A CULTURAL IMMERSION FIELD EXPERIENCE: EXAMINING PRE-SERVICE MUSIC TEACHERS' BELIEFS ABOUT CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

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ABSTRACT

A CULTURAL IMMERSION FIELD EXPERIENCE: EXAMINING PRE-SERVICE MUSIC TEACHERS' BELIEFS ABOUT CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

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With the intent of informing music teacher education practices and developing more culturally responsive and relevant teachers, the purpose of this research was to explore pre-service music teachers' understandings of culture and diversity, and to examine the impact of a short-term cultural immersion field experience on pre-service music teachers' beliefs, assumptions, and understanding about music teaching and learning with students whose cultural backgrounds differ from their own. Research questions guiding this study were as follows: 1) What are pre-service music teachers' beliefs, perceptions, and assumptions about music teaching and learning with students whose cultural backgrounds differ from their own before participating in a short-term cultural immersion field experience? 2) In what ways do pre-service music teachers' beliefs, perceptions, and assumptions regarding music teaching and learning with students whose cultural backgrounds differ from their own change during their participation in a short-term cultural immersion field experience? 3) How does the cultural immersion field experience shape their beliefs and understandings of music teaching and learning in educational contexts that differ from their own cultural backgrounds after participating in the experience?

This was a case study of pre-service music teachers' experiences with music teaching and learning in a short-term cultural immersion field experience. The setting purposefully was selected as one that could provide participants with an experience in a setting whose culture would be unfamiliar to them, and serve as a catalyst for transformative learning toward cultural understanding. Dearborn, Michigan is home to the largest concentration of Arab and Muslim

Americans in the United States. Given the current political and socio-cultural relevance of misperception and discrimination toward Arab and Muslim Americans, this immersion experience proved especially timely.

Nine undergraduate music education students participated in this project, which consisted of three different components. Data were collected from each component. Weekly pre-immersion orientation meetings took place on campus for eight weeks before the cultural immersion field experience. The meetings oriented participants to the immersion field experience setting and provided context for issues of cultural diversity in education. Following the orientation course, participants spent one week in a cultural immersion field experience in Dearborn. They observed and taught in two music classrooms in Dearborn schools and engaged in community activities to immerse themselves in the community culture. Participants lived and spent leisure time together throughout the immersion week. A few weeks after we returned from the cultural immersion field experience, I conducted post-immersion interviews with the group and each individual participant in order to probe how the cultural immersion field experience impacted their perceptions and worldviews about music teaching and learning with students whose cultural backgrounds differed from their own.

Participants in this study did not immediately notice cultural difference in the music classroom. By engaging in experiential learning in the music classrooms and by having disorienting experiences (Mezirow, 1991) as cultural outsiders, participants developed a deeper understanding of their own beliefs and assumptions and of the importance of understanding culture in the music classroom. Their experience led to greater understanding of Arab and Muslim students, and they developed a deepened understanding of the impact of culturally responsive teaching in the music classroom.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES ix

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION 1
Demographic Trends 2
Student Demographics 3
Teacher Demographics 5
Role of the Researcher and Researcher's Lens 6
Culture in the Classroom 9
Preparing Pre-Service Teachers for Culturally Diverse Educational Settings 12
Transformative Learning and Cultural Diversity 15
Cultural Immersion Field Experiences for Pre-Service Teachers 17
Developing Cultural Competence 18
Culture and Music Education 20
Need for the Study 22
Purpose and Problems 23

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF RELATED RESEARCH 25
Facilitating Transformative Learning in Pre-Service Teacher Education 25
Transformative Learning in Culturally Diverse Settings 28
Promising Practices for Facilitating Transformative Learning in the Classroom 30
Cultural Immersion Field Experiences for Pre-Service Teachers 30
Domestic Cultural Immersion Field Experiences 31
International Cultural Immersion Field Experiences 35
Summary 39
Cultural Immersion Field Experiences for Pre-Service Music Teachers 40
Summary 42

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY 44
Theoretical Framework 44
Method and Design 46
Setting Selection 50
Participant Selection 53
Data Collection 54
Pre-Immersion Orientation 54
Immersion 55
Post-Immersion 59
Data Analysis 59
Trustworthiness 61
Assumptions and Limitations 62
How the Data Are Presented 62

CHAPTER 4: THE PARTICIPANTS 64
Alexis 64
Anne 66
April 67
George 68
Jane 70
Lisa 73
Luke 75
Sierra 77
Simon 79
Summary 81

CHAPTER 5: THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL 83
Teacher Pedagogy and Philosophy 86
The Absence of Music Learning Theory 86
Culture in the Music Classroom 90
First Impressions 92
So Sweet, So Welcoming, So Well-Behaved 92
The School Facilities 93
Gender Dynamics 94
Summary 97

CHAPTER 6: DISORIENTING DILEMMAS 99
Disorienting Dilemma 1: The Girl in the Purple Sweater 99
Language Learners in the Music Classroom 101
The girl in the purple sweater 103
Perspective Shift 106
Summary 119
Disorienting Dilemma 2: Question and Answer Session with Students 120
Fear of Asking Questions 122
Islam 124
Summary 127
Disorienting Dilemma 3: The Local Community 129
"I Felt Uncomfortable" 130
Invisible wall 134
"We Were Out of Place Being White" 138
My blond hair 141
Reflecting on the Experience 143
Summary 147
Disorienting Dilemma 4: "It Just Doesn't Match Up In My Head" 149
Learning About Students' Experiences 151
When Politics Become Personal 154
"Here Come the White People" 158
Summary 160
The Disorienting Dilemmas 160

CHAPTER 7: AFTER THE EXPERIENCE 163
Reevaluating Perspectives 163
Current Events and the Media 163
Engaging With Muslims 170
Reconsidering Culture in the Music Classroom 173
A Broader Perspective 174
The Role of Language 178
Connecting Coursework to the Field Experience 180
Summary 184

CHAPTER 8: DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS 187
Summary of the Study 187
The Cultural Immersion Field Experience 189
Transformative Learning Theory 192
Experiential Learning 194
Experience as a Cultural Outsider 195
The Political Climate Surrounding the Study 198
Whiteness and Privilege 199
Summary 200
Implications for Practice 201
Reflection on Planning and Preparation 204
Participant selection 204
Size of the group 205
Orientation meetings 206
Structure of the cultural immersion field experience 207
Journal reflections 209
Community 209
Implications for Future Research 210
Conclusions 211
Coda 212

APPENDICES 213
Appendix A: Orientation Meetings Syllabus 214
Appendix B: Cross-Cultural Life Experiences Checklist 218
Appendix C: Social Identity Wheel 221

REFERENCES 223

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Social Identity Wheel 222

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Communities and schools in the United States are comprised of a growing population of people from an array of racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds. Race, ethnicity, and culture each are important elements in the composition of individual and group identity (Bolaffi, 2003). Though it is the combination of these elements that comprise identity, each defines different characteristic traits. Whereas race refers to physical characteristic attributes, ethnicity refers to a people's shared history, nation, language, religion, and/or social rituals (Bolaffi, 2003). Culture refers to the shared values, beliefs, and norms to which a group of individuals adheres. Race, ethnicity, and culture often intertwine to comprise the characteristic traits that identify groups of people.

As the population of the United States grows, so too does the diversity of racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds represented. Yet educational institutions and teacher education preparation programs often reflect monocultural Eurocentric beliefs and values (Ladson-Billings, 2009). Similarly, while student demographic trends reflect the growing racial, cultural and ethnic diversity in the United States, teachers have tended to remain predominantly White, female, and middle-class (Delpit, 2006; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Lind & McKoy, 2016). In addition to this tendency for teachers to be from non-minority backgrounds, many have limited experience with cultural diversity and have a narrow cultural worldview (Stachowski & Mahan, 1998). Teacher educators, then, must recognize the importance of preparing pre-service teachers for teaching students whose cultural backgrounds differ from their own. Preparing pre-service teachers to teach in culturally diverse educational settings will help them succeed in teaching their future students (Ladson-Billings, 2009). This dissertation will explore pre-service music teachers' beliefs, assumptions, and understanding about teaching students whose cultural backgrounds

differ from their own, and examine the impact of a cultural immersion field experience on their understandings of culture and diversity as it relates to music teaching and learning.

Demographic Trends

Demographic reports provide important information about races and ethnicities represented in the United States. The 2010 United States Census Bureau report reflected population growth in every racial category accounted for by the census, which included White, Black or African-American, American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian/ Other Pacific Islander, and Some Other Race (United States Census Bureau, 2011). Though the majority of the population in the United States was White (72%), White population growth was the slowest at 5.7% (United States Census Bureau, 2011). According to the United States Census Bureau 2010 report (2011), minority population rates continued to grow. Asians accounted for 5% of the total United States population and had the fastest growing population rate at 43.3%. Blacks and African Americans comprised 13% of the total population and grew at a rate of 12.3%. The American Indian and Native Alaskan population grew at a rate of 18.4% and comprised 1% of the total population. Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islanders population grew at a rate of 35.4% and comprised less than 1% of the total population. The population of those who identified as a race not listed on the census, or who identified with two or more races, grew at rates of 24.4% and 32%, respectively. Though racial demographics are not necessarily indicative of the cultural backgrounds represented in the United States, growing racial diversity does suggest growing cultural diversity, as there are ties between racial and cultural identities.

Further evidence of changing demographics in the United States can be found in immigration figures and trends. The United States Census Bureau reported a 2.5% increase in foreign-born population from 2013 to 2014 (Zong & Batlova, 2016). In the past, United States

immigrants came primarily from European countries, but today, the majority of immigrants to the United States immigrate from Latin American and Asian countries (Zong & Batlova, 2016). In 2014, the majority of immigrants to the United States came from India and China. Immigrants from Mexico, Canada, and the Philippines rounded out the top five countries whose citizens immigrated to the United States in 2014 (Adamy & Overberg, 2016; Zong & Batlova, 2016).

The United States Department of Homeland Security reported 69,920 persons were admitted to the United States as refugees in 2015 (United States Department of Homeland Security Office of Immigration Statistics, 2016). Refugees came primarily from Burma, Iraq, Somalia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Bhutan. Of all refugees admitted to the United States in 2015, 74% were younger than 35 years of age (United States Department of Homeland Security Office of Immigration Statistics, 2016). In addition, the United States granted 26,124 persons asylum in 2015. Most persons sought asylum from the following countries: China (23.7%), El Salvador (8.3%), Guatemala (8%), Egypt (6.4%), Honduras (5.4%), Syria (3.7%), Ethiopia (3.4%), Mexico (3.3%), Iraq (2.9%), and Iran (2.6%) (United States Department of Homeland Security Office of Immigration Statistics, 2016). States that accepted the largest percentage of refugees in 2015 were Texas (11%), California (8.2%), New York (5.8%), Arizona (4.5%), Michigan (4.3%), and Ohio (4.3%) (United States Department of Homeland Security Office of Immigration Statistics, 2016). A growing immigrant and refugee population suggests continued growth of diverse ethnic and cultural groups in the United States.

Student Demographics

The National Center for Education Statistics (2016) reported changing student demographics in elementary and secondary public schools. From 2003-2013, the number of White students enrolled in public schools decreased from 59% to 50%. The number of Black

students decreased from 17% to 16%. In contrast, the number of Hispanic students increased from 19% to 25%. Changing student demographics are reflected in every region throughout the United States (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016b).

Future projections of student demographics suggest that the number of White students in public schools will continue to decline to 46% of the total student population by 2025 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016b). Meanwhile, the population of Hispanic students is expected to increase to 29% of the total student population, and the population of Asian students is projected to increase to 6% of the total student population by 2025. Further, the National Center for Education Statistics (2016b) projects a 44% increase in students of two or more races by 2023. These projections reflect the changing demographics of the United States population, and highlight the racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity present in United States public school classrooms.

The National Center for Education Statistics (2016a) also reported growing numbers of English Language Learner students. Between the 2003-2004 and 2013-2014 academic years, the percentage of English Language Learner students rose from 8.8% to 9.3% of the total student population. Significant growth in the number of English Language Learner students has occurred in the western region of the United States and in urban areas. Reflecting immigration statistics to a large extent, the three most common languages spoken in English Language Learner student homes were Spanish, Arabic, and Chinese. Growing student diversity in United States elementary and secondary public schools reflects the growth of cultural diversity throughout the country and highlights the importance of a growing need for cultural understanding in our schools and communities. The United States Census Bureau recognized this need in their report

by calling for schools to use the demographic information “to design cultural activities that reflect the diversity in their community” (United States Census Bureau, 2011, p. 23).

Teacher Demographics

As previously noted, in sharp contrast to the growing diversity of the student population, the teaching population has remained relatively unchanged: female, White, middle-class, and monolingual (Delpit, 2006; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Ladson-Billings, 2006; Lind & McKoy, 2016). The National Center for Education Statistics reported teacher demographic information for the 2011-2012 school year. The majority of public school teachers (76%) were female. Further, 86% of teachers were non-Hispanic White, 7% were Black, and 8% were Hispanic (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013). These figures suggest that many teachers’ racial, ethnic, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds often differ from those of the students who they teach. Student demographic projections further suggest that teachers’ and pre-service teachers’ future classrooms increasingly will be comprised of students whose racial, ethnic, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds differ from their own (Delpit, 2006; Ladson-Billings, 2009). This mismatch between teachers and students can be problematic if teachers are not aware of the ways in which culture impacts teaching and learning. Delpit (2006) said:

> When a significant difference exists between the students’ culture and the school’s culture, teachers can easily misread students’ aptitudes, intent, or abilities as a result of the difference in styles of language use and interactional patterns. Secondly, when such cultural differences exist, teachers may utilize styles of instruction and/or discipline that are at odds with community norms. (p. 167)

If teachers have not considered the impact of cultural differences in the classroom, they may approach teaching in ways that are familiar to them and that represent their own cultural

backgrounds. While such approaches may be successful in some contexts, in others, teachers may find it difficult to identify and engage with students, parents, and members of the school and community whose values, beliefs, and experiences differ from their own (Bradfield-Kreider, 2001; Martinez, Penner-Williams, Herrera, & Rodriguez, 2011). In order for teachers to teach their students most successfully, they must understand the complexities of culture and the ways in which culture affects not only teaching and learning, but individuals' beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions about the world.

Role of the Researcher and Researcher's Lens

This dissertation is a study of the impact of a cultural immersion field experience on nine pre-service music educators' beliefs about teaching students whose cultural backgrounds differed from their own. My role as the researcher was one of participant-observer, where I lived the experiences in the setting with the participants in order to gain insider views (Creswell, 2013). By sharing the experience, I built trusting relationships with the participants in order to develop a meaningful understanding of our experiences. Because of my role in the study, it is important to share some of my personal background as it relates to music teaching in culturally diverse settings.

My interest in preparing pre-service music teachers to teach students whose cultural backgrounds differ from their own is directly informed by my personal experiences – both successes and failures – teaching in a variety of cultural settings. As a White, middle class, female, I fit the familiar profile of music teachers in the United States (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013), and, as is typical for many music educators, I began my career teaching in a community that shared many racial, ethnic, and cultural traits with the communities in which my hometown and my undergraduate music education program were located. All were

predominantly White, middle-class, and Midwestern. Later in my career, I taught music in settings that differed culturally from my own background and experiences. As a result, I learned how it felt to be a cultural outsider and experienced cultural "otherness" engaging outside of the predominantly White, middle-class, Midwestern culture with which I was familiar. Two experiences, among many that I could relate, have emerged as critical to the foundation of this study.

My first experience teaching and living outside of the culture of my own background was when I taught and lived at an international boarding school in Europe. The school's student body comprised students who represented over sixty different nationalities, and I was excited to engage with and learn from students and teachers in my new environment. Yet, I approached my classroom teaching with the same methods with which I'd had success back home, and in doing so, I struggled to reach my new students in a meaningful way. For the first time in my teaching career, I struggled with student behavioral problems in class. On a regular basis in choir class, one of my students spent much of the class period with his eyes closed while he sat in his chair. Frustrated, feeling disrespected, and assuming he was asleep and not paying attention, I repeatedly told him to keep his eyes open and explained that he was missing important information in class. One day, I approached him about the issue and he calmly explained to me that he had always been listening and repeated my words back to me. He had not missed anything, and had, in fact, been listening more intently, not less. Had I better understood that my student's behavior was socially acceptable in his culture and less so in mine, I might have sought to understand rather than assume his ill-intent.

In another instance, I provided the class with directions for a task during rehearsal. The students in the class performed the task as directed, except for one student who was regularly off

task, or doing the exact opposite of my instructions. Repeatedly, I approached him, reiterated the directions, and asked if he understood. He nodded and smiled. I nodded and smiled back. The rehearsal started again and he was back off task, not following my directions. We engaged in this dialogue round and round, until nearly three months into the school year when I realized that he did not speak English. He was not deliberately choosing to be off task. He did not know what I was saying and nodded because I had used his name, the one word he understood amidst the unrecognizable.

In both of these experiences, I had based my classroom expectations on my own cultural background, which resulted in misinterpretations on my part toward my students. Over time, and through trial and error, I developed some level of cultural understanding and sought ways of incorporating my students' varied cultural backgrounds into the classroom environment. A formative event for me was at my first international festival, part of an annual school event, "International Week." The week provided students with an opportunity to share and celebrate their national, ethnic, and cultural heritage with the school community, and culminated in a festival where students wore traditional clothing, shared traditional artwork, music, and prepared traditional dishes to be enjoyed by students and faculty alike. The students shared their heritages with immense pride, and it was clear to me that one's culture plays a powerful role in one's personal identity and way of being in the world. By incorporating students' cultural knowledge in the classroom, I was able to build stronger connections to students in meaningful ways.

The second experience occurred at a large state university in Michigan in my work with undergraduate music education students. During many class discussions in a music education foundations course regarding issues of diversity in schools, I noticed that many students lacked personal experience engaging with members of cultural groups that differed from their own. As a

result, cultural diversity in education often was discussed in the abstract. I recognized a need for pre-service music teachers to have personal experience engaging with and teaching in culturally different settings in order to be better prepared to teach students whose cultural backgrounds differed from their own.

Reflecting on my own experiences in a music teacher preparation program, and the knowledge I gained through my experiences teaching in culturally diverse settings, I recognized my weaknesses in my beginning days teaching in an international school. My effectiveness as an educator was compromised because I lacked the cultural understanding necessary to connect with my students. I learned and developed cultural competency through trial and error and, in doing so, realized the need for better preparation in music teacher education programs for teaching with cultural competency. These experiences make me an informed researcher/participant-observer for this study.

Culture in the Classroom

All members of a society are socialized into the culture of their surroundings. Culture is a complex concept and comprises many visible and unseen elements, all of which are internalized to comprise and frame one's worldviews (Dilg, 2003). Often, the aspects most associated with a particular culture are those easily observed by those outside of the cultural group. Clothing, language, foods, and music are surface-level, visible elements that can be used to develop schema for various cultural groups. Yet, there are many elements of culture that are unseen, including beliefs, customs, values, norms, assumptions, and expectations (Lind & McKoy, 2016). Often, individuals are unaware of the extent to which culture influences their lives. Culture forms the foundation of identity and often determines the ways in which persons think, speak, and act (Gay, 2000). Culture influences experiences and assumptions, all of which frames

worldviews, and subsequently, interactions with others (Dilg, 2003). When confronted with cultural differences that are not understood, persons can "harbor subconscious beliefs, attitudes, and misperceptions – based on prejudice and preconception" about those whose cultural backgrounds differ from their own (Lind & McKoy, 2016, p. 26).

Compounding one's understanding of culture and identity is the privilege one has as a member of the dominant culture group. In the United States, individuals who identify with the dominant White, monolingual culture may view themselves as being without culture and "just normal" (Ladson-Billings, 2009). Culture, then, too easily becomes a term used for "other" groups, rather than one that encompasses the visible and unseen elements that frame one's own points of reference and worldviews. This understanding is of particular importance in educational settings, as cultural differences can be challenging if they are not understood.

Because teachers and students carry their cultural backgrounds and influences into the classroom, without having an understanding of culture's complexity and its impact on personal identity, cultural incongruities and misperceptions may interfere with teachers' and students' abilities to develop effective relationships for teaching and learning (Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 2009). Teachers who lack cultural understanding may be unsuccessful in engaging with students from different cultural backgrounds and may unknowingly contribute to students' lack of success in school (Banks, 2002; Gay, 2000; Lind & McKoy, 2016). They may use culture as a scapegoat for student behavior that teachers cannot explain or understand (Ladson-Billings, 2006).

Indeed, teachers often identify students of different race, ethnicity, or gender as the "difficult" students in their classrooms (Ladson-Billings, 2006). Certainly, some of the confusion is a result of the terminology used in education. Teacher educators and teachers discuss teaching in "culturally diverse settings." In literal terms, a "culturally diverse setting" would be comprised

of individuals from an array of cultural backgrounds. However, what educators often mean by "diverse settings" is not one of actual diversity but rather a setting that is comprised mostly of students of color (Ladson-Billings, 2006). The terms "culture" and "diversity" become proxies for races and ethnicities outside of the dominant culture (Ladson-Billings, 2006). The trouble with this use of terminology is that, without awareness, teachers may perpetuate their own cultural beliefs and assumptions without honoring those of their students and community. Many pre- and in-service teachers seek to treat all students equally, invoking a colorblind approach to teaching students with diverse cultural backgrounds (Irvine, 2003). Teachers believe that ethnicity and culture do not influence relationships and interactions with students or teaching practices, when, in fact, one's culture and ethnicity influences one's perceptions and beliefs about "cultural others," and basic human interactions (Irvine, 2003). Teachers who have not had experiences with students whose cultural backgrounds differ from their own often do not understand the impact of culture on their own or their students' worldviews.

Teachers who teach students from different cultural backgrounds report feeling unprepared to teach a diverse student population (Bradfield-Kreider, 2001; Diller & Moule, 2005; Lewis, Parsad, Carey, Bartfai, Farris, & Smerdon, 1999). A report from the National Center for Education Statistics (Lewis et al., 1999) found that 27% of teachers working in schools with a high enrollment of English Language Learners and/or culturally diverse students felt "very well prepared" to teach in their school environment. In schools with a five percent or less population of English Language Learners and/or culturally diverse students, 10% of teachers felt "very well prepared" to teach students whose cultural backgrounds differed from their own.

This lack of preparedness begins with teacher preparation programs in higher education. O'Neal, Ringler, & Rodriguez (2008) surveyed 24 teachers whose students were majority

English Language Learners (ELL) to determine if they felt prepared to teach ELL students in their classrooms. Results indicated that most teachers were not required to take a course in teaching students with culturally diverse backgrounds in their teacher preparation programs and did not feel prepared to teach ELL students in their classrooms. Sleeter (2001) found that White pre-service teachers had little knowledge, understanding, or experience with cross-cultural teaching environments and often held stereotypical beliefs about students whose racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds differed from their own. Further, pre-service teachers did not understand the impact of structural inequalities and racism in education and were not prepared to address these issues in their classrooms. Therefore, in order to create a more equitable educational environment, it is important to provide pre-service teachers with opportunities to become aware of the influence of race, ethnicity, and culture in the classroom, and to develop the ability to reach and connect with students from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Preparing Pre-Service Teachers for Culturally Diverse Educational Settings

Teacher educators recognize the importance of preparing pre-service teachers to teach in cultural settings that differ from their own experiences, and many have called for greater attention on the part of teacher education programs to prepare pre-service teachers for teaching and learning amidst growing student cultural diversity (Bradfield-Kreider, 2001; Cushner, 2007; Roose, 2001; Sleeter, 2001; Stachowksi & Mahan, 1998). Cushner (2007) said:

> If we truly are serious about preparing teachers, and subsequently pupils in their charge, to better understand the complex world in which they live and to develop the skills necessary to interact effectively with people from a variety of cultural backgrounds, then understanding the manner in which people learn about culture becomes essential (p. 35).

Many teacher education programs address cultural diversity and seek to prepare pre-service teachers for the array of educational settings that they may encounter. Many pre-service teacher education courses address approaches and techniques of multicultural education to help prepare students for potential future educational environments. Yet, pre-service and in-service teachers still feel unprepared to teach in settings that differ from their own backgrounds (Irvine, 2003; Lewis et al., 1999; O'Neal et al., 2008; Sleeter, 2001).

One issue in preparing pre-service teachers to teach in culturally different settings is providing opportunities for pre-service teachers to have field experiences and student teaching placements in a variety of cultural settings in order to build culturally responsive teaching pedagogies. In a study of pre-service teachers' expectations of students of color and English Language Learners, Terrill & Mark (2000) found that, when asked about preferences for student teacher placement, most pre-service teachers reported an interest in teaching in schools with high enrollment of students of color. However, when their answer was going to affect their placement location, many changed their answer to a preference for White suburban school settings. In a review of studies examining pre-service teacher preparation for teaching in multicultural schools, Sleeter (2001) found that many pre-service teachers were placed in practicum field experience settings that resembled those of the communities and schools of their own cultural backgrounds. Perhaps as a result, while many new teachers reported having discussed teaching students whose cultural backgrounds differed from their own in their teacher education courses, they still felt unprepared to teach in culturally different school settings and often chose to teach in settings that were similar to their own school experiences (Bradfield-Kreider, 2001). Even in-service teachers who sought out culturally diverse teaching settings might find themselves unprepared to teach

students whose backgrounds differ from their own. In a study of teacher preparation for culturally diverse schools, Sleeter (2001) noted that:

> Though pre-service and in-service teachers conveyed positive intention about teaching culturally diverse student populations, limited experiences with diverse cultures and processing inadequate knowledge about how to teach these populations prevented, and continues to prevent many from becoming culturally responsive teachers. (p. 16)

While it might be easier to prepare pre-service teachers to teach within the confines of cultures with which they are already familiar, if pre-service teachers remain within the familiarity of their own culture, they do not develop the skills necessary to engage successfully with students in settings that differ from their own cultural backgrounds. Ladson-Billings (2006) noted:

> We fill our teacher education students with theories and ideas about what students will be like and then we send them to the field where they make their charges fit those notions. If we are serious about students learning about culture, we need to help them first become careful observers of culture, both in the communities in which they will teach and in themselves. (p. 109)

If teacher educators want to prepare teachers to teach successfully and with cultural relevance in an array of settings, teacher education programs must "… cultivate teachers who are not just tolerant of but attracted to differences and who want and are able to learn about new ideas, connections, beliefs, and ways of seeing the world" (Roose, 2001, p. 48). By providing pre-service teachers with opportunities to become aware of their own culture, beliefs, and assumptions about cultural diversity, they can develop an understanding of culture's role in teaching and learning and more successfully engage with students from a variety of cultural backgrounds.

Transformative Learning and Cultural Diversity

Research suggests that one of the struggles teachers face when teaching students whose cultural backgrounds differ from their own is an inability to successfully engage with their students (Delpit, 2006; Ladson-Billings, 2009). In order to reach and teach students from different cultural backgrounds with more success, teachers first must become aware of their own assumptions, values, and biases in order to reframe their perspectives and expand their worldviews (Delpit, 2006; Ladson-Billings, 2009).

> In some ways, to grow comfortable with participating in multifaceted cross-cultural discussions and with developing multicultural perspectives on complex issues means traveling beyond the socialization and grounding each of us has had in our homes and cultures. It means taking a long journey toward a sense of equilibrium involving a comfort with one's own self and views, being able to examine and respond thoughtfully to opposing views emanating from other perspectives, and being able to build cross-cultural relationships based on knowledge and understanding. (Dilg, 2003, p. 103)

The concept of critically examining one's beliefs and perspectives and developing an understanding of different or opposing views and perspectives was outlined in Mezirow's (1991) theory of transformative learning. Mezirow defined transformative learning as:

> The process of becoming critically aware of how and why our assumptions have come to constrain the way we perceive, understand, and feel about our world; changing these structures of habitual expectation to make possible a more inclusive, discriminating, and integrative perspective. (p. 167)

Transformative learning emphasizes the ways in which our socialization and our experiences affect our perceptions of the world (Cranton, 2006; Martinez et al., 2011; Mezirow,

1997). According to Mezirow (1991), the transformative learning process provides individuals with heightened understanding of their own belief systems and those of others. Outcomes of transformative learning include greater openness to others' perspectives, greater awareness of sources and consequences of norms, codes, and perceptions, increased quality of participation in reflective discourse, and changes in patterns of expectations and behaviors (p. 220).

> Transformative learning involves experiencing a deep, structural shift in basic premises of thought, feelings, and actions. It is a shift of consciousness that dramatically and permanently alters our way of being in the world. Such a shift involves our understanding of ourselves and our self-locations; our relationships with other human beings and with the natural world; our understanding of relations of power in interlocking structures of class, race, and gender; our body awareness; our visions of alternative approaches to living; and our sense of possibilities for social justice and peace and personal joy. (O'Sullivan, 2002, p.11)

Transformative learning is a process that can be influential in teaching and learning. Because of its emphasis on transforming beliefs and perceptions and on deepening understanding of others, transformative learning theory has been used both as a theoretical framework and as a model for developmental process in studies focused on developing understanding of differences, and it can be effective in experience-based learning environments (Cranton, 2006, Mezirow 1991, 1997).

Studies using transformative learning theory in educational contexts have focused on a specific population of learners or a specific classroom setting (Taylor & Snyder, 2012). Researchers employed transformative learning as a process for helping students to move out of their comfort zones to examine racial prejudices and assumptions about underserved populations in educational settings, English language learners, teaching in urban settings, and teaching within

culturally diverse settings (Doucet, Grayman-Simpson, & Wertheim., 2013; Dunn, Dotson, Cross, Kesner, & Lundahl, 2014; Hashimoto, 2007; Herbers, 1998; Hutchison & Rea, 2010; Lee, 2013; Wells, 2011). Though the context of each of these studies differed, the participants' opportunities to examine their own perspectives through personal reflection and discourse allowed them a deeper understanding of others' points of view.

Cultural Immersion Field Experiences for Pre-Service Teachers

Field experiences in pre-service teacher education courses help pre-service teachers to deepen their understanding of teaching and learning. By participating in cultural immersion field experiences in settings that differ from their own cultural backgrounds, pre-service teachers may develop a deeper understanding and appreciation of cultural difference and its impact on teaching and learning (Delano-Oriaran, 2012; Grant, 1994; Irvine, 2003). This deeper understanding raises pre-service teachers' cultural awareness and understanding, and broadens their worldviews (Delpit, 2006; Sleeter, 2001). Immersion field experiences have the potential to alter pre-service teachers' perspectives on teaching students whose cultural backgrounds differ from theirs (Bradfield-Kreider, 2001; Chance, Morris, & Rakes, 1996; Stachowski & Mahan, 1998). The experience itself can begin to dismantle previously held stereotypes and perceptions and can reduce the fear that pre-service teachers may have regarding working with students in culturally diverse settings (Diller & Moule, 2005).

Many research studies in the general education literature have explored pre-service teachers' experiences with cultural immersion in educational settings (Barkhuizen & Feryok, 2006; Bleicher, 2011; Cushner & Mahon, 2002; Dunn et al., 2014; Fry & McKinney, 1997; Hutchison & Rea, 2010; Lee, 2009; Lupi, Batey, & Turner, 2012; Marx & Moss, 2011; Marxen & Rudney, 2009; Rodriguez, 2011; Roose, 2001; Stachowski & Mahan, 1998). Immersion field

experiences in culturally diverse settings varied in context, location, and length, but each focused on examining pre-service teachers' perceptions of teaching in culturally diverse settings, developing pre-service teachers' understanding of those whose cultural backgrounds differed from their own and improving pre-service teachers' teaching methods as a result of the field experience. After the immersion field experiences, pre-service teachers identified a deepened understanding of self, others, and culture that helped pre-service teachers to become more culturally aware, more accepting of differences, and more empathetic. These experiences also increased pre-service teachers' understanding of multicultural education. After participating in the immersion field experiences, pre-service teachers expressed less fear about and increased confidence in working with students from diverse cultural backgrounds (Bleicher, 2011; Fry & McKinney, 1997; Marxen & Rudney, 1999).

Developing Cultural Competence

Teacher education courses and immersion field experiences sometimes employ transformative and experience-based learning as a way for pre-service teachers to develop a deepened understanding of culture and its role in teaching and learning. Because they share a similar process, transformative learning and immersion field experiences can help pre-service teachers develop cultural understanding and strengthen their ability to teach in culturally diverse settings (Taylor, 2007). Cultural understanding begins with cultural consciousness (Bennett, 1995). Bennett (1995) defined cultural consciousness as an awareness of "one's own worldview and how it has developed an understanding that one's personal view of the world is profoundly different from the views of people from different cultures" (p. 261). When individuals engage in cross-cultural experiences with others, they develop cultural consciousness. Cultural consciousness occurs as a result of engaging in cross-cultural experiences. Cross-cultural

experiences allow individuals to analyze their own culture, reflect, and examine their perspectives in order to deepen their understanding of cultural differences, and in turn, become more culturally conscious and competent (Delpit, 2006; Dilg, 2003).

Bennett (1995) referred to an individual's ability to communicate and interact effectively and empathetically with a person whose cultural background differs from one's own as cultural competence. Cultural competency is developed through a process of becoming aware of one's own worldview, understanding of one's attitudes toward cultural differences, gaining new knowledge about different cultures and worldviews, and incorporating that knowledge into a broadened perspective of one's world (Burton, 2011; Diller & Moule, 2005). In an educational setting, teachers who have developed cultural competency can engage in cross-cultural education that builds teacher-student relationships and strengthens teaching and learning.

Banks' (2005) process for developing cultural knowledge provides teachers with a model for developing cross-cultural understanding. In his four-level process, teachers become aware of their own cultural beliefs and practices, become aware of dominant culture beliefs and practices, become aware of culture's role at the school level, and finally, use their knowledge to transform their teaching in culturally aware and relevant ways.

Diller and Moule (2005) identified unifying assumptions required for teaching with cultural competence: (1) that teachers respect the unique and culturally defined needs of students, (2) that teachers acknowledge culture as a predominant force in shaping behavior, (3) that teachers acknowledge that community and family life is important, (4) that teachers recognize that concepts of family and community are different in different cultures, (5) that teachers respect, recognize, and understand individuals' cultural preferences, values, and beliefs, and (6) that teachers incorporate these preferences, values, and beliefs into the educational context as a

way of validating students' lived experiences (pp. 13-14). These assumptions provide a model for cross-cultural education. By understanding culture's role in teaching and learning, educators can embrace diversity rather than view it as a hurdle toward academic achievement. With cultural competence, teachers and students can build relationships to strengthen teaching and learning in schools.

When teachers understand the impacts of cultural differences in the classroom, they are able to teach with cultural relevance, which empowers their students "intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically" (Ladson-Billings, 2009, p. 20). Teachers who employ culturally relevant teaching strategies help students make connections between local, national, racial, cultural, and global identities (Ladson-Billings, 2009). Gay (2002) provided an overview of culturally responsive teaching. Culturally responsive teachers acknowledge students' cultural heritage and provide personal meaning to their learning by using resources from a variety of cultural backgrounds to provide frames of reference from their students' cultural backgrounds. Teachers' classroom environments and teaching methods reflect the cultural backgrounds of their students, allowing them to be proud of and empowered by their cultural heritage. Teaching with cultural relevance and responsiveness results in greater equity for students, because teachers not only understand the diverse culture of their students but act upon their understanding (Abril, 2009).

Culture and Music Education

Music educators recognize the critical role music and culture play in the development of an individual's identity (Lind & McKoy, 2016). As student diversity in music classrooms increased over the past decades, music educators sought ways to include multicultural and world music into their curriculum (Abril, 2009; Bradley, 2006; Campbell, 2002; Legette, 2003). Music

educators recognized the importance of including music from a variety of cultures in order to better understand music and cultures outside the Western canon (Campbell, 2002; Legette, 2003). Yet often music educators engaged in cultural diversity and multicultural music by including music outside of the traditional canon on a concert program without any in-depth learning of the culture from which it originated (Bradley, 2006; Campbell, 2002). By selecting repertoire through "cultural tourism," Campbell (2002) warned that music educators were not focusing on the cultural diversity of their own students, and students' musics were still not represented in the music classroom.

Music educators employed culturally responsive teaching in their pedagogy as a way to teach music with greater cultural inclusivity (Abril, 2013; Bond, 2014; Shaw, 2012). Selecting repertoire that represents cultural groups with which students identify is an important starting point. Music educators might go beyond that by presenting and engaging student discussion about music within its social and political context, and engage them in active decision-making about music making in the ensemble and music classroom settings (Abril, 2009; Bond, 2014; Shaw, 2012). Music teachers might ask students to reflect on their musical backgrounds and experiences, and engage them in thinking about musical meanings of songs, both for themselves and the cultural group from which the song comes (Abril, 2013). In doing so, music teachers might begin to know their students better and validate their cultural experiences and backgrounds, helping to deepen understanding of and between cultural groups (Abril, 2013).

