LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

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High Musical Achievement in Underserved High School Band Programs: A Qualitative

Study

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by

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THESIS APPROVAL SHEET

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Abstract

Although information is available detailing methods and strategies for high achievement in school band programs, very little is synthesized specifically addressing high schools in urban, inner-city, and other underserved student populations. This study explores the effects of cultural responsiveness, director-student relationships, and establishing and maintaining high standards on student motivation and overall program achievement. The data collected in this study originate from five Texas band directors in minority-majority programs where the school comprises a student population with over 60 percent eligibility for free and/or reduced lunch. These directors have all made significant achievements at the high school level in the state of Texas and have received recognition at the national level. For comparative purposes, all directors also maintain experience in the more affluent suburban situations. Furthermore, in most instances, the programs examined have shifted from being highly successful majority White suburban schools to now minority-majority urban program attempting to maintain or recapture past successes. These themes, while explicitly targeting urban/inner-city programs, are useful for band directors in all settings, as the strategies and methods examined may be effective in all high school band situations.

Keywords: underserved, urban, inner-city, cultural responsiveness, minority-majority, teacher-student relationship, achievement

Dedication

This Thesis is dedicated to the following people and organizations who have been instrumental in my development as an individual, musician, and educator:

1) My wife, Tinesha Brown for always being that strong, loving supporter without fail.

2) My daughters – Sadori, Lauren, and Leigh Anne.

3) My younger sister, Angelee Brown for always supporting me and my family and for being a motivational factor in my life.

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5) My parents for providing for me throughout my life.

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12) Louisiana State University

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I would like to acknowledge my wife for her support, love, and patience throughout this entire process.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

This hermeneutic phenomenological study aims to identify methods, characteristics, and pedagogical systems of high-achieving band programs and band directors who operate high school band programs comprised mostly of minority-majority students. This opening chapter provides a comprehensive background of the problem that informs the purpose of this study and formulates the research questions it attempts to answer. Next, it briefly introduces the phenomenon, outlines the theoretical framework guiding this study, and summarizes the significance of this study to stakeholders in various music education settings. Finally, the chapter concludes by defining applicable and relevant terms to the study.

Background

Public education is a privilege granted to all American children. "While education may not be a 'fundamental right' under the Constitution, the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment requires that when a state establishes a public school system (as in Texas), no child living in that state may be denied equal access to schooling."[1] Although granted, disparities exist between suburban and urban education that contribute to concerns for students and teachers. Persistent shortfalls of adequate resources limit the ability of urban schools to provide high-quality education with a varied curriculum.[2] Consequently, many urban schools underperform their suburban counterparts in nationally recognized measures, such as test scores and overall

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1. Constitutional Rights Foundation, "Bill of Rights in Action: Education and the 14th Amendment," 2023.

2. Jennifer Doyle, "Music Teacher Perceptions of Issues and Problems in Urban Elementary Schools," *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education*, no. 194 (2012): 33.

school ranking.[3] Due to various historical economic issues, United States racial minority groups comprise most of the urban school population, mainly Black and Hispanic families. Yet, most of the teachers in this setting are members of the middle class, have not lived in poverty conditions, and are of a different ethnic background than urban students.[4] This situation may be improved with meaningful involvement in a productive entity, which, for many students, is music. Although music teachers raised in different backgrounds than their urban students may experience difficulty relating to them, effective development of these students is possible.

Historical Context

While enrollment in Texas public schools has increased in recent years, the demographics of the students have shifted from what was historically majority White to a public-school composition that is statewide minority-majority. These changes steadily occurred between the 1987-88 and 2019-20 school years (SY) as the number of Hispanic students surpassed the number of White students for the first time in the 2001-02 school year, according to the Texas Education Agency (TEA).[5] Additionally, each year between 2009-10 and 2019-20, the majority of student families met the state criteria for being economically disadvantaged (ED) culminating with 60.2 percent of ED students in the 2019-20 SY.[6] During this same time frame, Hispanic enrollment increased by 500,820 students representing 20.9 percent, Black student enrollment

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3. Doyle, "Music Teacher Perceptions…," 2012, 32.

4. Ibid..

5. John Du et al., *Enrollment in Texas Public Schools, 2019-20,* Texas Education Agency, Document No. GE20 601 12, Austin, TX: (2020), 5.

6. Ibid.

steady at 12.6 percent, and White enrollment decreased by 64,005 students representing 4.1 percent.[7]

Although the overall student population in Texas is minority-majority, White teachers still comprise the largest group in the state. In Texas, Black teachers represent 10.1 percent of teachers, Hispanic 26 percent, and White 60.8 percent.[8] The Texas teacher workforce is more diverse than teachers nationally. However, the state's teacher diversity increase has not maintained pace with the expanding minority student population that will become more diverse each year.[9]

The disparity in degree attainment between minorities and whites is one barrier causing fewer teachers of color nationally and in Texas. Nearly half of the degrees,48.6 percent, conferred between 2014 and 2015 in Texas, were granted to White students.[10] Twelve percent were conferred to Hispanic students and only 10.6 percent to African American students.[11] Fewer students of color earning bachelor's degrees equate to fewer individuals being available to become teachers. Furthermore, minority graduates are not interested in teaching as a career, as the US Department of Education reported.[12] Only 25 percent of individuals enrolled in a teacher preparation program at an institution of higher education were students of color.[13] The degree completion rates of minority students compound this issue. Those minority individuals who are

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7. Du et al., *Enrollment in Texas…,* (2020), 7.

8. Amy Campbell, "Teacher Demographics and Diversity Challenges," Texas Association of School Boards. Austin, TX: (2017), 2.

9. Ibid.

10. Ibid., 3.

11. Ibid.

12. John B. King, "The State of Racial Diversity in the Educator Workforce," *United States Department of Education*, July 2016.

interested in teaching are not finishing their degrees at the same rate as white students.[14]

Campbell reports:

> Nearly three-quarters of bachelor's degree students majoring in education complete their degree within six years. However, only 43 percent of African American education majors and 49 percent of Hispanic education majors complete their degree in the same timeframe. So, more than half of the relatively small number of minority students with an interest in education never finish their education degree.[15]

This appears to be a self-perpetuating problem, as the number of minority teachers does not increase proportionately to the increase in minority students.

This phenomenon has seemingly forced changes in the way students are educated. Unfortunately, teachers who were raised in environments different from those of their students may maintain very different cultural, racial, or socioeconomic backgrounds and often have a difficult time relating to their students.[16] As a result, educators deliver information, build relationships, and establish high program standards differently to achieve individual and program goals at the highest levels, which may result in local, state, and national recognition.

Empirical Context

Music education in urban schools can help students form strong connections to their education. Urban schools tend to comprise students who may project a higher propensity towards participating in negative social behaviors.[17] Likewise, many urban students find their current school model irrelevant to their everyday life. However, music can provide that needed

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13. King, "The State of...," 2016.

14. Campbell, "Teacher Demographics and…," 2017, 3.

15. Ibid.

16. Doyle, "Music Teacher Perceptions…," 2012, 33.

17. Ibid., 32.

connection. Participating in music can help students find relevance in school as "music education is, by its nature, well-suited to meeting the special needs of at-risk students."[18] Careful teaching of culturally relevant music can connect the academic gap in the classroom and the social gap between students and teachers. Music teachers should prepare to engage with culturally diverse students, and a culturally relevant role model is of keen importance. Cultural responsiveness as a pedagogy allows teachers to be less apprehensive about teaching diverse populations and diverse styles of music.

The demographic changes in public school districts across the United States require educators to teach students originating from backgrounds that differ from their own in racial, linguistic, and/or economic ways. Culturally responsive education (CRE) is an approach that allows educators to relate to and validate their students while utilizing their strengths as educators.[19] CRE emphasizes setting high standards, forming a conducive culture, and developing an awareness of others and their life situations. There are many facets of culture, as Bond posits:

> Language, behavioral expressions, interpretations of actions, and societal expectations are all culturally borne and implemented. Culture includes ethnicity and race, as well as gender, class, language, religion, exceptionality, and other diversities that help to define individuals. Participating as a member of these microcultures makes each individual a multicultural being.[20]

In the music education profession, the mention of CRE began to emerge in the early 2000s in connection with the need to develop strategies to work with urban populations. CRE focuses on culture and does not explicitly treat race as a problem. Instead, it serves as a tool to address the

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18. Scott Shuler, "Music, At-Risk Students, and the Missing Piece," *Music Educators Journal*, 78(3), (1991): 22.

19. Vanessa L. Bond, "Culturally Responsive Education in Music Education: A Literature Review." *Contributions to Music Education* 42 (2017): 154.

20. Ibid.

many subthemes of each student.[21]

Theoretical Context

Cultural Responsiveness

One of the key concepts for this study is Culturally Responsive Education (CRE). The foundation is developed from both Gay's theory on culturally responsive teaching[22] and Lind and McKoy's concept of culturally responsive teaching in music education (CRME).[23] Gay posits that teaching is most effective when ecological factors, such as prior experiences, community settings, cultural backgrounds, and ethnic identities of teachers and students, are included in its implementation.[24] This is the essence of CRE: accessing a student's background, life experiences, and beliefs to inspire learning. Gay further states that while addressing culture and other differences can be difficult and complex, it can also be an empowering experience for both teachers and their students.[25]

CRE must also be applied in the music education classroom and for purposes of this study, in particular, the band setting. However, CRE is more than an approach to instruction; it is a disposition or mindset.[26] Students in urban settings bring culturally-based knowledge, strengths, interests, and skills to the classroom that requires intentionality from the teacher

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21. Bond, "Culturally Responsive Education…," 2017, 158.

22. Geneva Gay, *Culturally Responsive Teaching: Theory, Research, and Practice,* New York, NY: Teachers College Press, 2018.

23. Vicki Lind and Constance McKoy. *Culturally Responsive Teaching in Music Education*. New York: Rutledge, 2016.

24. Gay, *Culturally Responsive Teaching…,* (2018), 28.

25. Geneva Gay, "Teaching to and Through Cultural Diversity," *Curriculum Inquiry*, 43, (2013): 61.

26. Lind et. al., *Culturally Responsive Teaching…,* (2016), 83.

desiring to teach music in a culturally responsive manner.[27] There are no shortcuts or tips and tricks to providing CRME. Nevertheless, this study examines concepts and strategies that will increase the possibility of success in CRME, including getting to know the students, creating a supportive classroom environment, and making program decisions/choices that are culturally responsive.[28]

Lastly, CRE advocates for public validation of culture, including explicit implementation and valuing of various music literacies.[29] The actual repertoire performed by the students is a very visible representation of the values of a music organization. Bond postulates that if repertoires are limited to Eurocentric traditions, students may become indifferent to school music as it may not contain the same musical complexity or process orientation as home music constructions.[30] A commitment to the application of varied music sends the message that the music of a student's culture is relevant, and it also helps educators avoid unintentional marginalization of world and popular music.[31] Although CRE, with the added dimension of CRME, may be categorized as a complex and multifaceted endeavor, it is still achievable.[32]

Relationships

CRE creates a pathway to developing relationships. Students in urban settings experience additional challenges when developing trust, community, and culture. While challenging, it is

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27. Lind et. al., *Culturally Responsive Teaching…,* (2016), 83.

28. Ibid., 83-94.

29. Bond, "Culturally Responsive Education…," (2017), 160.

30. Ibid.

31. Ibid.

32. Lind et al., *Culturally Responsive Teaching…,* (2016), 98.

possible to gain the trust needed to develop an effective relationship with students in urban

settings. Living in poor urban neighborhoods creates a disproportionate risk of experiencing

community, family, and individual trauma, such as crime and family violence.[33] Children who

are traumatized spend the school day focused on their safety, making it difficult for them to

concentrate on learning classroom content.[34] School band programs with a positive culture and a

family environment are designed to potentially remedy this situation.

