," and thus appropriate for teachers to use to support learners with special education needs (Individuals with Disabilities Act, 2004).

Evaluating effectiveness necessitates circling back to clarifying the goals of inclusion, especially for students with dis/abilities. Dobbs (2012) argued that many teachers might still be embracing therapeutic epistemologies related to the medical model in their teaching practice. For example, when music educators refer to students with dis/abilities in ways that imply a

¹⁷ For two comprehensive reviews of literature involving children with dis/abilities in inclusive music settings, see Brown & Jellison, 2012; Jellison & Draper, 2015.

functional deficit and seek to mitigate these deficits through normative standards, they are reinscribing a medical model despite the appearance of inclusivity. If teachers believe music is inherently therapeutic, this affects how educators interact with recommended best practices for inclusion. Additionally, deficit approaches to inclusion may determine how a researcher might be measuring effectiveness of said inclusion. If a therapeutic or deficit mindset (based in the medical model of disability) leads in decision making about how, when, and why a child is included, then educators might measure effectiveness in terms of numbers of students with access to the space without regard for the quality of experience or musical progress based on an intervention strategy. If educators and researchers conceive of dis/ability from a social or complex model, they gauge effectiveness differently. Rather than focusing on the number of students with access to music education, educators and researchers might instead question what constitutes a pedagogy of inclusion and measure effectiveness through shifts in classroom culture, representation, teacher self-described mindset, and student empowerment. If music educators conceptualize dis/ability as multifaceted as well as a potential source of strength, they operate from a place where they believe every child can learn and grow in musical ways and will be more comfortable setting musical learning goals or considering musical outcomes.

Therefore, I argue that the conversation around strategies and tools for inclusion needs to shift—the tools exist, even if research evidence is not yet as robust as we may desire. Instead of lamenting the lack of a perfect set of algorithmic solutions, educators and scholars might shift the conversation towards building teacher awareness about what strategies and resources are readily available to them. Teachers and researchers have the responsibility to do the necessary work to seek out all the ways people are supporting students with dis/abilities in the music classroom and promoting more equitable and inclusive environments for BBIA students. For example, almost

every resource the CTSG participants read or watched was freely available from a public library or the internet. When articles could be accessed only through payment, often all that would be necessary is to email the author. There are more available resources on the internet than ever before, especially in light of the last two years of online and hybrid learning environments across the U.S. Educators and scholars around the country have blogs, videos, websites, curriculums, nonprofit organizations, and social media pages, much of which is free.

Teachers might also name lack of funding as a reason they struggle to create more equitable music education spaces. The required changes in mindset and action generally do not require equipment that would cost money. If a new program requires materials or supplies, grant money is readily available through music organizations, PTOs, nonprofits, government agencies, and websites like donors choose or GoFundMe, and many grant organizations prioritize giving money that supports students from minoritized communities or with special education needs. Furthermore, teachers can leverage title I funds, or funding provided through special education laws, to provide adaptive instruments and assistive technology (Grimsby & Knapp, 2020). The responsibility surrounding awareness and access does not fall solely to the practicing music educator; music education preparation programs must take responsibility as well for making sure that teachers enter the field with knowledge of availability, as well as tools to access them, such as understanding laws, funding structures, and resources for continued in-service education.

White Identity Development

This CTSG was a racially homogenous group, and several members wondered aloud about the value of having a more racially diverse group of educators in the CTSG. However, as mentioned in Chapter Three, my decision to have an all-white group was intentional. While homogenous groupings have the potential to create echo chambers that reify existing knowledge

and biases (Jacoby-Senghor et al., 2015) scholars also argue that white people need to do their own work to develop racial consciousness and literacy (Hancock & Warren, 2017; Hess, 2021; Lewis, 2021; Stevenson, 2014).

Stevenson (2014) argued that white teachers are afraid of discussing race or acknowledging how racism operates in schools. This was true for several of the participants. Some did not see race as a construct operating in their schools at the outset of the study. Others saw it but displayed language and behavior that demonstrated their fear of speaking out to name problematic impacts of racism throughout the study. However, Stevenson (2014) asserts that teachers must be aware of the role of their own race and how they operationalize race to their students, as teachers are one of the biggest influences on children during their formative years. Warren and Talley (2017) posit

that being aware of one's white racial identity and whiteness is significant because these two constructs influence how white women (mis)perceive students' skills, behavior, and capacity to accomplish academic-related tasks (p. 152).

Educators need to raise their capacity to see and talk about race and their role in racialized structures. Furthermore, they need to do the work without placing an emotional burden on BBIA people (DiAngelo, 2021). Warren and Talley (2017) argue that if white educators are unable to come to terms with their whiteness, there is no possibility of them operationalizing any form of culturally responsive praxis successfully. As music education scholars increasingly support incorporating culturally responsive education (CRE) into K-12 education (e.g., Abril, 2013; Bond, 2014; Shaw, 2020), this is an essential consideration that an overwhelmingly white teacher workforce must acknowledge.

Some music scholars have argued for immersive experiences in preservice preparation as a way for educators to develop their racial consciousness (VanDeusen, 2021). However, no known research considers the value of immersive experiences for in-service teachers. Perhaps this is because scholars are operating under the assumption that teaching experience will negate the need for targeted and focused interventions surrounding race. However, based on the initial positions of the participants in this study, many of whom had a decade or more teaching experience in racially diverse settings, that does not seem to be the case. Inservice teachers may also benefit from immersive experiences, such as a CTSG, to address the gap in their racial consciousness.

Talking to the Students

An emergent finding in this study was the experiences of several participants who reported talking to and connecting in new ways to their BBIA students during the study. For example, Annie shared, “I have been trying to give my students more love, more attention, and reaching out to build relationships with my students of color intentionally because they are outsiders in our predominantly white community” (exit interview). Similarly, Margaret shared how she was talking with the students about “sticky subjects” when they came up and listening to their experiences and stories (Margaret, exit interview). Others discussed creating new lessons to open up spaces for these conversations to happen organically (Odette and Savannah).

By privileging students’ voices, teachers can consider students’ lived experiences and how these experiences have contributed to their self-concept (Davis, 2017). Researchers found that when students discussed their own life experiences, their sense of self-concept improved (Morgan & Streb, 2001), and their understanding of themselves as good musicians was directly related to their own experiences (Knapp, 2019; Shouldice 2014). When students are empowered

to share their personal experiences, it creates a collaborative learning space that allows teachers to gain insight while allowing students to develop a sense of agency to work against harmful stereotypes presented in mainstream culture (Farrell & Masterone, 2017). Furthermore, by collaborating and listening to students, children have the opportunity to reauthor their own stories (Greenstein, 2016) and engage in a liberatory practice (Freire, 1970/2001). Unlike additive approaches to inclusion, by engaging collaboratively with students, teachers can situate students at the center of their practice and discover other ways of knowing and doing that are focused on students' strengths instead of weaknesses (Baglieri & Shapiro, 2017). Incorporating the perspectives of minoritized students creates an opportunity for teachers to engage in critical self-reflection (Haywood, 2006; Peters, 2010). These insights can open doors for teachers to implement systemic changes in their programs and schools.

No participant mentioned talking to or with their students with dis/abilities, although Odette did discuss spending time with the special education teacher to learn and ask questions (exit interview). Researchers call for educators to engage with students with dis/abilities as the experts in their own lives (Laes & Westerlund, 2018). Laes and Westerlund (2018) argue that by "teaching *with*, and *by*, rather than *about*" persons with dis/abilities, music education might disrupt hierarchical models and transform inclusive thinking and practice (p. 34). Furthermore, when considering children's voices, The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989/2005) states that the best interests of the child must be the primary consideration, and Article 12 states: "Children and young people have the right to say what they think should happen when adults are making decisions that affect them and to have their opinions taken into account." Lundy (2007) reinforces this by reminding us that including the child's voice is not merely about good practice but also the law.

Balancing Intersectionality: Considering Race and Dis/ability Simultaneously

One of the most unexpectedly challenging components during this study was balancing the topics of race and dis/ability during CTSG sessions. Prior to the study, none of the participants had considered the ways race and dis/ability intersect. As a result, I structured the readings and video materials to lead participants towards the ideas embodied in DisCrit: a simultaneous and intersectional view of race and dis/ability and how the two constructs can reinforce each other in schools. We started conversations from a personal standpoint to do this, with each person interrogating their own biases. Then the group thought about concepts such as the difference between equity and equality and how the constructs of race and dis/ability independently operated in music spaces. In our fourth session, participants read about DisCrit, and they tried to conceptualize how the two constructs work in tandem with each other in education. While each person grew in their conceptual understanding of how race and dis/ability intersect, some struggled to see it as more than a conceptual idea, as it did not match the population of children at their schools. In most of the remaining CTSG sessions, participants continued to silo the two topics into different conversations and overlaps only occurred during more holistic discussions of equity, or if I intentionally recentered the other construct back into the conversation.

The challenge of seeing the two constructs intersectionally was not unique to this group. Gunnarson (2017) argues that there is an inherent difficulty in understanding intersectionality because “the very term ‘intersectionality’...implies that the entities intersecting are distinct from one another in some way—otherwise they could not intersect” (p. 115). Gunnarson (2017) goes on to argue against a “separate and inseparable” view of intersectionality in favor of a “separate and unified” version, which is the belief that something can be separate and yet connected. While

theorizing further on this thought experiment is outside the scope of this study, the idea that race and dis/ability can be separate and unified offers insight into how the participants conceptualized the material in the CTSG.