Given that music and culture are so intricately connected, it would seem that music educators might be equipped better than most teachers to teach students whose cultures differ from their own and might teach in culturally relevant ways. Music teachers must understand cultural differences and be able to engage with students whose cultural backgrounds differ from

their own in order to do this in their classrooms. Yet, music teachers expressed a lack of knowledge and understanding about how to include music from cultures that differed from their own in their music classrooms (Abril, 2009; Legette, 2003). This lack of understanding might be a function of limited experiences teaching music to students whose cultures differed from their own.

Cultural immersion field experiences in which music teachers experience cultural "otherness" can help them develop empathy for and responsibility to students whose cultural backgrounds differ from their own (Abril, 2009). While the literature on the benefits of cultural immersion field experiences and the importance of preparing pre-service teachers to teach students whose cultural backgrounds differ from their own is prevalent in teacher education, studies of a similar nature remain limited in pre-service music teacher preparation (Emmanuel, 2003; Burton, Westvall, & Karlsson, 2012). In a study exploring pre-service music teachers' beliefs and assumptions about teaching students whose cultural backgrounds differed from their own, and the impact of a cultural immersion field experience on those beliefs, Emmanuel (2005) found that participants' beliefs and understanding about their own and others' cultures shifted throughout their cultural immersion field experience toward deepened cultural sensitivity and understanding in teaching in culturally diverse settings. Similarly, Burton et al. (2012) found that pre-service music teachers' perspectives and experiences in an intercultural immersion course provided them with new understandings and insights about their roles as music educators and helped participants to understand students' cultural needs more deeply.

Need for the Study

The United States is comprised of individuals from a variety of cultural backgrounds, and cultural diversity in the U.S. is growing. This diversity is reflected in schools throughout the

country. At the same time, the teacher workforce remains predominantly White, female, and middle-class, suggesting increased racial, ethnic, and cultural differences between teachers and students in their school communities. Therefore, it is important that teacher education programs seek to prepare pre-service teachers to teach students whose cultural backgrounds differ from their own. Research shows that, when individuals engage in activities that provide opportunity for reflecting on their assumptions and understanding of cultural groups, they develop increased cultural competency that helps them to more successfully engage in cross-cultural experiences. For pre-service teachers, the result can be better preparation for and success with teaching students from diverse cultural backgrounds. Cultural immersion field experiences are one way for pre-service teachers to become more equipped to teach with cultural competence in their future classrooms. Yet, despite music's inherent connection to culture and identity, studies examining cultural competency development in pre-service music teachers remain scarce. With an increasing number of music teachers teaching students whose cultural backgrounds differ from their own, increased understanding of pre-service music teachers' development of cultural competency is necessary.

Purpose and Problems

With the intent of informing music teacher educators and developing more culturally sensitive teachers, the purpose of this research was to explore pre-service music teachers' understandings of culture and diversity, and to examine the impact of a short-term cultural immersion field experience on pre-service music teachers' beliefs, assumptions, and understanding about music teaching and learning with students whose cultural backgrounds differ from their own. Research questions guiding this study were as follows:

1) What are pre-service music teachers' beliefs, perceptions, and assumptions about music teaching and learning with students whose cultural backgrounds differ from their own before participating in a short-term cultural immersion field experience?
2) In what ways do pre-service music teachers' beliefs, perceptions, and assumptions regarding music teaching and learning with students whose cultural backgrounds differ from their own change during their participation in a short-term cultural immersion field experience?
3) How does the cultural immersion field experience shape their beliefs and understandings of music teaching and learning in educational contexts that differ from their own cultural backgrounds after participating in the experience?

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF RELATED RESEARCH

The importance of multicultural education and teaching with cultural relevance and responsiveness has been well documented in the research literature. Research suggests that teacher education courses that emphasize pre-service teachers' deepened understanding of culture and diversity enable them to teach with cultural understanding and relevance in their future classrooms (Barkhuizen & Feryok, 2006; Bleicher, 2011; Bradfield-Kreider, 2001; Marx & Moss, 2011; Roose, 2001; Stachowski & Mahan, 1998). Studies have examined the impact of immersion field experiences on pre-service teachers' beliefs about diversity and teaching in a variety of cultural contexts and through lenses of transformative learning toward cultural competency. Yet, despite music's inherent connection to culture and identity, developing pre-service music teachers' cultural competency has received relatively little attention in the music education research literature. Therefore, this review of literature will focus on three bodies of literature: the facilitation of transformative learning in pre-service teacher education, cultural immersion field experiences for pre-service teachers, and developing cultural competency in pre-service teachers.

Facilitating Transformative Learning in Pre-Service Teacher Education

Mezirow (1991) and Taylor (2000) believe that transformative learning is a successful tool in educational settings, particularly when instructors purposefully plan courses with transformative learning in mind. Mezirow's (1991) intended outcomes of transformative learning include a greater openness to others' perspectives, a greater awareness of sources and consequences of norms, codes, and perceptions, an increased quality of participation in reflective discourse, and changes in patterns of expectations and behaviors. Studies that have employed transformative learning as a theoretical framework or as a model of the learning process found

that transformative learning can increase individuals' understandings of cultural differences and culture's role in education. These changes lead to deeper cultural understanding on the part of pre-service teachers.

Studies that employed Transformative Learning Theory as a framework in educational contexts have tended to focus on teaching a specific type of learner or on teaching in a specific classroom setting (Taylor & Snyder, 2012). Because transformative learning provides pre-service teachers an opportunity to examine their beliefs and perceptions, several teacher education studies have focused on teaching cross-culturally in diverse educational settings. Through a transformative learning lens and process, researchers examined pre-service teachers' understanding of others and the ways in which courses and/or personal interactions impacted their viewpoints.

Some studies examined transformative learning within the bounds of a teacher education course. Hashimoto (2007) examined the learning experiences of students in a beginning pre-service teacher education course focused on examining societal issues and current events in education through democratic classroom ideals. Throughout the semester, the instructor emphasized democratic learning, collaborative learning, care, and critical thought and reflection. At the end of the course, students identified a shift in their frames of reference and worldviews. Though not necessarily a result of the course exclusively, alumni of the course continued to engage in transformative learning opportunities. Hashimoto's study suggests that employing a transformative learning process in pre-service teacher education courses can impact students' perspectives and worldviews toward deeper understanding of others.

Lee (2013) examined the influence of a semester-long social justice art education course on pre-service and practicing art teachers' implicit and explicit attitudes toward an understanding

of race in relation to themselves and others. Through a lens of transformative learning, Lee determined that, through self-exploration, personal reflection, and using art as a medium for expression, students developed a deeper understanding of the ways in which race and identity impact the relationship between teachers and students. This mixed method study employed the Implicit Attitude Test (IAT) and Explicit Attitude Test (EAT) to determine the attitudes of pre-service and practicing art teachers toward race and racism. Further, these educators were interviewed and were asked to journal and create art throughout the course that had objectives focused on social justice issues of race and racism. Findings suggested that exploring race through transformative learning and art facilitated a change in attitude toward race and helped pre-service and practicing art teachers to become more comfortable in working with diverse populations. Lee suggested that creating a safe learning environment for students to engage in dialogue and personal reflection, as well as making deliberate choices in course readings, videos, events, and subject matter, are important for students' learning to transform their ways of thought.

In a foundation level course in urban education, Herbers (1998) examined the experiences of pre-service teachers to determine if experiential learning could transform students' understanding about African-American Civil Rights struggles. Students in the course participated in a field trip tour of the National Civil Rights Museum. In this study, the field trip served as an event intended to facilitate transformative learning. Because of its limited scope, the field trip did not serve as a catalyst for transformative learning for all students. However, the field trip and the dialogue and reflection it fostered did challenge some students' beliefs and assumptions about race and racism.

Wells (2011) examined the impact of a multicultural diversity education course designed to initiate transformative learning toward culturally responsive teaching on in-service teachers' perceptions and attitudes toward multicultural education. Wells interviewed in-service teachers who had previously participated in and completed a multicultural or diversity education course as part of their undergraduate or graduate teacher preparation program and who currently were teaching in a school with a diverse student population. Wells explored teachers' views and perceptions about the course and the ways in which it prepared them for their current teaching environment. Participants identified changes in their perceptions and attitudes as a result of the course, which allowed them a better understanding of their own and other cultures. As a result of the course, teachers became more aware of cultural diversity, its impact in the classroom, and the importance of teaching with cultural relevance.

Transformative Learning in Culturally Diverse Settings

Taylor (2000, 2007) stressed the importance of transformative learning in pre-service teachers' experiences in culturally diverse settings. Taylor (2000) noted that, while studies had focused on content and context of teacher education courses, the literature base did not include enough studies exploring transformative learning in relation to pre-service teachers' understanding of others whose cultural backgrounds differed from their own. Researchers have examined transformative learning in culturally diverse field experiences.

Hutchison & Rea (2010) examined 25 pre-service teachers' experiences on a trip to The Gambia. The purpose of the trip was to facilitate participants' development of global awareness and enhanced cultural sensitivity through visits to schools and communities. Researchers interviewed participants during and after the trip and found that many developed a new perspective and worldview as a result of their experience. Findings suggest that providing pre-

service teachers with an experience in a cultural setting that differs from their own background and is outside of their "comfort zone" prompts them to reflect on their own cultural values and beliefs and exposes them to new discourses and ways of being. As a result, participants developed greater cultural sensitivity and a broadened worldview.

Doucet, Grayman-Simpson, & Wertheim (2013) examined the experiences of undergraduate White women enrolled in a diversity and social justice course. The course followed the tenets of Mezirow's transformative learning theory and included opportunities for critical dialogue, self-reflection, and engagement in an unfamiliar cultural community as part of the course activities. After their experiences in a community in which they were the cultural "other," students wrote about how they felt being a minority and connected their thoughts and feelings to a deeper understanding of power and privilege in society. At the end of the course, students reported gaining new knowledge that challenged their preconceived notions about culture and diversity and provided them with a broadened perspective and worldview.
Through the transformative learning process, pre-service teachers developed relationships with members of a different cultural community. The relationships helped them to reframe their perspectives and shift their worldviews toward deeper understandings of culture and diversity.

In a comparative case study of two study abroad experiences for pre-service teachers in Sweden and France, Dunn et al. (2014) used transformative learning theory as a framework for understanding participants' experiences. Both study abroad programs facilitated a pre-departure program that included a pre-survey of beliefs and perceptions and an orientation toward the immersion experience. While abroad, participants journaled and completed context-specific assignments geared toward teaching and learning in culturally diverse settings. Researchers conducted follow up interviews with participants. The programs provided opportunities for

transformative learning to occur, such as disorienting dilemma, critical reflection, and dialogue with others. Findings suggested that critical reflection, dialogue with others, and experiential learning were important for participants' personal growth and understanding.

Promising Practices for Facilitating Transformative Learning in the Classroom

Transformative learning theorists have identified characteristics of coursework and classroom environments that best facilitate meaningful transformative learning (Cranton, 2006; Mezirow, 1997; Taylor, 2000; Taylor & Snyder, 2012; Wiessner & Mezirow, 2000). Theorists suggested that classroom environments that created a culture of safety, openness, and trust were most conducive to transformative learning experiences for students. Courses that were learner-centered, where the teacher acted as a facilitator, focused on learner participation, collaboration, reflection, and dialogue, and helped students build relationships with all members of their learning community, were considered most effective in facilitating transformative learning. Cranton (2006) and Mezirow (1991, 1997) believed that experience-based learning was an effective way to facilitate transformative learning. Thus, field experiences have been used to examine transformative learning in culturally diverse settings (Dunn et al., 2014; Hutchison & Rea, 2010).

Cultural Immersion Field Experiences for Pre-Service Teachers

Research suggests that teacher education courses that emphasize pre-service teachers' deepened understandings of culture and diversity enable them to teach with greater cultural understanding and relevance in their future classroom (Delpit, 2006; Sleeter, 2001). Teacher education courses that include immersion field experiences help pre-service teachers deepen their cultural awareness and broaden their worldviews, allowing them a deeper understanding of culture and its function in education and society (Delpit, 2006; Sleeter, 2001). Immersion field

experiences allow pre-service teachers an opportunity to reflect on their beliefs teaching students whose cultural backgrounds differ from theirs (Bradfield-Kreider, 2001). First-hand experience can begin to dismantle previously held stereotypes and perceptions and results in reduced fear about working with culturally diverse students (Diller & Moule, 2005).

A number of studies in the general education literature have explored pre-service teachers' experiences in cultural immersion field experiences in both domestic and international settings (Barkhuizen & Feryok, 2006; Bleicher, 2011; Cushner & Mahon, 2002; Dunn et al., 2014; Fry & McKinney, 1997; Hutchison & Rea, 2010; Lee, 2009; Lupi, Batey, & Turner, 2012; Marx & Moss, 2011; Marxen & Rudney, 2009; Rodriguez, 2011; Roose, 2001; Stachowski & Mahan, 1998). Immersion experiences varied in context, location, and length, but focused on expanding pre-service teachers' worldviews toward cultural diversity in order to develop cross-cultural skills and to prepare them better for teaching students whose cultural backgrounds differ from their own. Immersion field experiences facilitated a deepened understanding of self, others, and culture that enabled pre-service teachers to become more accepting of differences, more empathetic, and increased their understanding of culture and education. The intended outcome of the experience was to develop greater cultural understanding and empathy for students whose cultural backgrounds differed from their own in pre-service teachers' future classrooms.

Domestic Cultural Immersion Field Experiences

Cultural immersion field experiences can take place in any setting in which the pre-service teachers' cultural backgrounds differ from that of the students. Pre-service teachers who participated in immersion field experiences often fit the demographic profile of in-service teachers in the United States. Most were White and middle-class students with limited or no experience with racial, ethnic, or cultural diversity (Bleicher, 2011; Fry & McKinney, 1997;

Marxen & Rudney, 1999). Domestic immersion field experiences often were set in urban schools with high populations of students from racial minority groups.

Bleicher (2011) conducted a 3-year mixed methods study examining the effects of a one-week intensive urban field placement on pre-service teachers' perceptions of urban schools, students, and teachers. Ninety-five suburban and rural pre-service teachers participated in the immersion field experience and self-reported their perceptions through pre-and post- surveys, reflections, and interviews. Social justice, culturally relevant teaching, and reflective practice topics framed course preparation for pre-service teachers. After school, participants engaged in pedagogy courses and guided reflection of their experience. Participants reported improved confidence in teaching cross-culturally and greater interest in teaching in urban schools after the experience. The study suggests that an immersion field experience can contribute to a broadened perspective of educational settings and helps prepare pre-service teachers for teaching in settings that are unfamiliar to them.

In a similar study, Fry & McKinney (1997) examined the experiences of ten White elementary education majors in an urban teaching field experience in order to understand how to prepare pre-service teachers for teaching in a culturally diverse setting. Participants engaged in the field experience as part of an education methods course. Pre-service teachers engaged in pre-experience assignments on diversity and multicultural education, journal reflections, interviews, and demographic/background surveys to determine the amount and type of prior contact pre-service teachers had experienced with individuals whose cultural backgrounds differed from their own. Findings of this study suggest that pre-service teachers became more culturally aware and felt better prepared to teach in culturally diverse settings as a result of their experience.

Marxen & Rudney (1999) examined the impact of an urban immersion field experience on 25 pre-service teachers' learning. Most had limited experience in a culturally diverse setting. Findings from this study suggest different experiences for pre-service teachers that perhaps depended on their preconceived beliefs and assumptions about urban areas. While some pre-service teachers shared stories of their experiences suggesting deepened cultural understanding, others' stories suggested that the experience reinforced their preconceived beliefs. Still, others shared having a first experience as a minority, being the only White person in a 100% African-American school. This led to a deepened understanding of feeling like an "other." This study included a follow-up interview after these pre-service teachers graduated and obtained teaching positions. Regardless of the environmental context in which they taught, teachers talked about being more open-minded and feeling better prepared to teach in culturally diverse settings as a result of the field experience.

Roose (2001) explored the survey responses of in-service teachers who completed a cross-cultural internship as part of their undergraduate teacher preparation program at a small liberal arts institution. The internship typically was a semester long, and students fulfilled the internship in international and domestic settings. They resided and taught with those whose cultural backgrounds differed from their own. The goals of the internship were for students to experience being a cultural "other," as well to experience new and different ways of school and schooling. Students engaged in pre-field research about their setting. During the internship, they kept a reflective journal. Afterward, they completed reflective assignments and gave presentations to their classmates about their experience. Roose surveyed in-service teachers who had completed the program and had been teaching between six months and three years. Teachers were influenced by their cross-cultural experience, as it shaped their understanding of schools

and culture, broadened their understanding of students, learning, and curriculum, and helped them to understand and embrace cultural differences. Teachers reported that their cross-cultural internship was a formative experience in their teacher preparation.

Many cultural immersion field experiences in the United States focused more on the impact of race and class in educational settings than on the myriad of ways culture impacts teaching and learning through both visible and unseen elements. Alternatively, Stachowski & Mahan (1998) examined the impact of the Cultural Immersion Projects at Indiana University-Bloomington on student teachers' cultural and diversity learning. Many student teachers participated in The American Indian Reservation Project, a 17-week teaching placement on a Navajo reservation, and the Overseas Project, an 8-week teaching placement in overseas English-speaking national schools. Prior to the placement, student teachers participated in seminars and workshops to learn about their placement's cultural values, beliefs, and lifestyles. During the placement, student teachers engaged in all school and community activities, formed relationships with community members, engaged in a community service learning project, and documented their reflection of the experience. One hundred nine student teachers completed a survey at the end of their experience. They expressed the importance of community members as resources for learning, identified service learning projects as a way of developing greater understanding of others and building relationships with community members, as well as planned lessons with cultural relevance and a connection to the students' lives and communities. Stachowksi & Mahan stressed the importance of teaching and community involvement, and suggested that student teachers should be required to participate in activities that connect them to the local community as part of their student teaching placement experience.

Domestic cultural immersion field experiences in which pre-service teachers have a different background than their students are valuable, but they do not fully provide pre-service teachers with the experience of being a cultural outsider, or cultural “other,” because experiencing cultural “otherness” only can occur fully in a place where pre-service teachers’ culture is not dominant. Marx & Moss (2011) cautioned that participating in an immersion field experience where the pre-service teachers’ culture is still dominant (i.e., a Eurocentric education system) does not fully provide pre-service teachers with the opportunity to confront preconceived beliefs and assumptions or to critically reflect on cultural understanding. Further, domestic cultural immersion field experiences often focused on racial diversity in the setting when there are many ways of engaging with cultural diversity.

International Cultural Immersion Field Experiences

Due to growing interest in global-mindedness and as a way of providing an experience as a cultural “other,” many teacher education programs offer pre-service teachers opportunities to participate in international immersion field experiences. A growing number of studies on these immersion experiences highlight increased interest in developing cross-cultural understanding through first-hand experience (Barkhuizen & Feryok, 2006; Cushner & Mahon, 2002; Dunn et al., 2014; Hutchison & Rea, 2010; Lee, 2009; Lupi, Batey, & Turner, 2012; Marx & Moss, 2011; Rodriguez, 2011). International cultural immersion experiences provided pre-service teachers with opportunities to experience being an “other” and outside the culturally dominant group. The experience pushed pre-service teachers beyond their comfort zone and helped them to examine and understand stereotypes, prejudices, and marginalization – and how they affect people. As a result of the immersion experience, pre-service teachers felt more self-confident and expressed greater self-efficacy. They became more accepting of differences, more empathetic, and more

culturally aware and sensitive. Pre-service teachers expressed a deeper understanding of the world, enhanced global mindedness, greater interest in cross-cultural interactions, and a better understanding of themselves as an educator. Pre-service teachers exhibited enhanced abilities in teaching with cultural relevance, greater confidence teaching students whose cultural background differed from their own, and new approaches to education philosophies and pedagogies.

Cushner & Mahon (2002) examined the impact of an international student teaching experience on the personal and professional development of pre-service teachers. Fifty in-service teachers who had participated in international student teaching experiences responded to an open-ended questionnaire to determine how the experience impacted them in their current classrooms in the United States. Most respondents were White and had experienced international student teaching placements in English speaking countries. Findings suggested that, by experiencing cultural "otherness," student teachers developed increased cultural awareness and sensitivity, examined stereotypes, became more accepting of differences, and developed a broadened worldview. As a result, they were able to incorporate what they had learned about cultural diversity into their future classroom settings.

Barkhuizen & Feryok (2006) examined English second language student teachers' perceptions of a 6-week immersion experience in New Zealand. Student teachers were enrolled in a postgraduate teaching program in Hong Kong. The student teachers participated in courses on language proficiency and society and TESOL workshops. In addition, they visited local schools and participated in tourist and cultural social activities and homestays. Student teachers completed pre- and post- questionnaires to explore their expectations and experiences of the program. They also kept a reflective journal to document their thoughts and feelings about the program. Findings suggested that student teachers learned about the local culture and further

developed their language skills. Student teachers expressed deeper pedagogical understandings of teaching methods and classroom cultures and developed greater interpersonal awareness and increased self-confidence as a result of their experience.

In a similar study, Lee (2009) also examined the experiences of English language student teachers from Hong Kong on a 6-week language immersion program in New Zealand. Seventeen student teachers participated in coursework, field experience in local schools, homestays, and community and cultural activities during their immersion field experience. Student teachers completed questionnaires and kept journals of their experiences. Findings suggested that student teachers increased their confidence and empathy and acceptance of others. Student teachers reflected on their assumptions and improved both their teaching skill and their relationships with members of the school community. Student teachers expressed greater confidence in teaching students from different cultural backgrounds as a result of their immersion experience.

Lupi, Batey, & Turner (2012) examined the reflections of pre-service teachers who participated in a 3-week internship in the United Kingdom to determine how the experience impacted their perception of professional school relationships, classroom management, and structure. Participants engaged in a pre-trip course to discuss English schooling and curriculum. Participants engaged in formal and informal discussions while at the international internship site and wrote post-trip reflection papers upon their return to the United States. Findings suggested that pre-service teachers developed greater understanding of cultural differences and expanded perceptions of others that helped them to be more culturally competent teachers in their home communities. Pre-service teachers identified an increased ability to teach diverse learners after their experience.

Marx & Moss (2011) explored one pre-service teacher's intercultural development during a semester-long teacher education program in London. The program included guided cultural reflection, cross-culturally-based coursework, local cultural activities, and an internship in a local school. Data were collected in phases before, during, and after the semester experience. Findings suggest that the pre-service teacher developed greater cultural sensitivity and that the experience influenced her intercultural development. An important aspect of this immersion experience was the pre-service teacher's experience as a cultural "other." Contrary to a previous field experience in an urban setting in the United States, she (not the students) was the cultural "outsider." This experience facilitated an opportunity for deeper cultural understanding that could influence her approaches to teaching and learning with students whose cultural backgrounds differ from her own.

Rodriguez (2011) examined the impact of an immersion experience in Bolivia on pre-service teachers' understanding of education and their role as educators. Rather than focusing solely on increasing cultural sensitivity, Rodriguez sought to understand better how the immersion experience shaped pre-service teachers' perception of education and its role in society, as well as their role as educators. Pre-service teachers participated in a teacher education course that included a 10-day trip to Bolivia. Participants in the study reflected the demographics of teacher candidates in the United States – mostly White females from middle class communities who had little to no experience in diverse settings. The immersion experience included classroom observations and meeting teachers and parents. Prior to the trip, students engaged in coursework designed to promote thinking about racial, economic, and sociocultural inequities. Data were collected through an open-ended questionnaire. Findings suggested that pre-service teachers were more culturally sensitive and felt more prepared to teach students

whose cultures differed from their own as a result of the course. Moreover, the experience provided pre-service teachers with a deepened understanding of education in society and a greater sense of agency as a teacher.

Dunn et al. (2014) conducted a comparative case study of two study abroad experiences for pre-service teachers. One program was a 4-month student teaching placement in Sweden and the other was a 3-week intensive intercultural course in France. The researchers sought to understand better the ways in which international programs for pre-service teachers can deepen their understanding of cultural diversity in both global and local contexts. Data were collected to illuminate pre-service teachers' experiences through pre-departure coursework, personal reflection, journals, videos, and post-interviews. Findings suggested that pre-service teachers' experience prompted them to develop a deeper understanding of themselves as educators and to consider ways of being culturally competent teachers of diverse students. The authors suggested that this study:

> … has reaffirmed the importance of diversity-focused courses, whether in the United States or abroad, including critical reading, reflection, and a range of assignments in such classes, such as journals, collaborative endeavors, videos, blogs, and community-based activities … we need to develop more U.S.-based courses that deal explicitly with issues of global diversity and pedagogy (p. 301).

The experience provided pre-service teachers with a new or deepened interest in global issues.

Summary

Because internationally based cultural immersion experiences provide pre-service teachers with experience as a cultural outsider, they can facilitate the development of cross-cultural skills (Marx & Moss, 2011). Pre-service teachers who understand and empathize with

cultural outsiders can more easily make meaningful connections with a growing population of students whose cultural backgrounds differ from their own in their future classrooms. A growing number of communities in the United States are different culturally in a vast number of ways that extend beyond racial diversity alone. Cultural immersion field experiences, regardless of being internationally or domestically based, can facilitate pre-service teachers' development of cultural sensitivity and understanding to inform their teaching (Stachowski & Mahan, 1998). "Rather than viewing cross-cultural experiences as useful only to future global educators, teacher education programs need to explore how they can bring such experiences to all their preservice teachers" (Roose, 2001, p. 48).

Cultural Immersion Field Experiences for Pre-Service Music Teachers

Teacher education research studies suggest that cultural immersion field experiences can facilitate the development of pre-service teachers' cultural competence and better prepare them to teach students whose cultural backgrounds differ from their own. Yet, studies of a similar nature remain sparse in pre-service music teacher preparation.

Emmanuel (2005) examined the beliefs and assumptions of pre-service music teachers regarding music teaching and learning in culturally diverse settings and the impact of a cultural immersion field experience on their beliefs. Five pre-service music teachers participated in a cultural immersion experience that involved a 1-week orientation prior to a 2-week immersion field experience in a culturally diverse setting. During the orientation week, participants examined their own preconceived beliefs about teaching in culturally diverse settings through assigned readings, videos, journals, and reflections. Then the participants lived together, along with the researcher, in a culturally diverse community and observed and taught in a school within the community. Data sources included coursework, observations, discussions, interviews,

journals, and reflections. Findings suggested participants' beliefs and understanding about their own and others' cultures, teaching in culturally diverse settings, and perceptions of students' musical aptitudes shifted throughout the orientation week and the immersion field experience. Despite the brevity of the immersion, the participants' views and assumptions shifted dramatically toward deepened cultural sensitivity and understanding. This study suggests that academic coursework combined with a cultural immersion field experience can transform pre-service music teachers' beliefs, assumptions, and understandings about teaching music in culturally diverse settings.

Burton, Westvall, & Karlsson (2012) examined pre-service music teachers' perspectives and experiences in an intercultural course on music, art, education, and culture. Instructors developed a collaborative intercultural immersion course for pre-service music teachers in two universities in the United States and in Sweden designed to challenge their preconceived beliefs about culture and school music curricula and gain understanding of another culture's approach to music teaching and learning. Six students from the United States and six students from Sweden participated in the study, which involved pre-visit coursework and discussion and an immersion exchange experience where participants lived in each other's countries for 10 days. They visited campus and classes, participated in workshops and seminars, and observed and participated in music classes, as well as engaged in cultural activities and participated in daily life. Data were collected through focus group interviews. Findings suggested that the experience provided participants with new understandings and insights regarding music education and facilitated deeper thought about their roles as a music educator. Critical reflection helped participants to understand students' cultural needs better.

Summary

Research suggests that pre-service teachers develop cultural competency by experiencing how it feels to be a cultural "other." One way of accomplishing this is through an immersion field experience in a setting that differs culturally from one's own background. By participating in the immersion experience, pre-service teachers can transform their beliefs and assumptions and reframe their worldviews toward greater empathy and cultural understanding, allowing them to better meet the needs of their students (Marx & Moss, 2011; Marxen & Rudney, 2009; Roose, 2001).

Many of the immersion field experiences included pre-immersion assignments, activities, and/or cultural readings designed to orient participants toward topics of cultural diversity, and issues specific to the cultural immersion setting (Barkhuizen & Feryok, 2006; Burton et al., 2012; Emmanuel, 2005; Fry & McKinney, 1997; Hutchison & Rea, 2010; Lupi, Batey, & Turner, 2012; Marx & Moss, 2011; Rodriguez, 2011; Roose, 2001; Stachowski & Mahan, 1998). By engaging pre-service teachers in surveys and assignments before the cultural immersion experience, participants were able to identify pre-conceived biases and perceptions toward cultural diversity (Barkhuizen & Feryok, 2006; Dunn et al., 2014; Fry & McKinney, 1997; Lee, 2009). Critical reflection, often through personal journaling before, during, and after the experience was an important component of pre-service teachers' transformative learning throughout the cultural immersion experience (Barkhuizen & Feryok, 2006; Bleicher, 2011; Burton et al., 2012; Dunn et al., 2014; Emmanuel, 2005; Fry & McKinney, 1997; Lee, 2009; Lupi, Batey, & Turner, 2012; Marx & Moss, 2011; Roose, 2001). Many cultural immersion field experiences also included community engagement activities or service learning projects in order to connect pre-service teachers to the cultural community, and to build relationships with its

members (Barkhuizen & Feryok, 2006; Burton et al., 2012; Lee, 2009; Marx & Moss, 2011; Rodriguez, 2011; Stachowski & Mahan, 1998).

Research studies in teacher education have examined how pre-service teachers develop the skills necessary to teach students whose cultural backgrounds differ from their own, and many have conducted cultural immersion experiences to develop cultural understanding. Yet, while the existing research literature on preparing pre-service teachers for teaching in culturally diverse settings is growing, there remain few research studies examining the impact of cultural immersion field experiences in developing cultural understanding in pre-service music teachers.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to explore pre-service music education students' understandings of culture and diversity, and to examine the impact of a short-term cultural immersion field experience on pre-service music education students' beliefs, assumptions, and understandings about teaching music in educational contexts that differ culturally from their own backgrounds. This chapter provides a description of the methods used in this study, including a description of the theoretical framework, methodology and design, the course and cultural immersion experience setting, participant selection, data collection and data analysis methods, and assumptions and limitations of this study.

Theoretical Framework

For this study, I employed Mezirow's (1991) theory of transformative learning as a lens through which to view pre-service music education students' cultural immersion experiences. Mezirow (1991) defined transformative learning as:

> The process of becoming critically aware of how and why our assumptions have come to constrain the way we perceive, understand, and feel about our world; changing these structures of habitual expectation to make possible a more inclusive, discriminating, and integrative perspective. (p. 167)

According to Mezirow (1991), transformative learning requires the learner to "dig at the roots of their assumptions and preconceptions to change the way they construe the meaning of their experience" (p. 196). It also must involve fundamental questioning and changes in the ways in which we know and make meaning. Transformative learning theory suggests that learners can integrate past learning experiences with new perspectives gained from experiences that disorient their worldview in some manner.

Transformative learning begins with a *disorienting dilemma* – an experience that does not align with the learners' meaning perspective and leads them to reflect and examine beliefs and assumptions. Transformative learning theory proposes that adult learners can integrate new perspectives into their frame of reference as a result of experiences that expand their worldviews. The *disorienting dilemma* provides the catalyst for transformative learning to take place. Reflection and new experiences allow the learner to come to a transformed perspective. Mezirow outlined ten phases of transformative learning in his theory as follows:

1. A disorienting dilemma as a result of an experience
2. Self-examination with feelings of guilt or shame
3. A critical assessment of epistemic, sociocultural, or psychic assumptions
4. Recognition that one's discontent and the process of transformation are shared and that others have negotiated a similar change
5. Exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions
6. Planning a course of action
7. Acquisition of knowledge and skills for implementing one's plans
8. Provisional trying of new roles
9. Building of competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships
10. A reintegration into one's life on the basis of conditions dictated by one's new perspective.

Mezirow (2000) stressed that these phases are not stages of development, nor are they necessarily sequential. In other words, learners do not have to experience every phase in order, or at all, to experience transformative learning. In educational contexts, transformative learning can be used to help students develop a transformed perspective. Classroom environments that foster

safety, openness, and trust were most conducive to transformative learning (Mezirow, 1997; Taylor, 2000; Taylor & Snyder, 2012; Wiessner & Mezirow, 2000). Further, educators who teach with a learner-centered approach and act as facilitators rather than authorities of knowledge, and who help students build trusting relationships with all members of the learning community, achieve greater success in providing transformative learning opportunities for students (Mezirow, 1997; Taylor, 2000).

For the purposes of this study, the disorienting dilemma was participants' experiences learning about culture through participation in a cultural immersion music education experience. Pre-immersion meetings oriented participants toward issues of cultural diversity in education and possibly provided information and perspectives that disoriented viewpoints and understanding. The immersion experience itself served to contextualize the disorientation and served as a possible catalyst for participants to alter their frames of reference and assumptions about music teaching and learning in settings that differ culturally from their own backgrounds.

Method and Design

This project was a case study of pre-service music teachers' experiences with music teaching and learning in a short-term intercultural immersion field experience. Merriam (1998), Stake (1995), and Yin (2005) have addressed the characteristics, qualities, and purposes of case study research. Yet researchers have subtle differences of opinion regarding what constitutes a case study and the process by which to conduct one (Merriam, 1998). Merriam (1998) outlined the potentially complicated endeavor of defining case study research, stating, "Case studies can be defined in terms of the process of conducting the inquiry, the bounded system or unit of analysis selected for the study, or the product, the end report of a case investigation" (p. 43).

Yin (2003) identified three criteria that should be used when determining whether a case study is appropriate. First, case study research is preferred when the researcher wants to examine a phenomenon of people, places, events, issues, situations, or problems and when the phenomenon can be explained best if the researcher asks "how" and "why" questions. Second, case studies are preferred when the researcher does not have control over the events in a situation or context and when the phenomenon and the context are so tightly bound that they cannot be separated. In other words, when a researcher seeks to understand a situation, event, or phenomenon whose variables cannot be separated from their context, case study research could prove fruitful. Third, case study research should be used when the researcher seeks to understand a "complex social phenomena," particularly when the research focuses on contemporary rather than historical events.

For Stake (1995), case study research is more about the choice of what to study rather than the ways in which the study is designed. Stake defined case study research as "the study of the particulars and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances" (p. xi). Researchers should employ instrumental case studies when they want to gain insight into an issue that the case highlights. In this instance, the case itself facilitates an understanding of something else or advances an existing understanding of a phenomenon or circumstance (Stake, 1995).

Merriam defines case study research as an "intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single instance, phenomenon, or social unit," and determined that the "single most defining characteristic of case study research lies in delimiting the object of study" (1998, p. 27). Thus, for Merriam, the defining characteristic of case study research is in the form of the case itself.

Case study is commonly used in education research because of its ability to provide an in-depth understanding of a situation and meaning for those involved (Merriam, 1998, p. 19). Qualitative case studies can be valuable when researchers examine specific issues and problems of practice (Merriam, 1998, p. 34). Researchers who are interested in "process rather than outcomes," "context rather than specific variables," and "discovery rather than confirmation" find value in case study research, which often is framed with educational concepts, models, or theories (p. 19). Because case studies examine real-life situations, they can offer insight and meaning to improve education practice, evaluate programs, or inform policy (Merriam, 1998). Case study research can "focus on questions, issues, and concerns broadly related to teaching and learning" by examining the specifics of a particular case (Merriam, 1998, p. 37). Case studies are good for educational research because of the connectedness of context and phenomena in schools and teaching and learning (Barrett, 2014).

Because the purpose of this study lent itself to "how" and "why" questions relating to each participants' personal experience and because the phenomenon of music teaching in a culturally diverse setting is inseparable from the specific contextual teaching environment that was used as the setting for the study, a case study methodology was used (Yin, 2003). As is common with case study research, the study took place in a real-world setting with real participants. Teaching and learning occurred in a cultural environment that differed from participants' own cultural backgrounds.

The investigation followed a case study design, in which each participant's experience contributed to the understanding of the case as a whole (Stake, 1995). The case was clearly bounded by a small number of pre-service music teachers who served as participants in the study (Merriam, 1998). Ultimately, this study sought to gain a deeper understanding, within the

bounded context of each participant's experience, of pre-service teachers' cultural competency development through an immersion experience teaching music in a cultural setting that differed from their own backgrounds (Merriam, 1998).