Smith addresses solutions to student issues in urban situations by stating that teachers

must first examine themselves and their own motivations.[35] Although he states nothing truly

prepares one for the realities of teaching in underserved communities, his advice to increase the

effectiveness within a band program is threefold: teaching in urban settings is not about the

money, diversifying the teaching corps, and meeting students on their own terms.[36] Additionally,

and in particular, he discusses the need for radical consistency and defines that as "teachers and

other caring adults who stay invested in their lives," along with arts programs that "flourish and

grow without the perpetual threat of (program) cuts."[37]

Establishing community in urban settings involves earning the loyalty of the students, as

Halbert purports:

> Many of them either have strong family bonds or homes where they are constantly
> moving and/or the guardians who are constantly changing. Setting goals and standards
> with your students proves to them that you have expectations for them and also that you
> are invested in them. Many students may assume that you will leave at the end of the

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33. Kacy Martin, "Trauma in the American Urban Classroom," *Green & White – College of Education – Michigan State University*, (2015).

34. Ibid.

35. Lincoln Smith, "Four Things Every Music Teacher in an Urban School Should Know," *The Hechinger Report*, (2019).

36. Ibid.

37. Ibid.

year. Show them you are willing to show up for them if they are willing to show up for you.[38]

In urban settings especially, relationships matter for students to be engaged. Fredricks purports that the adults in the schools personalize learning by sincerely getting to know the students beyond academics and tailoring instruction to their individual needs.[39] Furthermore, these supports, coupled with respect and fairness, help students to feel more engaged over time.[40] Developing positive relationships with teachers was vital to students who maintain academic and social issues as they needed both types of support.[41] The importance of being heard and known by the adults in the school helps create that family environment for which students in urban settings are searching.

Gallagher asserts that positive relationships between adults and children can reduce the risks to which adverse (traumatic) experiences expose them.[42] She further states, "A significant relationship can reverse damage from trauma in students. So not only is the teacher the most important factor in student achievement, he or she also has an influence on the risks of trauma in students through positive relationships."[43]

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38. Emily Halbert, "Culturally Responsive Teaching in Urban Choral Education: Tips on Repertoire, Resources, and Relationship, *ChoralNet – American Choral Directors Association*, (2018).

39. Jennifer Fredricks, "Why Relationships Matter for Urban Students' Engagement," *Students at the Center*, (2017).

40. Ibid.

41. Fredricks, "Why Relationships Matter…," (2017).

42. Kate Gallagher, "Developing Relationships on Urban Education," *Graduate Programs for Educators*, (2020).

43. Ibid.

High Standards

CRE is the foundation that leads to a pathway to develop relationships which, in turn, leads to the ability to establish and maintain high standards within a band program. Lind and McKoy report:

> There is a great deal of conversation in education about the need for teachers to maintain high expectations for all students. This conversation has been generated by a concern that, too often, teachers do not have the same high expectations for the academic achievement of students from racial and ethnic minority groups as they do for other learners. Having high expectations for all students means teachers must be able to see the bigger picture of future possibilities that their students may not yet be able to envision.[44]

Garcia-Moya posits that learning from a teacher as a significant adult in students' lives produced positive effects in several essential areas, including increasing effort and engagement, developing academic skills, the perception of a more positive learning environment, and enhanced student well-being.[45] This increase in effort is a tangible aspect of participation that makes a difference in the level of achievement in a band program. It also dictates program goals and the level of expectancy of achieving the program's standards the teacher establishes.

This study also explores the effects on urban programs when standards are not rigorous. In such cases, the appearance of underachievement may become the identity of the program. The narrative of underachievement by students of color still thrives as the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) scores consistently report gaps between White and Black students.[46] Low expectations contribute to low achievement among students of color.[47] Milner

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44. Lind et al., *Culturally Responsive Teaching…,* (2016), 68.

45. Irene Garcia-Moya, *The Importance of Connectedness in Student-Teacher Relationships,* Switzerland, AG: Springer Nature, 2020, 5.

46. Erin Lewis and Brittany Hunt, "High Expectations: Increasing Outcomes for Black Students in Urban Schools," *Urban Education Research and Policy Annuals*, Vol. 6 no. 2, (2019): 78.

47. Ibid.

asserted that even when teachers present good intentions, sometimes they do not really believe in the abilities and capabilities of particular students.[48] This is called "deficit thinking" and affects what pedagogy is utilized, how teachers develop curriculum, and perspective.[49] Further, Vega contends that many urban school teachers maintain negative perceptions about the academic ability of Black students.[50] As a result, lackadaisical expectations can be attributed to deficit thinking, where teachers' lack of belief in the academic capabilities of students of color leads to lower expectations.[51]

Lastly, this study examines other factors influencing achievement in urban schools, including inequitable school discipline practices and the achievement gap. These two items seemingly contribute to program standards the teacher and high school band director will establish. CRE can serve as a remedy and a basis that allows the educator to develop and maintain high program rigor.

Statement of the Problem

In recent literature, research has neglected to explore programs in urban/inner-city settings that have achieved at the highest levels with band directors who do not originate from the majority background of their students (i.e., White band directors with Hispanic and Black students). This study examines those specific programs and provides information detailing their application of CRE, the effectiveness of their relationships with the students, and their ability to establish a particularly rigorous standard while holding students accountable in situations where

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48. Lewis et al., "High Expectations: Increasing…," (2019), 78.

49. Ibid.

50. James Moore, III and Chance Lewis. *African American Students in Urban Schools: Critical Issues and Solutions for Achievement.* New York, NY: Peter Lang Publishing, 2012.

51. Lewis et al., "High Expectations: Increasing…," (2019), 78.

it is perceived that students are only capable of attaining a certain level of success because of their circumstances. The problem is that literature has not fully addressed how students in urban/inner-city high school band programs are underperforming, and music educators do not maintain the information and/or tools necessary to implement a system that will reverse the trend of underachievement underscored by Geneva Gay.[52] While a dominant factor, she purports that culturally responsive teaching alone cannot solve the problem of improving the education of marginalized students of color.[53] Furthermore, the critical role of a positive relationship with at least one significant adult is a determining factor of a child's well-being. It contributes to their decision to be involved with a band program, music education program, or school altogether.[54] There is minimal information related to minority-majority students in urban/inner-city high school band programs and the methods utilized to inspire them to participate, excel, and achieve at or above the same level as their suburban counterparts.

Statement of the Purpose

The purpose of this hermeneutic phenomenological study is to identify methods, characteristics, and pedagogical systems of high-achieving band programs and band directors who operate high school band programs comprised mainly of minority-majority students. The programs included in this study have received recognition from the two governing bodies of public school music education in Texas: University Interscholastic League (UIL) and Texas Music Educators Association (TMEA).[55] Some of the programs examined have also received

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52. Gay, *Culturally Responsive Teaching…*, (2018), 1.

53. Ibid.

54. Garcia-Moya, *The Importance of…*, 2020, 5.

55. Texas Music Educators Association. *Honor Band Competition Rules and Entry.* 2021. https://www.tmea.org/band/honor-band/.

national recognition by the John Philip Sousa Foundation, Music for All (MFA), College Band

Directors National Association (CBDNA), the National Band Association (NBA),[56] and the

Midwest International Band and Orchestra Clinic.[57] Recognition by these organizations

demonstrates the appearance of high achievement and program success, as all of these

institutions require a lengthy application process in which an exceptionally high level of

performance is a prerequisite for recognition. This study further identifies perspectives that have

not yet been explored and documented concerning the experiences of band directors who teach

students who do not share the same ethnicity and/or social class. For comparative purposes, this

study also examines programs in urban/inner-city settings that are also excelling with directors

who are similar in ethnicity and former childhood experiences to the students in teach. Lastly,

this study illuminates how to better educate and support students in minority-majority programs

and offers professional development opportunities for music educators who operate in any area

of music education.

<div align="center">Significance of the Study</div>

This study demonstrates the significance of applying the appropriate methods to properly

inspire and motivate learning in urban/inner-city high school band students in a manner that will

result in rigorous achievement. This study specifically addresses individuals who are different

from the students they teach in multiple and key areas that include race, ethnicity, gender, and/or

social class. Further, this study serves to illuminate the need for directors to adjust to the needs of

their students while implementing their pedagogical training and expertise. Students will

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56. Music Education Alliance. *Dr. William P. Foster Project "Award of Excellence."* 2022. http://www.musicedalliance.org/award/.

57. Midwest Clinic International Band and Orchestra Clinic. *The Midwest Clinic Performance and Application Requirements. 2022.* https://www.midwestclinic.org/performance-application-requirements.

ultimately benefit from a learning environment that is culturally responsive, provides effective

director-student relationships, and maintains a rigorous standard. Music educators will be able to

immediately apply methods resulting from this study to their teaching situation and be more

effective at inspiring learning in all settings.

Methodology

As informed by the work of John Creswell and J. David Creswell on research methods, a

qualitative phenomenological research design is applied to gather the lived experiences of band

directors pertaining to a conceptual understanding and perception of cultural responsiveness,

teacher-student relationships, and establishing rigorous standards and their effects on

achievement in urban/inner-city high school band programs.[58] Applying a phenomenological

method and the structure outlined by Creswell and Creswell provides the best option for

ascertaining perspectives while informing the establishment of the concepts of cultural

responsiveness, teacher-student relationships, and establishing and maintaining rigorous

standards and their effects on achievement in the urban high school band setting.[59] To further

inform this framework and the underlying themes of band director and program efficacy, the data

gathered via the proposed method and approach provided an informed perspective of the basis of

music education development from educational scholars, leaders in the current literature, and

leaders in the band director profession. These data established the common themes and

ideologies related to rigorous achievement in urban high school band programs.

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58. John W. Creswell and J. David Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 5th ed. (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, Inc., 2018), 13.

59. Ibid., 64.

Research Plan

To address the proposed research questions via the outlined research method and approach, existing literature has been collected and examined for informative details, perspectives, ideologies, frameworks, and implications that define the concepts of cultural responsiveness, teacher-student relationships, and the establishing and maintaining of rigorous standards and how these examined concepts from the perspective of band directors affect achievement in urban/inner-city high school band programs. The data analyzed have been examined for underlying themes of band director efficacy and accountability and how these themes specifically direct the framework of urban high school band programs. As guided by a qualitative review of the literature defined by Creswell and Creswell, materials such as scholarly books, scholarly journals, magazine articles, legal state education agency documents, websites, interviews, commentaries, and video recordings have been examined and simultaneously documented for purposes of documenting methods and strategies that have guided directors to high achievements in high school band programs in an urban/inner-city setting.[60] Additional data gathered from these sources and via band director interviews were concurrently examined and discussed from a pedagogical perspective. The concluding information obtained may provide criteria that could be utilized by directors for the purpose of duplicating program results in high school band programs of any type. The collection and examination of this material created a foundation that directed this study towards establishing an understanding of achievement in urban/inner-city high school band programs and how they may be affected by cultural responsiveness, effective student-teacher relationships, and the establishment and maintenance of rigorous program standards.

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60. Creswell et al., R*esearch Design: Qualitative*…, (2018).

Statement of Primary Research Questions

As an exploration into the trend of schools becoming minority-majority and its effect on high school band programs, the following questions guided this study:

Research Question One: How does cultural responsiveness affect director efficacy in underserved high school band programs?

Research Question Two: How does the director-student relationship affect achievement in underserved high school band programs?

Research Question Three: What are the effects of rigorous standards and accountability on achievement in underserved high school band programs?