Most of the time, the participants kept the constructs separate, but as the semester evolved, they began to unify their ideas about equity and inclusion to be bigger than just a single identity category. At the beginning of the study, participants used the word "equity" almost exclusively when talking about BBIA students and "inclusion" when talking about students with dis/abilities. However, as participants interrogated these constructs (mostly) separately throughout the semester, I noticed they began to unify equity and inclusion into a broader view of all their students. For them, it was no longer about helping students who were BBIA or who were students with dis/abilities—participants started talking about their students in ways that extended beyond seeing them as a single identity point. Instead, they began to reconceptualize what music education might look like for all students when they approached each facet of their teaching through the lens of equity and inclusion.

The tenets of DisCrit differ from the concept of equity and inclusion. However, it seemed as if, for these participants, framing some of the concepts of DisCrit under the umbrella of equity and inclusion made the concepts easier to translate from theory to practice. It is possible that using an intersectional lens like DisCrit might be better served in spaces where participants come to the PD experience with similar background knowledge or experience with intersectional theorizing. It is also worth considering that DisCrit remains a valuable analytical tool but was too large of a conceptual topic to cover in a single PD experience. Alternatively, it might be of more value when used with a group who had enough prior knowledge about the constructs of race and dis/ability separately.

Considering Transformative Learning

In any intervention experience, such as this CTSG, the goal is change, whether stated outright or not. My goal was to offer ideas and challenge participants to think critically about the topics of race and dis/ability, hoping that they would then do something different in their thinking and teaching. While I observed changes to language and behavior in the CTSG, and participants described changes in their teaching, I have no data to determine if a long-term change occurred in any of the participants or if any of their self-described changes translated to their teaching practice. Therefore, I cannot definitively claim that a change took place. Scholars often use the word “transformational” when discussing a professional development experience and use participants’ self-reports as evidence of this change (Lewis, 2021). Many have analyzed studies through the theoretical lens of transformative learning (TL) (Mezirow, 2003), but this can be problematic if a researcher sets out looking for a specific thing and then claims to have found what they set out to discover, potentially leading to confirmation bias (McSweeney, 2021).

Alternatively, Wilson (2020) suggests a more realistic approach to transformation, arguing that it cannot be planned or anticipated. “The very notion that a prescriptive outcome can arise from a planned encounter is somewhat paradoxical because the transformative potential of an encounter lies in its ability to surprise, rupture, and unsettle, in ways that are necessarily beyond anticipation” (Wilson, 2020, p. 2). It is more realistic to consider that while transformation might happen, PD organizers and educators cannot plan for it. For example, Salvador et al. (2020a, 2020b) called participants' experience transformational only because participants used the word. Salvador et al. (2020a) then used grounded theory to develop an explanatory framework for the experiences that participants had named as transformative and then compared the emergent framework to Mezirow’s (2003) TL.

Salvador et al. (2020b) conducted a follow-up study a year later to consider the long-term effects of the experience on participants. Researchers need long-term data to determine the transformational nature of an experience. For example, Kazaemi and Hubbard (2008) noted that researchers frequently examine PD experiences for transformation, but they rarely examine what happens after PD ends and how the PD transfers to practice. Even with long-term data, Salvador et al. (2020b) were cautious in reporting their results, because their data regarding changes in practice were self-reported. Researchers need observation of teaching practice alongside teachers' self-reports to corroborate the presence of a change. Therefore, any participant self-reports of “transformation” in a single PD, even a PD that contains multiple elements that scholars use to determine effectiveness (content-specific, active learning, coherence, sustained duration, collective participation), require further investigation and other sources of data (Desimone, 2009). Without this, teachers are at risk for what Kennedy (2016) called the *problem of enactment*, whereby teachers learn about something and say they are implementing it yet continue teaching and behaving in the same ways.

The Complicated Role of Being the Facilitator

Facilitating the CTSG proved more challenging than I had expected. Despite designing the study to promote shared leadership of sessions and explicitly prioritizing the co-construction of knowledge, participants still treated me as if I was in charge, and I found this challenging to unseat in their thinking and behavior. As I navigated my multiple roles as facilitator and researcher, my memos reveal consistent grappling with the nature of leadership in a CTSG and the qualifications necessary for someone to facilitate a PD of this nature.

Navigating vertical and horizontal leadership is challenging, and scholars have maintained that CTSGs work best when there is fluidity in the hierarchy (Stanley, 2011). If a

CTSG is supposed to have shared leadership but still allows for a more knowledgeable other to assist (Stanley, 2009, 2011), the possibility remains that shared leadership might only be in name and not in reality. It is unclear how to reconcile this paradox within a CTSG without removing the presence of a facilitator who comes to the group with prior knowledge. I aimed to mitigate much of my hierarchical role by remaining markedly quieter than other participants, but this caused a different set of problems. As a result of my decision to hold back, there were several occasions where participants shied away from difficult conversations and avoided conflict or deeper interrogation of their feelings, words, and experiences.

Stanley (2011) warned of such potential pitfalls, where a CTSG can quickly turn into an echo chamber that does not foster an environment for growth, conflict, and disagreement. However, if I had interjected in those moments to challenge, offer a different idea, or guide the conversation back towards the conflict, I would have recentered myself as the leader. There were times when this exact thing happened, and then I struggled to pull back, as participants began to ask questions of me instead of each other. While I did not mind providing insight or asking questions to further their thinking, I remained cognizant that many participants began the study looking for specific answers, most likely from me. It is possible that the very moving back and forth between the vertical and horizontal leadership is the exact fluidity that Stanley (2011) referenced, but for this CTSG, it felt anything but fluid, and I struggled to decenter myself as the leader that participants seemed to desire.

While I consider myself well-positioned and prepared to lead and teach in PD settings, as I have been facilitating them in various settings for almost a decade, being a part of this CTSG caused me to reflectively question what was it that made me qualified outside my personal experience. I have 16 years of teaching experience, I regularly had student teachers while

teaching in public school, I am a nationally certified Orff Schulwerk Teacher Trainer, and have intensely studied the concepts of race, dis/ability, and professional development in my PhD work. All of these experiences theoretically positioned me to lead effective PD (Kennedy, 2016). Kennedy (2016) found that individuals or groups who had a long history of working with teachers, were teachers themselves, and based their programs on their personal experience and expertise, led more effective PD. However, I questioned how researchers determine PD effectiveness as it relates to the effectiveness of a facilitator. While there is extensive literature on the types of knowledge teachers need to be effective in their classrooms, few researchers have examined the knowledge and qualifications required for a person delivering PD. As the nature of a PD facilitator's required expertise is missing from the literature, it is hard to know more about how these facilitators prepare for their work or how to assess the effectiveness of their engagement in the PD. Considering what expertise or knowledge the facilitator brings to the experience may be essential for evaluating effective PD experiences in the future.

Considerations for Practice and Policy

The findings from this study are specific to a single group of participants and are not, nor are they meant to be, generalizable. However, I offer several considerations for music education practice and research through these findings. I believe these considerations can offer insights and strategies for others who may want to explore the constructs of race and ability and how they operationalize in music education spaces.

Preservice Education

Preservice preparation programs need to carefully consider how they explore social justice topics in coursework and thoughtfully craft educational experiences that challenge normative messages about who or what belongs in musical spaces. As many of the preservice

preparation programs remain embedded in a conservatory-style musical experience (Knapp & Mayo, 2021; Payne & Ward, 2020), the possibility exists that these programs might reinforce normative messages about music instead of creating opportunities for engaging in liberatory practice (Freire, 1970/201). However, preservice teachers need immersive, sustained experiences learning about culturally sustaining and asset-based approaches to teaching. Furthermore, preservice educators need significantly more experience working with, learning about, and learning from diverse students to effectively engage with 21st-century PK-12 students.

While some preservice preparation programs offer individual courses on teaching diverse learners or using CRE, more sweeping reform is necessary for structural and systemic change to music education preparation programs (Culp & Salvador, 2021). Culp and Salvador (2021) found that only 50% of undergraduate music education programs required at least one music-specific course related to teaching diverse learners, and that most of these courses focused exclusively on ability differences, leaving out other forms of diverse learners. Furthermore, Culp and Salvador (2021) noted that program-wide approaches to teaching diverse learners were rare. If preparation programs continue to silo these topics into single courses, or sub-sections of the curriculum, it is not much different from putting diverse children at the margins of education within the PK-12 system. Until preservice preparation programs center the diversity of the PK-12 student—and their musics—music teacher educators will continue to enter the teaching field unprepared and have a greater chance of unknowingly creating exclusionary spaces in music education.

PK-12 Music Teachers

The music educators in this study did not feel their preservice education effectively prepared them to work with an increasingly diverse student body, matching findings from other studies (Bond, 2017; VanDeusen, 2021). Even if preservice preparation programs made

sweeping changes to focus on inclusive and asset-based pedagogies, current in-service teachers need ongoing education to help counteract the perceived deficiencies they saw in their preservice education. PD organizers and educational stakeholders at all levels (local, state, national) need to consider how to offer continuing education that is both content-specific to music educators and responsive to the needs of K-12 students. At the same time, music educators need to feel they are a part of a larger picture of equity, one where *all* teachers in the building or district, regardless of content, are working towards similar goals of equity and inclusion for students. Therefore, PD organizers need to consider offering both depth (content-specific) and breadth (teachers working as a team towards similar goals across a building or district) as a part of their PD offerings. Related, those that facilitate PD need to be responsive to the specific needs of the community they are working with and avoid prescriptive PD that teachers might struggle to contextualize to their classrooms.

Inclusive Pedagogies

It is worth considering is what is meant by the phrase *inclusive pedagogy* and how educators and scholars employ it in research and praxis. Burnard et al. (2008), in a comparative case study across four countries, found that music educators often interpret *inclusive pedagogy* quite differently and that many take this term for granted. Others have echoed this by questioning what exactly constitutes an inclusive classroom (Ballantyne & Mills, 2008; Lubet, 2011) and noted that music teacher perspectives on social justice terms (such as inclusion) are often varied and conflicting (Salvador & Kelly-McHale, 2017).