The study design was instrumental (Stake, 1995) in that the cultural immersion field experience provided a deeper understanding of pre-service music teachers' experiences teaching in a culturally different setting in order to better understand the impact of the cultural immersion experience. Each participant's experience in the immersion provided insight into how pre-service music teachers develop cultural competency. Further, the study is descriptive, as the data was rich and thick (Merriam, 1998), providing a detailed understanding of each pre-service music teachers' experiences in the setting and adding to the research base on developing cultural competency in pre-service music teachers. The end product of the study is a full and thorough description of the experience/case studied, using the voices of the participants.

There are no prescribed or agreed upon methods for data collection and analysis in case study research. However, case study research data often includes interviews, observations and field notes, and participant reflections. For this study, I collected data through interviews, group discussion, observations, field notes, assignments, artifacts, and participant journal reflections.

This choice of research methodology and design is consistent with other case studies in the music education research literature, as the majority of studies employ multiple instrumental designs in order to understand better a particular phenomenon and contribute to the knowledge base in music education. Multiple instrumental case study research has been conducted in both general and music education settings in order to examine the impact of intercultural immersion experiences on pre-service teachers (Dunn et al., 2014; Emmanuel, 2005; Fry & McKinney, 1997). Conducting a multiple instrumental case study examining the experiences of pre-service

music teachers in a culturally diverse setting adds to the music education research base about the impact of intercultural immersion experiences in developing pre-service music teachers' cultural competency.

Setting Selection

The setting for this study was purposefully selected as one that could provide participants with an experience in a setting whose culture would be unfamiliar and possibly uncomfortable to them. I believed that such a setting might prompt participants to reflect critically on their beliefs and assumptions about cultural groups and provide an experience of cultural "otherness" that could serve as a catalyst for transformative learning toward cultural understanding.

Arab Americans comprise a small but growing population in the United States (United States Census Bureau, 2013). Accurate population records are difficult to obtain because Arab Americans are not officially recognized on the United States census and often self-identify as White on official census forms (United States Census Bureau, 2013). Despite difficulty with accurate record keeping, the Arab American Institute Foundation (2016) reported that one third of the Arab American population resides in California, New York, and Michigan. Though other states and cities in the United States have the largest population in terms of numbers, southeast Michigan is home to the largest community of Arab Americans according to population density (Arab American Institute Foundation, 2016). Arab Americans represent a number of ethnic, religious, and national backgrounds. The Detroit metropolitan area, and specifically Dearborn and Dearborn Heights, is home to the largest proportion of Arab Americans in the United States, representing 46.5% of the city's population in 2013 (American Immigration Council, 2015; Arab American Institute Foundation, 2016). Comparatively, in 2013, Arab Americans represented 1% of the population in New York City and 0.8% in Los Angeles (American Immigration Council,

2015). In the Detroit metropolitan area, 37% of Arab Americans have Lebanese or Syrian heritage, 35% Iraqi heritage, 12% Palestinian or Jordanian, and 9% Yemeni heritage (Baker, Stockton, Howell, Jamal, Lin, Shryock, & Tessler, 2004). In this same area, 58% of Arab Americans are Christian and 42% are Muslim (Baker et al., 2004). The majority of Muslims (64%) live in the Dearborn community (Baker et al., 2004). The Detroit metropolitan area, and more specifically the community of Dearborn, is home to more Muslims, persons of Iraqi and Yemeni heritage, and more foreign-born individuals than the national average (Baker et al., 2004). Many residents are bi- or tri-lingual, most likely fluent in English, Arabic or Armenian, and, if they speak a third language, it is Spanish (Baker et al., 2004). Michigan is one of the top five states in the country for refugee resettlement (Spangler, 2017). Of the 18,908 Syrian refugees who resettled in the United States since 2015, 2029 resettled in Michigan, making the state the second largest for Syrian refugee resettlement population in the nation (Spangler, 2017).

Many stereotypes and prejudices toward Arab Americans exist in the United States. In a collection of public opinion trends from 1990-2007, Schafer & Shaw (2009) found a rise in individuals who objected to having Muslims as neighbors from 14% in 1990 to 22% in 2006. Additionally, the Arab American Institute Foundation (2016) reported growing concern over relations between the Arab American community and the larger American population. In their 2016 report, the Arab American Institute Foundation found that 36% of Americans harbored unfavorable views of Arab Americans, and 37% harbored unfavorable views of American Muslims. Post 9/11, a 1,600% increase in hate crimes and hate speech were directed toward the Arab American and Muslim communities, a rate that has yet to return to pre-9/11 rates and spikes after media coverage of terrorist attacks (Arab American Institute Foundation, 2016). This is true in the Detroit metropolitan area as well. Baker et al. (2004) found that 15% of Detroit area

Arab Americans reported having had a "bad" experience after 9/11, and more than 25% had experienced verbal harassment in the last two years. Detroit area Arab American Muslims believe that their religion is not respected and worry about being Muslim in the United States (Baker et al., 2004). Members of the Detroit area Arab American community identified a need for a less hostile and more equitable environment for Arab Americans and for programs that educate people about cultural issues and facilitate unity between Arab and non-Arab populations (Baker et al., 2004).

In 2015, The Federal Bureau of Investigation reported a 67% increase in anti-Muslim hate crimes (Potok, 2017). Potok (2017) asserted that the rhetoric of Donald Trump's United States Presidential campaign and growing atrocities by the Islamic State in the Middle East drove anti-Muslim hate crimes in the United States to their highest since 2001, and these trends worsened after the Presidential election in November 2016. The Southern Poverty Law Center reported incidents of hate crimes in every state. Most took place on university campuses and in K-12 schools, and were anti-immigrant and/or anti-Muslim in nature. The largest number of incidents occurred the day after the November 2016 election (Potok, 2017).

On January 27, 2017, newly inaugurated President Donald Trump signed an executive order on immigration to the United States (Stack, 2017). The order banned Syrian refugees from entering the United States indefinitely, suspended refugee admissions from all other countries for 120 days, and blocked all citizens from seven Muslim-majority countries from entering the United States for 90 days. The seven countries included in the ban were Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen (Stack, 2017). Trump's executive order cited the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks and the 2015 shooting in San Bernardino, California, both events perpetrated by Muslim extremists, as justification for the ban (Blaine & Horowitz, 2017).

Given the current relevance of misperception and discrimination toward Arab and Muslim Americans, this immersion experience proved especially timely. Because of its Arab and Muslim population, as well as its proximity to the university that my participants attended, Dearborn area schools served as the setting for this cultural immersion field experience. These schools were comprised of students whose cultural backgrounds differed from those of my participants and may be similar to schools in which participants might soon find themselves teaching. Given the immersive nature of the experience, participants participated in school observations and teaching experiences, as well as lived and spent leisure time together throughout the immersion week.

Participant Selection

Participation in this study was available to all undergraduate music education students. I contacted all undergraduate music education students via email to explain my research purpose and to provide details about the field experience setting, and invited them to participate. I also followed up by visiting all music education courses in session to introduce myself, provide details, and answer questions about the field experience opportunity. My email correspondence and class visits began shortly after the November 2016 United States Presidential Election, and some students expressed that they were more inclined to participate in the field experience because of the election results. Students had the option to enroll in an independent study course option, an honors option to fulfill requirements for the honors college, or participate without enrolling in either option. Nine undergraduate music education students self-selected to participate in the study. All participated without enrolling in any credit options, meaning they voluntarily participated in the field experience. There were lodging, transportation, and activities costs associated with the cultural immersion field experience. Participants each paid a nominal

fee, but most of the cost was subsidized through a variety of university funding sources in order to provide an experience that was not cost-prohibitive to any undergraduate music education student who wanted to participate.

Data Collection

This study was comprised of three different components. Data were collected during each component.

Pre-Immersion Orientation

Like previous studies, a series of pre-immersion orientation meetings took place on campus in order to orient participants to the immersion field experience setting and to provide context for issues of cultural diversity in education (Bleicher, 2011; Burton et al., 2012; Dunn et al., 2014; Emmanuel, 2003; Fry & McKinney, 1997; Hutchison & Rea, 2010; Lee, 2009; Lupi et al., 2012; Rodriguez, 2011; Roose, 2001; Stachowski & Mahan, 1998). I designed a course to orient pre-service music educators toward thinking about culture in the classroom, and presented them with opportunities to examine their cultural beliefs, perceptions, and assumptions about groups and individuals whose cultural backgrounds differ from their own. Given the purposeful selection of the immersion setting, some of the materials presented were specific to immigrants, refugees, Arabs, and Muslims.

The orientation course met weekly for a total of eight meetings on campus before the immersion experience. I began the first meeting by having participants complete a cultural inventory survey to serve as a record of the knowledge base each participant had at the beginning of the orientation (Bleicher, 2011; Dunn et al., 2014; Emmanuel, 2003; Fry & McKinney, 1997; Lee, 2009). In addition, participants were asked to write an autobiography in which they "reflected on their own identity and the ways in which identity markers (such as social class,

race, ethnicity, language, ability, gender, sexual orientation, religion, etc.) informed their schooling experiences and their schooling experiences informed their identity" (Dunn, 2015). Weekly course meetings were discussion-based, with topics based on readings and/or videos participants were asked to prepare in advance or view during meetings. These materials included a video titled, "Immersion," which chronicled an elementary-aged boy as he navigated a classroom as an English language learner, and completing the "Social Identity Wheel," in which participants examined aspects of their own identity that were visible and invisible to those around them. During one meeting, a professor from the Muslim Studies Program on campus visited to share first-hand knowledge and experience of Islam and practicing Islam in the United States. Readings, media, and discussions were intended to spark participants' critical self-reflection of their assumptions and beliefs and provided opportunities for learning about teaching in culturally diverse settings (Dunn et al., 2014; Emmanuel 2003; Marx & Moss, 2011). Participants completed journal reflections at the end of each meeting to provide further self-reflection and understanding of the topics each week. A complete list of readings and videos used in the orientation meetings can be found in Appendix A. Discussions from the orientation meetings were recorded and participant journal reflections were compiled for data analysis. I also conducted one semi-structured individual interview with each participant in advance of the immersion week in order to better know each participant's background and experience. Each interview was about an hour in length. Interviews were audio recorded and later transcribed for analysis.

Immersion

Following the orientation meetings, participants spent one week in an immersion field experience in two elementary schools in Dearborn. Their school field experience included

observations, lesson planning with music teachers, and individual and team teaching in the music classrooms (Emmanuel, 2003). Outside of the classroom, participants engaged with the community culture as much as possible, as participation in community life has proven to be effective in cultural immersion experiences (Barkhuizen & Feryok, 2006; Burton et al., 2012; Dunn et al., 2014; Marx & Moss, 2011; Stachowski & Mahan, 1998).

The participants and I stayed in a hotel in west Dearborn for the duration of our trip. Both elementary schools were located in east Dearborn, a 15-20 minute commute for us each morning from the hotel. Unfortunately, east Dearborn did not have hotel options and the best lodging choice for our group, both in terms of proximity and cost, was in west Dearborn. Though not officially separate communities, west Dearborn and east Dearborn have distinct differences that were visible on our daily commutes to and from school. Driving from the hotel each morning, we passed shopping centers, fast-food chains, gas stations, and restaurants that looked similar to other communities in suburban metropolitan Detroit. As we drove toward the elementary schools and entered east Dearborn, the scenery abruptly changed. Store-front signs were written in Arabic. Grocery stores and restaurants advertised Arabic foods and cuisine, and many shops sold hijabs, hookah, and other items significant in Arab and/or Muslim culture.

I partnered with two music teachers in two elementary schools in east Dearborn. Both elementary schools were in residential neighborhoods that were in close proximity to each other. The schools, music classrooms, and music teachers were all integral parts of the immersion field experience. At the time of the study, Candlewood Elementary school was a large K-8 building that served over 1200 students: 500 middle school students and 700 elementary students. The student body population was largely Arab and Muslim. The school principal identified a significant increase in English Language Learners, an increase in students who were

economically disadvantaged, and an increased transient population over the course of the last year. The student body was comprised primarily of immigrant students with little or no formal schooling, little or no English language facility, little or no basic background knowledge for schooling in the United States, and previous residence in war-torn countries. The Michigan Department of Education (2017) reported 79% of the elementary students were English Language Learners, and 75% were labeled economically disadvantaged. The elementary music teacher was in her fourth year of teaching. She was White, blonde, and Jewish, and lived in a nearby majority Jewish community in metropolitan Detroit.

Claymore Elementary served 335 students in grades K-5 at the time of the study. They also offered adult English language courses to the community during the school day. The Michigan Department of Education (2017) reported 81% of the students were English Language Learners, and 81% were economically disadvantaged. The elementary music teacher was in her third year of teaching. She was a Black woman who was adopted and raised by a White family in west Michigan. She lived in an adjacent suburb of metropolitan Detroit.

On the first day of the week, all participants and I observed each school and classroom together. We spent the morning at Candlewood Elementary and spent the afternoon at Claymore Elementary. On subsequent days, participants split into two groups, and were divided based on participants' years of experience in the music education program. Each group comprised a balance of freshmen/sophomores and juniors/seniors. Alexis, Anne, April, Luke, and Sierra spent the rest of the week in the music classroom at Candlewood. George, Jane, Lisa, and Simon spent their week in the music classroom at Claymore. Because each participant observed both classroom settings on the first day, nightly group discussions included members of each group

filling in members of the other group on the day's events and making meaning from their combined and different experiences.

At the end of the day, we left the community in east Dearborn and traveled back to our hotel in west Dearborn, a community setting that more closely resembled the communities in which participants were raised. The stores, restaurants, and demographic population were familiar to participants, and there was comfort in that familiarity. By staying in a hotel in west Dearborn, we inevitably broke the immersive experience of being in east Dearborn culture each day. To attempt to counteract leaving the community in which we taught each day, we engaged in a number of after school activities in east Dearborn. We ate meals in local restaurants, including a large group meal with the teachers with whom we worked at a popular Arab restaurant, where we learned about and tried a variety of traditional dishes. We shopped in local shops and visited a Middle Eastern bakery multiple times, where we tried many desserts and sweets. We also visited the Arab American National Museum and learned about Arab culture and the many contributions of Arab Americans to the United States.

In the school field experience, classroom teaching and lesson preparation meetings were video recorded. I split my time each day at both schools. On Tuesday, I spent the morning at Candlewood Elementary and the afternoon at Claymore Elementary. On Wednesday, I reversed the split and spent the morning at Claymore Elementary and the afternoon at Candlewood Elementary. My rotation continued throughout the week, and I collected field notes at both sites throughout each day. Participants kept a daily journal in which they reflected on their experiences during the immersion, as self-reflective journaling is an important element in monitoring changing perspectives throughout an immersion experience (Barkhuizen & Feryok, 2006; Bleicher, 2011; Doucet et al., 2013; Dunn et al., 2014; Emmanuel 2003; Fry & McKinney,

1997; Lee, 2009; Roose, 2001). In addition to self-reflection, participants engaged in nightly group discussions during which they reflected on their experiences each day. Discussions lasted between one and two hours. Group discussions were audio recorded and later transcribed for analysis (Burton et al., 2012; Dunn et al., 2014; Emmanuel, 2003; Lupi et al., 2012). I also conducted one individual interview with each participant over the course of the immersion week in order to gain understanding of each individual's experience. Interviews were audio recorded and later transcribed for analysis. Group and individual interviews were conducted with open-ended questions and were directed by participants' thoughts and experiences each day.

Post-Immersion

Because the immersion itself was short, and because self-reflection and time are necessary components of transformative learning, I conducted post-immersion meetings with the group and each individual participant (Doucet et al., 2013; Emmanuel, 2003; Lupi et al., 2012; Roose, 2001). One week following the immersion, the group met for dinner and discussed how their immersion experience continued to impact them. The discussion flowed organically over dinner, and I asked open-ended questions to further probe and direct the conversation that was already in progress. I audio recorded the dinner conversation and transcribed it for analysis. A few weeks later, I conducted individual interviews with each participant in order to probe how the immersion experience impacted their perceptions and reflection as they completed their semester coursework (Emmanuel, 2003). Interviews were semi-structured and audio recorded and transcribed for analysis.

Data Analysis

Qualitative case study research methodologists do not specify definitive approaches for data analysis but rather suggest that analysis methods are best determined by the nature and

research questions of the study (Patton, 2002). In order to derive meaning from the information collected, I analyzed data by coding and subsequently constructing categories and themes from which to draw findings. I first organized the data using Dedoose, a web-based data analysis tool. Data were coded and organized into categories and themes in order to make meaning from the findings (Patton, 2002). I employed a number of coding methods appropriate for qualitative research (Saldaña, 2013), most notably in-vivo coding, process coding, emotion coding, and values coding. In-vivo coding uses participant-generated words to capture the essence of their experiences and perspectives (Saldaña, 2013). Saldaña (2013) suggested that in-vivo coding is appropriate for studies that prioritize and honor participants' voices. Process coding captures observable activity or conceptual action (Saldaña, 2013). It is particularly useful for studies that search for "ongoing action/interaction/emotion taken in response to situations, or problems, often with the purpose of reaching a goal or handling a problem" (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 96-7). Emotion coding labels "emotions recalled and/or experienced by participants or inferred by the researcher about the participant" (Saldaña, 2013, p. 105). It is appropriate for studies that "explore intrapersonal and interpersonal participant experiences and actions" (Saldaña, 2013, p. 105). Values coding reflects participants' values, attitudes, and beliefs, and represents the participant's perspective and worldview (Saldaña, 2013). Saldaña (2013) suggested that values coding is appropriate for studies that "explore cultural values, identity, intrapersonal and interpersonal participant experiences and actions in case studies, appreciative inquiry, oral history, and critical ethnography" (Saldaña, 2013, p. 111). These coding methods allowed for deeper understanding of the data to make meaning of the findings. I employed a constant comparative method throughout data analysis, where I compared sections of data between

participants, and data before, during, and after the immersion field experience to examine similarities and differences.

Trustworthiness

In order to address issues of trustworthiness, triangulation of data methods was employed. I collected a variety of data sources to analyze, including interviews, group discussions, observations, transcripts of conversations while commuting to and from school, and examining participants' reflective journals, as well as my own journal from the immersion week. Data were also triangulated between sources. For example, I wondered: Did participants' group discussions reflect my observations of their behavior and interactions in class? Did these align or differ with what participants reflected on in their journals?

As the researcher, I was a participant-observer in the study (Patton, 2002). During the immersion field experience week, I participated in all activities. I engaged with participants, classroom teachers, and students in both elementary school settings, and participated in after school activities and meals within the community alongside the participants. My role as participant-observer helped me to gain inside views of the field experience, but was also, at times, a distraction from my researcher role in collecting data. I was the primary instrument of data collection for the study, and was the only person to transcribe and interpret the data.

Participants received transcripts of all interviews for member checks after the immersion field experience and were asked to submit to me any corrections or clarifications to their statements. Some participants responded, but most did not. I also shared several selections from multiple data sources with teacher education and music education colleagues familiar with qualitative research methods for peer review to ensure validity of coding for data analysis.

Assumptions and Limitations

This study adds to the body of knowledge about how pre-service teachers develop cultural competency in order to successfully teach students whose cultural backgrounds differ from their own. It functioned under the assumption that cultural competence is an ever-evolving process and that participants were still in the process of learning how to teach students whose cultural backgrounds differ from their own, and that the cultural immersion field experience would function as a *disorienting dilemma* that would begin to transform participants' perceptions about teaching music in settings that differ culturally from their own backgrounds.

The short time frame of the immersion field experience limited this study. An immersion field experience of longer duration would allow for deeper understanding of its impact on participants' experiences. However, this study adds to the body of literature examining pre-service music teachers' cultural immersion experiences, and contributes to a foundation on which to build future research toward preparing pre-service music teachers to teach students whose cultural backgrounds differ from their own.

How the Data Are Presented

Because each participant played an integral part in the story, I introduce them in detail in Chapter 4. In the next three chapters, I present the cultural immersion field experience as it progressed through the week. These chapters draw on transcripts from group discussions, interviews, participant journals, and fieldnotes to share the story. In Chapter 5, I answer my first research question examining participants' beliefs and perceptions before and at the start of the immersion week. In the next chapter, I answer my second research question examining any changes in participants' beliefs and perceptions during the immersion week. I present findings through the lens of Mezirow's (1991) Transformative Learning Theory, where each section

highlights a disorienting dilemma that occurred during the immersion week that served as catalysts for participants to reflect and examine their beliefs and perceptions. In Chapter 7, I answer my third research question exploring the ways in which the cultural immersion field experience shaped participants' beliefs and understanding after the experience. In Chapter 8, I review and discuss findings from Chapter 5-7 and consider implications for music teacher education and future research.

Throughout the course of the study, I built personal relationships with each participant. My formal interactions with them as a researcher coincided with my informal interactions with them as their teacher and as a participant-observer in the experience. I grew to know and care about the participants as humans, and I recognize the vulnerability and trust they have entrusted me with as the author of this study. Because it was important to me to honor our relationship and to honor their development as learners, I struggled to present findings in a way that felt ethical toward each individual in the study. Some participants' statements reflected privileged positions that needed to be examined. Throughout my writing process, I questioned how each participant would feel to read about themselves in this document and thought carefully about the human beings I wrote about in my analysis. It is my hope that this document can serve as a learning tool for all who read it. The views and perspectives participants expressed represent the beginning of a learning process for all of us to better understand our positions and roles as individuals and as educators in society.

CHAPTER 4: THE PARTICIPANTS

There were nine undergraduate music education students who participated in this immersion field experience. Five identified as female, and four identified as male. All participants were White. Four were in their first or second year in the undergraduate music education program, and five were in their third, fourth, or fifth year. The students had varying levels of experience in music classrooms and varying reasons for choosing to participate in the immersion field experience. In this chapter, I introduce each participant[1], provide background information pertinent to each participant's identity and experience in the study, and identify each individual's initial expectations for the cultural immersion field experience.

Alexis

Alexis was 18 years old and a freshman music education major at the time of the study. She had shoulder-length blond hair and a radiant smile, which she often reserved for special occasions. Before participating in the field experience, Alexis completed a foundations of music education course, but had little classroom experience and few experiences being around children. Alexis was born and raised in mid-Michigan and lived and attended school in an affluent middle-class community. She described her school's student body as ethnically but not socioeconomically diverse, meaning that though a variety of ethnicities were represented at her school, most students were from affluent families.

Alexis had few experiences with people whose cultural backgrounds differed from her own, though she spent a week in Germany on a trip with her high school orchestra. During the trip, Alexis lived with a German host family and experienced the frustration of not being able to communicate linguistically. When asked to reflect on her own experiences with diversity in

[1] Participants selected their own pseudonyms, which are used throughout this document.

school, Alexis shared her thoughts about gender differences in her education. Alexis stated that she experienced gender discrimination when she was in high school, particularly concerning her interest in math, science, and technology.

> I have encountered countless times where people have doubted me, or questioned my abilities just based on the fact that I am a woman. For whatever reason, there is some stigma or stereotype that women can't program computers, do math, or be good at science… In my math classes, people made comments to me like, 'Well, you can't really be THAT good at math… you're a girl.' And no, as ridiculous as that seems, I'm not making it up… The same thing happened in my AP computer science class in high school. I was one of three girls in the class, and received the same kind of comments. It's astounding to me that these kinds of things still happen, but really they always just made me more determined to prove them wrong. (autobiography)

Alexis also noticed racial discrimination toward some of her friends in high school. These experiences drew her awareness to gender and race discrimination and feeling "othered." Alexis recognized that she had limited experience with cultural diversity but was looking forward to learning and engaging with people whose cultural backgrounds differed from her own.

> It's really important to me that I learn about other cultures, not only as an educator, but as a person. The lifestyles of people who are different from me are very interesting to me… I very much wish that I knew more, which is part of my excitement to take part in this field experience. (journal entry)

Alexis believed that she had much to learn about cultural diversity. This, coupled with her lack of experience in music classrooms, made her excited to participate in the cultural immersion field experience.

Anne

At the time of the immersion field experience, Anne was 21 years old. She was quiet and thoughtful, and her kindness reflected in her eyes. Anne was a senior music education major who looked forward to student teaching the following semester. Anne had already taken an early childhood methods course and was enrolled in elementary methods and choral methods courses while participating in the study. Anne also had experience teaching early childhood classes at the community music school and had interned in area music classrooms prior to participating in the study.

Anne was born and raised in a mid-Michigan community near Michigan State University. Anne's parents were from middle-class families, and her grandparents were conservative and participated in the folk music community, which Anne described as "very male-dominated and white-washed" (autobiography). Anne is an only child. Her parents are divorced. She has fond memories of traveling with her father to folk music festivals throughout the country and making music with members of the folk music community.

Anne lived in a community adjacent to MSU with her mother, but school choice provided her the opportunity to attend school in a community nearby. Anne struggled to find a sense of belonging in the many communities of which she was a part — her school community that did not always respect her home community; her participation in both her folk music community and her classical music community as part of her degree program; her White family and her engagement with the families of her closest friends, who were Indian and Korean.

Anne was inquisitive about cultures outside of her own and wrestled with navigating her identity and place in multiple communities as a child and adolescent. Anne thought quite a bit about the field experience before she went.

> I have no idea what this experience will be like. I think it will be a lot like going into schools around here in the sense that it is a school in the United States and every school has its own unique culture and challenges. So, I'm trying to think of it that way instead of making a huge deal that these students will be different from me. I'm just way used to the culture of mid-Michigan and that needs to change. I need to experience things and ideas other than the dominant White culture… I am very curious to see what effects our presence in the classrooms has on the students, especially with the current political climate and all the ICE raids that have been occurring in Michigan… I'm not sure what I expect of the people since I've never been in a mostly Arab community before… Getting out of my bubble is one reason I'm so excited for the week. (journal entry)

Anne already had many music teaching experiences at the start of the cultural immersion field experience, but had not had many experiences outside of her own culture. She looked forward to engaging with and learning from the students in Dearborn.

April

April was a 19-year-old sophomore music education major at the time of the immersion field experience. She had short, brown hair and spoke at a fast pace. April approached the world with timidity and tenacity, as she sought to carve out her place in it.

April was from a small, rural farming community in Illinois. The community was predominantly White and conservative Christian. April and her brother were raised by their mother and father, who are Fundamentalist Christians. The eldest child, April attended a Catholic high school whose community favored football and marching band, and April developed a love for marching band that continued into college.

April's conservative Christian upbringing was a significant influence in her life; both in her understanding of her role as a woman, and in her understanding of individuals whose racial, social, cultural, and religious backgrounds were different than her own. "My deeply religious upbringing slowly worked its way into my psyche and revealed itself through a sudden lack of confidence in my abilities, intelligence, and leadership capabilities that lasted from late middle school until after I attended counseling in college" (autobiography). April's ideas about gender, race, and social justice conflicted with those of her parents, church, and community. She continued to try to reconcile her feelings about her conservative upbringing, her thoughts about religion, and her political views. Now at college, April was working to mend her relationship with her parents. She carried a lot of frustration about her conservative upbringing that conflicted with her personal views about politics, diversity, and inclusion.

At the time of the study, April had completed two foundations of music education courses, but had not had a lot of classroom experience. When asked what her expectations were for the week, she said,

> I expect that my teaching experience will be a largely positive one and I that I will learn a lot, both about the students I am teaching and about myself as a teacher… I am nervous that I will not know the correct things to say to the students or that I will not feel prepared to teach. (journal entry)

April looked forward to gaining experience in a music classroom and developing her teaching skills throughout the course of the immersion week.

George

At the time of the immersion field experience, George was 24 years old. He had short brown hair and glasses, and a thin smile. George approached life with equal parts wonder and

skepticism. He had read many works by authors in the sociology and philosophy disciplines, and he enjoyed discussing them with those who were interested. George was a senior music education major who was planning to student teach in the next semester. He was taking elementary and instrumental methods courses at the time of the study.

George was raised by his mother in a rural mid-Michigan town outside of Lansing. His parents divorced, and he spent weekends with his father, who lived in a predominantly Hispanic neighborhood in Grand Rapids. As a result of his childhood experiences, George said he was used to being around people who looked different from him. “My father and I were some of the few White people in the area. So, in terms of being surrounded by people whose skin color doesn’t match my own, it’s something I’m aware of, but not necessarily concerned or worried about” (journal entry). George experienced both the farming and manufacturing communities where he lived with his mother and the blue collar, Hispanic community with his father throughout his childhood. “Working and growing up in these communities gave me valuable insights into the daily lives of various blue-collar workers, immigrants, and as a result, helped shape my own identity,” George said (autobiography). In addition to his studies, George worked with refugees throughout the state of Michigan. George noted that, in working with refugee children, they “looked vastly different from myself. I realized very quickly in that teaching environment that, while there were things about the children that made them unique, they too were still just children — anxious to play, learn, chat, and just be kids” (journal entry).

George’s musical background was informal and vernacular, and he self-identifies as a deviant musician. He struggled with the classical audition process at collegiate music schools and was rejected by all schools to which he applied. George attended community college for a few years and built his classical music skills in order to re-audition to four-year college

programs. After three attempts, he was accepted and began his music degree program, so he was older than most of his peers. During this time, George also developed tinnitus, a hearing condition that prevents him from hearing loud and high-pitched sounds. As a result, he has difficulty playing in ensembles.

George had been to Dearborn before, but said that he had not spent a significant amount of time in the community. Before the trip, George was excited to "really dig in and absorb more of its history, and how community members have been handling recent political events" (journal entry). George hoped to gain a deeper understanding of Dearborn and the people who lived there. In anticipation of the experience, George said,

> Having been in college for so long, it's easy to forget that the things I study aren't just abstract concepts. They are people's lives. I'm mostly just looking forward to learning as much as I can and going into the experience with an open mind. In terms of the classes, I know that they are still children, and despite the fact that many of them are part of a culture that is different from my own, I'm not expecting to be totally taken aback by anything I see in the classes… I hope to gain a more personal and thorough understanding of the people in Dearborn. I am particularly interested in the experiences of displaced people and the politics that contributed to their experiences. (journal entry)

George's experience working with refugees and his interest in sociopolitical issues drew him to participate in the immersion field experience. He was interested learning about and from the people he would meet in Dearborn.

Jane

Jane was 20 years old and a junior music education major at the time of the immersion field experience. She was goofy, loving, and thoughtful, with brown hair and a bright, dimpled

smile. Jane was born in Lansing and grew up in a suburb of metropolitan Detroit that was largely White and middle-class with little diversity. Jane and her identical twin were born premature. They also have a younger sister. Jane was raised Catholic in a "liberal, open-minded family" (autobiography). Her mother was Catholic, and her father was Jewish. They were married in a non-denominational church and later divorced. Though Jane was raised Catholic, religion was not a huge emphasis in her upbringing, and she "forged her own path" (autobiography). "I told my parents I didn't believe in any kind of God when I was in high school, and predictably they weren't too concerned. They were more concerned that I was being a decent human being and getting good grades" (autobiography).

Jane's twin was her best friend, and she thought the world of them. Jane's twin was gay and used they/them pronouns. "[They] are one of the most insightful, kind, and passionate people I know. They have taught me so much about countless things, but most of all about acceptance and activism for equitable treatment of others" (autobiography). They did not identify with either gender binary. Jane and her parents struggled to adjust to her twin's gender identity.

> Up until [they] had their first girlfriend, I had never really encountered someone in my own life that was "out." It was a complete shock to me, and I remember being so confused that my twin sister could all of the sudden be different from me in a big way. This moment and the years that followed taught me a lot about acceptance. My reaction was not something that I'm proud of in the least… To this day, I'm not really sure what was so upsetting about learning that [they were] gay. (autobiography)

Jane's understanding of her twin's gender identity helped her to understand equity better and prompted her to educate herself on privilege and social justice issues. This made her particularly interested in participating in this internship. "I hope that participating in this project will allow

me to more efficiently confront my own biases and learn more about how I can help the disadvantaged in a way that is appropriate and helpful rather than for the benefit of myself" (autobiography).

Jane was enrolled in an elementary methods course at the time of the immersion experience. She had previous experience with students as a counselor at a summer music camp and teaching at the community music school. Jane was interested in learning as much as she could about equity and social justice, and, though she had self-professed difficulty adjusting to change, she understood the importance of experiencing new things. "I chose to participate in this project because I think it is absolutely essential that we engage in opportunities that may be outside our comfort zone. It is very important to me to learn more about cultures that differ from my own" (journal entry). Jane was not sure what to expect in the immersion experience but was cognizant of racial differences between our group and the community.

> Since our group consists entirely of White individuals, I'm a little worried about overstepping my boundaries in a community largely composed of people of color… I'm sure it won't be an issue overall, but I hope that throughout this experience, we find ways to lift up the voices of those we meet in Dearborn, rather than putting our expectations and desires first. (journal entry)

Jane also recognized her minimal experience with people whose cultural backgrounds differed from her own and expressed some concern about navigating this during her immersion experience.

> I guess I'm a little nervous that we'll be exposed to cultural differences that we're not really 100% ready to deal with, but we just have to greet differences with respect and understanding. I just hope that my lack of exposure to communities of refugees and Arab

Americans doesn't play out in an offensive or demeaning way, so I'm definitely going to work hard on being conscious of that throughout the week. (journal entry)

Jane chose to participate in the cultural immersion field experience because she wanted to get out of her comfort zone and learn from people in a community that was unfamiliar to her. She also admitted that she may have difficulty navigating this new experience.

Lisa

At the time of the study, Lisa was 18 years old. She had long, blond hair that fell past her shoulders, an infectious laugh, and a big heart. A freshman music education major, Lisa had taken a foundations in music education course and had assisted in elementary music classrooms while in high school. She also assisted with early childhood classes at the community music school.

Lisa grew up with her mother in Chicago in a culturally diverse neighborhood. "The apartment building I lived in housed people from many different cultures and I grew up playing and being around kids who I had no idea what language they spoke" (autobiography). When Lisa was in the second grade, she and her mother moved to a White, middle-class community in west Michigan. Lisa was bullied in elementary school so much that her mother decided to switch school districts when Lisa was in the sixth grade.

> Because of being bullied, my schooling was effected in such a negative way that I had little interest in going to school. My mom even switched me to a different school because of how negatively my emotions and self-worth were being affected by the group of girls. (autobiography)

When she was in middle and high school, Lisa befriended two Latina girls and spent much of her social time with these friends and their Mexican and Puerto Rican families. Lisa stated that her

experience with bullying in elementary school taught her the importance of acceptance in helping children want to go to school.

Lisa's experiences with friends from cultural backgrounds that differed from her own and the bullying she experienced in elementary school gave her a strong desire to be inclusive and accepting of everyone she meets. She used this lens as she prepared for her field experience in Dearborn. "I am going to need to take a leap out of my comfort zone. I know that I would never exclude a student because of their physical attributes, but being face to face with a new culture and getting used to being around an entire room full of students who I have little experience with will be entirely new" (journal entry). When asked what she expected of the field experience, Lisa said,

> I'm trying to keep an open mind and stay away from expectations so when things arise I will be able to look at them through fresh eyes and take it all one step at a time. However, one of my big expectations is that I am going to be challenged in many ways, many I'm sure I am unaware of. That is because I have never been immersed in anything like this before. I have always been passionate about people needing to be culturally aware and being purposeful about reaching outside of their culture to recognize, celebrate, and learn about others, but have never experienced anything like this. I'm extremely excited, but nervous. (journal entry)

Lisa also thought about the impression she wanted to make on the members of the school and greater community.

> My hopes for this experience involve walking away with the school having a positive memory of myself and our group. I want them to think of us a group of students that

came interested and passionate about teaching music in their community, especially considering the times we are going through. (journal entry)

Because of her childhood experience with bullying, Lisa was committed to making everyone she encountered feel like they belonged. Though Lisa had close friends whose cultural backgrounds differed from her own, she did not have experience teaching students from different cultures. She looked forward to, and was nervous about, immersing herself in a new classroom environment.

Luke

Luke was 19 years old and a freshman at the time of the immersion field experience. He liked helping people, and when he smiled, it covered his face from ear to ear. Luke was born and raised in an affluent middle-class community. He described his school as ethnically but not socioeconomically diverse, that while students' backgrounds represented an array of ethnicities, most students were from affluent families.

Luke's father was Jewish, and his mother was Christian. Luke has older sisters and is the baby of the family. Though Luke's family did not struggle financially, his parents chose not to give their children lots of money as many of their peers' parents did. As a result, Luke was bullied at school. In addition, Luke had many health issues as a toddler that impacted his development. He also was diagnosed with dyslexia and ADHD.

> I found myself to be a hypersensitive child who would have many outbursts and tantrums due to my lack of emotional growth. I found it very difficult to make friends because I had very limited preschool experience and was not around very many students my own age. (autobiography)

Luke persisted and overcame these early struggles, though his dyslexia still made him anxious at times.