The results of this study aimed to investigate the effects of successful band programs comprised of minority-majority students on obtaining those successes while so many other similar programs are not. The attainment of regional, state, and national recognition, along with consistent program growth and morale aid in determining achievement within each program. Furthermore, the outcome of this study reveals a commonality that should serve as a foundation for all music education programs.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis One: Cultural responsiveness can affect director efficacy in underserved high school band programs in terms of motivating students to learn and achieve at the highest levels, establishing and maintaining rigorous program standards, and establishing relationships with students who are not of the same culture and/or economic background. There are many ways that culturally responsive teaching is validating to learners and to the learning process.[61] It acknowledges the value of the cultural heritages of differing groups in

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61. Lind et al., Culturally Responsive Teaching... (2016), 18.

terms of both curriculum and content and in terms of how respective cultural legacies influence students' attitudes, dispositions, and ways of learning.[62] This allows the teacher to develop effective relationships with the student.

> Hypothesis Two: The director-student relationship can affect achievement in underserved high school band programs in terms of fostering a bond that allows the student to welcome the director into his or her life and culture, acknowledging the value of the student outside of the band program, and establishing a classroom environment that fosters community and safety.

The foundation for teaching should be close relationships, as the better one knows one's students, the more devoted one will be while discovering how students learn best and that which inspires and upsets them.[63] Students who feel understood and supported are more open to new ideas and to criticism necessary for accountability.[64]

> Hypothesis Three: The effects of high standards and accountability on achievement in underserved high school band programs can include improved and positive student perception of value and self-worth, an improved level of motivation to achieve, and an increased level of effort and participation from the student.

Results from Deisler's study indicate that students, teachers, and principals perceived "Band director's high expectations" produced the greatest influence on the success of the program.[65]

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62. Lind et al., Culturally Responsive Teaching... (2016), 18.

63. Bonnie Blanchard, "Pedagogy Saturday IX: Music for Life - Base Your Teaching on Relationships," American Music Teacher, 10, 2005. 36.

64. Ibid.

65. Ann Deisler, "A Comparison of Common Characteristics of Successful High School Band Programs in Low Socioeconomic Schools and High Socioeconomic Schools," PhD diss., Florida State University, 2011.

Further, students' motivation to participate in band or other courses and their performance in those courses may have been influenced by the expectations of their teachers.[66]

<div align="center">Definition of Terms</div>

To fully ascertain the concepts, implications, and results of the study, the definitions of several key terms are required. By understanding the application of these terms, the reader will better ascertain the motives, aims, methods, and outcomes of this study. The following terms are applied throughout this study:

Underserved – The term "underserved populations" refers to populations who encounter impediments to accessing and acquiring victim services.[67] This includes populations underserved because of geographic location, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, racial and ethnic populations, special needs populations, such as language barriers, disabilities, alienage status, or age, and any other population determined to be underserved by the Attorney General or by the Secretary of Health and Human Services.[68]

Achievement – Achievement is defined as accomplishing and mastery of a clearly identified essential skill or of knowledge because of the individual's effort, learning, and practice.[69]

Achievement Gap – The achievement gap is defined as the disparity in academic performance between groups of students.[70]

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66. Deisler, "A Comparison of…," 2011.

67. Cornell Law School, *Legal Information Institute,* Ithaca, NY: 2022.

68. Ibid.

69. Law Insider, 2022.

70. Susan Ansell, Achievement Gap, *Education Week*. (2011).

Minority-Majority – Minority-majority relates to a population in which more than half reported a race and ethnicity other than Non-Hispanic White.[71]

Enrollment – Enrollment is defined as the number of students registered in a school at a designated time in the school year.[72]

Public School – The Texas public school system is structured to provide tuition-free education for all Texas children regardless of race, religion, or ability. They are self-governing with their own leadership hierarchy and policymaking processes, but still accountable to state and federal entities.[73]

Suburban – Suburban is defined as a district lying immediately outside a city or town, especially a smaller residential community that comprises a population between 1,000 and 2,000 per square mile.[74]

Urban – Urban is defined as or relates to the experience, lifestyle, or culture of African Americans living in economically depressed inner-city neighborhoods that are less than ten map miles from a population center of 30,000 people or more.[75]

Inner-city – The term "inner-city" is commonly applied for urban schools that accept students from neglected parts of a city, densely populated and usually deteriorating, inhabited

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71. Law Insider, 2022.

72. Du et.al., *Enrollment in Texas…* 2020, 1.

73. My Texas Public School: The School System. *Texas Association of School Boards.* Austin, TX: 2022.

74. Law Insider, 2022.

75. Dictionary.com, 2022.

mainly by poor, often minority, groups.[76] The term includes a negative connotation as the schools are considered rough or dangerous.[77]

Summary

A few key aspects require adherence when providing effective music education to students in underserved situations: cultural responsiveness, relationships, and rigorous standards. Each of these facets is interrelated to the extent that they seem most effective when all three function together towards developing a high-achieving high school band program in an underserved setting. These three key areas underscore the need to investigate further their implementation into music programs and urban/inner-city high school band programs specifically. Therefore, this hermeneutic phenomenological study aims to identify perspectives that still need to be explored and documented concerning the experiences of band directors in minority-majority programs that are achieving at a rigorous level. At the time of this study, previous studies or writings have yet to be discovered regarding this specific topic. As a result, little is known about the band directors' perspective and program operations when attaining high achievements with minority-majority students in underserved areas.

This study allows for a thorough examination of cultural responsiveness in music education, the development of effective director-student relationships, and the establishment and maintenance of high standards in an urban high school band program. Utilizing a culturally responsive approach when inspiring learning appears to be the most effective method. Acknowledging their culture and showing appreciation for the child's uniqueness will allow the

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76. Holistic Life Foundation, *An Inner City School: What It's Like and How to Help,* Baltimore, MD: 2021.

77. Ibid.

teacher to meet their holistic needs.[78] Culturally responsive teachers are demanding but also

"supportive and accessible, both personally and professionally,"[79] allowing them to gain the

necessary trust to develop effective relationships with their students. Lastly, standards must not

be compromised because of the setting. McAnally expressed, "The children of

whom we speak are experiencing a poverty of opportunity, not a poverty of potential. It is not

our job to 'fix' them, but instead to do our part in mitigating their circumstances."[80]

A hermeneutic phenomenological methodology was selected for this study because the

aim of qualitative research is to explore individuals' perceptions and lived experiences in their

natural environments. Additionally, this study comprised interviews with four White Texas band

directors whose programs are well respected and recognized throughout the state. Each program

consists of minority-majority students in an urban setting and has achieved national recognition.

The perspective of these four band directors revealed information relevant for teachers of

minority-majority students, band directors of any situation, and educators in general. The results

from this study emphasize certain themes for providing effective education for minority-majority

students and, in turn, promote recommendations for future research.

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78. Vanessa L. Bond. "Culturally Responsive Education…," 2017, 158.

79. Ibid.

80. Elizabeth McAnally. "General Music and Children Living in Poverty." General Music Today. 26. (2013). 25–31.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

The purpose of this hermeneutic phenomenological qualitative study is to identify methods, characteristics, and pedagogical systems of high-achieving band programs and band directors who operate high school band programs comprised mainly of minority-majority students. Educators who work with these students are often located in an urban/inner-city setting and are not familiar with these students' particular backgrounds and lived experiences because of their own upbringing. Analyzing these experiences may help identify the methods that are most effective at inspiring learning in that setting. A systematic review of the literature was conducted to explore the factors that influence achievement in these specific programs. This chapter presents a review of the current literature related to the topic. In the first section, the theory relevant to educating minority-majority students will be discussed. The following section synthesizes the recent literature appropriate to culturally responsive teaching in music education. Finally, the chapter concludes with an objective analysis of the literature pertaining to cultural responsiveness in music education, a framework for culturally responsive music education, and an examination of the role of these factors that influence high achievement in urban high school band programs.

Culturally Responsive Teaching

Gay says:

Too many students of color have not been achieving in school as well as they should (and can) for far too long. The consequences of these disproportionally high levels of low achievement are long-term and wide-reaching, personal and civic, individual and collective. They are too devastating to be tolerable. We must insist that this disempowerment stop now and set into motion change strategies to ensure that it does.[81]

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81. Gay, *Culturally Responsive Teaching…*, (2018), 1.

To realize the necessary transformation, Gay believes that classroom teachers and all other educators must understand that achievement or lack thereof, is an experience or an accomplishment.[82] It is not the totality of a student's identity or the essence of one's worth.[83] Teachers must learn how to recognize, honor, and incorporate the personal abilities of students in their strategies and lesson planning to improve school achievement.[84] While culturally responsive teaching alone cannot solve all the issues of improving the education of marginalized students of color, Gay suggests six central premises or assertions to support her theory and, as a result, reverse the underachievement of students of color. Although it is recognized that comprehensive educational and societal change may be needed, analysis of such is beyond the scope of this study. This research instead focuses on teaching in the K-12 setting.

The first premise is that culture is at the heart of all educational efforts, whether curriculum, instruction, administration, and/or performance assessments.[85] As applied here, culture refers to that dynamic system of social values, cognitive codes, behavioral standards, worldviews, and beliefs held to assign order and meaning to one's own life as well as the lives of others.[86] Gay posits that even without being consciously aware of it, culture strongly influences how one thinks, believes, communicates, and behaves, and these, in turn, affect teaching and learning.[87] Since teaching and learning are always mediated or shaped by cultural influences,

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82. Gay, *Culturally Responsive Teaching…*, (2018), 1.

83. Ibid.

84. Ibid.

85. Ibid., 8.

86. Ibid.

87. Ibid.

they can never be culturally neutral.[88] George and Louise Spindler further clarify Gay's stance as

they explain:

> Teachers carry into the classroom their personal cultural background. They perceive
> students, all of whom are cultural agents, with inevitable prejudice and preconception.
> Students likewise come to school with personal cultural backgrounds that influence their
> perceptions of teachers, other students, and the school itself. Together students and
> teachers construct, mostly without being conscious of doing it, an environment of
> meanings enacted in individual and group behaviors, of conflict and accommodation,
> rejection and acceptance, alienation and withdrawal.[89]

Teachers need to understand the different cultural intersections and incompatibilities, minimize

the tensions, and bridge the gaps among the cultural systems they encounter and influence.[90]

Furthermore, achievement for students of color will improve with congruency between how the

educational process is ordered and delivered and the cultural frames of reference of diverse

students.[91]

Gay's second premise is that conventional theories and proposals for improving the

achievement of students of color are inadequate. This results from their being deeply enmeshed

in a deficit orientation, concentrating on what ethnically, racially, and culturally different

students do not have and cannot do and their claims of cultural neutrality.[92] Evidence is prevalent

in current thinking regarding "at-risk" students and highly structured programs that only

emphasize the technical and academic dimensions of learning.[93] One program, in particular, has

been able to underscore this approach for students of color, as Gay points out:

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88. Gay, *Culturally Responsive Teaching…*, (2018), 8.

89. George Spindler and Louise Spindler, *Pathways to Cultural Awareness: Cultural Therapy With Teachers and Students*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin, 1994.