Some scholars have argued that “no known systematic inclusive music curriculum exists,” and without that, confusion will continue to abound (Lubet, 2011, p. 58). While others argue that inclusive pedagogies exist (Sounds of Intent Framework, n.d.), inclusive pedagogies

that reinscribe ableist mindsets are problematic. Instead of aiming for a universal, inclusive pedagogy, which I argue is impossible, music education might consider ways to frame *inclusivity* through CRE or other pedagogies that operate from an asset-based approach (Paris, 2012). In doing so, it is also essential to consider how race and racial inequity also intersect with notions of inclusion and equity in music education. It may also offer researchers a new lens to explore preservice teacher education and curriculum design and instructional materials.

Educational Policy

Participants in this study regularly cited outside influences, such as district policies and state laws, funding, and the current political climate as barriers to them teaching in more inclusive and equitable ways. Their concerns mirror societal views on teachers and public education in the U.S., where teachers are underpaid, undervalued in society, and regularly blamed for society's current ills (Allen, 2011; Knapp, in press). Teachers are quick to be publicly praised when something goes well (e.g., pivoting quickly to online learning at the beginning of COVID-19) but even quicker to be vilified when it does not (e.g., returning to in-person instruction too soon or not soon enough) (Knapp, 2022). Indeed, teaching has become a political battlefield, with states and local districts continuing to ban books and outlaw topics (such as Critical Race Theory), all in the name of control and power (Schwartz, 2021). What is lost in this "war on education" are the actual children and the educators who try to make a difference in children's lives day each day. If teachers are to enact equitable and inclusive praxis, educational policymakers must support them with dramatic reform efforts.

Without sweeping reforms to how the U.S. funds and values education, any changes to preservice curricula, continuing education, or PK-12 pedagogies and praxis will be ineffective. For example, instead of being afraid of Critical Race Theory or banning it out of ignorance,

policymakers would do well to interrogate how the tenets of CRT might shed light on inequity in education and respond accordingly. Further, school leadership might consider how educational policies such as IDEA and ESSA continue to uphold segregation in their local schools and its implications on the lip-service diversity statements that their districts espouse. Instead of proposing another law or educational act focused on testing and high-stakes teacher evaluation, educational leadership organizations and lobbyists could work to support initiatives that increase funding and education for teachers and schools to learn about creating equitable and inclusive spaces, as well as asset-based pedagogies. Likewise, music education professional development organizations can support these efforts by considering the PD they offer music educators. Music PD facilitators should prioritize finding ways to support teachers in centering the voices and musics reflected in the students they teach.

Suggestions for Future Research

This study investigated the experiences of eight music educators as they learned about the constructs of race and ability in a CTSG. I considered how teachers conceptualized their beliefs, what (if any) changes they experienced as a result of participation, as well as what conditions were necessary for someone to change mindsets and behavior. I now offer several suggestions for future research based on the results of this study.

First, this study was a limited glimpse into the lives of these participants. As Blair commented, one semester is not enough time. Many participants were still grappling with race and dis/ability as constructs and deciding how and where to make their first change. Others had begun making changes in their teaching practice and behaviors but were still at the beginning of what they came to understand was a lifelong process of promoting equity in their classrooms. It is unclear what, if any, long-term changes to mindsets or behaviors these participants

experienced. Therefore, I recommend a follow-up study with these same participants to follow their evolution over several years. Related, participants self-reported all the data about changes during this study. It would be valuable to observe these educators in their classrooms to look for the connections between words and actions.

I recommend a replication study using different participants and slightly different design features. First, the CTSG group should be a smaller number of people (most likely four to six) to allow more time for each participant to speak and connect. Additionally, if the group were to study the constructs of race and ability again, instead of a different facet of social justice work, it would be valuable to either have a group that had prior knowledge in both constructs independently or one that spends significantly more time talking about each construct in isolation before bringing the constructs together. Related, while there was great value to having the CTSG embedded within a school year to allow participants to contextualize the information to their teaching practice, one semester is not enough time. A replication study should aim to have a group meet for the entire school year, if possible. Another structural modification might be that of the facilitator. If an outsider organizes the group, the challenges of navigating leadership will remain, as they did in this study. However, it is hard to see how a group could come together, choose topics, decide readings, and make organizational decisions without this person. Furthermore, without such a person, there would be no one to study the group. Therefore, it is worth more investigation into the value of having a group of individuals who knew each other ahead of time over a group of strangers that need time to develop trust.

One solution might be a blend of a recommendation from Salvador et al. (2020a), who were navigating the tensions of the TLP being a part of a graduate course. Salvador et al. (2020a) considered the possibility that TLP might be better suited for a PD experience embedded in a

school year, like the CTSG. However, perhaps a truly non-hierarchical group for a CTSG of this nature could come directly from an experience like a summer graduate program, where participants choose to stay together over the next school year to participate in a CTSG. This would negate much of the need for a facilitator, as the researcher/graduate coursework teacher could assist the facilitation and serve as a researcher instead of a participant-researcher in the CTSG. And yet, the challenge of power dynamics may still remain.

Another area worthy of further research is teachers talking to and working with children with dis/abilities. While teachers in this study did begin to talk to and engage with BBIA students, no teachers reported talking to students with dis/abilities. Researchers have frequently commented on the lack of student voice in music education research, especially students with dis/abilities (Avery, 2020; Harrison & Finney, 2010; Gerrity et al., 2013; Gilbert, 2018; Hehir, 2005; Hosking, 2008; Jellison & Taylor, 2007). Even in research examining children's viewpoints, the level of engagement with actual students still appears to be perfunctory in most cases. Only one known study utilized people with dis/abilities as the teachers of non-disabled students and considered them as the *leaders* in the classroom (Laes & Westerlund, 2018). Centering students with dis/abilities as leaders has implications for how other researchers might consider increasing collaboration with students with dis/abilities beyond a surface level and center the importance of their voices in the research itself.

Collaboration with special educators, parents, and paraprofessionals remains under-researched in the literature. Many researchers recommended collaborating with special educators, using a team-teaching approach, and engaging parents in the experience (Adamek, 2001; Darrow & Adamek, 2017; Gonyou-Brown, 2016; Hammel & Hourigan, 2011b; Melago, 2014), yet few have explored these suggestions in practice. Focusing specifically on

paraprofessional collaboration, Grimsby (2020b) engaged in a semester-long professional development for music educators and paraprofessionals to consider how to build connections and support one another in successfully working with students with dis/abilities. Educators found that developing relationships in this community of practice led to a greater understanding between themselves and paraprofessionals as they worked with students. No known research explores the experiences of music educators collaborating with special educators or parents. This is an important gap in the literature, as both special educators and parents are incredible resources and sources of support for teachers working with students with dis/abilities in the music room.

Many of the recommendations that scholars offer for teachers working with students with dis/abilities could also apply to music educators seeking to better serve BBIA students. Several scholars have focused on student voice for BBIA students in music spaces (e.g., Carlow, 2004; Kruse, 2016a, 2020a; J. Lewis, 2020), and indeed, they assert more research is warranted. Additionally, no known research has considered teachers collaborating with students or parents to learn about how to promote home music cultures within school music. Furthermore, there is little research on what teachers actually do on a day-to-day basis as they enact what they consider to be an inclusive curriculum like CRE or implement elements of UDL. Regardless of what specific curricula a teacher uses, more research on the actual pedagogical practices of music educators working with non-white students and students with dis/abilities students is still necessary.

Finally, it is necessary to complete more research on those who lead and enact PD for music educators. The role of a PD facilitator-leader is complex and multifaceted. The facilitator must have pedagogical content knowledge of the topic of study (Shulman, 1986) as well as knowledge on how to lead professional learning experiences, in addition to organizational skills,

interpersonal skills, and experience leading pedagogically productive talk (Lefstein et al., 2020). These necessary skills become even more salient when the topic of study is a challenging, deeply personal, and potentially political topic, such as social justice issues. While Salvador and Sierzega (2021) researched the qualifications and experience of those in DEI leadership positions in music education, no known research has investigated the people offering PD to music educators, their qualifications for leading, or how they developed their skills. This is a critical piece of understanding the larger issue of making a PD experience effective for music educators.

Concluding Thoughts

Music education is at a crossroads. The U.S. student population is increasingly more diverse, and, as such, so are their needs. However, practicing teachers cannot rely solely on the education they received in their preservice coursework (or, in many cases, did not receive) to adequately support students in the ever-changing landscape of education (Culp & Salvador, 2021; Salvador, 2010). Many teachers did not, and do not, receive enough education on working with students with dis/abilities or with racially diverse populations. Indeed, music educators need more guidance to provide equitable learning opportunities for all students, especially for BBIA students and students with dis/abilities. Therefore, educators must seek out additional learning, often in PD, to supplement their knowledge. While one semester may not be enough time to bring about systemic and structural change for the music educators involved, it opened the door to ask, “what is possible if teachers are willing to reconsider what they thought they knew about themselves and their teaching?” In that space of possibilities, music educators have great potential to create change. Music can and should be a space where children, especially those who often find themselves at the margins of society, are welcomed and accepted. However, this requires intentional effort on the part of the educator—to interrogate their own biases, fill gaps in

their knowledge, and be willing to embrace different ways of teaching that center students' lived experiences, listen to their voices, and value what they bring to the musical space. Professional development through a CTSG is one way music educators might engage in the challenging work of interrogating mindsets and behavior to enact a more equitable teaching praxis for all students.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

RECRUITMENT MATERIALS

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Recruitment Material

Do you work with a racially diverse student population? Do you have students with special education needs in your classroom? Have you ever had an experience that made you wonder what you could be doing to better support your students of color and students with disabilities? Do you ever feel at a loss about where to start? Would you benefit from action steps that you can take in your classroom to help you unpack places where race and ability are operating (perhaps unconsciously) in your teaching practice? Consider joining this Collaborative Teacher Study Group to wrestle with these questions and more!