Luke's parents instilled in him hard work and acceptance from an early age. His mother had a profound impact on him and the ways in which he functions in the world.

> My mom has always held a high standard for me academically and socially. For a large time in her life, my mom was an ESL teacher at the elementary school I went to… I think this, along with other aspects of her life helped, her develop a higher patience and acceptance and love of people who are different. I think this is something she has passed on to me. (journal entry)

Luke had little classroom experience and was enrolled in his first music education course at the time of the immersion experience. He was excited to participate in the field experience in order to gain teaching experience in the classroom, and was interested in engaging with people from cultures other than his own. "I anticipate this project pushing me out of my comfort zones with new people and a culture and a people I am very unfamiliar with. I am nervous, but also very excited for this experience" (journal entry). When thinking ahead to the week, Luke said,

> Many of my expectations for the week are that of any other elementary school I have been in. I think certain cultural differences may push me out of my comfort zone a little bit, but the thing that has me so excited is seeing these kids that we have been discussing to just be kids. Considering this is going to be my first large interaction with students as a future educator, I am so excited for what this week is going to teach me. My only fear for this week is the fear of the unknown because a lot of this is going to be new for me. (journal entry)

Luke was both nervous and excited about his first experience working with students in the music classroom. He looked forward to learning about people and cultures with which he was unfamiliar.

Sierra

Sierra was a 20-year-old junior music education major. He was quiet, thoughtful, and kind. His presence did not command the attention of a room, but he was a leader in his actions and demeanor. Sierra was born in California. His mother was born in Iowa and his father was born in Michigan. Sierra was raised in a predominantly White, middle-class, suburb of metropolitan Detroit. Most people in his community were not concerned about people who were different from them, he said, because they did not interact with them on a regular basis.

> I am about as privileged as one can be. I am a straight, White guy who grew up in a nice area. I had great teachers and got a solid education through high school. Coming from a school with predominantly White population, there was not a lot of diversity, in my day-to-day life. (autobiography)

Sierra was frustrated by the lack of diversity in his hometown and felt "robbed of the opportunity" (autobiography) to meet people different from him, but he works to do that now that he is in college.

Though he did not have a lot of experience with people from other cultures, Sierra empathized with his cousin, who was adopted from Korea, when people told him that his English was good. "I could not imagine someone coming up to me and commenting on my language skills" (autobiography). Indeed, Sierra had a strong interest in learning about culture. "I think culture is so cool and it interests me to see how other people live their life" (autobiography).

Sierra had previously taken an early childhood methods course and was in instrumental methods at the time of the course. When discussing his expectations before the field experience, Sierra said,

> I honestly can't imagine that the elementary music classrooms will be drastically different from any others I've observed in the past. To some degree, I am expecting that the schools and the classrooms might appear to be less "well-off" than some of the other schools I've observed. I suppose there will be a language barrier for some students, which might demand some creative instructing on the teachers' parts. Aside from those things, I'm interested to see if the music curriculum is geared more toward the cultures of the student population or if it will maintain more traditional western roots. (journal entry)

Sierra also had some fears and uncertainties about the field experience, particularly in relation to its cultural difference.

> I have a limited background in Arabic culture and traditions, so I am unsure of their way of life. This uncertainty is also what intrigued me about this experience. I look at this as a way to become a more well-rounded human. I hope to gain a deeper understanding of people whose backgrounds differ from mine. Being a future public school teacher, a lot of my job will involve working with students who have vastly different life experiences than mine. It is my job to do the best I can to see life from multiple points of view. I'm coming into this with an open mind… Beyond the relationships I hope to build, I also hope to leave with a better understanding of the cultures we will be immersed in. Hopefully, I will leave the experience with a bigger heart for those who come from backgrounds that are different from my own. (journal entry)

Sierra recognized that he had not experienced much cultural diversity in his childhood and adolescence. He wanted to participate in the cultural immersion field experience in order to learn about Arab culture and to deepen his understanding about teaching students whose cultural backgrounds differed from his own.

Simon

At the time of the study, Simon was 20 years old. Simon had short, dark hair and wore glasses. He had a jovial and slightly nervous smile. Simon was a junior and enrolled in an elementary methods course during his participation in the study. Simon taught early childhood classes at the community music school and was a counselor at a summer music camp.

Simon was from a small town that he described as 95% White. He admitted that he likely held implicit bias toward Arabs and Muslims at the start of the experience. "The first time I met a person with a significantly different religion than my own was when I came to Michigan State" (journal entry). Religion was significant in Simon's upbringing. His father was Jehovah's Witness, and his mother was non-denominational Christian. Simon and his brother were raised Jehovah's Witness. Jehovah's Witnesses do not celebrate holidays, but Simon's parents compromised; Simon and his brother celebrated special holidays with their mother.

> Although Jehovah's Witnesses do not celebrate any holidays, my father and my mother came to an agreement that she would be able to celebrate birthdays, Thanksgiving, and Christmas with me and my brother because those holidays were meaningful to her. My father was always absent from all of those events growing up. (autobiography)

Simon and his family did not celebrate other holidays, which made school parties difficult for him.

> It was always an uncomfortable time for me in school around Halloween and Valentine's day. I dreaded having to explain to the other children why my family didn't participate in those holidays. I also dreaded having to head down to the library during the yearly Halloween and Valentine's Day festivities. (autobiography)

In addition to feeling left out because of his religion, Simon also felt out of place throughout his school years.

> I don't have too many noteworthy memories from my early childhood. What I do remember from my early childhood was always feeling a bit out of place. From a young age, I recall always gravitating toward interests that were typically associated with females. Although I can't really think of an instance in which my parents made an effort to stifle my interest, I always felt that there was something wrong with me. This may have been enhanced a bit by the "car guy" persona that my grandfather and father had. (autobiography)

When Simon was in the 8th grade, his father stopped practicing his religion. Simon's mother found a church that she attended with him and his brother. "Over the following years my faith and relationship with Jesus would grow to become the most significant aspect of my life" (autobiography). Simon had few experiences outside of his own culture and religion. His strong Christian faith was of the utmost importance to him, and he continued to reconcile his faith with finding his place in the world.

Simon said that he had not met any persons of color before entering college, and said he does not have a lot of friends whose cultural backgrounds differ from his. He recognized that this might cause him to hold biases toward people who are unfamiliar to him. "While I'd like to think

that I don't hold any biases toward people of other ethnicities, it's very likely I hold some type of subconscious biases" (autobiography).

Simon had mixed feelings about the field experience. "I feel both excited and a bit nervous to begin embarking on this project. I'm really excited to work with such an awesome group of [participants] as well as be a part of something so meaningful. Having said that, I'm feeling a bit nervous when I think about the ways that I may be stretched as both a person and an educator" (journal entry). Simon was hopeful about experiencing new cultures. "I am hoping to make meaningful connections with persons of a culture that differs from my own. I haven't had much opportunity in my life thus far to do so, and I am looking forward to expanding my understanding of others" (journal entry).

Simon looked forward to engaging with people in Dearborn. He had not had many experiences outside of his own culture and recognized that he may be stretched outside of his comfort zone during the immersion experience.

Summary

On the surface, this group of nine participants appeared quite similar. They were all White, from the Midwest, and middle-class. They were students in the same undergraduate music education program, and had taken, or would soon take, the same music teacher preparation courses. Yet, by sharing stories from their childhood and adolescent years, the participants illuminated the experiences that shaped the unique ways in which they perceived the world. Their worldviews informed their interest in participating in the cultural immersion field experience and how they perceived their experience during the immersion week.

The participants also experienced the immersion week together as a group. Their daily interactions with each other in the school settings, combined with regular large and small group

discussions, impacted not only the group experience, but each individual's experience as well. By sharing their own perceptions and by listening to each other, they gained new perspectives to consider. Certainly, the group dynamic influenced each participant's individual experience. In getting to know each other better and sharing their experience, the group developed a bond and friendships that lasted beyond the cultural immersion field experience week.

CHAPTER 5: THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL

We arrived at Candlewood Elementary[2] *during the bustling morning drop-off. The narrow, single-lane streets were lined with cars of all shapes and sizes. We watched as children walked down the residential sidewalks to the front of the school. Near the entrance, many children emerged from inside a large, black van. They chased each other, giggling as they made their way to the entrance of the school. Candlewood's architecture, with its tall, brick exterior, the arched entryways, and heavy, wooden double doors, was reminiscent of an earlier era. Upon entering the building, we surveyed the tall ceilings, the many long hallways, and faculty and students scurrying to start their days. Children of all shapes and sizes, their colorful backpacks on their backs, walked quickly to their destinations. One small boy with shiny, black hair and large, inquisitive brown eyes, stopped to look at us for a moment, until a hall monitor – a woman dressed in a black abaya – spoke to him in Arabic and he scurried on his way. We walked to the front office to sign in and wait for the music teacher to collect us. The office staff wore colorful hijabs and spoke to each other in Arabic. Our group was silent.*

"Hello!" a happy voice exclaimed. It was the music teacher, a blond haired, green eyed woman with a huge, inviting smile. "Welcome to Candlewood," she said. "Would you like a tour of our building?" She led us through the winding halls past lockers and walls decorated with student work and art. As we passed classrooms, some teachers came out to the hallway to meet us. "Welcome. You'll love it here." The teacher showed us the two gymnasiums where middle school students were having class. In one, a class of boys played basketball, and, in the other, a class of girls. Physical education classes are divided by gender, she explained. She showed us the school auditorium, with an old wooden stage and plush, covered house seats that can only be

[2] Candlewood Elementary and Claymore Elementary are pseudonyms.

found in spaces built in the somewhat distant past. She led us through the maze of hallways back to the front of the building and down the stairs to her music classroom. The room was large and colorful. Music posters and decorations adorned the walls. Floor-to-ceiling cabinets stored musical instruments of all varieties. Rainbow-colored risers circled the center of the room, toward the main focal point; a large, circular rug adorned with music notes and symbols. In the back, a built-in stage housed djembes, congas, and bongos, as well as a large, over-sized reading chair covered in a beige sheet.

The teacher told us about her school environment, discussed her music curriculum, and shared her philosophy of and goals for teaching. Her students, she explained, come mostly from immigrant and refugee families. Sometimes, she gets as many as seven or eight new students a week. They do not always speak English, and often they have not been in schools in the United States before. Many have not had music class before. Because of this, she explained, her musical goals are not always the same as those of other schools. First and foremost, she wants her students to enjoy music class and have fun. As each class of students entered the music classroom, the teacher introduced her new friends and invited everyone to come and sit at the rug. "How do we say 'welcome' in Arabic?" she asked, "And how do you respond?" "As-salam alaykom," they said, "And you say, 'wa alykom as-salam.'" The teacher had her students and participants speak the Arabic phrases to each other … The teacher invited participants to engage with her students right away. They sang, danced, and played instruments alongside students in each class…

After spending our morning at Candlewood Elementary, we spent the afternoon at Claymore Elementary. Because we arrived at Claymore in the middle of the day, the surrounding neighborhood and streets were quiet and void of activity. The narrow streets were lined on both

sides with cars. The houses were lined next to each other, and most were of similar size and architecture. Claymore was a brick building with similar architecture to Candlewood, but it was much smaller in size. Security at Claymore required us to buzz an intercom for entrance and wait in the main office until the music teacher came to collect us. As we waited, April examined the posted, bilingual signs, and Lisa watched intently as two school employees conversed in Arabic...

The music teacher, a petite African-American woman wearing glasses and a smile, entered the office and escorted us to her music classroom. Claymore's architecture also was reminiscent of an earlier era. The long halls were adorned with student work as classes of students walked past in a single-file line. They looked at us, intrigued, and the brave ones asked us who we were. On the second floor of the building, we entered the music classroom. The walls were adorned colorfully with music posters reflecting concepts students were learning. Shelves on each wall housed Orff instruments, recorders, and drums. Along the back and side of the room, chairs were lined in rows facing the Smart Board at the front of the room. A large, square music rug, much like the one at Candlewood Elementary, was in the center of the room. A rocking chair and bookshelf full of music-related storybooks sat adjacent to the rug...

The teacher provided seating for each of us, and we observed her classes throughout the afternoon. She vacillated between speaking English and Arabic in her instruction. Her lessons were constructed and executed in a thorough manner. The participants watched her intently from their seats. Some interacted with students from a distance, smiling and waving at those curious and brave enough to make eye contact (fieldnotes). At the end of the day, the music teacher gave us a tour of the school building. The gymnasium and auditorium looked similar to those at Candlewood, but smaller.

That evening, our group discussed the day, and participants shared their thoughts about their experience. Participants focused their discussion largely on their perceptions and observations of each music teacher and debated their own philosophical and pedagogical ideas. They also shared some of their first impressions about the school, teacher, and students with whom they would be working over the course of the week.

Teacher Pedagogy and Philosophy

The Absence of Music Learning Theory

Music education students at Michigan State University learn Music Learning Theory (MLT) in their elementary general music and early childhood music methods courses, and it serves as the framework through which they learn about elementary music teaching and learning. Neither of the music teachers in Dearborn used MLT, and the absence of this teaching pedagogy dominated some of the participants' observations on the first day. The students who were taking elementary general music methods as part of their coursework that semester immediately compared the teaching that they observed to what they were learning in their methods class. Participants commented on the teaching approaches that they saw and spoke at length about it together throughout the course of the day. Simon reflected on the absence of MLT in his journal reflection:

> I found it very interesting to observe an elementary music classroom that is not rooted in Music Learning Theory. I couldn't help but compare the ways in which I have been taught to teach music with the ways that [the teacher] teaches her classroom. (journal entry)

Jane shared her thoughts about the teachers' pedagogies during the group discussion, and George shared her sentiments:

Jane: It was just really weird to see teachers not doing MLT. That was the thing that got me the most about it.

George: I second that. I actually found that was the bigger shock for me– was that over the cultural things that were happening. I mean, these cultural things that we spent so much time talking about, while they're important and while they're happening, what was important to me was the flow of the classroom and what the teacher was doing pedagogically – that was the hardest for me. (Monday night group discussion)

In her journal, Jane reflected on her observations of each teacher and the philosophical approach that one teacher expressed:

> I found myself being very judgy of [the teacher] and her teaching philosophy. I totally get that she's in a really difficult school – in terms of student turnover, the language barrier, etc. But when she said that her main goal is for the kids to just have fun, rather than to achieve musically, I just didn't really understand why they couldn't do both. It was frustrating for me to see the kids not understanding and I immediately jumped to assuming that they didn't have enough scaffolding… It was just a little jarring for me to see kids that were so far "behind" compared to the students we see in our observations for school. All I could think about was that if [the teacher] had implemented MLT, her students would be a lot more successful. (journal entry)

Simon shared a similar perspective:

> As she mentioned before class, her focus with the kids is to make sure that they have a fun and memorable music experience in a safe and loving environment. I think it's super apparent that she is accomplishing that goal—the kids absolutely love her and the class. This sparked a discussion about the purpose of the music classroom—to provide students

> with an enjoyable musical experience or to provide students with the tools with which they may develop their musicianship? To me, it seemed like some of the activities that [the teacher] planned for her classes could have been executed in ways that would have promoted greater development in musicianship (but that is likely my MLT brain talking). It's totally important that my future students feel safe and loved in my classroom, but WE OWE it to our students to provide them with the tools to be the best musicians we can. I'm not so certain that it can always take second place to "fun". (journal entry)

Lisa was quiet during the group discussion, but devoted part of her journal reflection to her thoughts about philosophical music education goals. Lisa was a freshman and had not yet taken an elementary methods course. She only had her personal experience from which to draw when developing her perspective. Lisa considered the teachers' approaches and the conversation among her peers.

> I struggled with the conversation regarding the different teaching styles in the classrooms. The group discussed how [the teacher] explained that she recognizes that seven or eight new refugee students come in her class each week and they are already feeling overwhelmed. She makes learning about the enjoyment and love the students feel in the classroom. I completely see where [the teacher] is coming from and believe in many of the same priorities for my future students. However, it is our job as music TEACHERS to enrich their understanding of music. This is something that I am very interested in creating a stronger opinion about throughout the week. (journal entry)

In addition to participants' observations of teachers' pedagogies and subsequent discussions of teaching philosophies, some participants examined teachers' approaches to education as well. George enjoyed reading sociological and philosophical works about education

and applied his understanding of his readings to this new setting. George shared with the group his observation of a student whose music making he enjoyed – a student he viewed as a fellow deviant musician – and started a philosophical conversation with participants.

> George: That one girl playing on the rest, though. I was digging it. I was just so happy to see a girl wailing away on the drums just because it's like, "No! You can't play on the rest!" Part of me was just like, "Go for it, man. Have fun."
>
> Anne: I mean, but at the same time, it's kind of like saying, "Yes. You're having fun in class, but you still need to learn when it's appropriate to be silent." In order to function in society, you need to-
>
> George: I don't think our goal as educators is to get more people to beat half notes. You know, how do you transform society? I don't know. (Monday night group discussion)

In his journal reflections, George further reflected on the larger school and societal issues that were on his mind:

> Another issue that has been in my mind is how are these activities are conducive to letting kids be themselves? The vast majority of the classroom time seems to be spent on convergent thinking; where there is a clear right way to do something and a wrong way. If classroom activities were a little less structured and were more welcoming to divergent types of thinking, would we see kids participating in class who don't usually participate? I think this is because if a child has no fear of being right or wrong, then they have less things to be worried about when they participate. (journal entry)

George was drawn to conversing about the larger societal aims of education, which came as no surprise, given his self-identification as a deviant musician and his interest in sociology and philosophy.

At the time, I was surprised that some participants focused so intently on the teachers' pedagogies and did not discuss the students. When I asked participants about their focus on teacher pedagogy, some participants explained that they were accustomed to focusing on teacher pedagogy in past classroom observation experiences (fieldnotes). Participants observed music teachers within the context of concepts and pedagogies they learned in class. Their schema for observations involved observing teaching pedagogy in the classroom. Further, they also had experience developing their philosophical perspective based off their own experiences and discussing their perspective with peers in a classroom setting. Participants had schema for these types of observations and discussion, so they started from those experiences when discussing this new classroom environment. Yet by focusing on the teachers' pedagogical and philosophical approaches, participants did not appear to notice the students themselves in the music classrooms, thus disconnecting how the music teachers taught from who they were teaching. Perhaps this reflected an assumption that one can effectively teach students without knowing who they are as individuals.

Culture in the Music Classroom

Hoping to move the conversation focused on teaching pedagogy and philosophy in a new direction, I asked participants to reflect on the cultural aspects they observed in the schools and classrooms. At the end of the first day in the classroom, participants said they did not believe that culture played a significant role. Alexis said:

> We spent a lot of time talking about the culture and stuff, which is good, but I feel like it kind of made us forget that they are just kids and it's not going to be any different… that much. (Monday night group discussion)

George agreed with Alexis and suggested that our orientation meetings before the immersion week drew us away from the realities of teaching children in the music classroom:

> It was nice to finally meet the kids and see who I would be working with. All along through our weekly visits, I got the feeling that we were possibly losing our sense of what it's like to work with children. Of course it's important to talk about things like culture and religion and how those things play out in school settings. However, culture and religion aren't things that dictate how individual children behave and learn. It's a little more nuanced than that. (journal entry)

Simon also believed that culture was not prominent in the music classrooms he had observed. Drawing on his understanding of culturally relevant teaching, he expected to see a greater difference in the music content that was used.

> I felt like there wasn't a whole lot of… music making that was geared toward… their cultures or what they might be listening to at home or are familiar with. For some reason, in my head, I was expecting (sings) *a whole new world*… We just always talk about how we have to teach to the culture, or cultures of the kids, and I don't know. It was just a regular music classroom for the most part, I felt. (Monday night group discussion)

Anne also did not observe students' cultures playing a role in the music classrooms. To Anne, the students appeared similar to those she had engaged with in previous classroom settings. She said, "They are just kids and just want to have fun with us in music. It's so much fun to hang out with them for an entire week" (journal entry)

When asked to reflect on culture, participants did not perceive culture to be a prominent feature in the music classroom. Physically, the classrooms looked much like music classrooms they had seen before, and the content, though not presented pedagogically the same, was at least

superficially similar to that of other music teachers they had observed. Students engaged in music activities that reminded participants of classroom activities they had seen before. Because these elements were familiar, participants did not perceive cultural differences among students in the music classroom. This suggests that participants may have believed that working with children was separate from understanding culture, rather than understanding that one's culture is an important part of one's identity that impacts one's interactions with others.

First Impressions

Before the immersion field experience began, I asked participants to share their expectations for the upcoming week. Many said that they wanted to approach the experience with an open mind and wanted to avoid having any expectations for the week. Though participants expressed, both in conversation and in journal reflections, that cultural differences were not prominent in the music classrooms, it is possible they meant that the school and classroom environments were not as visibly different as they had anticipated. Though participants said that they did not observe cultural differences in the music classrooms, many reflected on the ways in which their observations differed from their expectations.

So Sweet, So Welcoming, So Well-Behaved

Participants enjoyed the welcoming atmosphere at Candlewood and Claymore elementary schools. They enjoyed interacting with the children and were surprised by their openness. In her journal reflection, April wrote, "The most surprising thing about my first day was how happy the kids were to see us" (journal entry). Luke reflected on how welcoming the students were and shared how that differed from what he'd anticipated. "They were way more open than I expected them to be. It really shows you that kids are kids. Their culture might be a lot more reserved, but like, they're kids" (Monday night group discussion). Other participants

reacted similarly after first meeting the students. Jane and Simon shared their initial thoughts about the students' demeanor and behavior:

> Jane: They were so sweet.
>
> Simon: They were so welcoming.
>
> Jane: Yeah! They were so well-behaved. Yeah. I was surprised at how well-behaved they were. (Monday car ride discussion)

Participants spoke often about how sweet and happy the students were. They also were surprised that students welcomed them so openly and were so well-behaved, which suggests that they may have expected students to be unwelcoming or to be behaviorally disruptive in class. Perhaps participants harbored some implicit bias in their assumptions about how students would behave in the music classrooms, or held preconceived beliefs about Arab and Muslim culture that they expected to observe in the school and classroom environments.

The School Facilities

Some participants held preconceptions about the condition of school facilities. During lunch on the first day, Anne shared how much she enjoyed the architecture of the old schools and how she loved the character of each building (fieldnotes). When asked to journal about their expectations for the field experience, Sierra shared that he thought the classrooms might not be as "well-off" as other schools he'd been to before (journal entry). Simon had a similar expectation, which he wrote about in his journal:

> I was surprised by how nice the schools were, both on the outside and the inside. I'm not sure exactly why I was expecting the schools to be in more dilapidated condition (possibly because we always talk about schools with large minority and refugee populations as being severely underfunded). (journal entry)

Anne, Sierra, and Simon drew upon their understandings and perceptions of school funding and facility conditions when they imagined how the Dearborn schools would look. In their experience, schools with large populations of students of color tended to be underfunded. It is possible that other participants also made a tacit assumption the schools would be in poorer condition, and that the reality of well-maintained and fully-resourced schools contributed to their perception that the schools were not culturally different.

Gender Dynamics

Participants learned about Islam and some of its associated cultural expressions in one of the orientation meetings. Though some Muslims do not touch members of the opposite gender, this is not true for all. However, the stereotype that Muslims divide themselves by gender pervades popular understanding. Some participants expected to observe gender divisions in the music classrooms and looked for its presence.

During the tour of Candlewood Elementary, the teacher shared that middle school physical education classes were separated by gender, and she explained that school administrators separated the classes by gender for cultural reasons. Simon considered his personal adolescent experience and shared his thoughts about the gender divided classes:

> I was surprised to learn that the school provides separate gym classes for males and females after they hit puberty. Although that decision was made for religious and cultural reasons, I am wondering if that has caused any students to feel ostracized or uncomfortable. My closest friends were predominantly female when I was that age, so I know that something like that would have likely made me feel some degree of discomfort. (journal entry)

In the music classroom, some of the participants considered gender dynamics while navigating their interactions with students. Sierra considered his interactions carefully:

> I felt that gender influenced my interaction with the kids. Since I do not know the culture very well, I wanted to be cautious about who I interacted with and how I interacted with them. One of the teachers had mentioned that conservative Muslim families do not condone males touching females, so I was not sure how strict the children felt about that. It definitely influenced the people I sat next to and talked to. (journal entry)

Simon reflected on the gender dynamics he perceived in the classroom and expressed his discomfort in navigating his experience:

> I noticed that genders typically congregated together. The male students tended to group with the male participants, and the female students tended to group with the female participants. However, I ended up sitting near a group of girls. In general, I felt less comfortable working with them because I felt like they were uncomfortable with me. (journal entry)

Jane also perceived gender divisions in the classroom and questioned whether the cause was religious, cultural, or if it was typical elementary school children behavior:

> Something that I really found interesting today was the gender dynamics of the classroom. When I did my "rowing" game with the students, the kids definitely tried to pair up with people of the same gender. When two kids of opposite genders became a pair, they would not hold hands while "rowing" like all of the other kids. Also, when the girls were next to the boys in a circle game, they flat out refused to link arms with the boys next to them. It took [the teacher] a lot of convincing to sort of "make" them do this.

> I wonder if this is just a case of kids being kids and thinking that boys have germs, or if it's something rooted in their culture. Maybe both. (journal entry)

George also wondered if the gender dynamics he observed were specific to Muslim culture or reflective of the culture of most elementary aged children:

> Gender seems to be playing some type of role in the classrooms. It's quite obvious because the girls will sit on one side of the circle and the boys will sit on the other side. I don't think that this is a uniquely Dearborn problem, though. I've seen similar things in my observations of other classrooms. (journal entry)

Jane and George perceived gender divisions in the music classroom. They sought to contextualize these divisions within their framework of knowledge about Muslim culture.

On the other hand, Lisa did not think the gender dynamics she observed in the music classroom were specific to Muslim culture. To Lisa, the student interactions she observed resembled most elementary school children that she had previously encountered.

> There's that gender thing that we've been talking about – which I think is in all classrooms. I don't think that has anything to do with this culture specifically – especially at that younger age. (individual interview)

Lisa interpreted the behavior she observed between genders in the music classroom to be typical behavior of elementary aged children. Girls migrated to girl partners and boys migrated to boys. When students paired with participants, they gravitated toward the participant they most resembled.

Gender likely plays a role in every classroom environment, but it is possible that some participants expected to observe explicit gender dynamics between Muslim students because of their preconceived understandings of Islamic religious and cultural practices. Participants'

expectations reflect both an assumption of gender binary and the perception of gender divisions in the classroom based on their preconceived understanding of Islam. The gender dynamics that participants perceived may have been reflective of most classroom environments, culturally based, or a combination of both.

Summary

At the beginning of the immersion week, participants focused their attention on teachers' pedagogies in the music classroom. The group discussed their experience much like they were in a class on their college campus, as they shared and debated their philosophical views. They stated that they approached their observation and discussion in this manner because it was the way they had approached these tasks in previous experiences. When I asked participants to discuss any cultural differences that they had observed, they said the classrooms were not any different than other music classrooms they experienced. When we unpacked this statement further, participants revealed some initial observations that did not align with their implicit expectations – participants were impressed by the schools' facilities and student behavior, and some observed gender dynamics in the classroom and questioned whether what they saw was indeed, culturally based. Participants' commentary suggests that they did hold some implicit expectations about students' behaviors and demeanors, as well as the school and classroom environments. Participants' preconceived understandings of Islam, and possibly interacting with students of color, influenced their initial observations in both classroom environments. Participants also held pedagogical expectations for the music teachers, and observed and reflected on the teachers' pedagogical approaches in the music classrooms. However, participants did not seem to notice the students themselves in their observations. Perhaps

participants did not recognize students' cultural identities as an important component of teaching and learning in the music classroom.

Participants' perceptions of each music classroom, the teachers, and students changed over the course of the immersion week. This change in perception resulted from a few key experiences shared by participants. The experiences, known as disorienting dilemmas in Mezirow's (1991) Transformative Learning Theory, did not align with participants' perspectives, knowledge, and understandings. In Chapter Six, I share and unpack four events that served as disorienting dilemmas for participants throughout the immersion week.

CHAPTER 6: DISORIENTING DILEMMAS

In his Transformative Learning Theory, Mezirow (1991) said that, as humans, our past experiences and socialization affect the ways in which we perceive the world. We form frames of reference that encompass the beliefs, values, and assumptions we have acquired through socialization. Often, our frames of reference exist outside of our conscious awareness. When one encounters a new experience that does not align with one's frame of reference, one experiences what Mezirow (1991) calls a disorienting dilemma. Disorienting dilemmas provide persons with an opportunity to expand points of view and opens the door for transformative learning to occur. Transformative learning begins with a disorienting dilemma and continues through phases that involve self-reflection and dialogue, which allow the learner to come to a transformed perspective.

In this study, participants' participation and experience as a whole throughout the cultural immersion field experience acted as an overarching disorienting dilemma. However, within the week, there also were smaller events and experiences that served as disorienting dilemmas for participants. In this chapter, I identify four disorienting dilemmas that prompted participants to reflect and think critically about their perceptions and worldviews and provided an opportunity for transformative learning to occur. I present the dilemmas in the order in which they happened, with the exception of the fourth dilemma, which unfolded over the course of the immersion week.

Disorienting Dilemma 1: The Girl in the Purple Sweater

I sat in the back row of chairs near the teacher's desk. As a new class of students filed in, a small girl wearing a purple sweater, her brown hair pulled back into a ponytail, slumped into the chair next to me. Curious, she looked at me and I smiled. She acknowledged me timidly, then

looked down at her shoes. The teacher started her lesson. She sang a hello song – including a hello to each student by name. As she went around the room, each student greeted her in return. When the teacher sang hello to the girl in the purple sweater, the girl smiled, and the teacher said, "I really love to see you smile," before going on to the next student.

Later on in the lesson, the students participated in a movement activity. They tiptoed, skipped, and stomped around the room, changing movement as their teacher instructed. I watched the girl in the purple sweater. Each time the teacher gave a new direction, she [the student] looked at her peers to see what they did before joining along. I wrote a note to myself: "Will the participants notice that she doesn't understand what her teacher is saying?"… When the activity ended, the girl in the purple sweater sat back down next to me and stared at her shoes until class ended.

After school, we visited a popular local bakery that specialized in traditional Arabic desserts. I shared a table with Sierra, Simon, Jane, and Anne. As we ate, they talked about their experience so far. Sierra said that he felt that we focused too much on teaching philosophy and pedagogy and not enough on observing culture in the classrooms in our group discussions. Jane replied that the classroom settings weren't that different culturally from others she observed as part of her coursework. Jane, Simon, and Anne discussed how cultural issues were less prominent than they'd expected them to be and agreed that culture was not their focus while in the classrooms. Their experience during this immersion week wasn't as different as they'd anticipated. They suggested that this might be because they'd already read quite a bit about sociological concepts and had already studied systemic inequities and their impact on education. I was frustrated by this conversation, and I was ready to start our group discussion back at the hotel that evening to find out what others had to say (fieldnotes).

Language Learners in the Music Classroom

After the first day of observing as a group in each of the two schools, the participants split, with half of them working in each building. Because they were in two separate groups throughout the day, participants began their discussion by catching up with one another on the events of their days at each school. Quickly, their discussion again centered around each teacher's pedagogy and their observations from a sociocultural perspective. Participants debated their philosophical perspectives of teaching and learning, much like they might in a course on campus.

The conversation shifted when Luke and George shared their experiences with English language learners that day in their respective classrooms:

> Luke: I don't think I truly understood at the end of the day yesterday how many students couldn't speak English. And having to work with one of them today and trying to communicate… I was trying to ask him questions and he started talking to me in Arabic. And I was like, "I don't speak Arabic!" So I tried non-verbal stuff, but it was weird. He was able to sing, but he couldn't understand.
>
> George: I had a similar experience working with a kid named Mohammad. It dawned on me that he only spoke Arabic after one kid told me he only spoke Arabic. Some kid had to clue me in on it first. But I noticed he was totally reliant on physical cues. He would say something to me in Arabic and I would gesture and he would nod. And we were using hand signs and he was constantly looking back at the sign[3] at the back of the room.

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[3] George referred to a visual aid of the Curwen hand signs labeled in solfege that was posted behind them on the classroom wall.

I kept thinking about that movie we watched – where people said things, but he didn't understand. (Tuesday night group discussion)

The movie George referenced was a video titled, "Immersion," that we watched during one of our orientation meetings. The video depicts the experience of an English language learner in his math class at school. The young boy was able to do the math problems faster than his peers, but could not read or speak English in order to communicate his knowledge with his teacher.

Sierra also reflected on his interactions with English language learners in the classroom, and shared his perspective:

> I guess my biggest difficulty so far has been the language. Personality-wise, kids are kids for the most part. But the first day doing drumming with the kid who didn't speak English, ever since then, I've been cautious about how I go up to people. I always say, "Hi. I'm Sierra. What's your name?" but I don't want to make it uncomfortable or overwhelming if someone doesn't speak English. So ever since then, when I've introduced myself to people, I've tried to think about it from their perspective and how I want to be perceived. (Tuesday night group discussion)

Though some participants shared their experiences with English language learners and the difficulties they encountered, other participants had a different perspective. Anne shared how her experience differed from her expectation:

> We've talked about how it's a transient refugee school and, without realizing it, I made the assumption that most kids would have difficulty speaking English… because they'd be coming in and who knows what they've had at refugee camps or wherever they came from before. So then, just having a lot of kids be fluent speaking English, I was just like, "Ok. I'm in a normal classroom." (Tuesday night group discussion)

In response to the experiences with English language learners that his peers shared, Simon said: "I don't feel like I really noticed students having trouble… I didn't notice" (Tuesday night group discussion). Jane agreed with him.

Some participants were paired with English language learners in the music classroom that day. Their interactions with students helped them consider the challenges English language learners face in the classroom and the ways in which they were unprepared to teach them. For other participants, language was not as prominent in their experience. Anne acknowledged the assumption she had made about students' language skills because she knew many students were immigrants and refugees. There are also a few implicit assumptions Anne made. First, Anne assumed that the students in Dearborn would not have the skills necessary to communicate in English. Second, Anne suggested that she was in a 'normal' classroom because the students with whom she interacted spoke and understood English. Anne assumed that a 'typical' school environment consisted of students and teachers who communicated with each other in English. Simon and Jane did not notice the presence of English language learners in their classroom observations. They, too, associated English with the 'normal' mode of communication in the classroom. By not noticing English language learners in the classroom, their experience reinforced their perception that English language instruction was a 'normal' classroom expectation. Yet, what is the impact on English language learning students when teachers do not notice them in the classroom? Participants revealed some of their assumptions and perceptions regarding English language learners and their experiences in the music classrooms. The viewpoints participants shared help contextualize the disorienting dilemma that happened next.

The girl in the purple sweater. As the discussion about English language learners unfolded, I grew more and more frustrated. Why, when some participants wanted to discuss their

experiences with and observations of English language learners, did other participants discount them? Had we not all observed in the same classrooms? I remembered my observation of the girl in the purple sweater that afternoon at Claymore Elementary and asked the participants if they noticed her in class.

> Andrea: Did you notice the girl who was sitting next to me in the purple sweater who wasn't smiling?
>
> Jane: Oh. Yeah. And [the teacher] said, "Oh. It's nice to see you smile."
>
> Andrea: Did you see what she did the rest of the class? How she was interacting?
>
> George: Kind of… Not at all. She was just kinda…. Chillin'.
>
> Andrea: With each activity, she waited until everyone else did it. She watched what they did and then started. She always had to see what other people were doing beforehand. I don't think she understood verbal instructions.

I shared my observation of the girl in the purple sweater as well as a few other students in the classrooms at both schools that day. Some children were withdrawn and rarely spoke. Some waited to watch their peers start an activity after the teacher gave verbal instructions. The girl in the purple sweater watched the movements her peers did before joining. At Candlewood, some children waited for friends to show them the page of music they were on after the teacher called out the page number. I told participants that these behaviors might indicate that students did not understand verbal instructions in English and asked participants if they noticed any of these behaviors. The participants thought about the girl in the purple sweater and shared their perceptions:

> Simon: Well, maybe it's bad. I just assumed that she had some type of… This is very telling.

George: I didn't know that she didn't speak English. I did not realize that she was – I thought she may have been just an upset girl.

Simon: I thought she was scared.

Jane: I thought she was shy. (Tuesday night group discussion)

Participants did notice student behaviors, but they had interpreted them differently. They assumed that the girl in the purple sweater was unhappy or that she had some kind of special need. Participants' perceptions of students in the music classrooms may have been impacted by the way the teachers facilitated interactions between participants and students. The teachers asked students to partner with a new friend, and the children approached the participant with whom they wanted to work. I asked participants to reflect on this facilitation:

Andrea: If the students are being told to find a buddy to pair with, who is going to come and buddy up next to you?