90. Gay, *Culturally Responsive Teaching…*, (2018), 12.

91. Ibid.

92. Ibid.

The Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) project, which began in 1980 in the San Diego County public schools, has proven the fallacy of this for Latino and African American students from urban areas. The directors and teachers of AVID found that achievement was much higher when academic interventions were reinforced by an infrastructure of social supports. These included personal caring, mutual aid and assistance, use of cultural anchors and mediators in instruction, and creating a sense of community among students and teachers.[94]

Gay's third premise is that intention without action is insufficient. Gay theorizes that many educators maintain good intentions about not being academically unjust and discriminatory towards ethnically and racially different students.[95] Likewise, others understand and even endorse the importance of simply being aware of cultural differences in the classroom.[96] However, these alone are insufficient to produce the necessary changes in educational programs and procedures that prevent academic inequities among diverse students.[97] That goodwill must be accompanied by pedagogical knowledge and skill as well as the courage needed to challenge the existing situation.[98]

Gay's fourth premise is her stance on cultural diversity. She says that cultural diversity is a strength, its full potential may not be realized, and it is a useful resource for improving educational effectiveness for all students.[99] She states:

Learning experiences and achievement outcomes for ethnically and culturally diverse students should include more than cognitive performances in academic subject and standardized test scores. Moral, social, cultural, personal, and political developments are also important. All of these are essential to the healthy and complete functioning of human beings and societies. If education is, as it should be, devoted to teaching the whole

93. Gay, *Culturally Responsive Teaching…*, (2018), 13.

94. Ibid.

95. Ibid.

96. Ibid.

97. Ibid.

98. Ibid.

99. Ibid.

child, then this comprehensive focus should be evident throughout curriculum, instruction, and assessment.[100]

Excellence in education is a process of perpetual self-discovery, reshaping to realize one's best self, to be the best person possible.[101]

Gay's fifth premise is that competence or incompetence is never universal or all-inclusive. The predominant predisposition in educational practices is to operate on the assumption that student capabilities shown in one area of performance will be the same in other areas of performance.[102] As a result, students demonstrating giftedness or talent in science are deemed and assumed to be similarly capable in math, language arts, social studies, and fine arts. Conversely, low achievement in reading per se assumes poor performance in writing, math, science, and economics. The tendency is for educators to act as if all children of poverty and of color are at risk of failure.[103] The conflict here is that competence is contextual and evolving and that no matter the level of difficulty of the task or learning, there is always some process that a child can do well. CRT recognizes and further develops the diversity and fluidity of competence in diverse student populations.[104]

Gay's final premise is that scores on standardized tests and grades students receive on classroom learning tasks do not accurately describe why they are not performing at acceptable levels. She asserts that low performance is a symptom of and not the cause or remedy for the

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100. Gay, *Culturally Responsive Teaching*…, (2018), 15.

101. John Gardner, *Excellence: Can We Be Equal and Excellent Too?* (rev. ed.), New York, NY: Norton, 1984, 124.

102. Gay, *Culturally Responsive Teaching*…, (2018), 16.

103. Ibid., 17.

104. Ibid.

problems.[105] If teachers do not ascertain the obstacles interfering with student performance, they cannot intervene appropriately to remove the barriers to high achievement. Placing the culpability on students, their socioeconomic background, disinterest in learning, motivation to learn, and/or inadequate parental involvement in the child's educational process is counterproductive. Consequently, the basis of the issue remains neglected. The inquiry investigating why different students are performing as they are should begin with careful disaggregation of achievement data.[106] Insights gained from this investigation should influence the design and implementation of instructional reforms to facilitate improved performance and achievement for these students.[107]

Theoretical Summary

Gay defines culturally responsive teaching as "using the cultural characteristics, experiences, and perspectives of ethnically diverse students as conduits for teaching them more effectively."[108] This pedagogy is designed to allow for various cultural differences among students while providing high-quality education for all. Gay posits that much intellectual ability and many other intelligences are not accessed in ethnically diverse students, and CRT promotes their higher learning potentials by simultaneously cultivating their academic and psychosocial abilities.[109]

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105. Gay, *Culturally Responsive Teaching…*, (2018), 17.

106. Ibid., 18.

107. Ibid.

108. Geneva Gay, "Preparing for Culturally Responsive Teaching," *Journal of Teacher Education, 53*(2), (2002): 106.

109. Gay, *Culturally Responsive Teaching…*, (2018), 21.

Heidegger's hermeneutic circle will be utilized to examine the lived experiences of the participating directors and their interactions with the phenomenon. This process involves understanding that is revealed by transitioning from the phenomenon that is to be understood to the personal interpretations of the researcher and back to the phenomenon.[110] In this study, the underlying theme of cultural responsiveness will be synthesized with the lived experiences of actual band directors. With the application of a hermeneutic approach to this phenomenological study, consideration will be granted to lived experiences, data will be analyzed to discover common themes identified through a concept of culturally responsive teaching, and information will be synthesized to gain a deeper understanding of the whole experience with the phenomenon. This process is related to the research because it is instrumental in identifying factors that may influence high achievement in underserved high school band programs.

<div align="center">Related Literature</div>

This section examines literature pertaining to cultural responsiveness as a pedagogy. The origin of culturally responsive teaching is explored, followed by a deep investigation of culturally responsive teaching in music education. The composition, framework, and many themes are thoroughly examined. Lastly, this section studies literature regarding knowing the students being taught.

Origin of Culturally Responsive Teaching

For several years, Gloria Ladson-Billings engaged in research with excellent teachers of Black students.[111] Various administrators, teachers, and teacher educators inquired about her

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110. Martin Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought* (Hofstadter, A., Trans.), Bloomington: Indiana University, 1971.

findings because of the state of academic performance by Black students during that time.[112]

Ladson-Billings states that the pedagogical excellence she studied was, indeed, good teaching

but encompassed more. She identified her findings as culturally relevant and argued for its

centrality in the academic success of Black and other children who "have not been well served

by our nation's public schools."[113] Ladson-Billings defined culturally relevant teaching as a

pedagogy of opposition committed explicitly to collective, not merely individual,

empowerment.[114] She posits:

> Culturally relevant pedagogy rests on three criteria or propositions: (a) Students must
> experience academic success; (b) students must develop and/or maintain cultural
> competence; and (c) students must develop critical consciousness through which they
> challenge the status quo of the current social order.[115]

She claims students must develop their academic skills despite social inequities and hostile

classroom environments.[116] While the method of developing those skills may vary, all students

need literacy, numeracy, technology, and social and political skills to be active participants in a

democracy.[117] Ladson-Billings insisted that Black students demonstrate academic competence

despite the need to develop their self-esteem. She theorizes that culturally relevant teaching

requires teachers to "attend to the students' academic needs, not merely make them feel good.

The trick to culturally relevant teaching is to attract students to 'choose' academic excellence."[118]

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111. Gloria Ladson-Billings, "But That's Just Good Teaching! The Case for Culturally Relevant Pedagogy," *Theory Into Practice,* 34 (3), (1995): 159.

112. Ibid.

113. Ibid.

114. Ibid.

115. Ibid., 160.

116. Ibid., 159.

117. Ibid.

Likewise, it requires students to maintain some cultural integrity as well. For too many Black students, the school remains an alien and hostile place. According to Majors and Billson, this hostility is manifest in the "styling" and "posturing" that the school rejects.[119] Therefore, the Black student wearing a hat in class or baggy pants may be sanctioned for clothing choices rather than specific behaviors, thus relegating school to a place where Black students cannot "be themselves."[120] The culturally relevant teacher will harness students' culture as a process for learning.

Lastly, culturally relevant teaching does not imply that it is sufficient for students to choose academic excellence while remaining culturally grounded if those skills and abilities only represent individual achievement.[121] According to Ladson-Billings, students must develop a broader sociopolitical consciousness that allows them to critique the cultural norms, values, morals, and institutions that produce and maintain social inequities.[122] Students in culturally relevant classrooms are expected to engage others and the world in a critical manner.[123]

Ladson-Billings desired to develop a theory that did not assume that the academic achievement of groups outside of the dominant culture was dependent upon assimilation into the dominant culture.[124] She introduced the term "culturally relevant" as a means to describe a

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118. Ladson-Billings, "But That's Just…," (1995): 159.

119. Richard Majors and Janet Billson, *Cool Pose: The Dilemmas of Black Manhood in America,* New York: Lexington Books, 1992.

120. Ibid.

121. Ladson-Billings, "But That's Just…," (1995): 162.

122. Ibid.

123. Ibid.

124. Vicki Lind and Constance McKoy, *Culturally Responsive Teaching in Music Education: From Understanding to Application,* New York: Rutledge, 2016.

manner of teaching which challenges the status quo so that students can critically examine educational content by applying their cultural knowledge and experiences to create meaning.[125] The term "culturally responsive" later emerged from her desire to describe the synergistic relationship between the student's home and school cultures.[126]

Culturally Responsive Teaching in Music Education

Vicki Lind and Constance McKoy desire music teachers to understand the concepts of culturally responsive pedagogy from the context of music education. They state that while many aspects of culturally responsive pedagogy may be generalized across multiple subjects, some facets may include distinctive applications and functions for music education.[127] They seek to translate culturally responsive pedagogy into a format usable for music educators.

Lind and McKoy state that culturally responsive teaching is validating to learners and the learning process in various ways. "Culturally responsive teaching acknowledges the value of the cultural heritages of differing groups both in terms of curriculum content and in terms of how these respective cultural legacies influence students' attitudes, dispositions, and ways of learning."[128] They assert that understanding the significance of culturally responsive pedagogy for teaching and learning in music requires understanding the culture's nature, the process of education as cultural transmission, and the historical events that may have formed the approach

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125. Gloria Ladson-Billings, *Research & Multicultural Education - Culturally Relevant Teaching: The Key to Making Multicultural Education Work* (Grant, ed.), Bristol, PA: The Falmer Press, 1992.

126. Gloria Ladson-Billings, "Toward a Theory of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy," *American Educational Research Journal* 32, no. 3 (September 1995): 465–91.

127. Lind and McKoy, *Culturally Responsive Teaching…*, 2016.

128. Ibid.,18.

to educating students from diverse backgrounds.[129] Furthermore, teachers who demonstrate proficiency in culturally responsive pedagogy and have developed cultural competencies are also sensitive to the complex issues pertaining to inequality in education.[130]

Lind and McKoy underscore the importance of creating a proper classroom environment that fosters culturally responsive caring. Teachers who incorporate the type of caring identified as integral to CRT do not perceive any of their students through a deficit lens where cultures that differ from the dominant norm are perceived as inferior.[131] Rather, those teachers see this diversity as an instructional asset and resource for learning instead of a problem to be solved or an inconvenience to be tolerated.[132] This type of caring extends beyond one's feelings towards their students. It is connected to action, and these educators are concerned about the whole child as they take responsibility for nurturing both academic success and psychological well-being.[133] Lind and McKoy posit:

> Music educators are in a unique position to demonstrate cultural caring with students because we often teach the same students over the course of several years. Elementary-aged students will typically have the same music teacher for six years (K–5). In situations where music teachers serve both a high school and the middle school that "feeds" into the high school, they may have the same students for three to seven years, depending on whether the students remain in a music program throughout middle and high school. Having the opportunity to work with the same students over time not only allows music teachers to develop deeper relationships with their students, but it may also help teachers develop culturally affirming perspectives.[134]

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129. Lind and McKoy, *Culturally Responsive Teaching…*, 2016,19.

130. Ibid., 33.

131. Ibid., 64.

132. Ana Maria Villegas and Tamara Lucas, "Preparing Culturally Responsive Teachers: Rethinking the Curriculum," *Journal of Teacher Education* 53, no. 1 (January 2002): 20–32.

133. Lind and McKoy, *Culturally Responsive Teaching…*, 2016, 65.

134. Ibid., 65.

Culturally responsive caring may require the music educator to rethink how caring manifests in the classroom.