This Collaborative Teacher Study Group will meet weekly (over Zoom) in Fall 2021, to read, study, and engage in conversation about how race and ability operate in music classrooms and consider potential action steps towards a more equitable and inclusive learning environment. Participants in this study will receive a \$500 honorarium to support implementation of action steps in their classroom. For further information and to indicate interest in participating, please click the following link (link to the google interest form).

APPENDIX B

GOOGLE INTEREST FORM

Google Interest Form

Preferred First and Last Name:

Preferred Email Address:

Contact Phone Number (with area code):

What is your preferred method of communication? (circle phone or email)

What is your comfort level navigating and engaging with a **private** social media page (such as a private Facebook page)?

- Not comfortable
- Limited comfort
- Moderate comfort
- Quite comfortable
- Expert

Where do you teach music (Name of school, City and State) Please list all if there is more than one:

Time zone you are in:

- Eastern Standard Time
- Central Time
- Mountain Time
- Pacific Time

What grade levels do you teach (select all that apply):

- Early Childhood (Birth to 5)
- Elementary (K-5) General Music
- Elementary (K-5) Choir
- Elementary (K-5) Other (please describe): _____
- Middle School (6-8) Band
- Middle School (6-8) Orchestra
- Middle School (6-8) Choir
- Middle School (6-8) General Music
- Middle School (6-8) Jazz
- Middle School (6-8) Other (please describe): _____
- High School (9-12) Band
- High School (9-12) Orchestra
- High School (9-12) Choir
- High School (9-12) Jazz
- High School (9-12) Other (please describe): _____

What is your school setting?

Private

Charter

Public

Other (please describe): _____

Describe your school location?

Rural

Suburban

Urban

I don't know

Other (please describe): _____

Years you have taught **at this school** (write in): _____

Years you have taught **overall** (write in): _____

What is your current experience level considering issues of **race** in your classroom and/or teaching practice:

This topic is not of interest to me

I have never explored this topic before, but would like to

I have considered it, but not applied it to my teaching

I have considered it a fair amount, but would like to do more or apply it more

I am currently working hard on exploring this topic in my teaching

I consider myself an expert on this topic

What is your current experience level considering issues of **dis/ability** in your classroom and/or teaching practice:

This topic is not of interest to me

I have never explored this topic before, but would like to

I have considered it, but not applied it to my teaching

I have considered it a fair amount, but would like to do more or apply it more

I am currently working hard on exploring this topic in my teaching

I consider myself an expert on this topic

This collaborative teacher study group will meet on weeknights (after 6pm EST) in Fall 2021 for approximately 1.5 hours. What **weeknights** are the best for you to meet? Circle all that apply:

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Age:

21-25

26-30

31-40

41-50

51-60

60+

Gender and preferred pronouns (write in)

Describe your race and/or ethnicity (write in)

APPENDIX C

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Participant Consent Form

Title of the project: Unpacking the “isms”: Addressing Race and Dis/ability in Music Education Through a Collaborative Teacher Study Group.

Purpose of the project: The purpose of this project is for a group of music educators to work together, engaging in conversations and collaborative learning about race and dis/ability in education. Teachers will participate in a Collaborative Teacher Study Group to unpack implicit beliefs and biases, evaluate teaching practices and consider the impact for students in their own teaching situations.

What you will do: You will participate as a member of a Collaborative Teacher Study Group (CTSG) from August 2021 through November 2021. You will participate in three semi-structured interviews with the Secondary Researcher, as well as eight weekly group meetings via Zoom with other participants. You will be asked to keep a weekly reflection journal throughout the study, as well as engage in weekly readings related to our group meetings. Finally, you will facilitate one of the CTSG meetings as the leader (with assistance from the Secondary Researcher). You will have the opportunity to engage with other participants outside of the CTSG through a private Facebook group (or other mutually agreed upon social media site).

Your rights to participate: Participation in this research project is completely voluntary. You have the right to say no at any time. You may change your mind at any time and withdraw. You may choose not to answer specific questions or stop participating at any time. Whether you choose to participate or not will have no effect on the relationship between you and the researcher(s). Refusal to participate or the decision to discontinue participation will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are entitled.

Costs and compensation: There is no cost to participate in this research study. All materials necessary for participation in the Collaborative Teacher Study Group will be provided free of charge. As compensation for participating in the study, and as a support towards implementing change in classroom practice, each participant will be gifted a \$500 honorarium to use for their classroom materials and resources, as they see fit. Half of the funds will be distributed in September 2021 and the other half will be distributed at the conclusion of the final interview.

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 study and you will be given the option to choose your own pseudonym prior to publication. The data collected for this research study will be protected on a password-protected computer in a locked file cabinet for a minimum of three years after the close of the project. Only the researchers and the Human Research Protection Program (HRPP) will have access to the research data. All recordings will be destroyed no later than June 2022.

Risks for the participant: The questions asked in interview and the conversations during the CTSG pose minimal risk of serious psychological harm. However, we will be discussing topics

that are sensitive and potentially triggering to some people, and participants may refer to their rights to pass or not participate at any time they feel as if the conversations are too much for them. There is no physical, legal or economic risk to participate in this study.

Benefits for the participant: Unpacking personal biases as well as engaging in action-oriented steps towards breaking down systemic barriers in the classroom has the potential to improve teaching, teacher to teacher relationships, and teacher to student relationships. Participants may be motivated to go back to their respective communities and become leaders working towards more socially just educational spaces.

Contact information: If you have questions or concerns about this study, such as scientific issues, how to do any part of it, or to report an injury, please contact the researchers: Karen Salvador, Principal Investigator at ksal@msu.edu, or Erika Knapp, Secondary Investigator at erikajknapp@gmail.com.

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 or irb@msu.edu or regular mail at 4000 Collins Rd., Ste. 136, Lansing, MI 48910.

You may keep a copy of this consent form for your records.

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

Name of Participant: _____

Signature of Participant: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX D

PROTOCOL OPTIONS PROVIDED TO PARTICIPANTS

Protocol Options Provided to Participants



Community Agreements

Developed in the field by educators affiliated with the NSRF.

When we talk about that which will sustain and nurture our spiritual growth as a people, we must once again talk about the importance of community. For one of the most vital ways that we sustain ourselves is by building communities of resistance, places where we know we are not alone.

bell hooks – Teaching to Transgress

1. Show up (or choose to be present).

This Warrior / Leader principle guides us to be both firm and yielding, honoring our own individual limits and boundaries as well as the limits and boundaries of others.

2. Pay attention (to heart and meaning).

This principle guides individuals to observe where in their experience they are half-hearted rather than open-hearted, when they carry a doubting heart rather than a clear heart, and when they are experiencing weak-heartedness rather than strong-heartedness.

3. Tell the truth (without blame or judgment).

This principle invokes the idea that the visionary is one who brings his or her voice into the world and refuses to edit, rehearse, perform, or hide. The task here is to come forward fully with our gifts, talents, and resources and to powerfully meet the tests and challenges of life.

4. Be open to outcome (not attached to outcome).

This principle is known as the Way of the Teacher. Traditional societies believe wisdom is flexible and fluid, never positional, that the human resource of wisdom is accessed by learning how to trust and how to be comfortable with states of not knowing.

Protocols are most powerful and effective when used within an ongoing professional learning community such as a Critical Friends Group® and facilitated by a skilled coach. To learn more about professional learning communities and seminars for new or experienced coaches, please visit the National School Reform Faculty website at www.nsrharmony.org.



National
School
Reform
Faculty

Harmony
Education
Center

www.nsrharmony.org

Forming Ground Rules

Developed by Marylyn Wentworth.

Ground Rules, or Norms, are important for a group that intends to work together on difficult issues, or who will be working together over time. They may be added to, or condensed, as the group progresses. Starting with basic Ground Rules builds trust, clarifies group expectations of one another, and establishes points of “reflection” to see how the group is doing regarding process.

Time

Approximately 30 minutes

1. Ask everyone to **write down what each person needs in order to work productively in a group**, giving an example of one thing the facilitator needs, i.e. “to have all voices heard,” or “to start and end our meetings when we say we will.” (This is to help people focus on process rather than product)
2. **Each participant names one thing from his/her written list**, going around in a circle, with no repeats, and as many circuits as necessary to have all the ground rules listed.
3. **Ask for any clarifications** needed. One person may not understand what another person has listed, or may interpret the language differently.
4. **If the list is VERY long – more than 10 Ground Rules — ask the group if some of them can be combined to make the list more manageable.** Sometimes the subtle differences are important to people, so it is more important that everyone feel their needs have been honored than it is to have a short list.
5. **Ask if everyone can abide by the listed Ground Rules.** If anyone dislikes or doesn’t want to comply with one of them, that Ground Rule should be discussed and a decision should be made to keep it on the list with a notation of objection, to remove it, or to try it for a specified amount of time and check it again.
6. **Ask if any one of the Ground Rules might be hard for the group to follow.** If there is one or more, those Ground Rules should be highlighted and given attention. With time it will become clear if it should be dropped, or needs significant work. Sometimes what might appear to be a difficult rule turns out not to be hard at all. “Everyone has a turn to speak,” is sometimes debated for example, with the argument that not everyone likes to talk every time an issue is raised, and others think aloud and only process well if they have the space to do that. Frequently, a system of checking in with everyone, without requiring everyone to speak, becomes a more effective ground rule.
7. **While work is in progress, refer to the Ground Rules whenever they would help group process.** If one person is dominating, for example, it is easier to refer to a Ground Rule that says, “take care with how often and how long you speak,” than to ask someone directly to stop dominating the group.
8. **Check in on the Ground Rules when reflection is done on the group work.** Note any that were not followed particularly well for attention in the next work session. Being sure they are followed, refining them, and adding or subtracting Ground Rules is important, as it makes for smoother work and more trust within the group.