Luke: Kids who know English.

Andrea: So then, what frames your experience in that classroom?

Jane: That they all speak English. That's totally the thing about the girl in the purple sweater. That didn't even occur to me, because the kids that I talked to were pretty proficient.

Having had previous experience with English language learners in my own classroom, I recognized some students who displayed behaviors that suggested they might be English language learners. The girl in the purple sweater was one such student, but there were others in both music classrooms. I also recognized that some participants did not perceive that there were English language learners in the classrooms. They may not have had prior experiences with English language learners to draw upon, and this might have impacted their perception and

interpretation of student behaviors. It was important to me that participants recognized the impact of language in their interactions with students in the music classrooms, and that they began to understand that language was an aspect of culture that influenced students' learning. At the end of our discussion, I challenged participants to look beyond teacher pedagogy and pay closer attention to their experiences and interactions with students when they returned to the classrooms the next day.

Perspective Shift

After our group discussion, participants reflected in their journals. Some referenced the girl in the purple sweater in their reflections. Some felt guilty about not having noticed English language learners' struggles in the classroom. Jane said:

> After our group discussion tonight, I feel really guilty that I didn't pay more attention to the students that were ELLs. When Andrea pointed out that we barely noticed the kids who did not immediately flock to us, it really opened my eyes to the things I was failing to notice in the classroom. I feel really guilty for having neglected the students who didn't have a very good handle on the English language. At dinner tonight, Andrea also pointed out that we were talking a lot about technicalities in teaching, rather than the culture of the classrooms that we were observing. That really struck a chord with me and I definitely think a goal of mine for the rest of the week is to become more aware of the cultural situations our children are in, not just how the teachers are implementing their music curriculum. (journal entry)

Simon shared Jane's perspective and reflected on how he had made incorrect assumptions about students he had encountered in the classroom:

> I didn't notice which students were ELL, to be honest. As Andrea pointed out, there was a girl in one of the classes that obviously didn't speak English. She was visibly distant from the students and appeared to be upset. I assumed she might have some sort of special need. It's no wonder teachers so often misdiagnose ELL students as having some type of mental disability. (journal entry)

George reflected on his interactions with English language learners and commented on his disappointment with himself for not better recognizing student learners in the classroom:

> This second day of our trip showed me just how difficult it can be to realize if kids struggle with English. While I was participating in the activities with the kids, I was pretty much constantly surrounded by kids who were social and able to speak English. The kids who I knew didn't speak English and the kids I suspected might struggle with English usually were not as willing to start conversations with me, or, they were less likely to respond to me when I asked them questions. Looking back now, it's pretty silly of me to think that a kid who struggles with English would come up to me and start speaking Arabic. Similarly, if a kid struggles with English, and I asked them a question in English, of course they're not going to respond to me. They possibly didn't understand what I was asking them, or, they're feeling too intimidated. I'm fairly disappointed with myself for interacting with kids in a way that was exclusive of English language learners. On at least two occasions I know, I read a kid's lack of participation in class as them just having a "bad day," rather than realizing the truth, which is that they struggled speaking English. I'm sure, however, that there were many more kids that I came into contact with today who struggled with English and I was totally unaware. That's a real disappointment to me, personally. (journal entry)

In their journal reflections, Jane and George both expressed disappointment in themselves for misunderstanding English language learners' experiences in the music classrooms. Both consider themselves well-read on issues of diversity, equity, and sociological concepts. Because of this, perhaps they expected to better recognize and interpret their interactions with English language learners in the music classrooms and felt personal disappointment in their inability to do so. It is important that Jane and George recognized that they made assumptions about students' behaviors and interactions in the classroom so that they might begin to interact with English language learners with a more informed perspective.

After having been paired with an English language learner on the first day of his field experience, Sierra reflected on his experience and connected it to his role as a teacher:

> The language barrier is a tricky obstacle to identify and maneuver. In a setting that I will most likely teach in, it might not be as apparent that a student has a language difficulty. As a teacher, it is important to recognize the difference of a student needing assistance with understanding language and the student having a mental learning disability. (journal entry)

Once I directed participants' attention toward the girl in the purple sweater, participants began to observe student behavior and notice English language learners when they returned to their schools the next day. Participants shared the difficulty they experienced in determining how to engage with these students in the classroom settings. Jane shared her experience with an Arabic-speaking student who did not yet speak English:

> We had breakfast with the kids. There was this little boy sitting near me who was not talking. He was just sitting with his head down. I was like, "Hi! How are you? My name is Jane!" and he just looked at me. He didn't look mad or anything. He just looked at me

> like, “What are you saying?” and one of the girls said, “He only knows Arabic. He’s embarrassed.” And I didn’t know what to do. I was trying to include him, but it was hard, you know? (Wednesday night interview)

April had a similar experience with an English language learner that made her realize that she was not noticing students’ language proficiencies in the music class. It prompted her to be more observant during her interactions with students:

> I had to check my assumptions while sitting by a 5th grader who did not respond when I asked her name. Another student informed me that she did not speak English, and after that I took more care to observe the language use of each student. (journal entry)

After April became more conscious of students around her, she realized that she next started to assume that students would not speak English even though many did. April realized she had assumed one students’ language cognition based in part on her physical appearance:

> I started watching some of the kids and there was one girl who I noticed wasn’t speaking as much. She had her glasses and her hijab on and I was making this assumption in my mind that she didn’t speak English. Then she got called on and she was like, “Yeah!” and ran up to the front of the room. I realized that I had completely made this false assumption about her in my mind. That is one thing I have to be careful of now. (Thursday morning group discussion)

April recognized that language acquisition and fluency was more nuanced than she had originally perceived. She realized that while it was important to recognize English language learners and their needs, it was equally important to refrain from making assumptions that students did not speak English based on their outward appearance. Her reflection implied that

she might have begun to recognize the individual experiences and knowledge that each student brings with them into the classroom.

As Jane and April reflected on their language experiences with students, Sierra considered language in a broader context. Sierra said:

> I noticed a boy in the group around me who was not participating as much. I tried to ask him what his favorite song was, but the other students told me he did not speak English. After I knew that, I kept an eye on him for the rest of class to see how he participated. For the most part, he just sat there out of the loop. This frustrated me because it is not like [the teacher] was doing a bad job. It is just difficult to provide every student with the individual instruction they need. These kids are not able to get the education they deserve because of the language disconnect. (journal entry)

What Sierra described was both how he understood the impact of language acquisition in the classroom and his perception that the English language learners' education suffered because he did not speak English.

Others perceived English language learners from a different perspective. They drew on personal experiences in which they did not understand the language around them and tried to empathize with students and their experiences. George had taken computer science courses previously and shared how lost and confused he felt in his classes:

> I'd be sitting in my lectures and they'd be using all this syntax and jargon for computer programming and I had no idea what was going on, even though it was still in English. I would just sit there and everything was just going over my head and I was just totally zoned out. Eventually, *if* I showed up to that lecture, I would just end up going on Google, basically self-translating this code that made zero sense to me. I was definitely

feeling some empathy towards these kids, basically having the same experience sitting there and code, jargon, and syntax going over their head. (Thursday morning group discussion)

George began to consider the perspective of English language learners in the music classroom. Perspective taking is an important step toward empathy in teacher-student interactions. However, one must be careful not to engage in false empathy in such interactions (Warren & Hotchkins, 2015). George's experience might have provided him with a perspective for English language learners' experiences in the music classroom, but it was not "basically" the same experience. George may have been confused by the terminology in his computer programming class, but the class was conducted in English, a language in which George was fluent. Though the experience of English language learners is more complex than George expressed, by reflecting on his personal experience, George did begin to consider students' experiences in music teaching and learning from a new perspective.

Alexis also connected her prior experiences to students' experiences. While in high school, Alexis spent some time in a homestay with a family in Germany. She shared her experience there and connected it to how students might have felt:

> The family was having conversations and I just kind of zoned out and didn't really try. I could pick up some words and understand the topic, but they were speaking so fast, I just didn't bother. (Thursday morning group discussion)

By connecting past personal experiences to their classroom observations, George and Alexis engaged in perspective taking and began to develop a new understanding of English language learners' experiences in the classroom.

Participants also observed interactions between students in the classrooms. They watched as students translated for each other during various classroom activities. One such interaction stood out to Alexis, and she commented on how helpful students were to each other. Alexis said:

> One thing I've been thinking about a lot was this boy who came from Libya with his family about three weeks ago. He doesn't speak English and the other kids in the class were so thoughtful and helped translate for him without any hesitation. It warmed my heart so much to see these kids being so eager to help out another student. (journal entry)

Alexis also listened to students share their experiences navigating their first days at school before they spoke and understood English:

> Hearing from them what their first day was like here – all of them were like, "I had no idea what was going on." I think there was one girl who said she was like, "Are they all talking about me? Is this some kind of inside joke thing?" because everyone else was talking in English and she… didn't. (Thursday morning group discussion)

As Alexis began to notice and interact with students, she learned about their experiences and considered how difficult it would be to navigate conversation without understanding the language being used.

When participants started to develop an understanding of the role of language in the classroom, they saw the ways in which English language learners navigated their environments. They also noticed how both teachers used Arabic in their classroom instruction. Participants observed how the teachers had learned Arabic words and phrases to use in their instruction. In many instances, the teachers taught bilingually, using both Arabic and English in their instruction. They said "hello" and "goodbye" and counted to ten in both languages, and asked students for help with pronunciations of new words they came across.

The teachers also used Arabic phrases to both joke with their students and to discipline them. Lisa observed the teacher speaking in Arabic with her students and decided she also needed to learn some words and phrases. She said:

> In the classroom, [the teacher] used Arabic words and I was like, “Ok. I need to figure out how to do that.” I asked some students to teach me some words in Arabic. They taught me how to say hello, which is “As-salam alaykom,” and then the other person responds, “alykom as-salam.” That was cool. There was a girl smiling and watching us. I said hello to her and she said it back to me. Then I told them I would learn how to count to ten by the end of this week! (individual interview)

Lisa challenged herself to learn some Arabic during her immersion field experience and reflected on her experience:

> I told them I was going to learn to count in Arabic and one girl held me to my promise. She asked me how to count to five. It was so evident in her face how much it meant to her that I did something as small as counting to five. I’ve learned that as a teacher, I also need to learn from my students. I can’t expect them to care about what I have to say if I don’t care about what they have to say. (journal entry)

Lisa realized that her students needed to know she cared about them in order to reach them. She recognized that one way of expressing her care was by getting to know and learn from them.

Luke, Alexis, and Anne also recognized the importance of knowing students in order to connect with and reach them. They observed how the teacher’s use of Arabic enabled her to know her students better. They conversed with the teacher about how she learned and uses Arabic in her classroom, and she shared that some teachers in her school chose not to use the

language in their classrooms. The trio shared their thoughts on their conversation with the teacher:

> Luke: [The teacher's] learned a lot of Arabic. She's been able to use that effectively in many different situations for those students.
>
> Alexis: It baffled me that she said there are other teachers who say they don't learn Arabic and don't see the point of it.
>
> Anne: Yeah. They refuse to learn any Arabic and use it in the classroom.
>
> Alexis: Which blows my mind. Why would you not do as much as you could to help? (Thursday night group discussion)

Participants recognized the teacher's important use of Arabic in her instruction. They observed the effectiveness of speaking to students in Arabic to help them learn, and were surprised that other teachers in the school chose not to do so. It is not clear why these teachers did not use Arabic in their instruction. What is important about this exchange is that participants began to understand the impact of including students' cultures in classroom instruction.

Participants also struggled to understand and comprehend students' Arabic names. They did not have a frame of reference for the language, and shared the difficulty they experienced:

> Simon: Their names are not typical to- like, it's not like Emily or Sara.
>
> April: It's not something we're familiar with.
>
> Simon: A couple of the kids told me their names and then, I was like, "Oh, wait." I forgot them. (Monday night group discussion)

Participants shared how difficult it was for them to remember students' names, because Arabic sounds were unfamiliar to them. Jane recalled the large number of students she saw in the

classroom each day and praised the teacher's ability to remember each of her students' names. Jane said:

> Oh my god! I don't know how she remembers all the names. They're just so different than, like, Lisa, and Simon, and whatever, you know? Midwestern names. They have different inflections and…. I just– I could not. I mean, I could (*laugh*), but it would be very challenging to learn all the names. (individual interview)

Because Jane knew she was participating in a short-term field experience, she did not feel responsible for learning students' names while she was there. It was difficult for Jane to remember names that were unfamiliar to her, and she shared that she was grateful that she did not have to.

Simon also struggled to remember students' names. He shared his experience with a student that helped him realize that he had much to learn about the students in the class. Simon said:

> I had one little boy who attached himself to me for the entire hour. I can't remember his name. This subtle slip-up has helped me recognize that there is so much I don't know about these cultures. Because his name wasn't something standard in my culture (Ryan, Jacob, Michael, etc.), I wasn't even able to (or take the time to) remember his "unconventional" name. (journal entry)

Participants shared their struggle to understand and remember students' Arabic names. They described students' names as 'unconventional,' 'unfamiliar,' and atypical. On one hand, participants' use of these adjectives might reflect their own cultural backgrounds and experiences. Perhaps they did not have a frame of reference for Arabic names and perceived students' names as different to them and, as a result, difficult to remember. On the other hand,

participants' statements might reflect an assumption that 'typical' names are names associated with White culture, reinforcing Whiteness as a cultural standard and students' cultures as "other." Participants expressed the difficulty they experienced trying to remember students' names with which they were unfamiliar. Because they knew their field experience was for a short time, participants did not feel it was necessary to remember the names of the students with whom they interacted. What does it mean that participants did not feel responsible for learning students' names? How might that impact their perceptions and understandings of students in the music classrooms?

The music teachers themselves were not fluent in Arabic, but shared how they learned basic words and phrases in order to connect with their students. They also incorporated Arabic music into their lessons. At Claymore Elementary, participants observed the teacher using a Lebanese song with which her students were familiar to teach musical concepts. She led the students in singing both English and Arabic words and asked her students for help with Arabic translation and pronunciation.

Participants started to realize the ways in which language impacted the music classrooms. They became aware of English language learners and started to recognize the ways in which Arabic was present in the classroom. Participants discussed the lesson on the car ride back to the hotel and in the evening group discussion. Simon and Lisa spoke excitedly about the Lebanese song they learned. They watched students light up when they recognized the song the teacher was playing. Participants described how some students were unable to contain their excitement and blurted out how they knew the song, where it was from, and shared how a family member had taught it to them. They helped the teacher with Arabic translation and pronunciation. George perceived the lesson differently. He believed that, though the teacher implemented cultural

referents in this particular lesson, she was not doing enough on a regular basis (fieldnotes). George's observation illuminates a perspective that both maintains earlier held beliefs and incorporates a new one. On one hand, George's critique of the teacher's content is similar to earlier critiques of teacher pedagogy, which he based on his observations of just a few days. George drew upon prior knowledge from his coursework and expected teaching to look a certain way in the classroom. On the other hand, George also revealed a perspective shift toward recognizing culture's role in the classroom, as this is one of the first times he acknowledged that culture was present.

While George believed the teacher should have been more culturally responsive toward her students' cultures in her lessons, Simon disagreed. He shared his perspective in his journal:

> Today [the teacher] did an activity with an Arabic song that all the kids knew. I liked to see that she was incorporating music from the children's native culture. It was awesome to observe the children helping her pronounce Arabic words and translate those words' meanings. I just thought it was cool to see it's not just her imposing her culture on them. It was also helping her understand things. I found it interesting that during our discussion at the hotel, George mentioned that he felt that [the teacher] didn't provide the children with enough musical opportunities with which they could express their culture. I personally felt that she is making a very clear effort to incorporate Arabic culture into her classroom. I doubt that her collegiate education came anywhere close to preparing her to teach anything outside of Western music. I think it's admirable that she even bothered to incorporate Arabic in her various lessons! (journal entry)

Simon appreciated the use of Arabic song and recognized its importance to her students. Simon also discussed the teacher's educational background and surmised that, in her undergraduate

degree program, she likely had prepared to teach music through a traditional Western lens. Thus, from Simon's perspective, he recognized that the teacher had to learn something new and was impressed with what she implemented in her class. However, because Simon suggested that it was admirable for the music teacher to include Arabic music in her instruction, he seemed to imply that it was not necessarily expected for her to do so, ignoring the importance of teaching with cultural relevance. Simon also revealed his assumption that all of the students in the classroom shared the same cultural background. Though he recognized the importance of acknowledging students' cultures, he did not fully understand the varied cultural identities represented in the music classroom.

While Simon and George debated, both together and on their own, the appropriate amount of cultural relevance in the classroom, Lisa considered the lesson from a different perspective. Lisa noticed how much it meant to students to sing and play a song with which they were familiar. Lisa also observed the teacher's interaction with her students and noticed that the teacher learned from her students as much as they learned from her. Lisa's observation led her to look inward and reflect on her own insecurities:

> One of my favorite parts of this lesson was seeing kids that looked sad immediately got a smile on their face when they knew what the song was and what it was about. Further, when it came time to pronounce words of the song, the students were so helpful and excited to share, rather than being annoyed with how we did not know how to speak Arabic. This is so comforting because I think there is always this idea that people are going to judge you when you try to step out of your comfort zone and might be a huge reason why teachers are less likely to teach in a culturally responsive way to their students. This shifted my view 180 degrees to understand that no matter how many times

> you mess up, kids will always be more excited and thankful that you are trying than they would ever be judging. There is always talk among our group related to how we can successfully teach and what it means to be doing enough. Some people from my group thought [the teacher] didn't do enough. I thought that she's trying to do as much as she can. (journal entry)

When Lisa saw that students were excited to sing a song they knew and happy to help their teacher with pronunciation, she realized that she did not need to know all the answers in order to teach. Previously, Lisa assumed that she would be judged for not knowing about language or culture and acknowledged that that was something she feared. By observing the teacher and students' positive interactions, Lisa's perspective shifted as she realized it was better to make mistakes with students than not to try.

Summary

The conversation about the girl in the purple sweater became iconic over the course of the immersion week, as participants referenced our discussion about her as a catalyst for reorienting their observations at the schools. Participants began to notice English language learners in the classroom. Some redirected their focus so much that they assumed students were English language learners when they, in fact, were not. Others learned first-hand the difficulty communicating with someone who speaks a different language by engaging with English language learners in the classroom. Through both of these types of interactions, participants reconsidered their assumptions about learners and learning in the music classroom.

Participants also observed how both music teachers addressed language in their classrooms. The teachers learned and used Arabic to communicate and connect with their students. They also incorporated Arab music into their lessons. In both of these examples,

participants began to notice the ways in which the teachers acknowledged and honored their students' cultures and began to understand why this was important.

The girl in the purple sweater is a metaphor for recognizing students and their cultural knowledge and backgrounds in the music classroom. By sharing my observation of the girl, I challenged participants to reevaluate their perceptions and observations of the music classroom. After listening to my experience, participants reconsidered their assumptions and began examining their experience in new ways. Future group discussions focused less on teacher pedagogy and more on the students and cultural elements in the music classrooms.

Disorienting Dilemma 2: Question and Answer Session with Students

"We have a bit of time before the next class comes," the Candlewood music teacher said. "Do you have any questions that I can answer while we have some time?" The participants thought for a moment, then started asking questions about students' religion and culture. Rather than answering the questions herself, the teacher suggested that participants ask the students questions directly. An upcoming 5th grade music class was comprised of mature, articulate students, she said, and they could use the class period as a question and answer session about their culture and religion, as well as anything else that participants wanted to understand more fully. The music teacher helped participants develop questions regarding Arab culture, Islamic practice and traditions, and students' backgrounds to help ensure that they were appropriate. While they were brainstorming questions about hijabs, April asked, "But some of them looked like scarves and some were like –"

The teacher interrupted her. "Ask them about it!" she said.

"I just feel so ignorant," said Alexis. The teacher acknowledged Alexis' feelings and encouraged participants to learn from the students. "You know, my first day here," she said, "I

was so overwhelmed because I'd never seen Arab culture outside of the media. I was like, 'These poor women.' Now, it's not like that at all. It's so comfortable for me."

With their questions prepared, the participants watched students from the 5th grade class enter the music classroom. The teacher introduced everyone and said, "Our friends have some questions for you. Do you mind if they ask you questions about Arab culture? They want to know more about the hijab, holidays, and food. Is that ok?"

"Yeah," the group of students replied.

"This is pretty exciting," the teacher told her students. "Dearborn is a unique community, isn't it? Not a lot of people get to experience the community. They're asking you questions because you are the experts."

The music teacher facilitated a conversation between participants and students, and helped guide the discussion about Arab and Muslim culture. The students shared their favorite holidays and traditions, described their favorite Arab foods, and explained elements of Islamic religion, including the various ways of and reasons for wearing the hijab. Throughout the discussion, the students shared how their customs differed depending on their countries of origin and translated for their peers to allow everyone a part in the conversation.

At the end of the discussion, the 5th grade students asked their teacher if they could share with participants a dance called the Debke. The Debke is an Arab folk dance originating from the Levant countries (Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Syria, Palestine) and often is performed at weddings and other large celebrations. The students divided themselves and participants into two circles – one for males and one for females – and taught participants the steps. Next, students played a YouTube recording of the Debke music, and everyone danced until it was time for dismissal (fieldnotes).

Fear of Asking Questions

Following the class, the music teacher debriefed with participants. They shared with her that they were curious to learn about students' backgrounds, but were afraid to ask them questions. Participants believed that their inquiries were inappropriate and shared how timid they first felt about asking students questions about their culture and religion:

> April: I've always felt bad. I've never wanted to ask people who wear a head scarf about it because I don't want to appear ignorant and insensitive by not knowing.
>
> Alexis: They were super excited to share.
>
> Music teacher: Yeah! You'd love to share about your culture, too. It's just this stigma that they've put on Muslims that you're supposed to leave them alone and not ask anything about it. (Wednesday morning classroom)

Later that evening in their group discussion, Candlewood participants shared their experience and what they learned with their peers.

> Alexis: We started with questions about Ramadan. It was interesting because being from different countries, they had different answers for things, mostly about the headscarves. When you asked about that, their answers were all different. They'd be like, 'No! It's like this!' But it was just because they were from different areas, so their answers were different. We got a lot of their own personal experiences of when they started wearing headscarves and what the rules are. Generally, there was a lot of like, 'Well, this is the overarching rule.'
>
> Jane: What do you mean? What is the rule?

Participants shared the varied responses students gave regarding rules for headscarves. The information was as nuanced as the students themselves. After listening to her peers, Jane said,

“Hmm. I didn’t know that.” Luke shared what he learned about Ramadan, fasting, and daily prayers. He said, “I think the big thing I took away from it was that it was not as strict of a culture as it’s often portrayed. It’s so much like, ‘Well, if this happens, then you don’t have to do this,’ or ‘if this happens, you can do this later.’ (Thursday morning group discussion).

Some participants thought critically about their fear of asking questions about people from different cultural backgrounds. Reflecting on her experience, April said:

> I noticed this about myself, and I’m guessing with a lot of other people too, that we’re always nervous about asking questions of Arab people about their culture and stuff because we don’t want to come across as insensitive or ignorant or say the wrong thing, but the kids were totally open to it. (Thursday morning group discussion)

Sierra also expressed his discomfort asking students questions about their cultural backgrounds. He sometimes was not sure if his questions were appropriate to ask. Sierra said:

> We were using them as experts of their culture, but they were so young. I didn’t look at them as any less able to explain but it was kind of weird. There were some times when I would think of a question and then I wasn’t sure if I should ask. (Thursday morning group discussion)

April further reflected on her discomfort asking questions in her journal reflection that night. She began to understand the connection between a person’s culture and their identity. April wrote:

> Even after [the teacher] told us not to worry about asking questions, I was still hesitant to ask them anything deeper than what they ate after sunset on Ramadan. However, the kids wanted us to ask questions. They wanted to educate us about their lives and culture. Our curiosity was met with honesty and openness. Headscarves, Ramadan, and wedding

traditions are not topics to be side-stepped and avoided. They are integral to the lives of the kids and should be treated as such. (journal entry)

The question and answer session with students was the second disorienting dilemma that occurred during the immersion week. Through their experience, participants learned about students' religion and culture. By acquiring new information about religious customs and traditions (in particular, rules regarding women's headscarves), participants' perceptions and understandings of Islam started to change. Further, some participants recognized and acknowledged their fears of asking questions about a different culture. They believed their questions would be insensitive and inappropriate, but learned that they needed to overcome their fears and ask questions in order to learn about their students. Participants realized that their inquiries were welcomed and as a result, they developed a new understanding of the students with whom they interacted. They understood that knowing their students was an important first step in building relationships that would help them determine how to best meet their students' needs.

Islam

Participants also thought about themselves and the assumptions they had made. The question and answer session with students challenged assumptions about and provided participants with new understandings of Islamic religion and culture. After gaining new information about the religion, Luke realized that he had assumed Islam would be more prominent in his experience at school. Luke said:

> I thought that religion and prayer was going to be much more something that we saw and much more present. Maybe it was and I just didn't notice it, but that was something wasn't as much so as I thought it was going to be. (Post-immersion individual interview)

April also realized that she brought her own assumptions into her experience. April was raised in a conservative Christian environment. She shared how her personal background shaped her expectations of Islam.

> This showed me that Muslims interpret their religion in incredibly different ways, just like Christians and Jews. This was especially true with the hijab. About six or seven girls in the class wore the headscarf, and they were all eager to tell us about it. The students insisted that wearing it is a choice, with the exception of one boy, who said that a girl's parents can choose for her. He was immediately shut down with startling emphasis – the kids were indignant that anybody, even parents, could violate anyone's autonomy by forcing them to wear a headscarf. I wondered if such an idea would have been shut down so quickly in the culture I came from. These kids were vehemently against the idea that anyone could be coerced into a religious practice. I have to admit that my experience with religion is a fairly unique one. I grew up surrounded by Christian hardliners who swore that all people should follow their rules of modesty and morality. This has colored my view of all religions, and I was pleasantly surprised by the kids' attitudes. Then, I wondered if my pre-judgement was any better than that of people who are Islamophobic. Some people form their view of Islam based on the media. My view was, at least in part, shaped by my own experience in an entirely different religion. How can I ask not to be painted with the same brush as my family if I cannot do the same for people of this different religion? (journal entry)

April started connecting her personal experience and relationship with Christianity to Muslims' personal experiences and relationships with Islam. She considered her assumptions about a strict Islamic religion and connected it to her strict Christian upbringing. She realized

that, by viewing Islam through her own lens, she failed to see Islam as being just as complex as her own religion. By making connections between her understanding of her Christian religion and Islam, April identified with Muslims in a new way.

Even after gaining more knowledge about them, participants remained intrigued by hijabs in the music classroom. For some, hearing students discuss the varied headscarf customs made them reevaluate their assumptions. Sierra said:

> They're all from different countries and so, each family had different- it's all under the same umbrella, but there's definitely a lot of nuance to what they could and couldn't do. I think a lot of it was up to the girl of the way to wear the scarf. Some of the girls were like, "Heck, no. I'm not wearing it," and some of them were like, "Yeah. I've been wearing it since I was three." (Thursday morning group discussion)

Some participants also noticed how the teacher addressed issues surrounding the hijab in her class. Anne recalled an interaction between the teacher and her student:

> There was a girl whose hair was sticking out of her hijab so [the teacher] went over and pulled the hood of her sweater up to cover it and said, "You're showing. If you want to go and fix it privately, you're more than welcome to." I thought this was a really cool thing to do that I have never had to consider in my day to day life. If I were in a teaching situation, I wouldn't know what to do and I think a lot of that stems from me not fully understanding the full significance of the hijab. (journal entry)

Sierra also thought about cultural practices with hijabs. He wondered how his gender might impact his interaction with a student wearing a hijab and how he should navigate the interaction in a culturally appropriate way. Sierra said:

> There were some gender things about the hijab and how you can't show men your hair at a certain age. [The teacher] talked about one time she told one of the students to go, if she needed to, and fix it because it was bunched up. I wasn't sure, as a male, if that would be appropriate. I wasn't sure what the protocol would be for a male teacher to do that. (individual interview)

Many participants developed a new perception of Islam throughout the immersion week. They learned from students the varied cultural practices based on their country of origin. They learned how some of their assumptions regarding hijabs were incorrect and began to consider how they, as teachers, would interact with students in their classrooms who wore hijabs. Some also connected the nuance and variance of Islam to that of Christianity and Judaism. They recognized that their personal faith shared similarities with the personal faiths of Muslims.

Summary

The second disorienting dilemma occurred because the Candlewood Elementary music teacher facilitated a question and answer session between her students and participants. The disorienting dilemma was comprised of three parts. First, by learning from students, participants recognized the cultural knowledge students possessed. Hearing the information about their religion and culture from student experts was informative in a way that they had not experienced before. In fact, participants had previously received much of the information about Islam and cultural practices both from readings I gave them and from a guest lecturer from the Muslim Studies program during our orientation meetings on campus. George explained why learning from students was different for him than prior experiences:

> This is all… [The guest lecturer] talked about this, right? Like, it's nuanced and there's no solid rule. This has already been said, but I think it's really cool that it's more salient

> now. It's more contextualized… All of the sudden it's like, we relearn it and we re-understand it when it comes from them rather than lecturing… I learned *zero* from the readings. I don't remember any of it. But [the guest lecturer] talked and I was like, 'Ok. I'm kind of getting it.' And then these *kids*. It's like, 'Ok. Now I'm *understanding* it.' (Thursday morning group discussion)

George highlighted what he and other participants gained by learning about students' cultures and religion from the students themselves. The question and answer session helped participants understand more fully and reevaluate what they thought they knew.

Second, the disorienting dilemma made participants realize how afraid they were to engage and ask questions of people who were different from them. They realized that they feared being perceived as ignorant or insensitive, and they assumed that it was wrong to ask about cultural or religious differences. The teacher provided a safe environment in which to ask questions, which helped participants realize how important it was to understand a person's culture as an integral part of their identity.

Third, the question and answer session helped participants reflect on their own assumptions about Islam and culture. Some participants' assumptions stemmed from stereotypes about strict religious practices and oppressing women by forcing them to wear a hijab. They learned from students not only how false these stereotypes are, but also how diverse practices and traditions were within Islam. Other participants connected students' religious and cultural practices to their own expressions of faith. They began to consider both the differences between the religions and the commonalities.

The question and answer session served as a disorienting dilemma that made participants reevaluate their understandings of Islam and Arab culture. It broadened their knowledge and

challenged some things they thought they knew. It also gave them new insight into the importance of acknowledging and understanding a person's culture as part of their identity.

Disorienting Dilemma 3: The Local Community

I parked the van on a side street in the east Dearborn neighborhood that housed both Candlewood and Claymore elementary schools. "We're going to explore the area and see what we find," I told the group. We piled out of the van and headed toward the sidewalk on the main road. I thought about my conversation the night before with Anne about the Dearborn neighborhoods. "I really like the character of east Dearborn. The signs are bilingual. Sometimes they're just in Arabic. That's awesome," she said (individual interview).

Anne and I were at the front of the pack, excited to explore the neighborhood. We saw a corner grocery store at the edge of a busy street and decided to check it out. The rest of the group followed. We entered the store as a man exited. Upon seeing our group, he asked, "Is this a demonstration?" He chuckled and went on his way. Though the store was smaller than a supermarket, its layout and food selection looked quite similar. There was produce at the entrance, refrigerated items lined the perimeter, and the interior aisles housed various snack items and dried goods. Many of the items in the grocery store could be found in any store in the United States, but some items were unique to Arab cultures. Anne walked directly to the produce at the front of the store and curiously examined fruits and vegetables that were unfamiliar to her. She researched on her smartphone and made herself a list of items she wanted to learn more about later when she returned to the hotel. I wandered to the cheese aisle. Some of the labels were written in Arabic, and I tried to decipher each variety. Other members of our group walked quickly around the store, then congregated throughout in small pods of three or four people.

Anne and I walked down each aisle, exploring the array of tea settings and flavors, the variety of cooking oils, and the candies and sweets from Arab countries on display. Periodically, a few participants approached me to determine when I might be ready to leave the store. "Hey, are you going to buy something?" Simon asked. Otherwise, he asked, shouldn't we leave? He felt uncomfortable being in the store and others did too. Anne and I found a wall of spices to explore. Simon and Jane joined us, and Jane started joking about the spices with which she was unfamiliar. I shared that I was considering buying some, and then Jane took a closer look. We wandered about the store and explored the bulk foods section and the meat counter. We passed a small room dedicated to hijabs and gazed curiously inside. No one chose to go inside.

We left the grocery store and walked down the busy street. Our group walked in a herd with Anne and me at the helm. I heard people behind me joke uncomfortably about walking in the neighborhood. A car honked at us as it drove by. And then another. One slowed and rolled its window down. A man yelled something in Arabic as he drove by. As we passed an alleyway, I saw a woman loading her car. She stared at us. I smiled at her. She did not smile back.

We found a second grocery store that Anne and I decided we wanted to explore. Our group walked in and saw two women wearing hijabs and abayas talking to two men working in the store. They stared at us as we walked in the door. The group dispersed and explored the store. As I looked at coffees and teas, Lisa and Alexis approached me to share their experience. They shared that the two women stared intently at them as they browsed. "This must be how they feel all the time," Lisa said (fieldnotes).

"I Felt Uncomfortable"

Our week in Dearborn coincided with a large windstorm that swept the area and knocked out power for many neighborhoods and their schools, including both Candlewood and Claymore

Elementary schools. With an unexpected day off of school, the participants and I enjoyed a much needed morning of sleep and relaxation at our hotel. Though we were disappointed to lose a day of the field experience, the mid-week break also allowed participants an opportunity to process and reflect on their experience amidst the busy week.

Tasked with developing a new plan for our day, I decided to keep our group as immersed in the experience as possible and used the additional time to explore the neighborhood that housed our schools. I had wanted more community interaction during the week, and this unexpected time provided an opportunity for some engagement. We explored the neighborhood with no agenda, no plan for stores we would visit and no predetermination of the length of time we would stay or how we would travel among and within our group. As the experience unfolded, it was clear that this immersion in the schools' neighborhood was one of the more disorienting moments of the immersion week.

The afternoon exploring east Dearborn was our only extended experience in the community outside of the school setting during the immersion week. While the elementary schools felt familiar to all of us, local shops in the community did not. Some participants enjoyed exploring the community. Anne enjoyed spending time in the grocery store:

> It was really cool to get a chance to walk around in the neighborhood that we were teaching in and it was really cool to be able to go into the grocery store. There were the typical American foods that you could see anywhere and then there was also fig jam, date jam. I bought carob molasses from Lebanon. Labels were entirely in Arabic. It was really cool to see that, but we're still in Michigan. (Thursday night group discussion)

George also enjoyed spending time in the community and felt that his experience gave him a stronger connection to students at Claymore Elementary:

> It was nice to actually be in the community where we were teaching. These are probably some of the stores that my kids go to. That could have been the mothers or the fathers of children. It's really weird for me to think about it, but because I was teaching their kids, I felt a stronger connection to them. I felt like I knew them just a little bit more. Even if I wasn't actually teaching their kids, it just felt like more of a connection. (individual interview)

Others expressed their discomfort in the community during our group discussion. Some felt that going into the shops was inappropriate. Jane shared her discomfort:

> The whole experience made me feel pretty uncomfortable. I felt like we were sort of intruding on the space that belonged to the people of Dearborn, and infringed on their cultural spaces. I could understand why they were gawking at us and making faces, since we were sort of placing ourselves where we didn't necessarily fit in or belong at all. We were going to gawk at their culture and I thought it was insensitive. They seemed a little suspicious of us and kept staring. I don't blame them. The women were especially staring at us, perhaps because of how we dressed more liberally than they were, in terms of what we had covered up. I really feel like it was inappropriate for us to take a "field trip" into their stores. I feel bad that we went into their space and invaded their cultural store. (journal entry)

Jane perceived that the workers and shoppers stared at the group as they walked about the stores. She also assumed that they stared based on her understanding of cultural norms regarding women's dress. Though Jane perceived that people were staring at her, it is also possible that she was self-conscious and uncomfortable being a racial minority in the stores of east Dearborn. It is

possible that she was more concerned about her own perceptions and discomfort in being an outsider than workers and shoppers were about her presence in the stores.