Lind and McKoy insist on upholding high standards and expectations for all students. Presenting high expectations for all students means teachers must be able to ascertain the holistic depiction of future possibilities that their students may not yet be able to envision.[135] There are two potential issues that music educators may encounter as they work to individualize instruction. First, teachers may reinforce the discrepancies between the "haves" and the "have-nots" by providing supplemental activities for advanced students who may be more apt to adhere to the standard.[136] For example, if an educator provides an opportunity for instruction via private lessons or masterclasses, factors such as ability level, classroom attendance issues, and/or previous demonstration of achievement should be disregarded when determining who receives the opportunity. Students should be held accountable for these factors in various other manners that do not exclude them from consideration. Second, teachers may limit opportunities for certain students based on their behavior rather than their ability.[137] This practice may disregard an opportunity that may serve as a pivotal moment in a student's life on the verge of deciding to correct their actions for the long term. Varying the standard creates the potential to alienate and re-emphasize existing inequalities in the classroom. In contrast, the culturally informed version of care is connected to expecting excellence from all students and demanding accountability when students do not attain expectations.[138]

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135. Lind and McKoy, *Culturally Responsive Teaching…*, 2016, 68.

136. Ibid., 70.

137. Ibid.

138. Ibid.

Lind and McKoy assert that there are no "tips and tricks" to providing culturally responsive music instruction.[139] Similar to all effective pedagogical practices, culturally responsive teaching effectively in the music classroom requires knowledge, understanding, commitment, and patience.[140] Teaching in a culturally responsive manner is complex and multifaceted, but it is also achievable. Lind and McKoy suggest the following for music educators:

1. Be aware of how culture informs cognition and the learning process;
2. Be willing to reflect on our own cultural conditioning and how it affects our beliefs, values, attitudes, and consequently our teaching;
3. Get to know our students—their personal, cultural, and musical identities, and their musical preferences, and how all of these factors influence their motivation to learn;
4. Create music classroom environments that not only support the bidirectional nature of learning (students learning from teachers and vice versa), but that also support multiple and equally viable perspectives with regard to music as a body of knowledge;
5. Incorporate information from a variety of cultural resources and materials for use in music instruction, both in terms of connections with the societal, historical, and cultural contexts of the music studied and performed and with the cultural backgrounds and knowledge bases of learners.[141]

Framework for Culturally Responsiveness in Music Education

In Bond's article, Brown-Jeffy and Cooper identify five major themes that serve as a framework for culturally responsive education (CRE) in music education.[142] The first theme of identity and achievement addresses "student and teacher identity development, embracing multiple perspectives, viewing diversity as an asset, recognizing and validating all cultural

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139. Lind and McKoy, *Culturally Responsive Teaching…*, 2016, 84.

140. Ibid.

141. Ibid., 99.

142. Shelly Brown-Jeffy and Jewell Cooper "Toward a Conceptual Framework of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy: An Overview of the Conceptual and Theoretical Literature. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, *38*, (2011): 65–84.

experiences, and connecting home and school experiences."[143] Teachers must know their

students thoroughly as individuals and citizens within their social context. No assumptions can

be made based on stereotypes or physical appearance, and the culturally responsive teacher must

demonstrate an understanding of each student's life. The music teacher should embrace the

students' heritage, as this validates the students. Ignoring may result in a student feeling ignored

or degraded. One may program various genres of music to avoid unintended marginalization.

Students may become indifferent to school music if the musical repertoire is limited to

Eurocentric traditions as it "may not contain the same musical complexity or process-orientation

as home music constructions."[144]

The second theme is equity and excellence. A significant component of the framework of

CRME is dedicated to this theme, as this is the core of culturally responsive education. The

influence of financial resources on school music is an issue in urban communities, as music

programs typically include an added expense that may consist of instrumental rental fees,

instrument accessories, uniform cleaning fees, private lessons, and other required purchases to

participate. Involvement in extracurricular activities is a privilege and not a right.[145] As a result,

families that cannot afford to participate are alienated, and access is limited and/or denied to

them.[146] Furthermore, students are discouraged from joining music programs that target certain

class demographics or are populated by peers outside their social network. To provide equity,

music teachers should attempt to offer free and equal music education to all, irrespective of each

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143. Bond, "Culturally Responsive Education…," (2017), 159.

144. Ibid., 160.

145. Shannon Ryan, "Fees for Extracurricular Activities Alienate Students Who Would Otherwise Participate and Should Be Replaced With Alternate Means of Fundraising," *Seton Hall Journal of Sport Law,* 13 (2003): 240.

146. Ryan, "Fees for Extracurricular…" (2003), 240.

student's cultural background and social class. The culturally responsive teacher acknowledges the students' musical preference, stresses development as opposed to competition within the classroom, and considers other alternatives to the large ensemble structure of most music programs.

Music educators must also address religion in music. If students are forced to only honor one particular or the dominant religion during holiday concerts or other events, an unintended consequence is exclusion. Music educators can avoid creating this conflict by programming various songs which may or may not directly relate to the "holiday" being celebrated. All music selected by the teacher should reflect the cultural heritages of the individuals present in the ensemble and/or music program, and developing positive attitudes towards diversity should be a norm.

The next theme is developmental appropriateness. Culturally responsive educators are motivated by fostering success in the classroom while developing cultural competence. In music education, developmental appropriateness forces one to consider how knowing the children present can determine the direction of the practice of music.[147] Abril states that culturally responsive teaching moves the focus from the things taught to the children and the social environment where music is taught.[148] This may assist the educator in acknowledging the various learning styles, understanding individual needs, and utilizing said information to influence their teaching style and strategies. Knowing one's students and their needs (and how to meet their educational needs) is paramount, and one must consider their culture. The one-size-fits-all approach is insufficient at best. For example, when music educators rely solely on approaches

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147. Bond, "Culturally Responsive Education…," (2017), 160.

148. Carlos Abril, "Toward a More Culturally Responsive General Music Classroom," *General Music Today*, *27*, (2013): 6–11.

historically linked to Eurocentric content,[149] it unintentionally reinforces the dominance of Western European music and further isolates the demographic and home experiences of individuals in the music program. Kelly-McHale's stance on the application of the Kodaly approach, is that with its focus on notational literacy and traditional American folk repertoire as "a color-blind approach to music teachings; regardless of prior knowledge or cultural affiliation, this one-size-fits-all curricular decision perpetuates Western classical norms."[150]

Lastly, when striving to connect learning styles and culture, the teacher should make every effort to acknowledge the multicultural identities of each individual but avoid stereotyping cultural groups. This acknowledgment may serve as beneficial to the teacher as the student becomes more comfortable in the learning environment, increasing the potential of learning. No assumptions should be made or shortcuts taken while the teaching the students.

Teaching the Whole Child

Teachers should utilize the knowledge that the students maintain regarding themselves (and their culture) in the teaching and learning process. This is key to developing meaningful relationships and gaining trust while learning about the student. Most students like sharing what they know about their culture and are primarily eager to share. Acknowledging their culture and showing appreciation for the uniqueness of the child will allow the teacher to meet the needs of the total child.[151]

The fifth and final theme addresses the student-teacher relationship and overlaps with the previous theme. However, the need for the teacher to provide a caring, safe, and supportive

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149. Bond, "Culturally Responsive Education…," (2017), 166.

150. Jacqueline Kelly-McHale, "The Influence of Music Teacher Beliefs and Practices on the Expression of Musical Identity in an Elementary General Music Classroom," *Journal of Research in Music Education* 61, no. 2 (2013): 195-216.

151. Bond, "Culturally Responsive Education…," (2017), 158.

environment in which to learn is emphasized. Developing relationships is reciprocating and should always keep in mind Matthews 7:12 "In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets."[152]

The Case Against Culturally Responsive Teaching

Over the past several years, education and school reform have been catalyzed by neoliberalism, with its emphasis on individualism and market competition.[153] High standards are a requirement, and the curriculum must reflect that obligation. Teachers are to teach and test to these standards via high-stakes examinations resulting in consequences that affect school ratings, student promotion, and a school's operating status in the form of school closures.[154] While culturally responsive teaching promotes the learning of a student via methods neoliberals do not emphasize, its advocates must confront three issues: persistent simplistic conceptions about its meaning, a thin research base, and political backlash prompted by fear of upsetting the social order.[155]

Neoliberal reforms purport to address racialized achievement gaps and culture as if they do not exist.[156] Although these gaps have been the focus of attention in the U.S., solutions have emphasized offering all students the same curriculum, taught in the same manner, although based on language, worldview, and experiences of White English speakers.[157] The National

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152. Unless otherwise noted, all biblical passages referenced employ the New American Standard Bible (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001). Matthew 7:12.

153. Christine Sleeter, "An Agenda to Strengthen Culturally Responsive Pedagogy," *English Teaching: Practice and Critique*, Vol. 10 (2), (2011): 7.

154. Kris Gutiérrez et al., "Backlash Pedagogy: Language and Culture and the Politics of Reform," *The Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies, 24*, (2002): 343.

155. Sleeter, "An Agenda to…," (2011): 8.

156. Ibid.

Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) is a set of standardized tests in the U.S. that serve as a tool to gauge the effects of national trends on student learning measured in grades 4, 8, and 12 in various subjects. The NAEP data would appear to suggest that neoliberal reforms are improving achievement. For example, NAEP scores of eighth-grade students in literacy (Black, White) between 1992 and 2007 have gradually improved, as shown in Figure 1, appear to be on the right path, and racial achievement gaps have somewhat narrowed (see figure 1).
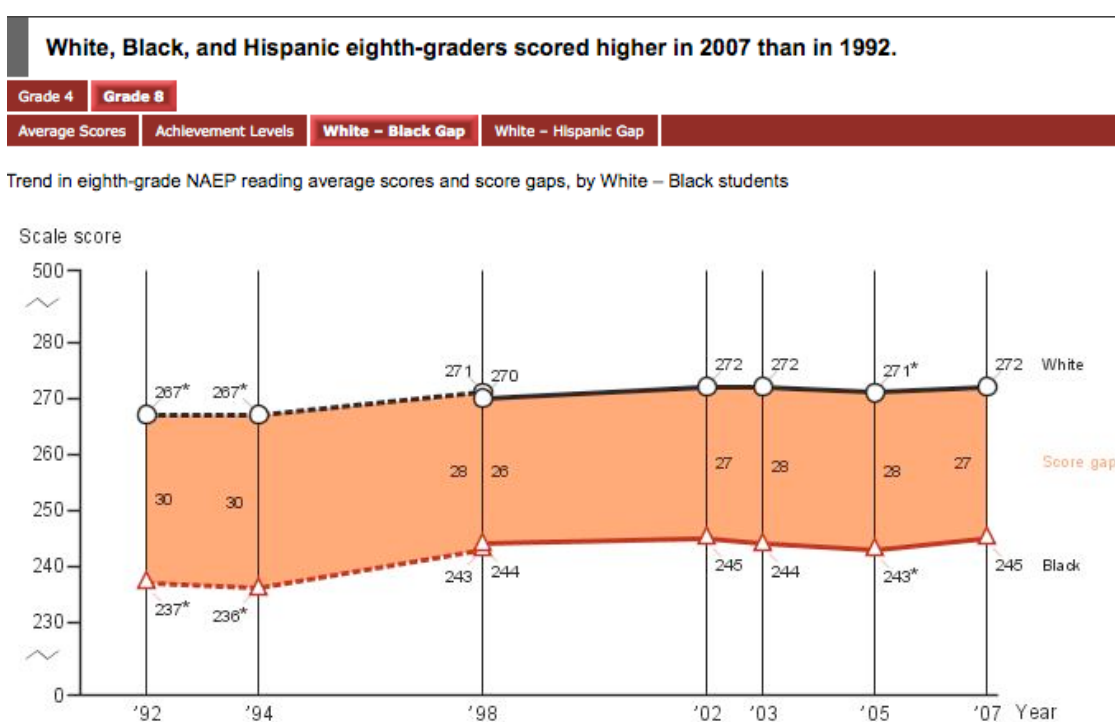
Figure 1. NAEP Scores of Eighth-Grade Students in Reading by Race (Black, White)[158]

However, NAEP scores that extended back to the early 1970s up to the same period depict different results. Figure 2 suggests that racial achievement gaps appear to have been narrowing

157. Gutiérrez et al., "Backlash Pedagogy: Language…," (2002): 343.

158. National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, "The Nation's Report Card: Reading 2007 – National Association of Educational Progress Grades 4 and 8," *Institute of Education Sciences*, (2008): 29.

during the 1970s and 1980s, with their lowest around 1988 and 1990 and then declining when

standards-based reforms were initiated in the 1990s (see figure 2).