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Ice Breakers and Warm-Ups

Shared at the June 2000 NSRF National Facilitators Meeting

The following exercises designed to help people get to know one another.

1. If you were to write your **Autobiography**, what would the title be and why.
2. Write on the inside of your tent card (table name card) **a fact about yourself** that no one would be likely to guess. Read them out loud. Gives people a hook. (i.e., "Faith, who raises sheep.")
3. **Draw a picture that describes who you are** -- can be symbols, colors, you doing something...
4. **Create a flower.** Each person puts one petal on the flower, on which is written something important about them. If we can find something we all have in common we put it in the center.
5. **Human Scavenger Hunt**, where you find things interesting about each person from a list that might be work related or not. Items like, find someone who has coached a CFG already, someone who has taught in another country, someone who has created a portfolio that works... People share who they found in the whole group.
6. People at each table find **four things they have in common and share with the large group as an introduction**. Can't be anything about education. (At one table, all had an Uncle Harry they didn't like).
7. People post one **clue about themselves** (with no name) on a bulletin board. Later in the day, add another clue beside the first clue (more if there is time) and people guess identities from the clues at the end of the day. People make assumptions and then they find that it's very revealing and fun.
8. **Post cards from the edge.** Bring a collection of wild postcards and hand them out. Each person finds something in the post card that relates to their experience as a teacher or principal and shares that with the group.
9. **Give out pennies and look at the dates.** Go around the room and share something that occurred for you in the year of the penny. It can be something about your education (as a child, a teachers etc.) or it can be just about life. You'll need a good collection of pennies with varied dates.
10. **Skittles.** People grab one, there is a guide by color: Yellow, something you're doing this summer; green, something about work; red, an adventure you've had in education, etc. Whatever you want for categories.

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Chalk Talk

Originally developed by Hilton Smith, Foxfire Fund; adapted for the NSRF by Marylyn Wentworth.

Chalk Talk is a silent way to do reflection, generate ideas, check on learning, develop projects or solve problems. It can be used productively with any group—students, faculty, workshop participants, committees. Because it is done completely in silence, it gives groups a change of pace and encourages thoughtful contemplation. It can be an unforgettable experience. Middle Level students absolutely love it—it's the quietest they'll ever be!

Format

Time: Varies according to need; can be from 5 minutes to an hour.

Materials: Chalk board and chalk or paper roll on the wall and markers.

Process

1. The facilitator explains VERY BRIEFLY that chalk talk is a silent activity. No one may talk at all and anyone may add to the chalk talk as they please. You can comment on other people's ideas simply by drawing a connecting line to the comment. It can also be very effective to say nothing at all except to put finger to lips in a gesture of silence and simply begin with #2.
2. The facilitator writes a relevant question in a circle on the board.
Sample questions:
 - What did you learn today?
 - So What? or Now What?
 - What do you think about social responsibility and schooling?
 - How can we involve the community in the school, and the school in community?
 - How can we keep the noise level down in this room?
 - What do you want to tell the scheduling committee?
 - What do you know about Croatia?
 - How are decimals used in the world?
3. The facilitator either hands a piece of chalk to everyone, or places many pieces of chalk at the board and hands several pieces to people at random.
4. People write as they feel moved. There are likely to be long silences—that is natural, so allow plenty of wait time before deciding it is over.
5. How the facilitator chooses to interact with the Chalk Talk influences its outcome. The facilitator can stand back and let it unfold or expand thinking by:
 - circling other interesting ideas, thereby inviting comments to broaden
 - writing questions about a participant comment

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A Change in Practice

Developed by Gene Thompson-Grove.

The purpose of this protocol is to provide a structure for analyzing the process participants have used to make changes in their practice, and for linking that process to Inquiry. This protocol highlights the changes educators constantly make in their practice, and gives them a way to think more systematically about the questions and data they use to inform those changes. Key to this protocol is the discussion in step 4, when the group talks in such a way that they broaden the presenter's thinking about how s/he generally approaches making changes in his or her practice.

Roles

- A facilitator (who also participates) should be assigned for each round. The facilitator's role is to keep the conversation moving through each phase and to facilitate the final conversation. The facilitator should also keep time.
- The presenter shares his or her writing about a change s/he has made in his or her practice. This becomes the text for professional learning within the group.
- Groups of three seem to work well for this process, as it allows every group member to present, and the conversation builds and deepens. If, however, a presenter prefers to hear multiple perspectives, a group of four or five could be used.

Time

Approximately 75 minutes for triads.

Process

1. Writing (10 minutes)

Each member of the group writes about a change he has made in his practice, with as much detail as he can muster (see prompts, below). This writing should tell only what happened, like a snapshot. The writing should be crisp and succinct, but it should be clear that the group's discussion will be about what happened, not about the quality of the writing.

Describe a significant change you have made in your practice:

- What were you teaching/doing?
- What change did you make?
- Why did you think you should make a change? How did you know you should be doing something differently? Was there a question that led to the change?
- How did you decide what to do? Was there data or evidence of some sort that made you think you should make a change?
- How did you know whether the change was successful/was working?
- Who else played a role?
- Now, what are you wondering about?

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Check In Circle

Developed by JoAnn Dowd

Check In Circle allows folks to transition from life outside to being present at a meeting or CFG.

Process

Sitting in a circle, each person takes a turn sharing “where they are” to whatever degree they feel comfortable, or they can pass. Others do not respond. (1-2 minutes each)

Suggested Adaptations

- Good Thing, Bad Thing: Each person says a good thing going on in their life and then a not so good thing.
- Fill In the Blank: Everyone is asked to respond to a statement, such as “What comes up for me when we start to talk about what equity, diversity and democracy is (blank) ”

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Considerations for Responsive Facilitation

Developed by Marylyn Wentworth.

Facilitation is a crucial part of any kind of collaborative work. A responsive facilitator has to keep many things in mind as he/she supports the work of a collaborative group. The following list is intended as both a general reminder of important skills, and a checklist of areas one might want to focus on for personal growth.

A responsive facilitator has to...

- ___ 1. pay attention to group dynamics all the time — body language, who's speaking and who's not, voice tone, reactions between group members, secondary agendas, judgmental comments;
- ___ 2. pay attention to inclusion of all members;
- ___ 3. attend to agreed upon group norms, adding new norms as needed for productive, group work;
- ___ 4. be able to help a group figure out what it needs, or;
- ___ 5. figure out what a group needs if it can't — give guidance, and then....
- ___ 6. be able to change the agenda to meet the group needs, without losing sight of the purpose/goals of the activity, workshop, work session;
- ___ 7. be able to distinguish between one's own agenda and the agenda of the group;
- ___ 8. have a way to identify oneself in the role of facilitator, teacher, person, when the roles change and let the group you are facilitating know. (One facilitator friend actually has three hats and puts them on when his role changes);
- ___ 9. know when you are stumped and get help from a colleague or ask the group where to go now — transparent facilitation often works well. It is important not to appear to be an expert when stuck;
- ___ 10. recognize when the whole group, sometimes the facilitator too, is "stuck" and put the issue/dilemma, in the "parking lot" for later when there's been time for reflection and distance, and move on;
- ___ 11. be able to step back - get some distance - when you feel yourself being emotionally drawn into difficult group dynamics;
- ___ 12. own up to goofs, and misperceptions - they are usually great opportunities for learning, and you provide modeling;

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The Constructivist Listening Dyad

Adapted from the National Coalition for Equity in Education by Victor Cary

Purpose

To create a safe space to become better at listening and talking in depth. Constructivist listening dyads help us as we work through feelings, thoughts, and beliefs that sometimes produce anger, passivity, undermine confidence, or cause interference in relationships with students or colleagues.

Time allotted: 2 to 30 minutes

Group format: Pairs.

Supplies: A timer

Facilitation tips: Talk about the purpose of a constructivist listening dyad.

The simplest form of doing constructivist listening is a **dyad**, which is the exchange of constructivist listening between two people....

I agree to listen to and think about you for a fixed period of time in exchange for you doing the same for me. I keep in my mind that my listening is for your benefit so I do not ask questions for my information.

Start with two minutes — at first it may seem difficult. But participants, over the course of time, may work their way up to 5-8 minutes and more each. *Remind participants that the purpose of a constructivist listening dyad is that the listening is for the benefit of the talker.* This is an essential point to access the usefulness and power of a constructivist listening dyad.

Guidelines for Constructivist Listening:

- 1) Each person is given equal time to talk. (Everyone deserves to be listened to.)
- 2) The listener does not interpret, paraphrase, analyze, give advice or break in with a personal story. (People can solve their own problems.)
- 3) Confidentiality is maintained. (People need to know they can be completely authentic.)
- 4) The talker does not criticize or complain about a listener(s) or about mutual colleagues during their time to talk. (A person cannot listen well when she/he is feeling attacked or defensive.)

The Activity:

1. Each person will have two minutes or more to respond to a prompt. It is very useful to scaffold the prompts.
Ex: When is the last time you remembered being fully listened too? How did it feel?
Growing up, what was your experience as a learner? What felt supportive? What interfered with your learning?
How did race, class or gender impact your experience as a learner in school?

Reflection questions following the activity:

- What came up for you using this structure? What came up for you reflecting on the prompt?
- What worked for you? What was difficult for you?
- What purpose do you think it might serve?
- When could it be used?

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Diversity Rounds

Developed in the field by educators affiliated with NSRF.