Simon also felt uncomfortable and expressed his concern about entering shops in the community:

> I felt uncomfortable in the stores because I felt like we were just coming in to like, "Ooh! What do we have here?" Turning their culture into a science experiment. It seemed to me as if we were entering this Arab owned store to gawk at the unfamiliar Arabic items. All I could imagine was what the staff was thinking about this group of ten White people entering their store and loitering. I personally would have felt a bit awkward entering any type of business and loitering, but I'm sure that my feelings of unease were exacerbated by the fact that we were a group of White people in an Arab community. My feelings of unease were heightened in the second supermarket we entered. There was a group of women at the counter of the deli who blatantly stared at us while we were in the market. I basically just tried to ignore it and continue shopping. We headed back to the car after spending some time at the supermarket. Some cars honked at us on our way back. I'm not entirely sure why that was, but it was something I had never experienced before. (journal entry)

Simon shared a valid concern about potentially exploiting the community for his own educational gain. Yet, his reflection also suggests that his discomfort may have stemmed from being noticed by workers and shoppers as a racial minority in the stores.

The group discussed how they felt about exploring the community. Some were heated over how inappropriate they felt we had been. Participants questioned the validity of our

experience, as we were a group of ten people entering each store. George shared his thoughts about our "social experiment" and a conversation ensued:

> George: I just felt like we were studying, ogling at things that are new to us. We had a huge group of people go in and I feel like that's not something I would do in a normal every day situation.
>
> Luke: I don't know. I didn't really feel anybody was particularly staring at us in the first store at all.
>
> George: I just really feel like we were not going in there because we needed groceries. We were going in there because we're on a cultural immersion trip. So, I mean, there's definitely this feeling of, "I'm a White person in an Arab community and I feel like an outsider because of that," but also in the back of my mind, we know we're on this trip. (Thursday night group discussion)

George continued to share his concern over our large group presence, and I challenged his view:

> Andrea: I didn't ask you to go into the store and stick with me or follow me out. I didn't ask you to not go to a store that you were interested in going into. You just followed me.
>
> George: I guess that's true. We passed a vape shop and I really wanted to go in and see what it was like, but I definitely felt intimidated to go in there by myself. (Thursday night group conversation)

Invisible wall. Participants continued to share their discomfort during their group discussion. George realized that he was too intimidated to enter the interesting vape shop and connected it to his experience in the grocery store:

> George: Did anybody go in to the hijab section and look around?
>
> Anne: I wanted to, but I didn't go.

Luke: Same.

George: Yeah. So, in my mind, I was like, "Oh my gosh! I need to go in there and I need to look around. It looks really cool," but there was this invisible wall that kept me from going in there.

Simon: Yeah. I guess I thought somehow it would be offensive. I have no affiliation with the hijab. I'm never going to wear one. (Thursday night group discussion)

Experiencing cultural "otherness" served as a catalyst for participants to reconsider their understanding of race, culture, and community. Participants shared their discomfort with the experience and empathized with how students might feel in the music classroom. George, Sierra, and Alexis shared their discomfort in being unable to communicate and read in Arabic. They shared their perceptions of Arabic speakers in the stores:

George: There were these really cool things at the check-out at the first place we went. It looked like a toy. It was all in Arabic, and I really wanted to ask the lady what it was, but I got super intimidated and I couldn't do it. I just felt really intimidated being in that place and not being able to read what it was. I don't know. I felt like such an outsider already in that place that asking for help was just going to draw more attention to how much of an outsider I was. I felt like if I asked, they would either laugh, or talk behind my back, or given me a scorn like, 'What are you doing here asking that?'

Sierra: There was a moment in the first store when one of the people in the meat section yelled across in Arabic to another person at the cash register. I think they were looking over at us and wasn't sure if they were talking about us.

Alexis: That reminds me of what one of the little girls said yesterday when she'd just come into the country and didn't speak English at all. She said that she thought that

everyone was just talking about her. I definitely felt that when the people in the store would start speaking in Arabic. I was like, "Well, I hope they're not talking about us." (Thursday night group discussion)

George also shared his experience exploring the bulk foods section at the grocery store:

George: I got really frustrated when there was a food and it was all in Arabic. I didn't know what the food was. I saw a bunch of stuff that looked kind of cool. I was like, "Oh. I wonder what that is. I have no idea because it's in a language I don't understand." And that was frustrating for me, and I thought, "Wow. If that was mildly frustrating for me, what if I was on the flip side and I spoke Arabic and I was surrounded by only things in English?" That would just be the worst. (Thursday night group discussion)

As participants shared their discomfort in being unable to communicate in the stores, they began to relate their experiences in the schools. Alexis and George discussed similar discomfort navigating language in the music classroom:

Alexis: I don't know if this is just me, but I feel like if one of the people in the Arab community says something to me and I don't understand it, I feel kind of weird being like, "I'm sorry." I don't want to seem like I can't understand what they're saying. I feel like I don't want to say that I didn't understand what they said the first time because I feel … not racist, but weird.

George: Yeah. I forgot this happened, but yesterday, the same thing happened at school. I asked a kid what his name was. He said his name quietly and it was an Arabic name. I didn't quite catch it, and rather than asking again what he said, I was like, "I'll just fake it and sit here."

Alexis: Yeah. I just won't ever say his name.

George: In that moment, I was like, "Oh my gosh! What's happening to me right now?" (Thursday night group discussion)

Participants started to recognize why they felt uncomfortable in the grocery stores. Because some labels were in Arabic, participants could not read them and were afraid to ask questions of the workers in the store. They also perceived that workers were talking about them while they were walking about the store. This experience feeling like an outsider provided participants with an opportunity to reflect upon themselves and the ways in which they engaged with students in the classroom. They began to better understand students' experiences. George said:

> It just dawned on me. If I felt so intimidated asking a person at the counter what a little toy was, I can't imagine what it must feel like to be a student in the class and not understand English and raise your hand and basically out yourself to be like, "I don't know what this means." That must be petrifying. (Thursday night group discussion)

Alexis started to look inward and considered how she might engage with people from cultures other than her own in the future:

> Alexis: I think we can also turn this situation back on ourselves. I'm not going to be offended if someone from a different culture asks me a question about my culture. I'm not going to be like, "Wow. You're an idiot. You don't know this." So, I don't know why I have the assumption that they're going to think I'm an idiot because I don't know everything about their culture.
>
> George: That's true… I guess if somebody asks me about something, I never talk about them or think they're an idiot. Yeah. That's… shoot. (Thursday night group discussion)

Participants reflected on their experience and their perceptions of people they encountered in the grocery stores. They started to recognize why they felt uncomfortable and afraid, and empathized with how others might feel when the situation was reversed. Their experience as a cultural "other" helped them reconsider their assumptions and changed their perspective about engaging with people from cultures outside of their own.

"We Were Out of Place Being White"

As the conversation progressed, participants considered why they felt so uncomfortable in the community. Alexis said:

> I felt weird. I was not very comfortable. But if the situation were not with groups of Arab people, would it have mattered? When I was in Germany, we would go in stores and it wasn't weird at all. So I guess I'm thinking, 'why is that weird?' I don't know. I think it's a subconscious thing, through the media or whatever that there's such a perceived – like, it has to be weird because it's these two groups of people. I'm trying to word this in a way that doesn't make me seem racist, but I feel like if it weren't an Arab store, we wouldn't have felt so weird – if it were White culture. (Thursday night group discussion)

Alexis continued, sharing how she felt when people stared at her in the stores:

> For most of us, generally, people aren't just going to stare at you. So, it was interesting to be on the receiving end. It wasn't like they were mean or threatening. I was just aware that they were looking at us and probably wondering why we were there. I was aware the attention was on us. I'm not used to that, I guess. It was kind of weird. You could tell that all the women in the second store were looking at us. They were probably really confused why this giant group of White people was walking around the store. I don't know if it's because we've just been generally in the school or what, but I haven't really felt that self-

> conscious, like, “I’m White. I am the minority here.” I haven’t really felt that. Maybe it’s because I’m used to not being the minority that it just doesn’t occur to me, but I feel like I just haven’t really been thinking about that in the schools at all. (Thursday night group discussion)

Participants considered how members of the east Dearborn community might feel in their home communities. Luke said, “I’m not saying that any of us do this, but think of when an Arab person goes into stores in our community. Sometimes they get stared at by people” (Thursday night group discussion).

Once the discussion ended, participants reflected in their journals. Lisa reflected on her experience as an outsider and considered how others might feel in a situation where roles were reversed:

> I think I was not quite as worried as other people about looking or feeling out of place in the stores. I was just walking around and staring blankly at some of the things with Arabic written on them. Slowly, I felt I was being looked at by other people, feeling out of place and like I’d overstepped some kind of line. I think I felt that because I felt so out of my element. I did not feel comfortable asking questions about what things were. I think that is sad because I have no reason to think that they would be hostile or annoyed with these questions. It showed me again how hard it would be to be in a situation 24/7 where you don’t know the language and feel like you are an outsider. (journal entry)

Sierra also felt like an outsider and shared how uncomfortable he felt because he did not feel he belonged:

> Walking around the grocery store was an interesting experience. This was one of the first times in my life where I was in the racial minority. I felt as though people were looking at

me, wondering why I was there. Nobody seemed angry, just curious. I couldn't help but think about how it feels to be Arab in this country. Something as harmless as getting looked at made me feel so uncomfortable. If this was just one time for me, I can't imagine how uncomfortable these people must be on a daily basis. I almost felt like I needed to explain to everyone why I was there and that I was not a bad person. This feeling must occur to Muslims every day in America. (journal entry)

Alexis continued to reflect on her own Whiteness in her journal. She noticed how different her experiences were in the community and at school.

> People were staring at us and it makes me wonder how much of it was because we were out of place being White, and how much of it was because we were in a large group. I feel like it made me understand what it was like for them when people stare at them. It was just uncomfortable and made me want to leave. The first store had a hijab section. I wish I'd gone in, but I was so concerned that people were staring that I didn't want to draw more attention by going into a section that was clearly not relevant to me. Honestly, maybe they weren't even staring at us the way I thought they were and I was just really self-conscious being there. I think that the stores were the only time this week that I have been very conscious of being White and that maybe people don't think I belong. At the school, I didn't even think about the fact that we were some of the only White people there. (journal entry)

Participants shared their perceptions that they did not belong in the community because they were White. Alexis shared that she hadn't considered her Whiteness in the schools and had not felt out of place because of her race in the music classroom. Perhaps other participants felt the same, given that they appeared to be uncomfortable in the community, but not in the schools.

This raises a question as to whom participants believed school communities belong. What does it mean that participants did not feel out of place or recognize their Whiteness in schools where the student body is primarily comprised of students of color? Why did their Whiteness permeate their experience outside of the school community?

My blond hair. As the group continued their discussion, Luke shared his perception that the women in the second grocery store stared specifically at Alexis and Lisa and their blond hair. The group discussed how they noticed advertisements on storefronts in the community that projected White beauty standards. Their conversation unveiled another experience in which some participants felt othered:

> Alexis: I did notice on a few different stores, there were advertisements with White people on them. I did notice a few that were, I'm assuming, Arab Americans on the posters, but I noticed there were more signs that I saw with White, blond hair, straight teeth…
>
> Simon: It's like at the [Arab American National Museum] where at the top of that mural there were the two Arab women who were looking at an advertisement of a blond.
>
> Alexis: It's surprising to me because in the stores, they use so many White people. I guess I kind of expected that they wouldn't.
>
> Simon: It's also like Lisa mentioned how a lot of the kids were like, "Ooh! Your hair's so pretty!"
>
> Alexis: I have a story about that in the classroom yesterday! I was with a group of girls. There were probably six of them that kept being like, "I wish I had your eye color. I always wish I had blue eyes." They just kept saying that and I was kind of…

> uncomfortable. I don't know what to say. [The teacher] said they love people with blond hair and that's why they flock to me. (Thursday morning group discussion)

Lisa and Alexis experienced otherness in the community and at their schools because of their blond hair. Young girls commented on their beautiful hair each day at school. Children admired and revered their hair color, which made Alexis and Lisa feel uncomfortable even though it potentially elevated their social status. Lisa did not expect her hair to be a focal point. She said:

> One thing that took me off guard today was when a couple of girls started to touch my hair and say how beautiful it was. Maybe I wasn't thinking, but I couldn't figure out why. I asked Jane, "Was it because I curled it?" For most of my life, being White and having blond hair is the 'basic' way to be. Looking back on it, there is no reason I should have been confused about why they seemed to like it so much. Thinking back to the Social Identity Wheel [assignment], and what do we notice about ourselves – race isn't something I think about. Thinking about my blond hair is just not something I think about. So when they took notice, I'm like, "Why is that interesting?" I don't know. That was something that caught me. I never really thought about being blonde. (journal entry)

Lisa referenced an assignment that participants completed in an orientation meeting. The Social Identity Wheel worksheet asked participants to identify visible and invisible aspects of their identity. Lisa had not before considered her hair color as a distinguishing factor, or as a desired trait.

April also noticed the extra attention Alexis received in the classroom and connected it to the larger social context:

> Something I've noticed is the kids' fascination with Alexis. She has blond hair and blue eyes, a rarity in this school, and some of the girls have told her she is lucky to have such beautiful eyes and hair. I wonder how much of this is wanting what you can't have and how much is rooted in Eurocentric beauty standards. Being White myself, I never paid much attention to the cultural dominance of things like eye and hair color. (journal entry)

Lisa and Alexis received a lot of attention in the local community because of their blonde hair. Lisa shared the impact of her experience:

> When you're the majority of the population and you go somewhere where you're not and you're feeling different… I guess I wasn't ready for little girls to say, "I wish I had your hair." I wasn't expecting a group of women at a grocery store to look at me and Alexis. That threw me off a bit. I just wasn't prepared to be the minority. That was a strange experience. (Post-immersion individual interview)

Lisa and Alexis shared an experience that was different from those of the other participants because of their blond hair. Neither had considered their hair and eye color as part of their identity before. They had never been in an environment where their hair color was coveted. Their experience throughout the week gave them a new perspective on Whiteness. Though their hair was desired, their experience helped them better understand what it feels like to be othered based on external identity traits.

Reflecting on the Experience

Participants had such a visceral, emotional response to their experience in the community that I, as their teacher, had to take a step back and reflect on the experience. Some participants felt strongly that we were in the wrong by bringing ten White people into a store in a predominantly Arab community. Because I was responsible for the event, I questioned the

experience. Were they right? Should we not have entered this space? Was it insensitive? I sought to make sense of this experience.

I knew that Jane felt strongly that we should not have gone into the stores in the community, and I wanted to better understand why. In our post-immersion interview, I asked Jane to reflect on her experience and explain why she believed what we did was wrong.

Andrea: So, talk to me about the grocery store.

Jane: Oh, I was very uncomfortable. Very uncomfortable.

Andrea: Why?

Jane: Well, I just felt like we were intruding on *their* space. We weren't really there to get anything, so it was just kind of weird.

Andrea: What do you mean, 'intruding on their space?'

Jane: That…. I mean, the area we were in was... mostly Arab Americans and I don't think- from their reactions to us, they were clearly not… super comfy with us being there. So I felt bad being like, "Oh. A group of White people is here to intrude on your space." You know what I'm saying? I just felt like we were putting ourselves in a situation that we should not necessarily *been in*.. you know?

Andrea: So what if you had gone in by yourself?

Jane: Uh… I probably wouldn't have. I wouldn't have gone at *all*.

Andrea: Because you would be intruding?

Jane: Yeah.

Andrea: So what makes it intrusive?

Jane: I just feel like we're intruding on their cultural space, you know?

I knew that Jane planned to participate in a European study abroad program that coming summer. Jane and I had discussed her upcoming program, and I had given her recommendations for a side trip she planned for Paris. Many of my recommendations were to visit local markets, restaurants, and shops that were unique to Parisian culture. Because Jane was sensitive about intruding on others' cultural spaces, I was interested in her perception about traveling through Europe. I decided to ask her about it.

> Andrea: So, when you go to Paris this summer, are you going to feel like an intruder?
>
> Jane: That's with *White people.* No. It's a similar culture.
>
> Andrea: Well, it's *not*, actually. So it's about race?
>
> Jane: It's Western Europe.
>
> Andrea: Yeah. It's not the United States.
>
> Jane: But it's not one of… the Arabic countries, you know?
>
> Andrea: So, it's about Arab countries?
>
> Jane: …. I guess so. I guess just, like, in the current political climate, if I were them and a bunch of *White people* walked in, I'd be like, what the hell? Like, *why?* You know? I just think that it made them uncomfortable and us making them uncomfortable made me uncomfortable. You could just tell they were like, 'what is going on,' you know?
>
> Andrea: So, it wasn't that you were uncomfortable being there. You were uncomfortable with them being uncomfortable.
>
> Jane: YES! I just don't like making people feel uncomfortable. It's like second hand embarrassment, you know? I felt like we were intruding in a space that they should feel comfortable in and we were making them feel uncomfortable, so I felt *bad*. (Post-immersion individual interview)

We also visited an Arab bakery in Dearborn many times over the course of the immersion week. Participants did not feel uncomfortable when they were there, and I asked Jane why.

Andrea: Did you feel uncomfortable in [the bakery]?

Jane: … No.

Andrea: Why?

Jane: I don't know.

Andrea: We could also consider that to be 'their space.'

Jane: I guess to me, [the bakery] was more of like a novelty thing, or even like a touristy thing, if there is such a thing in Dearborn. So, it felt more comfortable for us to be there…. I guess it was also more populated by *White people* while we were there. At least, I noticed. It was definitely not… *all*… That sounds so bad. That sounds like I'm only comfortable... around White people….

Andrea: Was this the first time that you were in a space that wasn't predominantly White?

Jane: Yeah… So, I mean, yes. But that's not why I was uncomfortable. I was uncomfortable because I felt like we were… being an intrusive presence somewhere where we should not have been. You know?

Andrea: Because they're Arab?

Jane: Yeah. And because... *they* deserve places where… they can just… be... without… weird strangers coming. When we were in there, I was thinking about what our *White* president is currently doing to Arab Americans and… you know, I was like, 'Man, this must be weird for them as this group of *White people* just *enters* the grocery store.' You know? … I'm very uncomfortable right now.

Andrea: Why?

Jane: I don't know. I just feel like I'm saying bad things. Offensive things. I don't know. I guess that's something that I'll have to think about. (Post-immersion individual interview)

Jane's perspective was enlightening. She touched on all of the elements of the experience that were uncomfortable for participants. They were extremely aware of their Whiteness in a way that they had not experienced before. Their discomfort was heightened because of the political unrest surrounding Arabs and Muslims in the United States. Jane felt bad about engaging with people in the community because of her racial connection to the political climate. By comparing the experience to her perception of both the bakery and her upcoming trip to Paris, Jane started to reexamine her experience in the Dearborn community.

I continue to reflect on the group's experience in the community. On one hand, I led a group of ten White college students into stores in a predominantly Arab community, and should have considered more carefully how our presence may have been perceived by members of the community. On the other hand, I did not perceive our presence to be as obtrusive as participants said. Rather, I noticed participants' discomfort and hoped that their experience would prompt them to explore its source.

Summary

Participants had a strong reaction to their experience in the local community. They felt uncomfortable upon entering the grocery store and perceived that workers and patrons were staring at them and wondering why a group of ten White people were in the store. Participants believed that the grocery store was a space that belonged to the people who lived in that community, and that, as outsiders, we should not have been there. The underlying emotion in

their reactions was fear as they navigated a place with which they were unfamiliar. Participants feared their presence in a space to which they believed they were not entitled. They also were afraid to interact with people in the stores. Participants shared that they feared asking questions about items they were interested in, and that they did not feel comfortable straying from the group to explore their own interests. As they discussed their experience, participants unpacked and voiced the underlying issue that fueled their fear and discomfort. They were a group of White people in an Arab community. The perception that people were staring at them or that they did not belong indicates that participants began to feel what it was like to be "othered" because of their racial identity.

For some participants, this was their first experience in a space that was not predominantly White. They felt uncomfortable in the space. As she further unpacked her experience, Alexis wondered why the experience felt so jarring to her. After all, she had explored stores in Germany and had not felt out of place. Alexis also voiced what was perhaps the most impactful part of this disorienting dilemma. She spent the majority of her week in the schools and never thought about her Whiteness while teaching students of color. Yet, as soon as she was out in the community, her consciousness of being White permeated her thoughts and her perception of her experience. It is possible that other participants shared some of those thoughts and perceptions.

There is much to unpack from this experience regarding participants' racial discomfort, their perception of access to spaces, and their discomfort surrounding their personal and racial connection to the political climate that is beyond the scope of this study. Within the frame of transformative learning, it is clear from participants' dialogue and journal reflections that their experience in the local community was a disorienting dilemma. Many participants were

uncomfortable and their discomfort stemmed from their assumption that east Dearborn was not a space in which they were or should be welcome. They were uncomfortable because they felt like outsiders in the community and were afraid and unsure of how to engage with people they perceived as different from them. The discomfort and fear surrounding their experience led participants to reflect on their assumptions, perceptions, and personal bias. Because of this reflection, some participants began to better understand the perspectives of students and their experiences in the classroom.

Disorienting Dilemma 4: "It Just Doesn't Match Up In My Head"

We gathered Friday night for our final group discussion. Participants positioned themselves around a long table carrying with them the physical and emotional exhaustion of a fully immersive week. "It doesn't feel over yet," Anne said. "It's making me sad," said Alexis.

"I feel like the first day we were just observing," Simon said. "The second day, we were really meeting the teachers and getting to know the kids more, and the third day was like, "Ok. Here we go." And today, I feel like…" His voice trailed off.

"What was this last day like?" I asked.

"I felt really comfortable," Alexis said. "And it was sad."

"It was fast. Really fast." said Jane.

"It was hard," Anne said. "You get this class and they know you and you know them and you've started to form connections with the kids."

"Sorry. I'm crying," Lisa said. "No, it's fine." (Friday night group discussion)

I looked around the table at other participants. They, too, were upset. Anne also was crying. Sierra and Alexis stared down at their laps.

George: Hearing some of the back stories of the kids, that shook me. Hearing about the little girl that was in Syria that got bombed. The detainee. Like, oh god! That hurts. It's so bad. I hate hearing that. That was uncomfortable... You care about these kids, you know? They're the nicest kids. You don't want to hear that these awful things are happening to kids that don't deserve that shit. That's terrible.

Andrea: Is it also uncomfortable when it's on the television?

Jane: It's more comfortable. It's more uncomfortable when... it's people that you physically see.

Anne: When it's on the television, it's kind of dehumanized. And removed. It's like you hear about it and it's frustrating and sad, but it doesn't usually seem real, at least to me.

Jane: Same.

Anne: I can hear about all these stories and I know these things, but they don't feel real because I'm not personally experiencing them. It's like… I don't know. It's kind of like… I don't know. When I hear about 9/11, I know it was a terrible thing. I intellectually know how horrible it was. But I don't… feel it because I didn't see it. I wasn't directly affected by it, so it's really hard to, like.. (starting to cry) understand. When you're not... seeing someone who's been... or talking to someone or working with someone who's been directly affected by it. It just makes it so much more real and human. And it's harder.

April: One thing that I thought about was that raid on the compound in Yemen about a month ago. It made the news that the little 8-year-old Yemeni girl got shot and killed. And I was like, 'Oh my gosh! That's horrible,' but it didn't really sink in how horrible that was. But now, I've met 8-year-old Yemini girls! I've led them through little dances and held their hands as they learned how to make music and now that's all I'm going to see.

Andrea: Was that something you anticipated this week?

Jane: It wasn't really something I thought about. Isn't that weird? I don't know.

Luke: I mean, maybe I anticipated it, but you can't prepare for it. Even though we talked about how we would see refugees and we would meet refugees, you can't prepare for that. You can't –no class is going to teach you, "Oh. This is how you're going to feel," or "this is what you're going to experience when this happens."

Jane: It still felt really abstract to me. Until we met the kids, you know? Or even until a couple days in, you know?

Andrea: What made it not abstract anymore?

Jane: We met the kids. And heard about what they suffered through.

Anne: For me, it's still even hard to believe. We meet these kids in school, which is their safe space, and they're happy and they're laughing and they're smiling. Then you hear the stories from the teachers. You're not hearing it from the kids. You're hearing it from the teachers about what they've been through and what's still happening to them. But comparing what you know to that smiling, happy face, it doesn't – like, it doesn't match up in my head. (through tears) And so, I'm still having trouble, like… Like, I see those boys who have been detained and I can picture them in my head, but… I can't picture going through that situation… Because I only ever saw them smiling and happy and trying to understand and… It just doesn't match up in my head. *(Friday night group discussion)*

Learning About Students' Experiences

The fourth disorienting dilemma occurred over the course of the field experience and culminated in an emotionally-charged discussion on the last night of the week. Participants

shared how the stories in the media seemed so far away and removed from their own experience. During the immersion week, they met immigrant and refugee students from war-torn countries and students who were affected by the United States travel ban. They interacted with members of the Arab and Muslim communities who were discriminated against in the media and the current political climate. As a result, the stories they saw on television became real. Now, they saw a human face in every news story. Participants sought to make meaning of their experience, as the disconnect between the reality of engaging with students in the classroom and their perception of refugees, their countries of origin, war and persecution did not align.

Throughout the week, the teachers shared background information on some of their students with participants. The teachers shared these stories in passing throughout the day, usually after participants had engaged with the students in music class. It was disorienting for participants to reconcile classroom music making with the stories they heard. Sierra said:

> [The teacher] told the story of children being separated from their parents and interrogated for several days due to the recent travel ban. They were kept in a room without beds and had to sleep on the floor. On top of this, they were only given hot dogs for food, which is against their religion, so they went hungry. Nevertheless, this child got up and went to school the next day. (journal entry)

Luke struggled to connect in his mind the boy he saw in the classroom to the child in the music teacher's story:

> That boy whose family was detained was smiling that entire class. I don't know *why* he was smiling that much, but just to see his smiling face and playing the drum. That was really cool and really happy. Then you realize his family was detained. (individual interview)

Jane also tried to connect a student's story to her experience with the student in the classroom. Jane was singing and dancing with a young girl, then later learned what had happened to her. Jane said:

> There was a girl that [the teacher] was talking about. I think she was in kindergarten. She had some kind of vision impairment with one of her eyes and it was because she was at a wedding in Syria with her family when she was a baby. The wedding got hit by a bomb and shrapnel, or something, hit her and impaired her vision. I think she was just now regaining some of her sight. That was a striking thing to me. (Thursday morning group discussion)

Luke interacted with a student from Iraq in music class. Luke knew and understood Iraq through news reports of the war, then engaged in music making with a happy girl. He struggled to make sense of this experience in his mind. Luke said:

> One little girl, I think she was from Iraq, was sitting in front of me. She was the cutest little girl. Growing up, I always heard these negative things going on in Iraq and all these horrible, horrible things going on there. Then to see this pure, innocent, little girl sitting in front of me, from a country I've only heard these crazy things about was just incredible. (individual interview)

George also learned a student's background story after having worked with her in music class. He tried to make sense of his experience and said:

> So, this girl's parents split up. In this community, that's not something that happens very often. I don't know if she has siblings or not, but this girl was in the house. The father pulled up in the car, so the mother went out to the car. The mother and father were fighting in the car and the father pulls out a gun. He kills the mother and then kills

himself in the car. So now this kid doesn't have any parents. And… it was a kid I worked with in a classroom, you know? And I would not have ever guessed that that would have been a thing that happened to that kid. And that's the worst part. These kids did nothing to deserve these awful things to happen to them, you know? Or being detained? These kids, they're not responsible for the political climate around them. They're not responsible for a ban on countries. They had nothing to do with that, you know? That for me – hearing how the things adults have done hurt kids is so hard to hear. You don't want to hear bad things happening to kids that you care about so much. That was the worst. (individual interview)

The more participants learned about the backgrounds of students they met in the classrooms, the more they connected their experience to the current political climate. As participants expressed repeatedly, by engaging with children affected by politics and war, the stories they heard on the news were humanized. Though participants may have previously been saddened by news stories about Arabs and Muslims, the stories remained largely abstract because they were not, nor had they met anyone directly affected by politics and war.

When Politics Become Personal

The current political climate was an underlying factor throughout the field experience in Dearborn. Yet, most members of the school community did not discuss President Trump or his policies with participants or each other. The teacher even guided participants away from asking fifth grade students political questions during their question and answer session. When teachers and students did bring him up, they did so in a joking manner. Alexis shared her experience when a teacher, who wore a headscarf, dropped her students off for music class and was introduced to the music teacher's guests. Alexis said:

> One teacher came in and she was so funny. She was like, "So you all support Donald Trump, right?" She was yelling at us, "You want to build a wall!" And she was laughing. We didn't really know what to say, but we were laughing because she was – making light of it. (individual interview)

Similarly, one student did a great comedic impression of the president. The music teacher asked her student to perform his impression for participants. Sierra reflected on the experience:

> I wasn't sure what to think about it, but the teacher brought it up. She was like, "This guy's got the best Trump impersonation. You have to see it." He did it and it was a good impersonation, but I don't know. It was kind of weird. (individual interview)

Participants struggled to make sense of the school community's satirical approach to politics after hearing how students have been directly affected by them. In an interaction with students over breakfast, Simon listened to one student's perspective on President Trump. Simon said:

> I was sitting across from this kid and we were chatting. At one point, he brought up Donald Trump and he was like, "Yeah, me and my sister make fun of him a lot." He said something like, "Yeah. He's not really a nice guy," and I don't know. At that age, I probably didn't even know who the president was, you know? But he knows that already and at home, they probably talk about the things that are happening. So that was interesting. (Thursday morning group discussion)

Simon's realization that the young boy already knew about the President and his policies brings another aspect to this disorienting dilemma. In this interaction, Simon began to understand how the political climate affected students in Dearborn differently than it did him. The students had to be aware of politics because politics directly affected their lives. Since participants were not

members of the ethnic, religious, and/or cultural groups affected, they did not experience the same reality as the students and could disengage from the impact that politics had on students' lives. These political issues remained largely abstract until they were confronted by them in the faces of the students with whom they worked.

This shift from understanding political issues in the abstract to experiencing them through the eyes of students made participants consider these issues in a new way. Though he said he supported the Arab and Muslim community before his immersion field experience, Luke's perception changed as a result of his experience:

> I've made attachments to these people who could eventually get forced out of this country. I think it makes me feel even stronger about politics. It's one thing to be sad, a hypothetical, 'Oh, these poor people that I don't know and haven't interacted with,' It's one way to feel empathetic that way, but when you've met the people that are actually dealing with this, it's a whole new ballgame. This is an awful thing. These people are just trying to flee from danger, live a better life, and the fact that we're grilling second graders on questions that they don't even understand, it's just ridiculous to me. (individual interview)

Their first-hand experience with students affected by the political climate changed the way in which they perceived Arabs and Muslims in the United States. Simon said:

> Yesterday, they were doing the Pledge of Allegiance in the gym. All I could think about was how if people who were afraid of Arab or Muslim people could just see those kids who probably love America just as much as anybody else does. They're not trying to harm anyone. I feel like I came into this pretty open minded, I guess. I don't have any negative feelings toward Muslims or Arabs, but to someone who maybe doesn't feel the

same way that I do, I think they'd have a stronger reaction to things than me. If people who are afraid could just have this experience, they wouldn't be as afraid or ignorant, you know? (individual interview)

Lisa also gained a new understanding of Arabs and Muslims after interacting with students. Though she stated that she did not harbor prejudice toward Arabs and Muslims before, her perception of the community broadened after spending time with them. She could not connect the negative media portrayals to the people she met. Lisa said:

> It just blows my mind that there's all this stuff in the media and blaming them as terrorists and all these horrible things – which I did not believe in the first place, at all… The way that their culture views being kind to others and the way the kids work around each other, how could society put that label on them? Telling them to get out of our country, it has just blown my mind. (individual interview)

The school's communities welcomed participants with open arms during their field experience. Participants built relationships with students and teachers that, in some ways, reframed their perception of Arabs and Muslims. News stories that once seemed abstract to participants were real now because they could connect them to a human face. Alexis said:

> I don't think I've ever met a more welcoming and kind group of people, and it has only made me more fired up about the current state of our country and the views that some people have. I would get upset and angry hearing about these political issues regarding Arabs and Muslims before, but now I have so many faces with stories to relate to those things, that it just makes it that much more real. Now if I see on TV, something happening to a child, I won't be able to help but imagine one of the wonderful children I got to work with this week. Especially after meeting the boy who was recently detained,

and hearing these stories, and seeing these kids in person makes it feel that much more real and makes me really angry. (journal entry)

Participants built relationships with students and teachers that, in some ways, reframed their perception of Arabs and Muslims. They began to connect students' experiences to the current political climate, and in doing so, the news stories they saw were no longer abstract.

"Here Come the White People"

At the beginning of the field experience, participants described students using four adjectives: sweet, happy, welcoming, and well-behaved. They often referred to students using these adjectives throughout the field experience. Later in the week, I asked participants why they kept referring to students in this manner:

> Andrea: Many of you have referred to students saying, "They're so cute," "They're so happy." Why is that the way you describe them?
>
> Luke: I think the media portrays – especially Arab people – as not happy, and victims and sad.
>
> Andrea: Is that what you were expecting?
>
> Luke: No. I wasn't really sure what I was expecting.
>
> Jane: I wouldn't have been surprised.
>
> Simon: I think, to some degree, I expected to show up like, 'Here come the White people to save the day.' *Not* to a crazy amount, but I think I was mildly surprised to see that wasn't the case. I guess on one hand, I was like, 'It will be a normal classroom. It's not going to be that different,' but on the other hand, I figured – just from all you hear in the media and how their culture is being persecuted, that you would see more of that – children feeling less joy and happiness and normalcy.

Luke: Right. When we were having these discussions beforehand, I got the sense that they were going to be more fearful of what was going on in the country, but we had a 5th grader come up to us yesterday and give his best Donald Trump impression… So, I think that's what sticks out. Not that it wasn't what we were expecting, but it wasn't what we were expecting.

Simon: I think partially. Maybe I had that expectation because, why would we be going and doing this big group trip if it weren't for some type of noble cause?

Alexis: I think part of it is that you hear the stories of some of the things these kids have gone through in their countries or coming here, like when [the teacher] told us about the two kids who were detained. I was expecting the kid who had been detained to be off to the side, like, traumatized, but he seemed fine. He was smiling and having a good time. (Thursday morning group discussion)

In this discussion, participants further revealed the perceptions they held of Arabs and Muslims at the beginning of the field experience, as well as their assumptions not only about the students they would encounter, but also the purpose of the field experience itself. Participants perceived that Arabs and Muslims were persecuted and, therefore, assumed that Arabs and Muslim students would be sad and dejected in the classrooms. Simon also shared his assumption that the purpose of the cultural immersion field experience was to save and help the people we would meet in Dearborn. It is possible that Simon voiced an assumption held by other participants as well. What does it mean to assume that White participants were going to help people in a predominantly Arab and Muslim community? How might this assumption have impacted participants' development of cultural competence throughout their immersion field

experience? These perceptions and assumptions about the people they were going to meet help to illuminate the disorienting dilemma the participants experienced.

Summary

The fourth disorienting dilemma occurred as participants realized their perceptions of and assumptions about Arabs and Muslims did not align with their experiences with the students. Instead of meeting sad and traumatized children, participants met happy, lively students. The school community did not openly portray fear about the current political climate. Rather, they joked about and poked fun at the president. Yet, participants developed a new understanding of politics and war when they met people whose lives were directly affected by it. Participants voiced that after their field experience, the stories they saw in the media and the political climate were made human in the children they met. This disorienting dilemma was particularly raw at the end of the immersion week, and participants returned to their homes still reconciling their experience. Their perceptions suggest unchecked White privilege surrounding their interactions with members of the school and local communities. It is possible that some participants perceived themselves as White Saviors who would help students in Dearborn.

The Disorienting Dilemmas

In this chapter, I described four disorienting dilemmas that occurred during the cultural immersion field experience, each of which impacted participants' perceptions and assumptions of and beliefs about Arabs and Muslims, the current political climate, and teaching students whose cultural backgrounds differ from their own. Each disorienting dilemma prompted participants to reconsider their perspectives and understandings in a different way.

In the first disorienting dilemma, the girl in the purple sweater, I redirected participants' focus from teacher pedagogy to the students in the classroom. I shared my observation of an

English language learner's experience in the music classroom that prompted participants to notice and reconsider the role of language in the classroom. Participants felt guilty for not noticing English language learners and realized they had made incorrect assumptions about students' behaviors in class. Participants also began to notice the teachers' use of Arabic language and Arab songs in their instruction to connect to their students. Participants saw how students were more engaged when the teachers incorporated their cultural knowledge in the music lessons. The disorienting dilemma oriented participants to observe students and cultural influences in the music classrooms.