Trend in NAEP reading average scores for 9-year-old students, by race/ethnicity
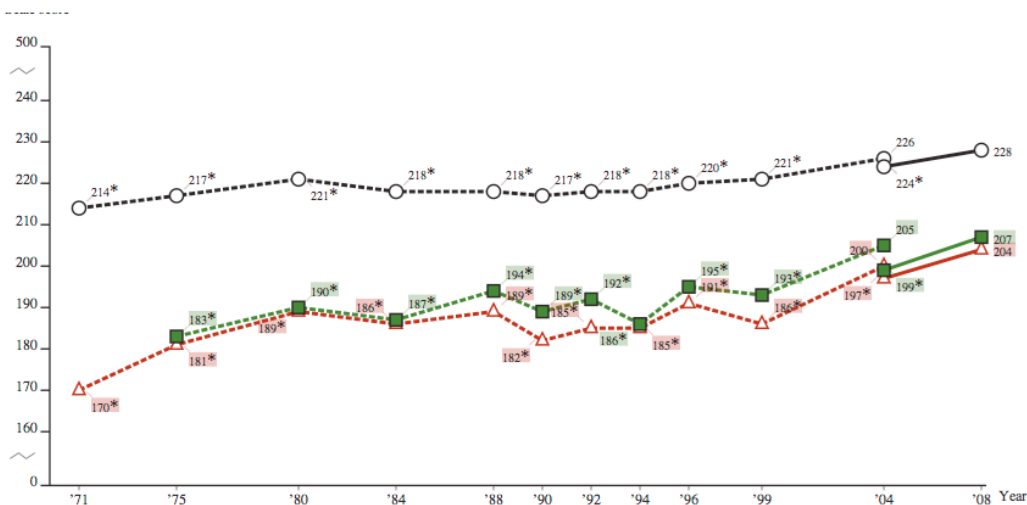
Trend in NAEP reading average scores for 13-year-old students, by race/ethnicity

Trend in NAEP reading average scores for 17-year-old students, by race/ethnicity
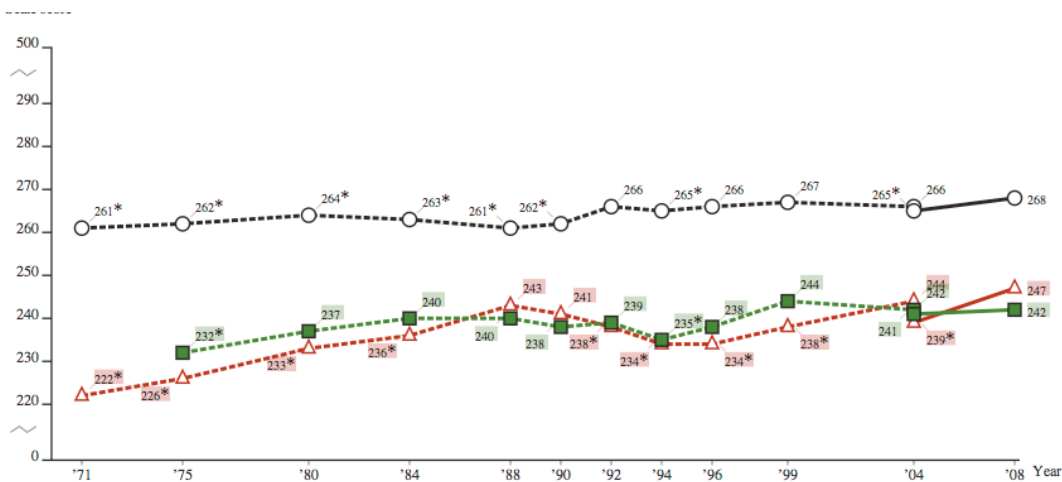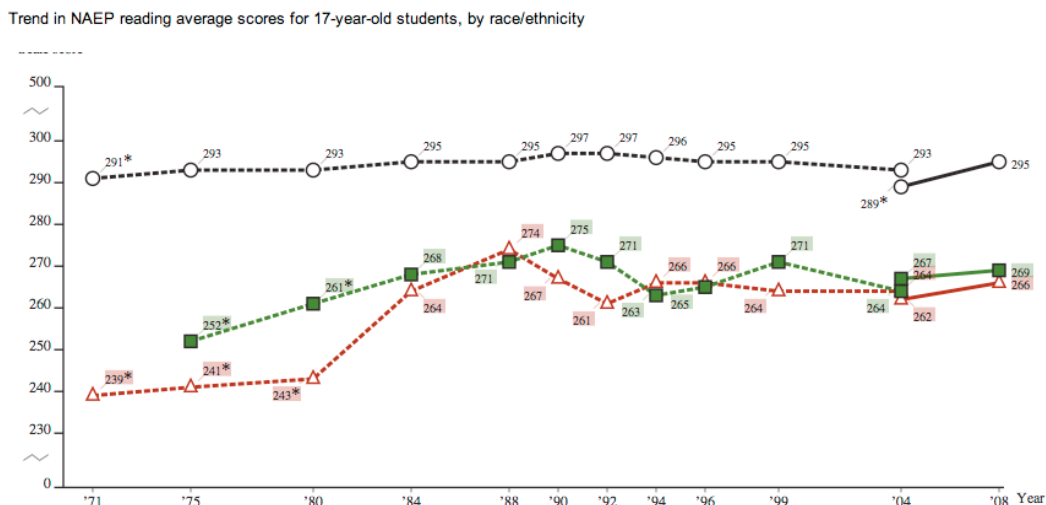
Figure 2. Trends in Reading Between 1971 and 2008.[159]

During the 1970s and 1980s, schools across the US were experiencing desegregation, and school districts were experimenting with approaches to working effectively with a more diverse student population.[160] This led to a sharp increase in the achievement gap in students of color as schools began to develop curriculum and pedagogy for teaching diverse students, a multi-cultural approach.[161] The term "culturally responsive" had yet to be invented, yet the concept of cultural deficiency was openly challenged as educators began the realization of the new normal in education.[162] The desegregation of schools was significant, and the important work in response should be neither minimized nor underestimated when referencing decreasing the achievement gap of students of color. Over the last two decades, the multicultural approaches to teaching have been primarily replaced by standardized curricula and pedagogy, relegating culturally responsive pedagogy to the margins because of three primary reasons: a) persistence of faulty and simplistic

159. National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, "The Nation's Report Card: Reading 2008 – National Association of Educational Progress Grades 4 and 8," *Institute of Education Sciences*, (2009): 27.

160. Sleeter, "An Agenda to…," (2011): 11.

161. Ibid.

162. Ibid.

conceptions of culturally responsive pedagogy, b) an insufficient amount of research connecting its use with student achievement, and c) elite and White fear of losing national and global hegemony.[163]

Faulty and Simplistic Understandings

Culturally responsive pedagogy is often understood simplistically, lending itself to portrayal as an instructional method eliciting unproven meaningful change. Simplistic conceptions may cause this pedagogy to be deemed ineffective or not worthy of consideration altogether. Four simplistic conceptions include cultural celebration, trivialization, essentializing culture, and substituting culture for political analysis of inequalities.[164] Culturally responsive pedagogy viewed as cultural celebration separates attention to culture from academic instruction while leaving existing academic expectations intact.[165] This conception tends to ignore issues of power and equity.[166]

Trivialization involves reducing an avenue to connect teaching and learning with students' community-based culture to steps to follow or a checklist to accomplish.[167] For example, administrators may document compliance with an expected pedagogical adjustment while minimizing actual change. Essentializing culture means assuming a fixed and homogeneous conception of the culture of a minoritized group, thereby assuming that students who are members of that group identify with that self-conception.[168] This may be perceived as

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163. Sleeter, "An Agenda to…," (2011): 12.

164. Ibid.

165. Ibid.

166. Ibid.

167. Ibid., 13.

stereotyping, causing hesitancy in the implementation of the pedagogy. Substituting cultural analysis and emphasis for political analysis involves assuming that working with culture alone will rectify issues of equity and justice, thus ignoring conditions of racism and other forms of oppression that motivate disparities in education outcomes.[169]

Limited Research

Although research is available pertaining to culturally responsive pedagogy, too little systematically documents its effects on learning and the contexts of those effects. Furthermore, research on the preparation of teachers for this pedagogy is also limited and consists of case studies. Future research should address two concerns. First, clarification on what culturally responsive pedagogy means and how it appears in any given study since wide variations of possible meanings exist.[170] Second, it is important to address how a culturally responsive pedagogy fits the specific cultural context(s) of students.[171] Researchers need to define which principles of culturally responsive pedagogy apply across groups and national boundaries so that educators in diverse contexts may learn appropriately from each other's situations.[172]

Elite Backlash

Culturally responsive pedagogy involves a political endeavor directed toward equity and justice. As the work of teachers becomes increasingly prescribed, implementation of new pedagogical systems becomes difficult to implement. Neoliberalism and its reforms are pervasive

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168. Sleeter, "An Agenda to…," (2011): 14.

169. Ibid., 15.

170. Ibid., 18.

171. Ibid.

172. Ibid.

and are in opposition to culturally responsive pedagogy, serving as a backlash movement against the political gains of poor and minoritized peoples.[173] Gutiérrez and his colleagues assert they make it professionally and, in some cases, legally risky to use culturally responsive practices that conflict with mandated "sameness" disguised as equality for all.[174] The political backlash against culturally responsive pedagogy appears clearly evident in Arizona, where the state legislature passed a law banning ethnic studies.[175] Stronger research and skilled practitioners are needed, as culturally responsive pedagogy is political and social justice work that will inevitably cause a backlash. With this knowledge, hesitancy exists in its implementation.

Summary

In the most current literature, one central pedagogical concept has emerged as potentially being the most effective at inspiring students in urban/inner-city settings to learn. With the most recent data revealing a consistent decline in scores since 2013 and the most significant decline in 2022, the NAEP data would appear to suggest that neoliberal reforms are not as effective as once perceived.[176] Pedagogical adjustments are seemingly necessitated as a solution for this current trend of decline in achievement. Gay encourages all educators to act now to prevent the unthinkable tragedy of not delivering a high-quality education to every child via a culturally responsive education.[177] Research has shown that the usage of CRT in music education provides the best opportunity for students of diverse backgrounds.

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173. David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2005.

174. Gutiérrez et al., "Backlash Pedagogy: Language…," (2002): 345.

175. Sleeter, "An Agenda to…," (2011): 20.

176. National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education. "The Nation's Report Card: Reading 2022 – National Assoc. of Educational Progress Grades 4 and 8." *Institute of Education Sciences. 2022.*

177. Gay, *Culturally Responsive Teaching…*, (2018), 292.

Existing in Texas are band programs that service students whose background and home situation would suggest only a certain level of success is possible. These programs are comprised of students, of which the majority are on either free or reduced school meals. The demographics of these schools are minority-majority, and the head band director is not of the same background either ethnically, economically, or socially. Furthermore, participating band directors in these programs did not have similar experiences during their childhood as their students. Nevertheless, although few, these programs are recognized at regional, state, and national competitions and have maintained a respectful reputation for their rigorous achievement.