Purpose

To become more aware of the “Venn Diagram” of our identities, to work with others to define our various identities, and to think more deeply about what diversity means.

Procedure

1. Facilitator asks participants to group themselves in four to five of the following ways (do not define the categories fully, the participants are to define for themselves the groups they form):

geography
kind of school
role in school
reform agenda identity
birth order
gender
ethnicity

2. As each group forms, participants discuss one or more of the following questions, being ready to report on them as a group. There will be approximately five minutes for each conversation.
 - What does it mean to you to be _____?
 - How much do you define yourself this way? How is our group unique/different from the other groups?
 - One thing we would like the other groups to know about us is _____.
3. Each group reports back, briefly.
4. Repeat for each “category.”
5. Reflection questions:
 - How did you feel about doing this exercise?
 - What did it bring up that was new for you?
 - What was difficult? What was uncomfortable? What made you feel good?
 - Would you use this activity with your own group/staff?

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Equity Perspectives: Creating Space for Making Meaning on Equity Issues

National Coalition for Equity in Education, Victor Cary

Below are a set of perspectives or assumptions that have important implications for schools and communities. These perspectives provide the opportunity to dialogue and build shared meaning on the beliefs, values and assumptions that generally are not discussed in schools or other public spaces. **Note:** It is very helpful to use constructivist listening dyads as a structure to help support a discussion of the equity perspectives.

1. No one is born prejudiced. All forms of bias, from extreme bigotry to unaware cultural bias, are acquired, actually imposed, on a young person.
2. We are all one species. All humans are very much alike.
3. In many societies, many of the assumptions, values and practices of people and institutions of the dominant culture serve to disadvantage students from the non-dominant culture.
4. Individual prejudice and institutionalized biases are dysfunctional for individuals and to the society as a whole.
5. Systematic mistreatment (such as racism, prejudice against people with disabilities, classism, or sexism) is more than the sum of individual prejudices. Thoughtful action with regard to curriculum, pedagogy, school policies and school organization is necessary to overcome the effects on people and institutions with a long history of prejudice and discrimination.
6. Individuals and groups internalize and transfer the systematic mistreatment. They often act harmfully toward themselves and each other. This process must be identified and eliminated.
7. Educators are an important force in helping many people overcome the effects of societal bias and discrimination, but educational institutions also serve to perpetuate the inequalities and prejudices in society.
8. Race, class, perceived ability, and gender bias are serious issues facing U.S. society and education. Unfortunately, they are issues that are usually not discussed. Talking about them is necessary, not to lay blame, but to figure out better ways of educating our students.
9. Lack of acceptance and support is an impediment to the development of educational leadership among people of color, women, and the working class.
10. To make progress on this very complex problem it will be necessary to improve alliances between educators from different ethnic and racial groups, between males and females, between those with disabilities and those without, and between people of different class backgrounds.
11. Discussing and gaining new understandings about the existence and effects of bias and discrimination will usually be accompanied by strong emotions.
12. Changed attitudes and actions will be facilitated if we are listened to attentively and allowed to release our emotions as we attempt to make sense of our experiences and the experiences of others.

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Equity Protocol

Developed by Nancy Mohr, 2002.

Purpose

To look at student and teacher work in order to understand our own work and its relation to promoting equity.

Roles

A presenter who brings work for feedback
9-12 participants

Steps

1. Presentation. The teacher presents the assignment, offering context and his or her expectations concerning the student work it would produce. (5-7 minutes)
2. Go-Rounds. 1 questions per round. Possible questions (30 seconds to 1 minute per person)
 - What do you see that would be engaging to many different students?
 - What do you see that would meet more than one learning modality?
 - What do you see that would support/hinder special needs students?
 - What do you see that would support/hinder English Language Learners?
 - What do you see that could be considered bias in the language used in the assignment?
 - What do you wonder about?
3. Student Work. The presenter distributes student work samples that resulted from this assignment. Participants review the work. (5-7 minutes)
4. Final Go-Round. Participants reflect on the relationship between the questions raised earlier and the student work reviewed. (1 minute per person)
5. Reflection. The presenter reflects on all that he or she has heard, and comments on any new insights or opportunities that have arisen. (5 minutes)
6. Open conversation. "What do we think we have learned from this?" (as time allows)
7. Debrief. "How could we apply this to our work?"

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Equity Stances Activity

Developed by John Newlin, Southern Maine Partnership, University of Southern Maine.

Participants will engage in an activity to examine some of the tough questions that arise when educators act to address equity in student learning but that are often obscured by vague language about equity.

Goals for the Activity

- Participants will deepen their understanding of several meanings of the word “equity” in regards to student learning.
- Participants will learn an activity that can be used to effectively engage members of their school community in the issue of equity in student learning.
- Participants will engage in activities that invite them to examine potential inconsistencies between and among their beliefs, language, and actions regarding equity in student learning.

Please note: Participants will probably NOT reach an agreement during the activity on how to define equity.

Introductions

10 Minutes

The facilitators introduce themselves and ask each participant say name, workplace and town (ONLY). Provide the agenda with Appendix A on the back. Go over the agenda.

Introduction to Equity Stances

5 Minutes

Begin with something like, “The equity issue can be confusing. Clarity is elusive. Exploration of the issue often feels risky. This activity is intended to provide a safe place to explore and examine the issue in greater depth than often happens.” Ask participants to read the 5 stances in Appendix A alone and quietly for now and decide which stance **most closely** matches their own. “This is intended as an opportunity to form a first impression based on reading very brief explanations of each stance. We will dig deeper in a few minutes.” Display the stances via overhead if desired – only the stances, not the examples or the tough questions.

Read Full Stances Handout and Write

10 Minutes

Distribute Appendix B, which includes the examples in practice and the tough questions. Participants are given time to individually (without discussion) read and write their initial reactions, questions, etc.

Text-based Discussion

20-40 Minutes

Focus Question: What do you believe schools should do regarding equity in student learning? If the group is larger than 12, break into two groups. Participants will be reminded to refer to the text.

Three Levels Protocol (groups of 3 or 4)

25 Minutes

Remind participants to pick a passage that has implications for their work. There may be time for more than one round. See Appendix C below.

Conclusion and Debrief

15 Minutes

Distribute and briefly explain the Facilitators’ Notes for the activity – see Appendix D below. Participants are invited to ask questions, make comments and suggestions, and reflect on adapting the activity for home audiences. With 2 minutes left, check-in on the Activity Goals: Comments or questions? Please fill out feedback form — Appendix E.

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ProMISE Protocol

Using the Courageous Conversation Compass with a Text

Adapted from the Judith Gray's 4As by Debbie Bambino, Daniel Baron and RoLesia Holman, June 2007.

Description

Use the "Compass" from *Courageous Conversations About Race* to reflect on the author's perspective and your response to a text morally, intellectually, socially and emotionally.

Process

- Distribute copies of the "Compass" and review the four points or quadrants before reading the text. Explain that ProMISE means: A **Pro**-active journey towards examining and understanding the **M**oral, **I**ntellectual, **S**ocial, and **E**motional foundations required for racial healing to occur.
Singleton & Linton, 2006 (p.151)
- Select and read the text. Highlight sections that correspond to the four points of the "compass." The text should be provocative and should lend itself to reflection and interpretation.
- Divide into small groups of four.
- Choose one point on the "Compass" and ask each participant to share their selection and their response to it in rounds on a moral (believing), intellectual (thinking) and social (doing), and emotional (feeling) level. In some instances, the selection may connect to more than one, or all points. (2 minutes each, 8 minutes/round)
- After each round, discuss what you heard and implications for your practice before moving to the next point/round. (7 minutes)
- Debrief the content and process. (10 minutes)

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Provocative Prompts for Equity

Developed in the field by educators affiliated with NSRF.

Essential Question: What does it really mean to do “equity work”?

“There are many ways to do diversity work. The most exciting, the most effective entry point as I see it, is helping people learn how to talk and listen to one another. Everyone has a story to tell about the impact of differences on their lives and careers. Most people want to tell their story. The heart and soul of this work is giving people the chance to talk.”

Barbara Walker, Teaching Diversity, Gallos, et al, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, 1997.

“...groups can often avoid unproductive situations if members recognize that inequity and prejudice have grown out of societal oppression or distressing earlier experiences. People need opportunities to work through the feelings from these hurts. Participants also need to be reminded that emotional release (through tears, trembling, laughing and talking, for example) is the natural healing process from the distress they have experienced. It is also important for people to be able to talk about the first time they encountered prejudice and inequity and their feelings at the time.”

Julian Weissglass, “Deepening our Dialogue About Equity,” Educational Leadership, ASCD, April 1997.

“We agree with Mr. Weissglass’s concise diagnosis, but he does not go deeply enough into the structures and policies that allow racism to be active in the lives of children and the business of our schools. We have to change the facts, not just the feelings that nurture and are nurtured by deep and historic social engineering that divides races and economic classes in America. It will take honest dialogue and leadership, but also much more than that to put our society and our students on equitable footing.”

National Urban Alliance for Effective Education, National Advisors: Alan E. Farstrup, Peter Gerber, Asa Hilliard, III, Lisa Delpit.

“I worry that in this country, we’ll only learn to value differences one at a time — work on each separately, difference by difference by difference. We view life in terms of its dualism: good (my way) or bad (your way). Instead, I wish we could learn, truly learn, that the fundamental problem is our basic attitude toward difference.”

Barbara Walker, Teaching Diversity, Gallos et al, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, 1997

“Even in schools with very small populations of color, educators are becoming more aware of the need to prepare white students to live in a multiracial society. Yet this is a world with which the current teaching force has limited experience. Most white teachers were raised and educated in predominantly white communities. Their firsthand knowledge of communities of color and their cultures and histories are quite limited.”