The second disorienting dilemma, the question and answer session with students, showed participants the importance of asking questions and learning from students who are the cultural experts in the class. Participants realized they were afraid to ask questions about students' cultures and religion, but, in doing so, they learned a great deal, particularly about Islam. Participants learned about the cultural differences within the religion and reconsidered their assumptions and impressions about Muslims. The disorienting dilemma provided participants with new information about students' backgrounds and prompted them to reflect on their assumptions, perceptions, and beliefs about interacting and engaging with people from cultures outside of their own.

The third disorienting dilemma, the experiences in the local community, made participants reflect on their own implicit biases and think about their perceptions of interacting with people outside of the school community. Participants were uncomfortable and afraid in the grocery store. For some, it was their first experience as a minority, and they were conscious that they were White in the grocery stores and walking about the community. Many were intimidated when they were unable to read Arabic labels or understand what workers were saying to each

other. By experiencing how it felt to be a cultural outsider in a community, participants started to better understand the experiences of Muslims in the United States and of the students in the classrooms. The most important aspect of this disorienting dilemma was that participants acknowledged that their experience in the community differed from their experience in the schools. At school, participants were not consciously aware that they were White people teaching students of color. In the local stores, their Whiteness consumed their thoughts.

The fourth disorienting dilemma occurred over the course of the week as participants gained more experiences in the schools. Their experiences were disorienting when what they believed and understood did not align with what they heard and saw in the classroom. Participants' prior knowledge about Arabs and Muslims did not align with the students they encountered. The tragic stories that they heard about students' backgrounds were not reflected in the faces of students they met. Their abstract, conceptual understanding of politics and war became real in the people they met. Participants' perceptions and beliefs began to change with this new information.

CHAPTER 7: AFTER THE EXPERIENCE

After the cultural immersion field experience, participants returned to school and to their regular routine. Only a few weeks remained in the semester, and their lives were busy preparing for concerts and exams. We met for a final group meeting over dinner one week after our return. I was interested in learning participants' perceptions of the week and looked forward to hearing their thoughts. Now that the immediacy of the disorienting dilemmas had passed, how did participants view their experience? What were they thinking about now?

Reevaluating Perspectives

For many participants, the cultural immersion field experience was their first interaction with members of Arab and Muslim communities. Participants built relationships with students in the music classrooms and developed a more personal connection to the stories about Arabs and Muslims that they read and saw in the news. This connection impacted their perception of these communities and prompted some participants to reconsider what they thought they knew.

Current Events and the Media

Participants' experiences in Dearborn differed from media portrayals of Arab and Muslim communities. Some participants noticed that Arabs and Muslims are portrayed negatively in the media. Lisa said:

> I get news alerts on my phone. ISIS this, ISIS that. The killings. I think about how poorly represented they are and how that would be so hard on their families. They're not represented in any positive way. When I look at the news, I don't think I've seen where Arabs are represented in a positive light. That just breaks my heart. (Post-immersion individual interview)

George also reflected on media portrayals of Arabs and Muslims. After the immersion experience, he felt he had a deeper understanding of their communities. George said:

> It just kind of made me realize that the stories we hear about them – the CNN updates on my phone – are not at all representative of most Muslims or most Arabs or most refugees. In reality, they're so much more similar to everybody else in the world. So that's the really big take away that I got. (Post-immersion individual interview)

George recognized that the media influenced his perception of Arabs' and Muslims' lived experiences. His interactions with members of the Dearborn community gave him a new perspective that not all Arab and Muslims experienced what he saw depicted on the news. However, while CNN stories did not represent all Arabs, Muslims, or refugees, it is important to recognize that the families in Dearborn also do not represent their entire cultural, ethnic, or religious groups.

Simon also developed a new perspective of Arabs and Muslims. He appreciated the opportunity to engage with members of the Dearborn community and said:

> I like that I have more concrete evidence that Arab Americans are literally normal people. I hadn't really known anyone or interacted with anyone who was an Arab American or Muslim or anything like that. That was good for me… There are a lot of people who feel uneasy with Arab Americans or people of their culture. So, a lot of what was going through my mind was that if someone who did feel uneasy, or racist, or I don't know – If they had the experience that I had, I feel like their mind would be changed a lot. They would realize that they're just people like you and me. (Post-immersion individual interview)

Simon recognized the importance of interacting with people outside of his culture in order to further develop his own cultural competence. Simon shared that he learned that Arab Americans were "normal" people. Perhaps this is evidence that Simon harbored some implicit fear toward Arab Americans before the cultural immersion field experience.

Because media portrayals of Arabs and Muslims did not align with participants' experiences, they began to reconsider their previous understandings. Some participants broadened their perspective and began to think critically about media influence on their understanding.

The political climate at the time of this study had a profound impact on participants as they processed their experiences in Dearborn. They formed relationships with students and teachers and felt more personally connected to political issues surrounding Muslims and refugees. While Jane said she had always been supportive of Arabs and Muslims and against anti-immigration policies, she felt more connected to the issues once she developed personal connections to students and families who were affected:

> The thing that really got me about being in the Arab American community for the week is just – they are just people. They want to live. I wish that people that were anti-immigration and stuff could just spend a day in that music classroom with those kids. It just made me feel frustrated that there are so many people out there that just don't care. And don't understand. And don't care that they don't understand. I guess the need for inclusivity was emphasized to me after that experience. I've always been a pretty liberal person. I've always been like, "We should let everyone in," and blah, blah, blah, but meeting the kids and being in the community really emphasized that for me… I guess it's made me feel like I have a more personal connection to the current political climate and

> the things that are going on with refugees and legislation regarding that… I have been in a few situations where people say, "Oh, Arab Americans," or "Arab people," and I'm automatically on edge. I feel a lot more responsibility towards those people and that topic to make sure that people know what I now know, which is not even a lot, to be fair. But it's something I didn't have until I did this. So, I feel very defensive and protective of discussions about Arab Americans or Arab people, in general, because when I think of that now, I just think of the kids I met and the community that I was in. (Post-immersion individual interview)

Anne also felt a more personal connection to politics and the media. After building relationships with students in Dearborn, media stories became more real. Anne said:

> It's really hard for me to read a story in the news, and I'll feel sad and it sucks, but it doesn't register as something that's really happening. You hear about all these attacks and problems in the world, I know it's there and I know it's wrong. I feel sad, but it doesn't feel real because it's not happening to someone I know. Everything that we talked about was right in front of me, so it made it real. I mean, I hate that that's what it takes, but now I feel like I can do something because I've had that experience and now it seems real. (Post-immersion individual interview)

Participants described the ways in which their perception and understanding of Arabs, Muslims, and refugees changed after their experience. They began to question some previous assumptions they made. Participants felt more personally connected to politics surrounding Arabs, Muslims, and refugees as a result of their experience. It is unclear whether participants recognized the implicit bias underlying their perspectives of and assumptions about Arabs and Muslims as cultural groups.

Sierra looked inward and thought about how his perception of people from different cultures changed after his experience. He said:

> If I had seen someone from a different culture, I wouldn't necessarily be scared or uncomfortable, but I think just disconnected from the other person, just because I've never personally interacted with so many people from this culture. Not that I saw them as less than human before this, but now I have a personal experience with them. Now I have a better idea. We aren't really different at all. I mean, we're different in certain aspects, backgrounds and stuff, but from a human standpoint, we're pretty much all the same. But until you get those experiences with people, they can't really be connected. I think that's where a lot of ignorance comes from – people who haven't experienced different cultures and they just assume that since they're so disconnected, they must be very different or there must be certain things that they do that aren't what we do. (Friday night group discussion)

Sierra shared a more nuanced understanding of people from cultures other than his own. He acknowledged that people have different backgrounds and experiences, but also shared a common humanity. Sierra also considered how his socialization impacted his worldview and the norms that structured his life. He considered the importance of experiencing new viewpoints to broaden one's perspective. Sierra said:

> It's been eye-opening to me, trying to understand other people's point of view. I think society in general wants a black and white answer, but I think there's so many different answers to a question. And there are so many different students with so many different life experiences. Growing up, I've seen one group of people and you get to know norms and that's your world. And then, the more you veer outside of your world, the wider the

bubble expands. And then you have more of a reference point, I guess. I think it's important to experience things that you wouldn't normally do. (individual interview)

By engaging with students in Dearborn, George said he developed empathy towards people who were different from him. He believed his experience would help him in his future classroom teaching. George said:

> Just being around people that are different from you… I think it's really important if you want to be empathetic towards certain people, you need to have experiences that allow you to be empathetic towards your students. So, if I'm ever teaching refugees or Arabs or Muslims or anyone like that, I feel like I have a lot more personal, lived experience to draw upon. I think that's why this experience is important. It's why I'd advocate for similar programs. To have more lived experiences to draw upon as teachers. (individual interview)

George recognized the importance of empathy when interacting with students. However, while empathy is important in teacher-student engagement, false empathy can be problematic (Warren, 2014). George was not Arab, Muslim, or a refugee himself, so George likely could not truly empathize with students' lived experiences? Did George consider himself prepared to teach *all* Arab and Muslim students he encountered or did he understand that culture was more nuanced than he seemed to suggest?

Alexis did some self-reflection on her own assumptions about engaging with people. She thought about how she could structure future interactions with people whose culture differed from hers. Alexis said:

> It's not like I was excluding people before, but going out of my way to be friendlier to everybody and talk to more people – I realize how much we miss out on when we think,

> 'Oh, they're different. They have a different culture.' I'm nervous, I guess. I know I felt that sometimes. Not just to talk to them, but to ask more questions about, "What experiences do you have? How do you live? What is your culture like?" And we miss out on a lot when we don't ask those questions and take that extra effort to learn those things. (individual interview)

While Alexis considered how she might engage with others in the future, Lisa connected her experience in Dearborn to one she had at school. There were many Asian students in Lisa's applied studio and Lisa often had trouble engaging with them at school. She thought about how she might apply what she learned in Dearborn to her interactions with her peers. Lisa said:

> I think it's really important to apply this to other cultures. I just think it's really important for people, in general, to feel recognized. Like on the 5th floor of the music building, a lot of [the piano majors] come from Asian countries. I'm finding it difficult to connect with them, to be able to talk to them. But I feel like that's just as important. So, I'm trying to figure out how to apply this to my college experience. I realize I have to purposefully go out of my way to find other cultures. I'm just trying to figure out ways to connect what we learned, to help people feel their culture is recognized. (Post-immersion group discussion)

Many participants shared perspectives that suggested they were still in the process of developing cultural understanding. Some participants began to reflect on their personal assumptions and beliefs about people whose cultures differed from their own. They recognized the importance of stepping out of their comfort zone in order to engage with people from different backgrounds. Some shared how their experience broadened their perspective and their frame of reference.

Engaging With Muslims

Some participants interacted with Muslims for the first time when they were in Dearborn. Participants did not disclose that they had any fear of or bias toward women wearing hijabs before or during the field experience. However, some shared their new perspective after the field experience ended. Luke said:

> Before this experience, if I were walking down the street and a woman in a hijab had walked past me, I would have felt mildly uncomfortable. That's me being completely honest. And now, I don't think that will affect me. I don't think it will phase me. And if that's the only thing I've taken away from this, which I don't think it is, that's a big thing. At least for me. (Friday night group discussion)

During our post-immersion dinner, Sierra and George shared their experiences:

> Sierra: One thing I've noticed is that whenever I see people wearing scarves now, I don't think of them as any different. Not that I used to, but I wasn't used to seeing someone wearing that. Now, I guess it's a little less out of the ordinary for me.
>
> George: I felt similarly [in my fieldwork placement]. There's a girl who plays flute who wears a hijab and I definitely felt more inclined to talk to her and reach out to her. I don't feel like I would have been as inclined before this experience… The women I pass in hijabs now, they just feel more human. They don't feel like these shells or these caricatures that I had known them as before. I feel like if I were to talk to them or if I were to reach out to them, they would have really cool and interesting things to say to me. I don't know. That was a surreal realization to make.
>
> Sierra: I see people as more similar now than I do different. Because I used to see the differences. Obviously, you still notice if someone is wearing a head scarf, but I think

> now that I have had experiences with it, I feel like I am more likely to just have a normal conversation with them as opposed to feeling awkward or like, 'Oh. We aren't supposed to be talking,' you know? (Post-immersion group discussion)

Luke shared how he noticed women wearing hijabs on a recent shopping trip:

> I was in [the grocery store] the other day and there were three women in hijabs. There was this one lady, who was with her family. She was just a beautiful person. And I don't think I would have noticed that before. I probably would have just turned and not looked because that's how we are taught. (Post-immersion individual interview)

Sierra, George, and Luke shared how their prior meaning perspectives made them feel like they should not engage with Muslim women because they were different. Their perspectives changed after engaging with students and teachers during the immersion field experience. By reexamining their assumptions, they broadened their frames of reference to include a new perspective of Muslim women. Participants shared that they no longer felt uncomfortable seeing women in hijabs and that they noticed Muslim women more in their daily lives, which suggests progress from a socialization that suggested they should not engage with or "see" Muslim women. However, what does it mean that now they see women wearing hijabs as more human? How had they seen them before?

Anne noticed a difference in her own awareness of Muslims on campus after she returned from the immersion field experience. She used this awareness to continue broadening her perspective of her surroundings. Anne said:

> I don't know if I just wasn't aware of it before, but since I've gotten back on campus, I've noticed more women in hijabs than before. I'm not going anywhere different. I think I'm just aware. So, I'm looking more closely at people around me and trying not to make

snap judgements as much as I can. Trying to just understand more about different cultures and understand everyone is different. It's hard to do because so much of it is unconscious. (Post-immersion individual interview)

Sierra also used his experience to reflect on the ways in which his perspectives and assumptions changed. He shared what he learned:

> I think I expected things to be more different than they were, in terms of visible traits. I think it's easy to see someone who looks different and expect them to be different, but when you talk to people who look different than you, like I did on the trip, you start to realize that maybe you kind of think of people as different based on appearance or something visible, but you don't take into account that we're all just human beings walking the earth. (Post-immersion individual interview)

After they returned from the cultural immersion field experience, participants started reevaluating their understandings and perceptions of Arabs, Muslims, and refugees. They realized that the media did not represent the people with whom they interacted in Dearborn. They understood people differently after connecting with people in the school community during the immersion field experience. Participants' reflections also suggest that while their beliefs about Arabs and Muslims began to evolve, they might still view Arabs and Muslims as a monolithic cultural group, rather than understanding that culture and religion are more nuanced aspects of one's individual identity. Participants also shared perceptions that Muslim women became more human and noticeable after the cultural immersion field experience. Perhaps this is evidence that participants held implicit bias toward Muslims before their experience.

Reconsidering Culture in the Music Classroom

At the beginning of the cultural immersion field experience, participants did not immediately notice cultural impacts in the music classroom, and they focused their observations primarily on teacher pedagogy. Throughout the immersion week, participants began to notice more cultural differences in each school. When they reflected on their experience and what they learned, participants shared how they consider culture as they think about teaching in their future music classrooms. Lisa reminded me of her perception before the beginning of the cultural immersion field experience:

> I remember we were all sitting in our meetings beforehand and we were talking about how teaching would be culturally different and everyone thought they would be good. Hands down, they could recognize cultural differences and they were going to be the best teachers ever. Then we got there and it's so different, you know? People can say they have all these ideals, but I'm worried when it comes to putting them into action, they might be all talk sometimes. Looking back, everyone thought they would be totally ready. I don't know. I just remember sitting there and everyone was like, "Yeah. We'll be culturally relevant teachers." And you were like, "How?" And we were like, "We don't know!" (Post-immersion individual interview)

Lisa reflected on an orientation meeting in which we discussed culture in education. She remembered believing that she was prepared for the field experience before it began and reflected after the experience on how she was not aware of what she did not know prior to her immersion experience.

A Broader Perspective

Other participants reflected on their experience in the music classrooms and acknowledged that there were many things of which they were not aware at the start of the week. Jane remembered that she focused on teaching pedagogy at the beginning of the week and shared how her focus changed as the week progressed.

> The first day, I was like, "They didn't do MLT," Blah, blah, blah. We only had four days there, but my [journal] reflections became more about the kids and interactions with them. Not to say that the music wasn't important – because it was – but, it was so much more important to see the kids and how we all interacted with one another. (Post-immersion individual interview)

Alexis also reflected on the ways in which her classroom observations and interactions changed throughout the week. She thought about the students and her role as a music teacher. Alexis said:

> Especially after the first couple of days, I started thinking more about the kids as people. Like, what they've been through and what they deal with and who they are. I think especially after talking about the girl in the purple sweater and Ali, the little Libyan boy, then I started looking at them like, 'What are you thinking? What are you feeling?' instead of just 'We're teaching kids!' It became 'What are their stories and how does that affect them?' [The teacher] said she thinks that loving the kids and taking care of the kids comes before what they learn. If they can't do this thing as well as another school, she doesn't care as long as they have this place and feel loved. They still have to deal with the pressure of kids having to meet standards, so it's not all like they just come in and

take care of the kids and love them. They still have to teach them something. How do you balance that and accomplish that? I don't know. (journal entry)

Participants further developed their music teaching philosophies after the cultural immersion field experience. For Jane, learning about students' backgrounds changed her perspective on her role as a music teacher. She reconsidered the things she valued in her classroom. Jane said:

> Hearing these kids' stories and all the stuff they have been through and seeing [the teacher] teach, it was about music, but it was also about giving them a place where they felt safe. And of course you want your kids to achieve musically, but I think for me, when I have a classroom, I want them to feel safe and that's the number one thing. (Post-immersion individual interview)

Luke also shared how the cultural immersion field experience impacted his thoughts about music teaching. He said:

> I think for me, inclusion is so important. I think I thought that before, but this experience definitely added to it. Inclusion and listening. And just… being aware of my students. Not even my students, but just the world around me, and using that to be a better teacher. (Post-immersion individual interview)

Anne considered how culture will impact and inform the lessons she teaches in her future classroom. She also began to think about how she might foster cultural interaction and learning amongst herself and her students. Anne said:

> I've thought about how I'm going to present my own culture in the classroom. How can I show who I am so that by showing who I am, they're more comfortable showing who they are? If I can show who I am and where I come from, then maybe I can ask some

questions about who might be willing to volunteer some information. Or thinking about how culture affects the lessons? And how to work within their culture – maybe pull things from their culture into what you're trying to do. And how to bring in a culture that maybe no kid is from and incorporate that and make it work. (Post-immersion individual interview)

Lisa realized the complexities of teaching with a cultural eye. She shared how her perception of teaching culturally changed after her experience.

> You know, in choir, you have a student from Africa or something, so you teach maybe an African drumming lesson in your class and then you get to check the box off, you know? But I learned that it's not really like that. Even though that's a part, it's more about that emotional connection and kids feeling wanted and valued. If there's not that connection there, they'll be totally disengaged. At school, [the teacher] taught that song [from Lebanon]. The kids recognized it and got excited. But you still have to go out of your way to find times when you can validate kids, and care about who they are when they walk into the classroom, not who you want them to be when they leave. That's just something I think about. (Post-immersion individual interview)

Sierra recognized the complexity of teaching both content and people. He thought about the importance of teaching and pedagogy, but also recognized the importance of knowing his students and considering their needs in the classroom. Sierra said:

> This trip made me realize more how complex teaching is. Taking all these different classes – like conducting class – you have to get the right technique and then you have to gesture and you have to know the music and be musical. And that's all good and well, but when you get into a classroom, yeah, you need to know that. You need to know how to

run a rehearsal, but you also need to know if this kid is having issues and you also have to know how to deal with that, too. So, I think this experience has given me a broader perspective, taking into account each student's story. (Post-immersion individual interview)

George's experience helped him understand culture and teaching from a new perspective. He acknowledged that he still had much to learn. George said:

> I think that was the biggest benefit – this deep emotional connection to some of these kids and that feeling toward the kids has definitely stuck in my brain the most, compared to reading about it or thinking about it… Having actual concrete life experiences with real people that you actually meet was the most meaningful and awesome thing about the experience. There's certain ways of knowing and certain ways of thinking that you just can't get from reading. You really have to be in the situation and have that personal connection. I'm really thankful now that I have at least a few personal stories to draw back on and use to advocate for certain things or to help ground the way I think about the world and the way I see things… I always think that the more I read about in culture and teaching, I'll eventually have it figured out and everything will click. It kind of feels like now, the more kids I meet, the more stories I hear about, the more I read about culture, it just kind of feels like this never-ending process of learning. (Post-immersion individual interview)

After their cultural immersion field experience, participants developed a broader perspective of music teaching and learning. They began to understand the importance of knowing students' backgrounds and experiences in order to effectively teach them. They also considered how they might incorporate students' cultures into their teaching. While these

perspectives will continue to develop over the course of their career, participants began to consider student backgrounds and experiences, as well as the classroom culture they hoped to create.

The Role of Language

The presence of English language learners was one of the most prominent differences in these music classrooms in comparison to the classrooms that they had experienced previously. Participants closely observed and interacted with English language learners, particularly after I directed their attention toward the girl in the purple sweater. Lisa reflected on the difficulty she had identifying English language learners in the music classroom. She said:

> When we had that meeting and you brought up the little girl [in the purple sweater], I think that made me feel uncomfortable because it totally made me question my character and who I was and what I thought. I didn't think, 'I'm a bad person,' but I did think, 'I have some work to do.' In that [orientation] meeting, I thought, 'We'll be the greatest teachers ever,' but putting that into action, I think I realized in that moment, you have to be much more mindful than I was prepared for. I was not prepared for how difficult it was to even initially notice that. I don't think I realized that I wouldn't. So, I think that threw me off quite a bit. (Post-immersion individual interview)

George also struggled while working with an English language learner. He shared his experience teaching a student to play recorder and the difficulty he experienced not being able to communicate with the child. George said:

> The issue of language and literacy was a big thing. In the abstract, of course not knowing the language would affect you and it'd be hard. But trying to help a kid play recorder who didn't know how to speak English? That is so difficult. It's not just kind of difficult. The

lesson doesn't happen unless they speak English. So, I didn't realize how severe an issue language can be in the classroom. Or in life for that matter. If you're trying to shop at the grocery store and it's written in English, that's got to be so aggravating… It definitely made me reevaluate the importance I put on language and literacy and making sure that I'm always conscientious of the fact that kids might come into my classroom and not speak English. So, I'm actively thinking of ways that I can support language learners in my future classroom. I can put English signs and Arabic signs next to a pencil sharpener. Something like that. I would say, I'm definitely more cued into that aspect of learning. (Post-immersion individual interview)

For George, his experience teaching an English language learner in the music classroom combined with his experience in the Arab grocery store, provided him with a new understanding of language in the classroom, and prompted him to consider ways in which to support English language learners in his future classroom.

Both teachers also incorporated Arabic language into their instruction and interactions with students. Alexis shared her observations of the teachers' use of Arabic in the music classroom. She reflected on its importance in making students feel validated:

I saw how [the teacher] learned a lot of Arabic and incorporated that. The kids loved it. She'd joke with them in Arabic and they'd laugh. Or she'd scold someone in Arabic and they'd laugh. They loved that she got involved in their culture and didn't just expect them to conform to her standards and culture. So, I'm thinking about how to do that, and thinking about trying to relate positive reinforcement and punishments with the culture. That wasn't really something I would have thought about before, just thinking about how

> important it was for these kids that [the teacher] was involved in their culture and how much effect that had. (individual interview)

Language played an important role in both music classrooms. After spending the week with students, participants' understanding of the impact of language in the classroom grew. They were better able to identify English language learners and were less intimidated to work with them by the end of the week (fieldnotes). Participants recognized the importance of teachers learning and using students' language, and began to consider how they might support their future English language learner students.

Connecting Coursework to the Field Experience

As participants reflected on their week in the music classrooms, some connected aspects of their coursework to their field experience. Participants saw concepts they read about in classes come to life during the week. George considered the difference between reading about and conceptualizing topics and experiencing them while in the music classroom:

> This cultural immersion experience has shown me how much there is to learn by becoming a teacher, especially a teacher in a community like Dearborn. While I understood, in the abstract, how complex issues of literacy, race, and religion are in society and in the classroom, being with these kids who embody so much of what we talk about has really helped me develop a more nuanced understanding of these ideas. (journal entry)

Participants shared how their beliefs and perceptions broadened as a result of first-hand experience. They thought about their coursework and classroom discussions, and they shared how their experience enriched their learning. Their experience helped them understand course readings and discussions from a different perspective.

Before the immersion field experience, Lisa believed she was more prepared to teach students whose cultural backgrounds differed from her own. When she reflected on her experience, she realized that, while her academic preparation was helpful, she was not fully prepared for the experience. Lisa said:

> No amount of reading or studying could ever fully prepare someone for the exact moment when they're thrown into the unknown. I think beforehand I had this general idea that I want to be a music teacher that is culturally in touch with her students and very sensitive to things like stereotypes. Even though this is a great way to think, when I was put in the situation right away, it was kind of like, "Oh, shoot. How do I follow through with this?" (journal entry)

Simon also thought about the readings he completed for the orientation meetings connected to the immersion field experience. He developed a deeper understanding of the readings after he interacted with people in Dearborn. Simon said:

> Even in our meetings beforehand, we're just reading these articles and talking about it, and it's just words on a page. Even in the discussions, I felt like we were not saying much or if we did, it was almost surface-y, kind of regurgitating what we read. But here, we're actually interacting with the people we're reading about. It's just real, I guess. (Post-immersion individual interview)

Anne also developed a new understanding of topics discussed in her coursework. She shared how her experience made her consider how she might teach music in the future:

> There are the things that we talk about in all the classes that we're in, but experiencing it firsthand is a totally different experience. It's become much more the forefront of what I want to include in my teaching – bringing my students' cultures into the classroom and

being comfortable talking to them about their culture. Or even just researching on my own so that I incorporate things. I'm thinking about how I'm going to do that when I'm teaching. (Post-immersion individual interview)

Sierra thought about the impact and importance of his coursework in his undergraduate degree program. Sierra believed his coursework prepared him well for music teaching, but his experience in Dearborn broadened his perspective of music teaching and learning. He said:

> I think that college prepares teachers for teaching in a one-size-fits-all environment. MSU does a good job of exploring diverse teaching settings, but for the most part, it focuses on how to teach in a "typical" public school. [The teacher] said that her biggest adjustment was meeting the kids where they were as opposed to trying to drastically change the music program. I've always thought about teaching as how I can come into a school and be the best music teacher. After this experience, now I think about how I can work with the students and figure out a way where we both can get the most out of the class. It is difficult for me because college classes tell me that when you get into the classroom, you must do x, y, and z or else you are a bad music teacher. Going into these schools, I feel that most of us came in with these expectations for the teachers. After I saw that [the teacher] was doing things different from what I had been told was "right," I thought that her teaching was possibly lacking or she was not being as effective as she could be. After this week, I realized how schools are not one-size-fits-all and although it is important that I am getting such a strong music education foundation, there will be times where I will need to adapt my teaching to the environment that I am in. (journal entry)

Luke was enrolled in his first music education course at the time of the study. The foundations course covered topics related to human diversity, education, and schooling. Luke shared how his experience informed his learning in the course:

> [The cultural immersion field experience] is definitely one of those situations I'll always remember and always use it as a resource, using it as a frame of reference. Even now in my classes, I'm always thinking, 'How would this apply in this situation?'… We talked about culture in general in class and I brought up our trip and how the United States White-centric culture isn't the culture in every single classroom. How do we act in a classroom culture that's different from our own culture? How do we incorporate that culture with our own culture in order to be successful? … We talk about culturally relevant teaching and stuff like that. And in my mind, thinking about… hmmm… these are my experiences now. How would this play into effect in a community like Dearborn?... Those are some of the things I add in class. (Post-immersion individual interview)

George also considered the connection between experience and coursework. George enjoyed academic readings and liked to debate concepts and issues in his classes and in discussions with friends and colleagues. He thought about how his first-hand experience changed his perception of engaging in academic debate.

> Honestly, a big thing I'm thinking about now is our tendency to pull away from conversations and sit in my armchair and smoke a pipe and talk about how I know everything. This is how things should be. But now, I'm so much more interested in the value of these emotional conversations that change people and make them want to do good things. I don't think that you can have as impactful a change if I'm the armchair

> intellectual and I debate you and use good rhetoric. That doesn't change people's minds. Or it changes some people's minds, but it doesn't change the right people's minds. So, as a way of affecting change and becoming better humans, not pulling away from these conversations and not going back to the abstract and philosophizing, but really keeping it real and personal. (individual interview)

Some participants thought about their experience within the context of what they learned in their coursework. They realized that they learned a lot about teaching content and pedagogical delivery in class, but the field experience helped them also recognize the importance of considering the students they taught. Further, their lived experiences with students in Dearborn helped some participants begin to connect the concepts, issues, and topics they discussed abstractly in class to real people. Participants' concurrent participation in the immersion field experience and their coursework gave them new perspectives and connections to topics discussed in class.

Summary

When participants returned from Dearborn, they were immediately immersed in their academic lives and focused on completing the semester. Once we returned to our regular routines, it was difficult to find a time for our group to reconnect for a post-immersion dinner, and, though I invited students to attend events on campus related to immigrants, refugees, and Muslims, participants were not able to attend because of their active schedules. Because they were busy, it remains unclear the extent to which participants were able to reflect upon and process their experience. It is possible that a longer period of reflection, or a summer break, might have provided participants with the time necessary to fully process their experience and perhaps more evidence of transformative learning would begin to emerge. However, their

reflections do suggest that some participants began the process of transformative learning, as they showed progression to perspectives outside of their own socialization.

Within the time constraints of this study, I followed up with participants to determine the aspects of their experience they found most salient shortly after their return from Dearborn. Participants' visceral emotional response at the end of the immersion week subsided and they began to reexamine their experience now that they were removed from the setting. Participants reconsidered some of their assumptions about Arabs and Muslims based on their knowledge acquired from the media and other sources. Participants also shared changing perspectives about culture in music teaching and learning. They began to reconsider their personal teaching philosophies, and some made connections between the field experience, their coursework, and other aspects of their lives.

Some participants also began to humanize people whose backgrounds differed from theirs after engaging with people in Dearborn. They started to apply perspectives gained from their field experience to other parts of their lives, and considered how they might engage in future interactions. This suggests that participants' worldviews started shifting shortly after their return from the immersion field experience. The participants shared how they started to examine their perspectives and think critically about assumptions they held. The extent to which participants reflected critically on their own identities remains unclear. Participants displayed implicit bias toward Arabs and Muslims in their reflections, as they referred to them in relation to a normalcy of White culture. Did participants recognize the complications of describing Arab and Muslim people as more "human" and "normal" than they previously believed? What does it mean in relation to participants' understandings of their own cultural identities? As mentioned earlier, I conducted follow-up interviews within one month after returning from the field

experience. It is possible that this time frame did not allow for extensive personal reflection. However, it is clear that at least some transformation had already begun to occur.

CHAPTER 8: DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

In the preceding chapters, I presented findings from this study through a lens of transformative learning – first looking at participants' perceptions and understandings of music teaching and culture at the beginning of the field experience, then identifying and exploring key events that functioned as disorienting dilemmas for participants, and finally exploring participants' perceptions and understandings of cultural differences and music teaching after the field experience. In this section, I present a summary of my study, and then I offer my reflections on this study and the cultural immersion field experience. In the final sections, I present implications for the field of music education and recommendations for future research.

Summary of the Study

With the intent of informing music teacher education practices and developing more culturally responsive and relevant teachers, the purpose of this research was to explore pre-service music teachers' understandings of culture and diversity, and to examine the impact of a short-term immersion intercultural field experience on pre-service music teachers' beliefs, assumptions, and understanding about music teaching and learning with students whose cultural backgrounds differ from their own. Research questions guiding this study were as follows:

1) What are pre-service music teachers' beliefs, perceptions, and assumptions about music teaching and learning with students whose cultural backgrounds differ from their own before participating in a short-term intercultural immersion field experience?

2) In what ways do pre-service music teachers' beliefs, perceptions, and assumptions regarding music teaching and learning with students whose cultural backgrounds differ from their own change during their participation in a short-term intercultural immersion field experience?

3) How does the intercultural immersion shape their beliefs and understandings of music teaching and learning in educational contexts that differ from their own cultural backgrounds after participating in the experience?

The setting for this case study was purposefully selected as one that could provide participants with an experience in a setting whose culture would be unfamiliar to them, and might prompt participants to reflect critically on their beliefs and assumptions about cultural groups and serve as a catalyst for transformative learning toward cultural understanding. The Detroit metropolitan area, and specifically Dearborn and Dearborn Heights, is home to the largest concentration of Arab Americans in the United States (Arab American Institute Foundation, 2016). The majority of Muslims (64%) lived in the Dearborn community (Baker et al., 2004). Many stereotypes and prejudices toward Arab Americans exist in the United States. In their 2016 report, the Arab American Institute Foundation found that 36% of Americans harbored unfavorable views of Arab Americans, and 37% harbored unfavorable views of American Muslims. In 2015, The Federal Bureau of Investigation reported a 67% increase in anti-Muslim hate crimes. This trend worsened after the United States presidential election in November 2016 (Potok, 2017). Given the current relevance of misperception and discrimination toward Arab and Muslim Americans, this immersion experience proved especially timely.

Nine undergraduate music education students participated in this project, which consisted of three different components. Data were collected from each component. Weekly pre-immersion orientation meetings took place on campus for eight weeks before the cultural immersion field experience. The meetings oriented participants to the immersion field experience setting and provided context for issues of cultural diversity in education. Following the orientation course, participants spent one week (seven days) in a cultural immersion field

experience in Dearborn. They observed and taught in two music classrooms in Dearborn schools and engaged in community activities to immerse themselves in the community culture. Participants lived and spent leisure time together throughout the immersion week. A few weeks after we returned from the cultural immersion field experience, I conducted post-immersion interviews with the group and each individual participant in order to probe how the cultural immersion field experience impacted their perceptions and worldviews about music teaching and learning with students whose cultural backgrounds differed from their own.

The Cultural Immersion Field Experience

In this study, I used Mezirow's (1991) Transformative Learning Theory as a framework through which to examine participants' cultural immersion field experience. As described in Chapter 3, Mezirow defined Transformative Learning Theory as:

> The process of becoming critically aware of how and why our assumptions have come to constrain the way we perceive, understand, and feel about our world; changing these structures of habitual expectation to make possible a more inclusive, discriminating, and integrative perspective. (p. 167)

The cultural immersion field experience provided participants with an opportunity to engage with students whose cultural backgrounds differed from their own and to examine and reflect on their beliefs, assumptions, and views about cultural differences and music teaching.

At the beginning of the field experience, participants focused their observations on the music teachers' pedagogies and philosophical approaches to music teaching and learning. They did not focus much attention toward students in the classrooms and did not notice the ways in which students' cultures influenced the classroom environment. Some participants did not perceive students' cultural differences in the music classrooms and concluded that "kids are

kids" in educational environments. This assumption reflects what Irvine (2003) described when pre- and in-service teachers invoke a colorblind approach to teaching students with diverse cultural backgrounds, believing that culture does not influence relationships and interactions between teachers and students or influence teaching practice.

Some participants expected to observe more apparent cultural differences in the music classrooms. When they did not observe these apparent differences, they perceived the classrooms as "normal" because they fit with their own cultural expectations. Ladson-Billings' (2009) assertion that individuals who identify with the dominant White culture view their own culture as "normal" and those outside of it as "other" proves useful here.

At first, participants perceived that the music classrooms they observed were not culturally different than those they had previously observed, but they did notice cultural differences that they interpreted based on their own assumptions and understandings of the environment. Participants knew the schools were comprised of a predominantly Muslim student body and had a preconceived understanding of how Muslim students would behave. Because they knew that stereotypical Islamic cultural traditions prescribed separations between genders, some participants expected to see, and perceived that these gender divisions existed. Their perceptions reinforced their preconceived understandings and assumptions about Muslim culture, a finding that remains consistent with the assertions of both Lind & McKoy (2016) and Sleeter (2001), that teachers hold subconscious preconceptions and stereotypical beliefs about students whose cultural backgrounds differ from their own.

Participants also observed the behaviors and interactions of English language learners in the music classroom but did not connect what they saw to manifestations of language proficiency. They perceived students as unhappy, unmotivated students, and wondered if they

might have a special need rather than understanding that the student behaviors in the classroom were as a result of the students being English language learners. This misconception is what Delpit (2006) described when teachers are unaware of the ways in which cultural differences impact the learning environment and, as a result, assume deficiencies in students' learning abilities. These findings support Sleeter's (2001) argument that, without having had experience teaching students from different cultural backgrounds, teachers do not know how to be culturally responsive in their teaching:

> Though pre-service and in-service teachers conveyed positive intention about teaching culturally diverse student populations, limited experiences with diverse cultures and processing inadequate knowledge about how to teach these populations prevented, and continues to prevent many from becoming culturally responsive teachers (p. 16).