On the contrary, existing in Texas are similar programs, with similar directors that are not achieving at a rigorous level. These programs far exceed the number of high-achieving high school band programs, suggesting an issue needing examination. This study will investigate methods, characteristics, and pedagogical systems of high-achieving band programs and band directors who operate high school band programs comprised mainly of minority-majority students. This will be accomplished by utilizing a hermeneutical phenomenological approach to gain a deeper, more detailed understanding of the band director's lived experiences. Structured interviews, follow-up interviews, journal entries, and classroom observations will be employed to gain insights from directors experienced in teaching minority-majority students in urban/inner-city settings.

Gay's theory on culturally responsive teaching will provide the framework for this study. This theory promotes the ideas that (1) culture is at the heart of all things done in the name of education, whether that is curriculum, instruction, administration, and/or performance assessments; (2) that conventional theories and proposals for improving achievement of students

of color are inadequate; (3) intention without action is insufficient; (4) cultural diversity is a

strength, its full potential may not be realized, and it is a valuable resource for

improving educational effectiveness for all students; (5) competence or incompetence is never

universal or all-inclusive; and (6) scores on standardized tests and grades students receive on

classroom learning tasks are not an accurate description regarding why they are not performing

at acceptable levels.[178] This theory will be applied to examine the experiences of the

participating high school band directors to identify potential factors that may influence their

accomplishing high achievements.

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178. Gay, *Culturally Responsive Teaching*…, (2018), 8-17.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

The purpose of this hermeneutic phenomenological study is to identify methods, characteristics, and pedagogical systems of high-achieving band programs and band directors who operate high school band programs comprised mainly of minority-majority students to gain a deeper understanding of the factors that may influence high achievement in underserved high school band programs. Chapter three provides a thorough description of the research design, the theoretical framework, the participant selection process, details about the setting and sites of research, a description of the motivation to conduct this study, and the interpretive framework and philosophical assumptions that will guide the study. Additionally, it addresses the research procedures, methods of data collection, analysis and synthesis, and the process by which credibility and trustworthiness are ensured. Finally, it concludes with a summary of the alignment of design choice, data collection and analysis strategies, and an overview of data synthesis and ethical considerations.

Research Design

The few previous research studies examining methods, characteristics, and pedagogical systems of high-achieving band programs and band directors apply both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The qualitative approaches involve case studies and focus on programs not specific to underserved high school band programs. Because this study aims to examine the participants' lived experiences to understand better the factors that may influence their decisions in inspiring their programs to achieve rigorous standards, a qualitative approach was appropriate. However, no studies were identified that attempted to analyze the band directors' experience in high-achieving, underserved high school band programs.

Phenomenology was selected because its primary purpose is to search for rich meaning in the first-person experiences, impressions, beliefs, and feelings of an individual's or group's involvement with a phenomenon to produce detailed descriptions of a central phenomenon.[179] Previous qualitative studies investigating band programs examined lived experiences that included the student experience and perspective.[180] However, no specific research was identified that investigated a high school band director's experience with implementing particular methods that may reveal a personal meaning and understanding of that experience that may lead to high achievement in underserved high school band programs. This study will address the gap and add to the body of knowledge in this area.

Phenomenology was conceptualized as a philosophy in Germany prior to World War I. Hegel and occasionally Kant first applied the term. However, it was Franz Brentano who utilized the phrase "descriptive psychology" or "descriptive phenomenology" who inspired the intellectual motivation for Husserl to devote his life to philosophy and, ultimately, the development of phenomenology.[181] He deemed experience as the foundational source of meaning and phenomenology as the unbiased study of occurrences as they appear.[182] Husserl's phenomenological methodology considers Epoché, Transcendental-Phenomenological Reduction, and Imaginative Variation on the induction of knowledge.[183]

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179. Creswell et.al., R*esearch Design: Qualitative…*, (2018), 64.

180. Adria Rachel Hoffman and Bruce Allen Carter, "Representin' and Disrespectin': African-American Wind Band Students' Meanings of a Composition-Based Secondary Music Curriculum and Classroom Power Structures," *Music Education Research* 15, no. 2 (2013): 135-150.

181. Edmund Husserl, *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology*, Florence: Taylor & Francis Group, 2012.

182. Frances Racher, and Steven Robinson. "Are Phenomenology and Postpositivism Strange Bedfellows?" *Western Journal of Nursing Research* 25, no. 5 (August 2003): 471.

183. Clark Moustakas, *Phenomenological Research Methods*, Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Publications, 1994.

Introduced by Heidegger in 1927, hermeneutic phenomenology is concerned with human experiences as it is lived but differs from Husserl's approach in how these lived experiences are explored.[184] Heidegger advocates the implementation of hermeneutics as a research method founded on the ontological view that lived experience is an interpretive process.[185] In his book *Being in Time* (1927), Heidegger states that consciousness is not separate from human existence and argues for an adjustment to Husserl's interpretation of essential structures, such as basic categories of human experience rather than as pure, cerebral consciousness. He combines existential matters with phenomenology, and his focus is ontological, believing that the primary phenomenon concerning phenomenology was the meaning of being or presence in the world.[186]

Heidegger argues that understanding is a reciprocal activity and proposes the concept of the hermeneutic circle, illustrating this reciprocity. His hermeneutic circle may be perceived as Husserl's revisioning phenomenological reduction, as it acknowledges that the interpretation and understanding of knowledge are in a state of constant revision as the data are analyzed, organized into parts, and synthesized.[187] He asserts that interpretation is not the acknowledgment of what has been understood but rather the development of prior possibilities projected in understanding, and the understanding itself is also achieved in light of anticipations, pre-assumptions, and fore-meanings, and always be based on some prior pre-cognition.[188]

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184. Maura Dowling, "From Husserl to Van Manen. A Review of Different Phenomenological Approaches," *International Journal of Nursing Studies* 44, no. 1 (2007): 133.

185. Racher et al., "Are Phenomenology and…," (2003), 473.

186. Dowling, "From Husserl to…," (2007), 133.

187. Zsuzsanna Mariann Lengyel, "Hermeneutical Circle in Understanding: On an Original Link Between Hermeneutics and Logic in the Heidegger-Gadamer Dialogue," *Philobiblon* 23, no. 1 (2018): 95-108.

188. Lengyel, "Hermeneutical Circle in…," 2018, 102.

While Heidegger did not clarify his method for phenomenological research, his focus on interpretation facilitated a variety of interpretive methods to reveal and express lived experiences.[189] Gadamer followed the work of Heidegger and held two positions in his work *Truth and Method*: prejudgment and universality. In his version of phenomenology, detachment of healthy prejudices that facilitate understanding from prejudices that impede understanding occurs in the process of understanding.[190] Consequently, understanding is derived from personal involvement by the researcher in a reciprocal process of interpretation inextricably related to one's being in the world.[191] Gadamerian hermeneutics becomes dialogue as opposed to individual phenomenology, and interpretations encompass every activity, with the researcher considering social, cultural, and gender implications.[192] He advances the concept of the hermeneutic circle further, allowing the hermeneutic process to become a combination of the perspective of the researcher and the phenomenon being studied.[193]

Theoretical Framework

Phenomenological research is a design of inquiry resulting from philosophy and psychology in which the lived experiences of individuals are described regarding a phenomenon as explained by the participants.[194] This philosophical framework focuses on observing and

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189 . Marcella Horrigan-Kelly, Michelle Millar, and Maura Dowling, "Understanding the Key Tenets of Heidegger's Philosophy for Interpretive Phenomenological Research," *International Journal of Qualitative Methods,* (2016): 4.

190. Dowling, "From Husserl to…," (2007), 134.

191. Deborah Spence, "Hermeneutic Notions Illuminate Cross-Cultural Nursing Experiences," *Journal of Advanced Nursing.* 35, no. 4, (2001): 626.

192. Tina Koch, "An Interpretive Research Process: Revisiting Phenomenological and Hermeneutical Approaches," *Nurse Researcher (through 2013)* 6, no. 3 (Spring, 1999): 20.

193. Valerie Fleming, Uta Gaidys, and Yvonne Robb, "Hermeneutic Research in Nursing: Developing a Gadamerian-based Research Method," *Nursing Inquiry, 10*(2), (2003): 113–120.

describing the world from the observer's perspective to understand better the human experience.[195] Meaning and significance are at the center of phenomenology.[196] Inductive reasoning is applied by qualitative researchers in the pursuit of understanding data. Since this research aims to discover meaning and methodologies, a phenomenological approach was the most appropriate method.

Hermeneutic phenomenology considers prior experiences, assumptions, and preconceptions, referred to as foresight or fore-conception, inviting the researcher to engage in self-reflection and contemplate one's own experiences in relation to the investigated phenomenon.[197] Hermeneutic phenomenology is the specific approach to phenomenology selected for this study because it allows the integration of theoretical frameworks as perspectives through which one could perceive the phenomenon being studied.[198] While Geneva Gay's theory on culturally responsive teaching (CRT) will be employed in this study, Rogers' diffusion of innovations theory will serve as the theoretical framework to provide insight into the factors that influence the adoption or rejection of a new innovation.

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194. Creswell et.al., R*esearch Design: Qualitative…*, (2018), 13.

195. Stephanie Sheehan, "A Conceptual Framework for Understanding Transcendental Phenomenology Through the Lived Experiences of Biblical Leaders," *Emerging Leadership Journeys, 7*(1), (2014): 10-20.

196. Tammy Moerer-Urdahl and John Creswell, "Using Transcendental Phenomenology to Explore the 'Ripple Effect' in a Leadership Mentoring Program," *International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 3*(2), (2004): 19.

197. Marcella Horrigan-Kelly, Michelle Millar, and Maura Dowling, "Understanding the Key Tenets of Heidegger's Philosophy for Interpretive Phenomenological Research," *International Journal of Qualitative Methods, (2016):* 4.

198. Susan Laverty, "Hermeneutic Phenomenology and Phenomenology: A comparison of Historical and Methodological Considerations," *International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 2*(3), (2003): 21-35.

Diffusion of Innovation

Rogers' diffusion of innovations theory purports that innovations are accepted and adopted by an identified population through a designed process.[199] His theory details how new ideas, technologies, and practices (all described as innovations) are accepted and adopted in specialized or identified communities.[200] This process consists of five stages, as outlined in Figure 3, and consist of (1) knowledge – exposure to the innovation and some understanding of its operations; (2) persuasion – development of a positive or negative attitude towards the innovation; (3) decision – engagement with the innovation leading to acceptance or rejection; (4) implementation – the application of the innovation; and (5) confirmation – reinforcement of the decision (see figure 3).[201]
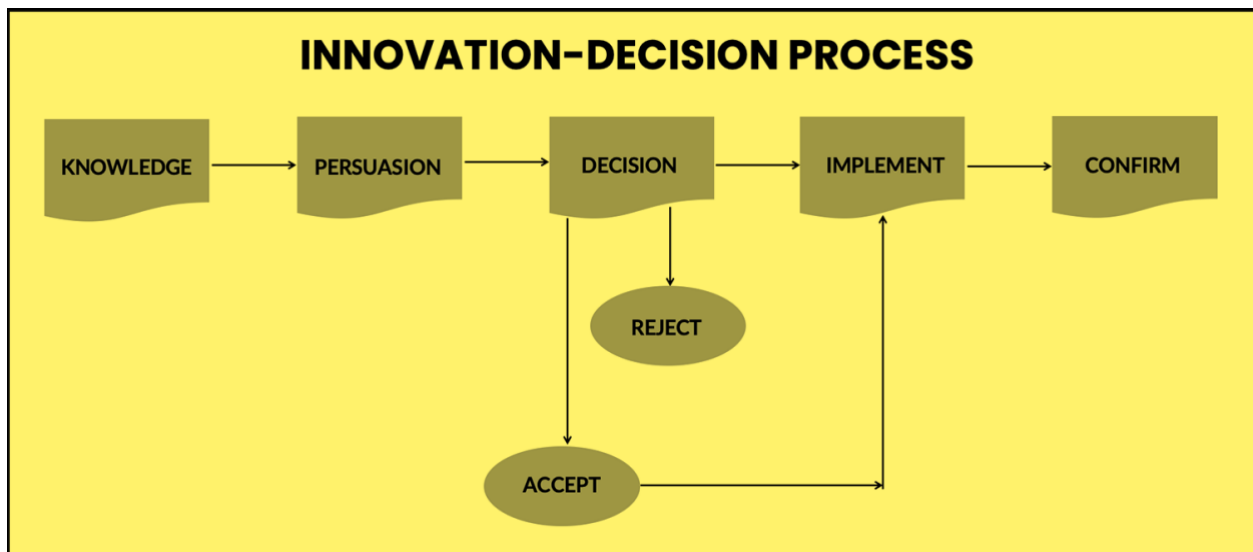
Figure 3. Five Stages of the Innovation-Decision Process[202]

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199. Everett Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovations,* 5th ed, New York: The Free Press, 2003, 48.