Sandra M. Larence and Beverly Daniel Tatum, “White Educators as Allies: Moving from Awareness to Action”, from Off-White, edited by Fine et al

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Southern Maine Partnership Guide to Good Probing Questions

Developed by the Southern Maine Partnership.

Many of the structured conversations or protocols currently used in education include a period of time for “probing questions.” This Guide offers one approach to defining and constructing probing questions that has been informed by the work of educators in Southern Maine Partnership schools.

There’s no way to assure that a probing question will be a good one — that is determined by its impact on the receiver. But we can increase the likelihood that a probing question will be good by following the ideas in this Guide.

What are the attributes of good probing questions? Good probing questions:

- Are for the benefit of the receiver and the colleagues and students he/she impacts
- Deepen and expand thinking and conversation
- Sustain thinking beyond the moment
- Are relevant and important to the receiver
- Keep learning at the center
- Help foster a sense that participants are a community of learners
- Are concise
- Elicit a slow, reflective response
- Are exploratory - they do not contain explicit recommendations or directives
- Are non-judgmental - neutral rather than positive or negative

A few more words about judgments may be helpful

Judgments are expressed in a variety of ways including word choice, “tone” of voice, and body language. Our tendency to judge may or may not be natural or hard-wired, but it’s clear that we can choose when and how we express our judgments. The expression of judgments, positive and negative, play a significant role in most clinical supervision and evaluation processes; this should NOT be true within the Probing Questions portion of a protocol. It’s especially important to guard against asking probing questions that contain an expression of negative judgment, e.g. “Why, in heaven’s name, did you do that?”, or “Don’t you think you should at least try to...?” The expression of negative judgments often puts people in the “danger zone,” where they tend to shut down. If a negative judgment is expressed, the problem can usually be pointed out by another participant or the facilitator, and it can often be addressed with a simple, “I’m sorry,” followed by moving on.

What should people keep in mind when constructing a probing question?

- Assume that the receiver intends well in their work as an educator.
- Think of yourself as an advocate for the success of the receiver.
- Prepare your question carefully before you ask it.
- Internally check your question for relevance to the receiver’s original questions and focus.
- Remember the concentric circles of comfort, discomfort, risk and danger. Don’t avoid discomfort and risk, but make questions appropriate to the trust level of the group.

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Tuning for Equity Protocol

Tuning Protocol developed by Joseph McDonald and David Allen, with adaptation for equity focus by Mary Hastings.

1. Introduction (5 minutes)

- Facilitator briefly introduces protocol goals, guidelines, and schedule
- Participants briefly introduce themselves (if necessary)

2. Presentation (15 minutes)

The presenter has an opportunity to share the context for the student work:

- Information about the students and/or the class — what the students tend to be like, where they are in school, where they are in the year.
Descriptions of the students grounded in evidence the way descriptions are shared in the Collaborative Assessment Conference would be useful here. This might eliminate predisposing the participants to a particular “view” of the class or students in question.
- Assignment or prompt that generated the student work
- Student learning goals or standards that inform the work
Potential clarifying questions might be, “How are all students being served with this assignment?” or “How was it ‘differentiated’ for the members of this particular class?”
- Samples of student work — photocopies of work, video clips, etc. — with student names removed.
More questions to consider: How did the presenter select the work? Was it truly random? Does it represent not only the range of learning, but also the range of diversity in the class?
- Evaluation format — scoring rubric and/or assessment criteria, etc.
Questions here could focus on how evaluation is handled. Are clear, high expectations stated for all, using student friendly language that guides the students to equitable outcomes?
- Focusing question for feedback
- Participants are silent; no questions are entertained at this time.

3. Clarifying Questions (5 minutes)

- Participants have an opportunity to ask “clarifying” questions in order to get information that may have been omitted in the presentation that they feel would help them to understand the context for the student work. Clarifying questions are matters of “fact.” The facilitator should be sure to limit the questions to those that are “clarifying,” judging which questions more properly belong in the warm/cool feedback section.

4. Examination of Student Work Samples (15 minutes)

- Participants look closely at the work, taking notes on where it seems to be in tune with the stated goals, and where there might be a problem. Participants focus particularly on the presenter’s focusing question. Presenter is silent; participants do this work silently.

Protocols are most powerful and effective when used within an ongoing professional learning community such as a Critical Friends Group® and facilitated by a skilled coach. To learn more about professional learning communities and seminars for new or experienced coaches, please visit the National School Reform Faculty website at www.nsrharmony.org.

APPENDIX E

CTSG SCHEDULE AND READINGS

CTSG Schedule and Readings

Table 3. CTSG Schedule, Assigned Readings, and Facilitator

Date of CTSG	Readings & Videos	Facilitator
7/27/21	<p>* <i>Equity Perspectives: Creating Space for Making Meaning</i> (NSRF, 2021)</p> <p>* Chapter 6 from <i>Daring Greatly</i> (Brown, 2012)</p>	Erika
8/10/21	<p>* Video: <i>Invisible Knapsack</i> (MacIntosh, 2008)</p> <p>*Video: <i>Recognizing White Privilege</i> (MacIntosh, 2012)</p> <p>*Video: <i>I'm Not Your Inspiration</i> (Young, 2014)</p> <p>*Chapter 1 from <i>Courageous Conversations</i> (Singleton, 2015)</p>	Blair
8/24/21	<p>* Video: <i>The Danger of the Single Story</i> (Adichie, 2009)</p> <p>*Chapter 5 from <i>Equity by Design</i> (Chardin & Novak, 2021)</p> <p>*Chapter 1 from <i>Not light but fire</i> (Kay, 2018)</p>	Annie
9/7/21	<p>* Dis/ability critical race studies (DisCrit): theorizing at the intersections of race and dis/ability (Annamma et al., 2013)</p> <p>* Analysis of gender, age, and disability representation in music education textbooks: A research update (Bernabé-Villodre et al., 2018)</p>	Margaret

Table 3 (cont'd).

9/21/21	<p>* CAST website (2016)</p> <p>* Taking the risk to engage in race talk: Professional development in elementary schools (Coles-Ritchie & Smith, 2017)</p>	Odette
10/5/21	<p>* Chapter 4 from <i>Courageous Conversations</i> (Singleton, 2015)</p> <p>* Video: <i>Intersectionality and Sociology</i> (Hill Collins, 2018)</p> <p>* Disability and the ideology of ability: How might music educators respond? (Churchill & Bernard, 2020)</p>	Erika
10/19/21	<p>* Chapter 7 from <i>Being white, being good: White complicity, white moral responsibility, and social justice pedagogy</i> (Applebaum, 2011)</p> <p>* Performing disability in music teacher education: Moving beyond inclusion through expanded professionalism (Laes & Westerlund, 2018)</p>	Savannah
11/2/21	<p>* Chapter 8 from <i>Courageous Conversations</i> (Singleton, 2015)</p> <p>* “Crippling” the curriculum through academic activism: Working toward increasing global exchanges to reframe (Dis)ability and Education (Connor & Gabel, 2013)</p>	Maybelline
11/16/21	<p>* Chapter 6 from <i>Equity by Design</i> (Chardin & Novak, 2021)</p>	Cindy

Table 3 (cont'd).

11/30/21	<p>* Video: John Stewart monologue from <i>The Daily Show</i> 8/26/14</p> <p>*Chapter 4 from <i>Not light but fire</i> (Kay, 2018)</p> <p>* You can't be in my choir if you can't stand up: One journey toward inclusion (Haywood, 2006)</p>	Lydia
12/14/21	* Chapters 11 and 12 from <i>Courageous Conversations</i> (Singleton, 2015).	Erika

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APPENDIX F

SEMI-STRUCTURED OPENING INTERVIEW GUIDE

Semi-Structured Opening Interview Guide

General:

- Where are you from?
- Tell me about how you came to be a music educator.
- What is your favorite thing about being a music educator?
- What is the hardest part of being a music educator for you?

Race:

- Tell me about the racial makeup of the students you teach.
 - Have you ever taught a different racial makeup of students? Tell me about that.
- How does race appear or manifest in your classroom?
 - Ask them to speak to a specific experience.
- What are your feelings about the intersection of race and music?
 - Specifically for your classroom?
- Have you explored issues of race in your teaching in the past? Why or why not? Tell me about those experiences.
 - If yes, was there a specific event that prompted it? Tell me about that.

Dis/ability:

- Tell me about the ability makeup of the students you teach.
 - Have you ever taught a different ability makeup of students? Tell me about that.
- How does dis/ability appear or manifest in your classroom?
 - Ask them to speak to a specific experience.
- What are your feelings about the intersection of dis/ability and music?
 - Specifically for your classroom?
- Have you explored issues of dis/ability in your teaching in the past? Why or why not? Tell me about those experiences.
 - If yes, was there a specific event that prompted it? Tell me about that.

Goals:

- What are your goals for being a part of this CTSG? What do you hope to learn, explore or gain from this experience? Is there a particular topic or situation that you would like to cover?
- Have you participated in a group like this before? Tell me about it.
- What is your conversational style? Describe how you operate during a difficult or sensitive conversation?
- Each person in the group will be asked to participate by leading one session. I will assist you in planning this. What do you need from me to feel successful in a group setting like this?

Potential Follow-up Probes to Utilize:

- You mentioned _____. Tell me more about that.
- Can you describe the situation for me? What happened?
- What did you do? How do you remember it? How did you experience it?
- What do you feel about it? How was your emotional reaction at the time?
- What do you think about it? What is your opinion of what happened?
- As you think back, how would you handle/respond/judge the situation today?