As the cultural immersion progressed, participants' perspectives changed and they began to incorporate a broadened frame of reference for cultural differences in the music classroom. Participants developed a new understanding about culture's role in the classroom. They had less fear and increased confidence about working with students whose cultural backgrounds differed from their own, which remains consistent with the findings from similar studies on immersion field experiences (Bleicher, 2011; Fry & McKinney, 1998; Marxen & Rudney, 1999).

By engaging with English language learners and experiencing first-hand how both music teachers incorporated Arabic language and Arab songs into their music lessons, participants gained a new perspective about the importance of culturally responsive teaching in the music classroom. Further, by building relationships with the music teachers and students, participants developed a deeper understanding of students' cultures and lives. These findings mirror those of numerous studies that suggest that cultural immersion field experiences dismantle pre-service

teachers' previously held stereotypes and assumptions (Diller & Moule, 2005), alter their perspectives of teaching and learning (Chance, Morris, Rakes, 1996), provide them with a better understanding of themselves as educators (Cushner, 2007; Dunn et al., 2014; Lee, 2009), and help them develop a deeper understanding of culture in teaching and learning (Barkhuizen & Feryok, 2005; Bleicher, 2001; Bradfield-Kreider, 2001; Cushner & Mahon, 2002; Delano-Oriano, 2012; Diller & Moule, 2005; Fry & McKinney, 1997; Lupi, Batey, & Turner, 2012; Marx & Moss, 2011; Rodriguez, 2001; Roose, 2001; Stachowski & Mahon, 1998; Marxen & Rudney, 1999).

Transformative Learning Theory

Consistent with extant literature employing Transformative Learning Theory as a framework (Doucet, Grayman-Simpson, & Wertheim., 2013; Dunn et al., 2014; Hashimoto, 2007; Herbers, 1998; Hutchison & Rea, 2010; Lee, 2013; Wells, 2011), findings from this study suggest that critical reflection of one's assumptions and understandings of their worldviews after a disorienting experience can lead to changes in one's perspectives of cultural differences and a deepened understanding of the impact of culture on teaching and learning.

According to Mezirow, transformative learning begins with a disorienting dilemma, progresses through phases of new understandings and perspectives, and concludes with a new viewpoint that one puts into action. I identified four disorienting dilemmas that emerged from the data, which provided participants with an opportunity to become aware of their own assumptions about cultural differences. Disorienting dilemmas have been used as catalysts for change in perspective and provided similar results in previous studies (Doucet et al., 2013; Hutchison & Rea, 2010; Wells, 2011).

After experiencing these disorienting dilemmas, participants began the process of subsequent phases in Mezirow's theory. The phases following a disorienting dilemma are: 2) self-examination with feelings of guilt or shame, 3) critical assessment of epistemic, sociocultural, or psychic assumptions, 4) recognition that one's discontent and the process of transformation are shared and that others have negotiated a similar change, and 5) exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions. During the cultural immersion field experience, participants began to process through some of these phases – they felt guilt about not recognizing English language learners in the music classroom, they realized that their assumptions about Arabs and Muslims were not true, they reexamined their understandings of the current political climate, and started to explore culture's role in the classroom from a new perspective. The next phase of Mezirow's theory is to put this new learning into action. However, given the short length of the immersion experience, the long-term implications of the process remain unknown. It is likely that some participants do, and will continue to view their world with a new perspective. This was evident when, after returning from the cultural immersion field experience, George shared how he viewed his own community from a new perspective:

> I noticed for the first time that there are actually Arab restaurants all over Lansing. On Michigan Avenue. I had no idea there was an Arab restaurant on Michigan Avenue before until the day after our experience. I was like, "Oh, wait! There's a restaurant. It's Arab. It's halal." I thought that was really cool. It may have been like the grocery store we visited. I just cued in on it like, "Oh my gosh! That's so cool!" I had never noticed that before. I thought that was interesting. (Post-immersion group discussion)

George not only developed a new understanding of the students and community in Dearborn, but he also viewed his own community from a new perspective. This suggests that the transformative

learning that began during this cultural immersion field experience has potential to continue beyond the experience itself.

Experiential Learning

Many participants entered the orientation meetings and the cultural immersion field experience with prior knowledge about cultural diversity that they learned from academic coursework and their own personal reading. Participants presented a strong conceptual understanding of social justice, cultural diversity, racial, ethnic, and cultural identities, and their impacts in educational settings. Yet, despite this understanding, participants failed to recognize cultural differences among students in the music classrooms and did not know how to interact effectively with students. Through their experiential learning in the music classrooms, participants were able to contextualize the concepts they learned in their academic coursework and developed a deeper understanding of culture's role in the music classroom. George stressed the importance of experiential learning when he said, "I learned *zero* from the readings. I don't remember any of it. But [the guest lecturer] talked and I was like, 'Ok. I'm kind of getting it.' And then these *kids*. It's like, 'Ok. Now I'm *understanding* it' (Thursday morning group discussion).

This study supports previous literature examining the impact of experiential learning on pre-service teachers' understandings and perspectives about teaching students whose cultural backgrounds differed from their own (Bradfield-Kreider, 2001; Chance, Morris, & Rakes, 1996; Delano-Oriaran, 2012; Diller & Moule, 2005; Dunn et al., 2014; Emmanuel, 2003; Fry & McKinney, 1997; Hutchison & Rea, 2010; Lee, 2009; Irvine, 2003; Stachowski & Mahan, 1998). This cultural immersion field experience highlights the importance of experience in teaching and

learning and supports the argument that academic coursework must be connected to experiential learning (Bleicher, 2011; Dunn et al., 2014; Emmanuel, 2003).

Experience as a Cultural Outsider

One of the more formative events during the immersion week happened mostly by chance. Because of an unanticipated day off of school, participants were able to spend an afternoon exploring the local community. Participants were uncomfortable in the local grocery stores and felt that they did not belong in the community, both because they could not read the Arabic signs and labels and because they recognized suddenly that they were the racial minority. For many participants, this experience was their first realization of how it feels to be a racial minority, and of understanding that Whiteness was a part of their personal identities. Participants' discomfort made them feel like outsiders in the community, and they believed that workers and shoppers were staring at and judging them for being in their space. Participants' assumptions of and sensitivities to their perceived cultural "otherness" reflect the experiences of participants in previous studies of cultural immersion field experiences, where the experience as a cultural "other" helped participants to reflect on their preconceived beliefs and develop cultural awareness (Barkhuizen & Feryok, 2006; Cushner & Mahon, 2002; Lupi, Batey, & Turner, 2012; Rodriguez, 2011; Stachowski & Mahon, 1998).

Participants expressed their discomfort in recognizing their Whiteness in the local community, but they were not aware that they were White while in the schools. Alexis said:

> I don't know if it's because we've just been generally in the school or what, but I haven't really felt that self-conscious, like, "I'm White. I am the minority here." I haven't really felt that. Maybe it's because I'm used to not being the minority that it just doesn't occur

to me, but I feel like I just haven't really been thinking about that in the schools at all. (Thursday night group discussion)

Participants became aware of their own racial identity while in the community, but were not aware of it in the schools. This is perhaps because, though participants knew that their backgrounds were different culturally from students, the schools still functioned under a paradigm that was familiar to participants; they were comfortable in the school environment. Their comfort subsided when they were in the community and away from the familiar environment of a public school.

Because they experienced the discomfort associated with being a cultural outsider, participants identified and empathized with students' experiences. Their discomfort in the community also made them reflect on their own racial identities. This experience is consistent with Marx & Moss' (2011) assertion that immersion field experiences in settings where pre-service teachers' cultures remain dominant do not fully provide them with the opportunity to critically reflect on cultural understanding or confront preconceived beliefs and assumptions. It also shows why international settings in which pre-service teachers are immersed in cultural "otherness" push them beyond their comfort zone to examine the effects of stereotypes, prejudices, and marginalization of cultural groups (Barkhuizen & Feryok, 2006; Cushner & Mahon, 2002; Dunn et al., 2014; Hutchison & Rea, 2010; Lee, 2009; Lupi, Batey, & Turner, 2012; Marx & Moss, 2011; Rodriguez, 2011).

This study, however, complicates the notion that pre-service teachers can better experience how it feels to be a cultural outsider in international settings (Marx & Moss, 2011). The school settings themselves functioned under domestic education paradigms with which participants were familiar. However, the community did not, which provided participants an

opportunity to begin to recognize their own Whiteness and experience how it feels to be a cultural outsider. Their experience was similar to previous studies in international settings, even though they were within a two-hour van ride from their university, which suggests that there might be opportunities for teacher education programs to facilitate similar experiences within their own geographic regions. By providing cultural field experiences close to their university, teacher education programs could provide more pre-service teachers with the opportunity to further develop their cultural competence in settings that differed culturally from their own. As Roose (2001) noted, “rather than viewing cross-cultural experiences as useful only to future global educators, teacher education programs need to explore how they can bring such experiences to all their preservice teachers” (p. 48).

Participants’ experiences in the community differed from their experiences in the schools. This study suggests that an important component of cultural immersion field experiences is community interaction, a finding that remains consistent with previous studies (Barkhuizen & Feryok, 2006; Burton et al., 2012; Dunn et al., 2014; Lee, 2009; Marx & Moss, 2011; Rodriguez, 2011; Stachowski & Mahon, 1998). Being in the community provided participants with an important new perspective that informed their understanding of their own identity as teachers. When discussing her previous understanding about her own identity and teaching, Alexis said:

> I’ve thought about, ‘What will I do if I end up in an urban school that is struggling?’ … But not from a cultural standpoint. It was more like resources and children’s behavior… But not, ‘What would I do if I end up in a class where I’m the only White person.’ I hadn’t really thought about that… But it’s pretty important. (individual interview)

Delpit (2006) said, “We all carry worlds in our heads, and those worlds are decidedly different. We educators set out to teach, but how can we reach the worlds of others when we

don't even know they exist?" (p. xiv). Delpit's question resonates with participants' experience in this cultural immersion field experience. In order for teachers to build relationships with students whose cultures differ from their own, they must not only understand their students' cultures but also their own cultural identity. If teachers do not understand their own racial identity, how can they understand the identities of their students? Without knowing who they are, how can teachers know and build meaningful relationships with their students?

The Political Climate Surrounding the Study

This study cannot be separated from the political climate that surrounded it. I started planning this study before Donald Trump was the GOP's Presidential candidate and before the 2016 United States Presidential election. While I considered growing Islamophobia, as well as growing immigrant and refugee populations in Dearborn in thinking about the study, I had not prepared for the tense 2016 United States Presidential campaign, its resulting Trump presidency, or the immigrant travel ban (Blaine & Horowitz, 2017; Stack, 2017) that went into effect shortly before the field experience. These events added an additional layer of culturally-based politics that I had not anticipated, but their impact on the study cannot be ignored.

Some participants chose to participate in the study because of the political climate that surrounded it. Having nine participants, which was a larger group than I had anticipated, I suspect was due, in part, to the political climate surrounding the study. Politics specifically surrounding Arabs, Muslims, immigrants, and refugees likely also contributed to the heightened emotions participants expressed at the end of the week. The findings from this study reflect the current political climate and lead one to question how participants' experiences may have been different without the saliency of recent political events.

Though politics were particularly influential in this study, politics are always present in classroom environments. It is important to remember this when engaging with students, particularly those whose personal identities are impacted by political events. Although politics often influence educational settings and have throughout history, the particularly heightened political climate surrounding this study played a role in the thinking and experiences of the participants. Lisa said, “I remember sitting in class the day after Trump got elected and thinking about how that was going to affect my teaching” (Friday night group discussion). Lisa’s statement is a reminder that schools have changed in this new political era and pre- and in-service teachers must be aware of how they might affect students in their classrooms.

Whiteness and Privilege

Though I did not seek to specifically examine Whiteness and privilege in this study, both emerged as a finding that warrants further discussion. Participants displayed underlying Whiteness and privilege in their assumptions and perceptions of the cultural immersion field experience. Participants described the music classrooms, and the students who inhabited them, as “normal” and did not recognize the cultural backgrounds and experiences students brought with them to the classroom. Bonilla-Silva’s (2013) notion of colorblind racism, where White normalcy is reinforced by ignoring that which exists outside of a White-centric worldview proves useful here. Further, when participants did not perceive culture as an important aspect of students’ identities, they displayed what del Prado Hill, Friedland, & Phelps (2012) described as culture blindness.

Participants also were confronted by their own Whiteness when they shopped in the local community. The emotional stress and discomfort some participants expressed as a result of their

experience as a racial minority and cultural outsider reflects what DiAngelo (2011) called white fragility, where "even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable" (p. 54).

The music teachers shared students' personal stories related to the current political climate with participants. Some participants became emotional when they heard the stories and felt sorry for the students and their circumstances. Participants' comments reflected pity toward students that may hint at what Matias (2016) termed, white emotionality; feelings of guilt, shame, pity, and anger that White people express when discussing race and racism.

Finally, some participants revealed underlying Whiteness and privilege when they shared what they thought was the purpose of the trip. Some believed that they were participating in the cultural immersion field experience in order to help the Arab, Muslim, and refugee students in Dearborn. This belief suggests that some participants might have perceived the experience as a mission trip rather than a learning opportunity to help them become more culturally competent.

This discussion merely scratches the surface of the underlying Whiteness and privilege embedded in the data. Future research might examine pre-service music teachers' perceptions and beliefs about a cultural immersion field experience through theoretical frameworks of Critical Race Theory or Critical Whiteness Studies to gain a deeper understanding of the ways in which participants' Whiteness and privilege impacted their experience and shaped their beliefs.

Summary

This study explored the impact of a short-term cultural immersion field experience on pre-service music teachers' beliefs about cultural differences. The findings from this study suggest that the experience did impact participants' perspectives. They began to recognize their assumptions and perceptions about cultural differences and music teaching and learning. Through their experience as a cultural "other," they developed a new perspective about cultural

differences and empathized with students' experiences in the music classroom. Participants also broadened their understanding of culture's role in education and within a larger sociopolitical context.

Implications for Practice

The purpose of this research was to explore pre-service music teachers' understandings of culture and diversity and to examine the impact of a short-term cultural immersion field experience on pre-service music teachers' beliefs, assumptions, and understanding about music teaching and learning with students whose cultural backgrounds differ from their own. As I discussed in the review of literature, this study was needed because of gaps in the literature on the impact of cultural immersion field experiences on pre-service music teachers. It is important for music teacher educators to prepare pre-service music teachers with a comprehensive understanding of music content, pedagogy, and music teaching philosophy. It is equally important to prepare them to consider the identities of their students and ground them toward an understanding of cultural differences in the music classroom. Ladson-Billings (2006) described this when she said:

> We fill our teacher education students with theories and ideas about what students will be like and then we send them to the field where they make their charges fit those notions. If we are serious about students learning about culture, we need to help them first become careful observers of culture, both in the communities in which they will teach and in themselves. (p. 109)

Participants in this study did not immediately notice cultural difference in the music classroom, nor did they recognize their own racial and cultural identities. By engaging in first-hand experiences with Arab and Muslim children and by having disruptive experiences as

cultural outsiders, participants developed a deeper understanding of their own implicit biases and of the importance of understanding culture in the classroom. Their experience led to greater empathy and understanding of Arab and Muslim students, and they developed a deepened understanding of the impact of culturally responsive teaching in the music classroom.

In order to prepare pre-service music teachers to teach students whose cultural backgrounds differ from their own, music teacher educators can provide opportunities for pre-service teachers to develop a deeper understanding of culture and music teaching and learning. Music educators do incorporate multicultural and world music in their curriculum (Abril, 2009; Bradley, 2006; Campbell, 2002; Legette, 2003). However, music teacher educators must prepare pre-service music teachers to think beyond incorporating culturally diverse repertoire toward knowing students' cultural identities and acknowledging them in their instruction. In this study, I directed participants' observations away from music teachers' pedagogies toward students' cultures in the music classrooms and provided participants with a new perspective of the music classroom environments. This suggests that music teacher educators can and should guide pre-service music teachers' observations in field experiences toward the cultures of students in the music classrooms.

Music teacher education programs should combine academic coursework with field experiences that connect concepts from readings to classroom teaching to help pre-service music teachers more fully understand the role of culture in music teaching and learning. Music teacher educators should consider providing pre-service music teachers with experiences engaging with a diverse array of learners. If pre-service music teachers had experiences with students from diverse racial, ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and behavioral backgrounds before entering the field, they would be more prepared to work with the diverse students in their music classrooms. Music

teacher educators also must provide pre-service music teachers with opportunities to reflect on their own identities and cultural backgrounds in order to better understand the beliefs, assumptions, and perceptions they bring with them to the music classroom.

Music teacher educators must consider carefully the settings of pre-service music teachers' field experiences. Sleeter (2001) asserted that pre-service teachers often participate in field experiences in settings that resembled their own backgrounds. By incorporating field experiences in a variety of cultural settings, pre-service teachers might develop a deeper understanding of cultural diversity and how to teach students with an array of cultural backgrounds. In order to do this, music teacher educators would need to build relationships with K-12 teachers in a variety of school settings. Music teacher educators can also include community engagement as a component of the field experience in order to provide pre-service music teachers with a deeper understanding of students' culture than they observe in the school setting (Doucet, Grayman-Simpson, & Wertheim, 2013).

Music teacher educators also must consider incorporating cultural immersion field experiences as a requirement for music teacher education programs. Cultural immersion field experiences could be a part of study abroad programs or take place in a domestic setting, but must include opportunities for pre-service music teachers to experience "otherness" in their new environment, as the experience as a cultural "other" is an important component in one's understanding of one's own racial, ethnic, and cultural identity.

Finally, colleges and universities must employ music teacher educators who have experience working with students whose cultural backgrounds differ from their own, and who bring their experiences into their classroom instruction. Music teacher educators must intentionally teach pre-service music teachers to understand cultural diversity in schools and to

know how to effectively teach students whose cultural backgrounds differ from their own in their music classrooms.

Reflection on Planning and Preparation

Although there were many aspects in the planning and preparation of this cultural immersion field experience that created a meaningful experience for participants, there also were aspects of the study that I would change for future study of cultural immersion field experiences.

Participant selection. Participants self-selected to be a part of this cultural immersion field experience and likely approached the experience with some openness toward cultural differences and the specific populations represented in Dearborn. If this experience were a required part of a course, findings might differ because participants might possess less openness to the experience.

Participants' ages ranged from 18-24, and their years in the music education program ranged from freshman to senior. The varying ages and years of experience offered a range of classroom experience and development of teacher identities. Initially, I was concerned that freshman may not be ready to participate in an immersion field experience, and questioned whether the interaction between freshmen and seniors would be positive. In the end, the varying levels of participants' experiences and perspectives enriched the cultural immersion field experience in positive ways. Because some participants had previously taken music education methods courses and others had not, they observed the music classrooms from different perspectives. The older participants mentored younger participants with their knowledge of music teacher pedagogy, while the younger participants reminded older participants to view the classrooms from a less biased perspective. The group benefitted from these varied perspectives as each individual made meaning of their experience.

Size of the group. As mentioned earlier, the size of the group was larger than I had originally hoped for or anticipated. I chose not to limit the size of the group so that I could provide this learning opportunity to all interested undergraduate music education students. There were both advantages and disadvantages to the group size. First, with nine participants, group bonding took longer than it may have with a smaller group. Despite meeting regularly before the immersion field experience, the group did not bond fully until the latter portion of the immersion week. Because the group did not have a fully-formed bond at the beginning of the week, participants' may not have felt comfortable sharing their thoughts and experiences during group discussions.

The large group size also impacted logistical aspects of the immersion field experience. In an effort to have both manageable group sizes and cause minimal disruptions at the schools, participants were divided into two groups. These groups were in two separate schools and worked with two separate teachers whose school and classroom cultures differed. Thus, participants did not share the same experiences. I also was not able to be with all participants throughout the entirety of each school day, as I spent half days at each school. As a result, I missed many of the informal discussions and experiences participants had with teachers and other members of the school community that helped frame their experience, and relied on participants' retelling of stories and events that I missed. Because participants' perceptions of their interactions with students were not fully informed at the beginning of the week, I wondered whether their retelling of stories were fully accurate.

There also were benefits to having a larger group of participants at two sites. By having two sites, nine undergraduate music education students were able to participate in the experience.

Nine participants offered nine different perspectives to enrich the group discussions. Further, by having participants at two sites, the group had a more informed perspective of music teaching in Dearborn schools. They worked in two schools with two different teachers, which provided a deeper understanding of the Dearborn community than they would have had if participants had only been at one site.

Orientation meetings. The length of this cultural immersion field experience was shorter than recommended by previous studies (Emmanuel, 2003; Fry & McKinney, 1997). I sought to offset the short duration of the field experience by facilitating weekly hour-long meetings over the course of the eight weeks preceding the field experience. In each meeting, I asked participants to discuss weekly readings, watch videos, and participate in activities designed to orient them toward cultural diversity in education, Arabs, Muslims, immigrants and refugees, and their own experiences and identities. The structure of the orientation meetings may have resulted in their being less impactful than I had hoped. Although participants referred to some of the activities in which they had engaged during the orientation meetings, these activities did not seem to affect the ways in which they approached their work at the start of the field experience. Participants only came together for one hour per week, and this was on top of their work as full-time students in an already busy degree program. They completed readings for meetings in addition to their academic course load and, not surprisingly, their orientation for this project was not their top priority. It is possible that a week-long intensive orientation that allowed participants to be fully immersed in subject matter would have been more impactful. It also might have resulted in more bonding within the group prior to the field experience.

During their reflections on the field experience, some participants referred to the "Immersion" movie about an English language learner's experience in the classroom. Lisa

referenced the social identity wheel when realizing the importance of her blond hair with the students. After the field experience, Anne chose to read an entire book from which I had assigned a chapter during the on-campus orientation meetings. After the field experience in her interview, she said:

> I've been reading *How Does It Feel To Be A Problem?* I reread the first chapter, which is the one we read before. Rereading it after the fact is really interesting because I sit there and there are a lot of things I understand a lot more… [A line in the book is] just a small comment that if you're reading and you don't understand how important that is… rereading it and understanding it more has changed how I see that book. (Post-immersion individual interview)

Though the orientation materials did not affect participants' approach to the start of the field experience as much as I had hoped, they did impact participants' overall understanding of their experience. This suggests an importance of balancing readings and experiences to deepen pre-service music teachers' overall understanding.

Structure of the cultural immersion field experience. This cultural immersion field experience was not a fully immersive experience. Though the schools were located in east Dearborn, a neighborhood largely populated by Arab and Muslim families, the hotel was located in west Dearborn. West Dearborn was more ethnically diverse than east Dearborn, but lacked the same cultural aspects as the east Dearborn community where the schools were located. I chose the west Dearborn location because hotels were not available in the largely residential area of east Dearborn, and this was the closest lodging option for our group.

The immersion field experience was one week in length and, because of the unplanned power outage, participants spent four days in the music classrooms. A longer immersion would

have been desirable, as it took time to get acclimated to the setting before participants could engage fully. Despite its short length, participants did gain a lot from their experience. They followed each teacher for the entirety of their day. They observed and participated in all the activities and preparations the music teachers did for their classes. Participants had many teaching opportunities throughout the week and grew as music teachers as well. Both teachers welcomed participants into their classrooms and music teaching with open arms. Though previous studies stressed the importance of an immersion field experience that lasted at least two weeks in order for an impactful experience (Emmanuel, 2003; Fry & McKinney, 1998), the participants still grew as a result of their participation. However, an even longer immersion might result in more substantial growth.

Previous research discussed the importance of engaging with the local community (Dunn et al., 2014; Stachowski & Mahon, 1998). With this in mind, I planned additional activities for the group at the ends of most school days. The activities included touring the Arab American National Museum and eating in local bakeries and restaurants. My intent was to keep participants immersed in the east Dearborn community for as long as possible before returning to the hotel. Once we returned to the hotel, there was little downtime before our group discussion. After group discussion, participants retreated to their hotel rooms for the night and to complete journal reflections before going to sleep. While my intent was to keep participants immersed in the community and the experience, in hindsight, perhaps the days were too long and too fully scheduled. This may have contributed to the fatigue and heightened emotion at the end of the week. If I had the opportunity to restructure the experience, I would have had participants tour the museum and engage in the community over the weekend before the school week began. This

would have allowed participants additional leisure time at the end of each school day and helped to diminish the overall fatigue of the week.

Journal reflections. Critical self-reflection is an important aspect of transformative learning (Mezirow, 1991) and journal reflections have been an important aspect of cultural immersion field experiences (Barkhuizen & Feryok, 2006; Bleicher, 2011; Burton et al., 2012; Dunn et al., 2014; Emmanuel, 2003; Fry & McKinney, 1997; Lee, 2009; Lupi, Batey, & Turner, 2012; Marx & Moss, 2011; Roose, 2001). As mentioned earlier, I incorporated journal reflection time into each day by asking participants to write in their journals each night after returning to their hotel rooms. Overall, the journal reflections were not as rich as I had hoped. Participants were fatigued while writing at the end of the day and may have been unable to reflect more deeply as a result. I also asked them to write reflections after they had participated in group discussions. They may have felt that they had nothing left to say. I also did not provide participants with a prompt, but rather asked them to write about whatever was on their mind each day. It is possible that I did not provide enough guidance for journal entries. In the future, I would consider providing participants with journal reflection prompts in hopes for a richer and more robust response. It is also possible that writing was not the best mode of communication for some participants. Perhaps their personal reflections may have been richer if they had additional modes of communication, such as audio memos, or video and photo representations of their thoughts (Dunn et al., 2014).

Community. The afternoon exploring east Dearborn and the visits to two grocery stores proved most impactful for participants. As mentioned earlier, I spent some time reflecting on our visit to the grocery stores after participants' strong reactions. In hindsight, our large group presence was conspicuous and it would have been better to split participants into smaller groups

to explore the area. However, the extreme discomfort some participants felt was important to their understanding of race and their own identity. In future cultural immersion field experiences, I would facilitate a similar experience, as it was the only moment during the immersion week where participants felt uncomfortable enough to examine their assumptions and perceptions about their own racial identities. In the future, I would have participants shop for their lunch supplies at grocery stores in the community where they would teach and allow for unstructured time in their schedules in which to explore the area.

Implications for Future Research

Despite the inherent connection between culture and music, studies addressing pre-service music teachers' beliefs about teaching students whose cultural backgrounds differ from their own remain scarce (Emmanuel, 2003). Thus, music education researchers should conduct similar studies to explore how to best prepare music teachers for cultural diversity in their classrooms.

To extend the findings from the present study, future research should focus on the long-term impact of the cultural immersion field experiences. Future research might include reconnecting with participants during their student teaching placements and into their first years of in-service teaching. In addition, future studies should follow the freshmen who participated in this type of study into their final years of their undergraduate music education program to examine the impact of this experience early in their education careers.

Research is also needed to examine the impact of academic coursework combined with both cultural immersion field experiences and field experiences in a variety of cultural settings. Studies of this nature might help determine the importance of combining coursework and field experiences to prepare pre-service music teachers to teach with cultural competence. Future

research should also focus on cultural immersion field experiences with community integration to determine the impact of such an experience on pre-service music teachers' understandings of culture within a broader sociocultural and sociopolitical context.

Conclusions

The findings from this study indicate that the cultural immersion field experience impacted participants' beliefs and understandings about cultural differences and teaching in culturally diverse settings. Participants developed a new perspective about themselves, students whose cultural backgrounds differed from their own, and music teaching and learning in culturally different settings.

Cultural immersion field experiences are important in developing pre-service music teachers' understanding of teaching students whose cultures differ from their own. Such experiences provide a different lens than academic coursework and experiential learning provides a different type of learning than academic coursework. Cushner (2007) said:

> If we truly are serious about preparing teachers, and subsequently pupils in their charge, to better understand the complex world in which they live and to develop the skills necessary to interact effectively with people from a variety of cultural backgrounds, then understanding the manner in which people learn about culture is essential. (p. 35)

It is important to provide both academic coursework and experiential learning in tandem to provide pre-service teachers with both content and application of concepts learned in classes. Finally, cultural immersion field experiences are most effective when they incorporate community engagement and opportunities for self-reflection in order to help pre-service music teachers understand their own identities in relation to their teaching in the classroom (Doucet, Grayman-Simpson, & Wertheim, 2013; Dunn et al., 2014).

Coda

'I will miss these people,' I thought as I looked at each participant seated around the table at our last dinner together. I listened as they reminisced about their experience together. We laughed as George, Lisa, and Jane recited a song they'd memorized after having taught it to students many times over the course of the week, and giggled when Alexis reminded us of the little boy who tricked her into believing his name was something else during a class activity.

"He knew what he was trying to do," said Anne. "He was smirking at me," Alexis said, laughing. "I was like, alright. You got me." (group discussion)

We listened as Luke spoke about how his perception of Muslim women wearing hijabs had changed, and as Sierra shared how he felt more connected to political issues after his experience. Then we laughed again as participants remembered dancing the Debke with 5th grade students. "They moved their feet so fast!" April said. (group discussion)

When our dinner ended, we walked outside and said goodbye to each other, one by one.

"See you later," Simon said after giving me a hug. (fieldnotes)

"I'm glad I was a part of this," said Alexis (journal entry). "I am, too." I replied.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Orientation Meetings Syllabus

Orientation Meetings Syllabus
Cultural Immersion Field Experience ~ Dearborn
Spring Break 2017
Andrea VanDeusen

Meeting Information
Meeting times: January 10-February 28, 2017
Immersion Field Experience: March 5-12, 2017
Follow-Up Meetings: March - April 4 2017
Please see attached calendar, as times and locations vary.

Attendance and Active Participation
You are expected to attend all meetings and the immersion week in their entirety. Active participation means showing up on time for the day's activities, engaging in discussion and related activities, and completing all readings and assignments in a thorough and timely manner.

Journal Reflections
Journal reflections will be submitted after each meeting. Your journal entries will include your reflections on your readings and experiences. You will be provided a prompt related to discussions, and you will have the opportunity to write about anything else you may be thinking, feeling, considering, etc. Please remember that, while this is a journal, it should still be completed thoughtfully and with grammatical and spelling integrity.

Professional Demeanor
Our group meetings and field experience will be a safe, comfortable, and open environment for everyone to express their opinions. During the immersion week, participants are expected to be respectful and behave appropriately at the school, hotel, and all events and activities throughout the week. Anyone behaving disrespectfully, immaturely, or inappropriately will be asked to leave.

Calendar Schedule

January 10 7-8 PM
Welcome & Introductions
Trip Details & Consent Forms
Course Meetings & Schedule
Cross-Cultural Life Experiences Checklist
Watch: The Danger of a Single Story
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D9Ihs24lzeg&list=PLcYQvzieEpdSddpXn7ucPpGUamkJq2M71

Assignments to be completed in advance:
Complete Harvard Implicit Bias Tests Online on your own. You are not required to share your results.
https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html

January 17 7-8 PM
Education in a Multicultural Society

Assignments to be completed in advance:
Read: Education in a Multicultural Society (Delpit)

January 21 7-8 PM
Meeting w/Dearborn Teachers at Michigan Music Conference

Be prepared with a few questions you might ask the teachers with whom we will work in March
Assignment: Journal your thoughts after meeting with Dearborn teachers

January 24 7-8 PM
Language & Immigrants

Watch: Immersion
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I6Y0HAjLKYI
Watch: Immigrant Stories
http://immigrants.mndigital.org/exhibits/show/immigrantstories-exhibit/page01

February 7 7-8 PM
Arab Americans

Read: Questions and Answers about Arab Americans
Assignment: Autobiography

Assignments to be completed in advance:
Read: American Girl, an excerpt from How Does It Feel To Be A Problem? Being Young and Arab in America (Bayoumi)

February 14 7-8 PM
Islam, Muslims, & Muslim Americans

Guest Lecturer: Representative from Muslim Studies Program, MSU

Assignments to be completed in advance:
Read: Questions and Answers about Muslim Americans
Watch: American Muslims: Fact vs. Fiction
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eFsn49Qxwl0&t=191s

February 21 7-8 PM

Discuss readings & podcast:
What are some of the issues surrounding Muslims and immigrants and refugees?
What are some specific to teaching?
What might we see in the classrooms?

Assignments to be completed in advance:
Read: Expelling Islamaphobia
Read: Immigrant and Refugee Children

Listen: This American Life 600: Will I Know Anyone at this Party?
https://www.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/600/will-i-know-anyone-at-this-party?act=1 - play

February 28 7-8 PM
Preparing for the Field Experience – Trip Details

Social Identity Wheel Activity
How do we navigate entering the setting?
What expectations do you have about your experience in Dearborn (e.g. people you expect to interact with, what the school and community will look like, etc.)? What fears or concerns do you have about your experience in the school and community? What are your hopes for your experience?

Assignments to be completed in advance:
Watch: What is Privilege? https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hD5f8GuNuGQ
Read: White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack (MacIntosh)
Read: Responsibilities & Safeties Handout (from MSU Service Learning Department)

March 5 Depart 7 PM for Dearborn

March 6-10 Immersion Field Experience

Tuesday: Dinner at Al Ameer with teachers
Wednesday: Guided Tour of Arab American National Museum

Journal reflections to complete on your own each night

March 11 Travel to East Lansing

APPENDIX B

Cross-Cultural Life Experiences Checklist

Cross-Cultural Life Experiences Checklist

(Ward & Pohan, 2006)

Name _________________________

1. Age: ______ 2. Gender: __________________

3. What is your first spoken language? _______________________

4. Which description best describes your background? (circle the most appropriate)
   - Black / African
   - Asian
   - Hispanic/Latino
   - American Indian
   - European/Anglo
   - Mixed—Please describe: (e.g., 50% Black & 50% Anglo):
     - _____% __________________
     - _____% __________________
     - _____% __________________

5. Which best describes the town/city in which you grew up during your elementary school years? (circle the most appropriate):
   - population < 40,000
   - population 40,000–100,000
   - population 100,000–300,000
   - population > 300,000

6. How many students were in your high school graduating class? (circle the most appropriate):
   - 0–50
   - 51–100
   - 101–300
   - 301–500
   - over 500

Directions: Check (✓) any of the following items that describe your life experiences.

______ 7. I have studied a foreign language for two or more years.

______ 8. I speak, read and/or write in more than one language.

______ 9. I grew up in a home with very strong religious beliefs and practices.

_____ 10. At least one of my parents completed college.

_____ 11. Most of my K-12 educational experiences were in schools serving a racially or ethnically diverse student population (25% or more minority).

_____ 12. I have been the minority in at least one school I attended for more than four months.

_____ 13. I have (or have had) at least one close friend, family member, teacher or colleague of a different race, ethnicity, or nationality than my own.

_____ 14. I have (or have had) at least one close friend, family member, teacher or colleague of a different sexual orientation than my own.

_____ 15. I have (or have had) at least one close friend, family member, teacher or colleague who is transgender/gender variant, or identifies with a gender that does not match their assigned birth sex.

_____ 16. I have (or have had) at least one close friend, family member, teacher or colleague with a mental, emotional or physical disability.

_____ 17. I have (or have had) at least one close friend, family member, teacher or colleague with a significantly different socioeconomic background than my own.

_____ 18. I have (or have had) at least one close friend, family member, teacher or colleague of a significantly different religion/religious orientation than my own.

_____ 19. I have (or have had) at least one close relationship with a person that is in the process of learning to speak English.

_____ 20. I grew up in a racially or ethnically mixed neighborhood.

_____ 21. As an adult, I have lived in a racially or ethnically mixed neighborhood for six months or longer.

_____ 22. I have lived in a foreign country for four months or longer.

_____ 23. I have participated in a national or international program (e.g., study abroad, Peace Corps, church-based service project, Habitat for Humanity, culture-language school, etc.).

_____ 24. I have relied upon my second language as my primary means of communication for major events or extended periods of time.

_____ 25. I regularly view international TV broadcasting networks/channels (e.g., British Broadcasting Corporation/BBC, Spanish Television, etc.).

On the back of this sheet, please list any other cross-cultural experiences you have had that may have influenced your current beliefs and/or attitudes about diversity and diverse others. You may also use this space to share any other insights into what has shaped your current beliefs about diversity.

APPENDIX C

Social Identity Wheel

Figure 1: Social Identity Wheel

Social Identity Wheel

Gender

Socioeconomic Status

Ability

Religion

Race

Education

First Language

Age

Sexual Orientation

National Origin

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Place a "V" next to your visible identities?
2. Place and "N" next to your invisible identities?
3. Which identities do you think about most often?
4. Which identities do you think about least often?
5. Which identities have the strongest effect on how you see yourself as a person?

Adapted from "Voices of Discovery"
by Intergroup Relations Center at Arizona State University, n.d.

For more information see the Service Learning Toolkit at:
servicelearning.msu.edu/resources/service-learning-toolkit

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