(Brinkman & Kvale, 2015)

APPENDIX G

SEMI-STRUCTURED MIDPOINT INTERVIEW GUIDE

Semi-Structured Midpoint Interview Guide

Opening:

- Ice breaker- Ask participants to choose a pseudonym

Life History:

- When were you first aware of your race?
- What do you remember from childhood about how you made sense of human difference?
What confused you?
- What childhood experiences did you have with friends or adults who were different from you in some way?
- How, if ever, did any adult give you help thinking about racial difference? Ability difference?
- What is your earliest recollection about disability? Do you remember any pivotal moments about experiencing disability?
- How does your reflection impact how you see your own students?

Contemplating Group Participation:

- When you saw the call for the study, what drew you to want to participate?
- Reflecting on our first 5-6 sessions, what was the most beneficial reading? Activity? Why?
- Have there been any times during our meetings where you felt more or less apt to participate? Why?
- I am curious about your take on the group being more focused on race than ability?
- As we have begun to navigate the intersection of race and ability, have any of your thoughts or perspectives changed? What do you think the cause for that was?
- What are things you still want to talk about with regard to race and disability?
- If you have already been the leader of the group, how did that go for you?
- Is there anything else you want to tell me?

APPENDIX H

SEMI-STRUCTURED EXIT INTERVIEW GUIDE

Semi-structured Exit Interview Guide

Life History:

- How did you first learn to play music?
- What were your music learning experiences like? Mostly formal or informal?

PD:

- How did you experience PD last year?
- How do you perceive the experience of being a part of this CTSG?
- Have you thought about race or disability in the spaces between our meetings?
- How do you perceive any changes or impacts to your thinking or teaching?
- Tell me about your experience participating in the CTSG. Was there anything that was really enjoyable or overly difficult in participating?

Race and Ability:

- Before we began this project, did you see race impacting your interactions or relationships with students? How about now? Ability?
- Talk about how you connect with students? Are there qualities in students that make bonding easier or more difficult? Are there any barriers to building relationships with students?

Thinking About Change:

- Before we began this project, did you think about your own biases in the context of your work? Has that shifted? What do you think about now?
- Do you take any active measures to mitigate or minimize bias in your teaching now that you have had experiences in the CTSG? Or change the ways you interact?
- Did your participation in this group affect how you interact with colleagues in your own buildings? Your students? Your administrators? Parents? Your personal life?

What's Next:

- There is a difference in shifts in beliefs and shifts in action. Where do you see yourself going after this with regard to these topics? What will you do next?
- Can you see yourself engaging in these topics or presenting these ideas to your admin to be further explored?

APPENDIX I

REFLECTIVE JOURNAL PROMPTS

Reflective Journal Prompts

7/22 Reflection Prompt-

As you look forward to our first group meeting, is there anything in particular that you want to share with me that you didn't share during our opening interview? This might be something you forgot to say, something you are looking forward to, a concern or worry, a topic you want to make sure we discuss, an accommodation that I can make for you... anything.

7/27 Reflection Prompt-

Reflect on our first session. How did the text rendering activity and the listening dyad activity go for you? Was there anything about it that was hard or surprising for you? Consider the opening readings and our conversation and try to write your own "equity perspective" statement. Over the next week, feel free to continue adding any other reflections or thoughts that come up for you based on our conversation or the readings.

8/10 Prompt-

Reflect on our diversity circles that we did in our meeting and consider all the other ways that you might identify. Please describe your social identities, including but not limited to gender, sexuality, (dis)ability status, race, ethnicity, class and/or location growing up, religion, and anything else that is important to how you experience or navigate the world. Your response can be shorter than this question and can include or exclude any of the above and/or expand in ways that are important to you. Consider in what ways these identity points affect the way you teach and/or interact with your students.

Did you have any other reflections based on the readings or videos that we didn't get to talk about in our session that you want to point out?

8/24 Reflection Prompt-

Reflect on our final small group talk about implicit bias. Consider your own thinking and teaching. Can you identify any ways that your thinking or teaching practices are being shaped by implicit biases, especially regarding race or disability? Remembering that this is completely confidential, try to flesh out that bias here. What is the behavior or thought that you think is being affected? What is that bias towards or against? Conceptualize how you could reframe that thought or behavior or teaching practice. What is the potential for you and your students if you operationalize this new way of thinking?

9/7 Reflection Prompt-

Reflect on our conversation about the tenets of DisCrit, and how race and ability intersect. What were your takeaways from our conversation? What are some ways that ability and race intersect in music or music education? Think about the life map you made (or watched others make). How have race and ability played a role in your own life? Think about Margaret's last question about how, on a scale of 0 to 100% race and ability impact your life. Consider this: the lower the number, the more these ideas are not a part of your daily consciousness yet (which is not a judgement, just a way to think about it). What changes (if any) do you see in your thinking or behavior since we have started this group? What questions do you have that you want answered or talked about?

9/21 Reflection Prompt:

Here are all 5 of the equity stances again that we talked about in our session.

Stance A: Equity as Initial Equal Opportunity — Schools should guarantee each student will receive the same initial educational opportunity, and that each student's response to this initial opportunity will be used to determine the kind of academic program he/she receives going forward.

Stance B: Equity as Ongoing Equal Opportunity — Schools should guarantee that each student will have easy access to all academic programs every year, regardless of past performance levels or other factors.

Stance C: Equity as Personalized Opportunity — Schools should guarantee each student will receive an academic program that is well-designed to meet the student's unique needs.

Stance D: Equity as Equalization of Opportunity — Schools should guarantee that each student will receive an academic program that is well-designed to enable him/her to demonstrate performance that meets or exceeds a common high level within a reasonable length of time.

Stance E: Equity as Equal Results — Schools should guarantee that each student will demonstrate performance that meets or exceeds a common high level.

Which one most closely resonates to your personal view on Equity? Why? Are there things about it that you would change? Regardless of whether you feel closely aligned to any of these or not, try to write your own equity statement that you think could/should represent how you engage with equity in your classroom? As you write this, consider: are there shifts in your practice you need to make in order to make this equity vision come true? If so, what?

10/12 Reflection Prompt-

Reflect on our conversations and on your own practice. In what ways is ableism still the unconscious default in your classroom/teaching? What are some musical “best practices” that you can think of that you utilize that may unintentionally be reinforcing ableism? What suggestions or ideas do you have about shifting them?

Reflecting on your own engagement with others in your life about race, have you ever felt discomfort when talking about race? Describe that situation and why you think you feel/felt that way? Which emotions prevent you from speaking your truth during conversations about race? Which conditions can make it safer for you to deal with your racial fears and speak your truth?

10/19 Reflection Prompt-

At our last meeting, Savannah provided each person a “conversational move” question or statement. Examples of these moves were leading questions to dig into something someone else said, such as “how do you know that....?” or “if you could go back,?” or “can you give an example of what you mean?”

Could you see yourself using a “move” like these (or others) as an engagement tool in a conversation with someone about either ability or race (or other difficult topics)? Why or why not? What do you feel like you still need to engage in difficult conversations with peers/colleagues/administrators/students?

11/2 Reflection Prompt-

At our last meeting, we “hive mind” workshopped several people’s lessons from the perspective of UDL and equity. If/when it was your lesson, describe how it felt to be a part of that experience and hear others’ thoughts, especially when you were not allowed to talk during the “hive mind” section? Did you implement (or do you plan to implement) any of the changes that the group offered? Can you see any of those changes applying to other lessons or settings? If so, describe.

If/when it was not your lesson, describe how it felt to be a part of the “hive mind.” Did you have any takeaways that you think you might put into your own practice? If so, what?

What is your current level of comfort with discussing equity concerning race and ability in an actual lesson? Is this different than you felt at the beginning of the CTSG?

Could you see yourself doing a similar hive mind experience again with others outside our group? Why or why not?

11/16 Reflection Prompt-

There are three parts to this reflection:

1. We workshopped more lessons last week, and people were asked to specifically focus on only one component of UDL as they listened. How did this go for you? Did it make it easier or harder for you to understand UDL applications? Did it feel more or less successful than the week before? Why?
2. If you have shared your lesson, what are the changes you are going to make to it before you teach it again? If have not shared your lesson, what about someone else's lesson could you see yourself doing in your own space?
3. Go watch the John Stewart video in our readings folder (before you read the Kay chapter). It's ten minutes. As soon as you watch it, come back here, and with no context, write your reactions. Be honest with yourself and don't censor because you think someone else is reading it.

11/30 Reflection Prompt-

How has your experience been focusing on both race and disability in tandem? What parts were easier or harder for you with this? Is one topic easier or harder for you than the other? Have your "noticings" about these topics changed at all since you started in this group? If so, how? What have you noticed?

12/14 Reflection Prompt-

Compare your school to the vision of equitable school in book we talked about. Where is your school strongest/weakest with regard to equity? Do you think it is possible for your school to change to be closer to that vision? Why or why not?

As the CTSG comes to a close, please reflect on any final thoughts you have. What is next for you?

APPENDIX J

GROUP CO-CONSTRUCTED NORMS

Group Co-Constructed Norms

1. Use phrases such as: I like, I wish, I wonder statements (spoken as a lead)
2. Utilize active listening (rephrasing what you think they said for confirmation)
3. Listen first, then speak (listen to understand, not just to respond)
4. Clear definitions - work from common understanding of terms- avoiding ambiguity
5. Use kind and calm words towards others. Fired up about a topic is good, not towards others
6. Being careful when it comes to personalization of others' idea, make sure it's a safe space
7. No one speaks for a group
8. Allow time for others to process their thoughts
9. Be open to questioning (not getting offended if someone asks for clarification)- assume good intent
10. Step up /step back (be aware if you are dominating the conversation). Be mindful of your time on the platform
11. Avoid absolutes
12. Process over product - there may not always be answers or solutions we come to
13. Feel free to use the chat during our meetings to engage with each other

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