200. Ibid.

201. Ibid.

202. Ibid.

This theory also postulates that five characteristics of an innovation influence whether it will be adopted or rejected by a specialized community. These characteristics are identified in Figure 4 and are (1) relative advantage – the degree to which an innovation has an advantage over previous methods; (2) compatibility – the degree to which an innovation is relevant and appropriate to the values and experiences of the potential adopter; (3) complexity – the degree to which an innovation is categorized on a complexity-simplicity continuum and is regarded as easy or difficult to understand and implement; (4) trialability – the degree to which an innovation may be tried before being fully implemented into practice; and (5) observability – the degree to which the adopter can observe the positive outcomes of an innovation.[203] Innovations adhering to these criteria may be adopted more promptly than other innovations (see figure 4).
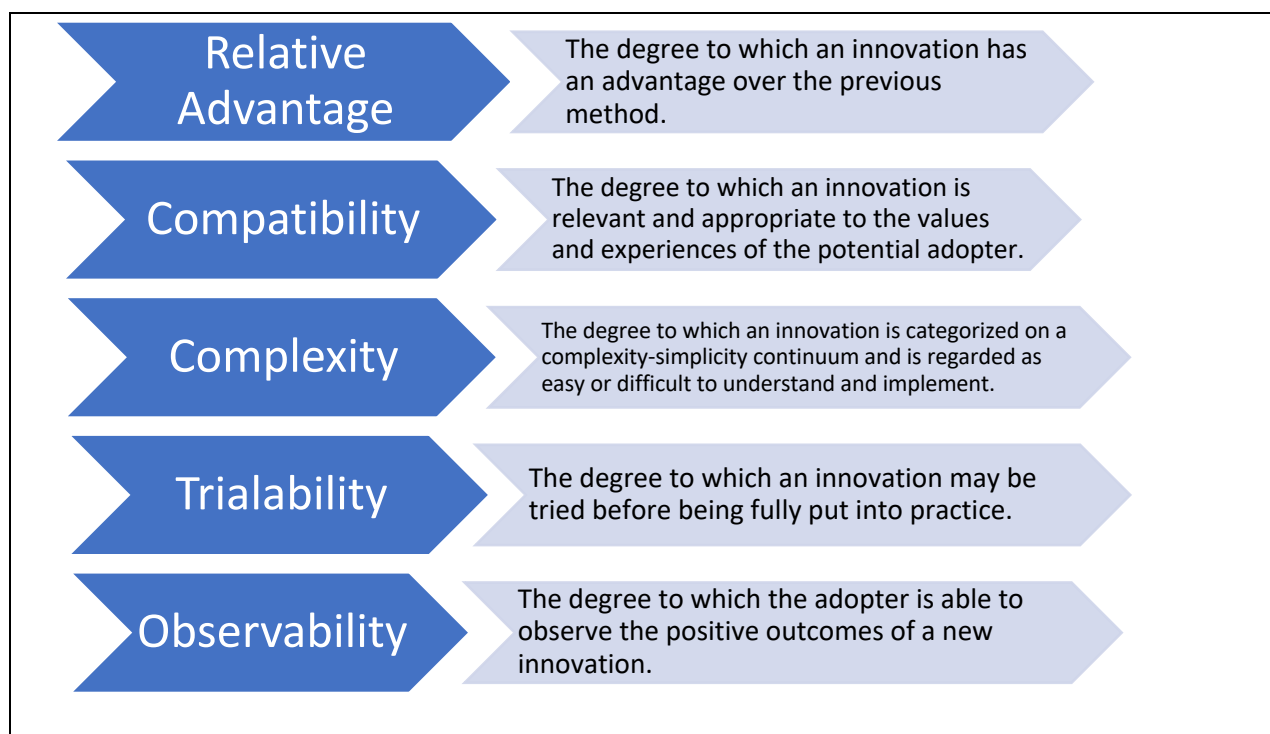
Figure 4. Core Attributes of Diffusion of Innovations[204]

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203. Rogers, "*Diffusion of Innovations…,*" 2003.

204. Ibid.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this hermeneutic phenomenological study.

Research Question One: How does cultural responsiveness affect director efficacy in underserved high school band programs?

Research Question Two: How does the director-student relationship affect achievement in underserved high school band programs?

Research Question Three: What are the effects of rigorous standards and accountability on achievement in underserved high school band programs?

Participants and Setting

This section identifies the research setting and sites, and the reasons supporting its selection are objectively stated. The participant selection process is also reported. Finally, a description of the study participants is detailed.

Setting

This study does not occur in one centralized location. Seven band programs and school districts in the state of Texas comprise the setting for this study. These programs are all well respected throughout the state and across the United States for their current level of quality achieved and their storied reputation of success. While success may be defined differently for the programs studied, they each share commonalities in a few areas. First, at minimum, each program is acknowledged as receiving, either currently or in the past, the highest ratings possible in concert, sight reading, and marching performance at the regional level by the governing body in the state of Texas, the University Interscholastic League (UIL). Next, each program is currently comprised of minority-majority students who are Black and/or Hispanic. The directors of four of these programs are White and do not share a similar upbringing as their students. Most

students in each of these programs also qualify for free or reduced meals as defined by the

United States government's National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program.[205]

The family income eligibility guidelines were obtained by multiplying the 2022 Federal income

poverty guidelines by $1.30 and $1.85, respectively, and by rounding the result upward to the

next whole dollar.[206] Next, each of these programs has also been recognized by the other

governing body for music education in the state of Texas, the Texas Music Educators

Association (TMEA). Recognition is received in the form of All-State band qualifying students,

All-State solo and ensemble qualifying participants, and advancement in the Honor band

competition.

There are also a few aspects that distinguish each program. These distinctions include

participation in the Texas State Marching Contest, performances at the Midwest Clinic,

performances at the TMEA convention as the Texas Honor Band competition winner, and

recipient of the Sudler Flag and/or Sudler Shield award. Not all programs studied have attained

these same accolades. However, these programs were selected because their highest

accomplishments occurred mostly when their programs were comprised of majority White

students.

Participants

The selected participants of this study are either engaged in the field of band directing or

are retired from the field of study. These participants serve a population of students who are

underserved. 86% of the participants represent schools eligible for free and/or reduced lunch. All

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205. USDA Food and Nutrition Service, *Child Nutrition Programs Income Eligibility Guidelines,* U.S. Department of Agriculture, (2022-2023).

206. Ibid.

of the participants of this study represent minority-majority programs comprised of Black and

Hispanic students as the majority. Of the seven selected participants, six are males, three of them

being White males and two Black males. One participant is a White female. All participants are

between the ages of 38 and 68. Although underserved, the students in all of the participants'

programs have experienced achievement at levels beyond what many would deem possible.

The idea behind qualitative research is to purposefully select participants or sites that will

best help the researcher understand the phenomenon and the research questions.[207] This does not

suggest random sampling of many participants and sites, as is typical for quantitative research.[208]

Phenomenology involves a range of three to ten individuals. This study examines band directors

of programs that were once perceived as top-tier high school band programs based on their

accolades and are now striving to attain success at that same level with students who are now

minority-majority. Their programs were once in settings that may be considered affluent with

students who were predominantly White, and the situation has now changed to one that has the

characteristics synonymous with an urban/inner-city setting.

The participants in this study were selected utilizing purposive sampling from a

population of fifteen high school band directors who either currently work in the field or have

recently retired from being a high school band director. Qualitative studies typically utilize

purposively selected samples and focus more on the quality and richness of data rather than the

number of participants.[209] The most common guiding principle for determining the adequacy of

the sample size is saturation.[210] The concept of saturation was originally developed in 1967 by

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207. Creswell et.al., R*esearch Design: Qualitative…*, (2018), 185.

208. Ibid.

209. Monique Hennink, Bonnie Kaiser, and Vincent Marconi, "Code Saturation Versus Meaning
Saturation: How Many Interviews Are Enough?," *Qualitative Health Research, 27*(4), (2017): 591.

Glaser and Straus as part of their grounded theory approach to qualitative research as they sought to explain social phenomena.[211] Saturation is generally known as the point at which no additional issues or insights emerge from data collection and all relevant categories have been identified, explored, and exhausted.[212] The challenge regarding saturation is that it can only be operationalized during data collection.[213] Without adequate guidance on its application in a broader context, it is unclear what saturation means and how it can be achieved.[214]

Qualitative research often requires the researcher to identify sample sizes *a priori* and, to a large extent, is "an institutionally generated problem for qualitative research."[215] Despite data saturation being the conceptual measurement for estimating and assessing qualitative sample sizes, few studies have been conducted yielding empirical data on achieving saturation in purposive sampling. Morse asserts that saturation is an important component of rigor, it is present in all qualitative research, and it is, unfortunately, evident mainly by declaration.[216]

Empirical research to address saturation began appearing in literature in the early 2000s. Morgan et al. found that the first five to six interviews produced the majority of new information in the data set and that little information was gained as the sample size approached twenty

210. Janice Morse, "Data Were Saturated...," *Qualitative Health Research*, *25*, (2015): 587.

211. Hennink et al, "Code Saturation Versus…," (2017): 591.

212. Ibid., 592.

213. Ibid.

214. Cicely Kerr, Annabel Nixon, and Diane Wild, "Assessing and Demonstrating Data Saturation in Qualitative Inquiry Supporting Patient-Reported Outcomes Research," *Expert Review of Pharmacoeconomics & Outcomes Research* 10, no. 3 (2010): 269-281.

215. Martyn Hammersley, "Sampling and Thematic Analysis: A Response to Fugard and Potts," *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, *18*, (2015): 687.

216. Janice Morse, "The Significance of Saturation," *Qualitative Health Research*, *5*, (1995): 147–149.

interviews.[217] Guest et al. proposed using a ≤ 5 percent new information threshold to represent the proportion of new information acceptable as evidence of saturation at a given time in data collection.[218] Their study found that six to seven interviews would capture sufficient data, and a sample size of ten exceeded this threshold to provide the richness of data needed.[219]

<div align="center">Researcher Positionality</div>

The motivation for this study is grounded in successful personal experiences with adolescents and high school band programs in the urban/inner-city setting who have attained high levels of achievement. This research study is designed to provide consultants, university educators, and professional development presenters with insights into the factors that may influence educators' decisions to adopt techniques that may improve their high school band program. Achieving a complete bracketing of my personal experiences with the phenomenon being investigated is an impossible consideration. My extensive professional knowledge and intimate connection with high school band programs in underserved settings, the fact that I am a band director of a high-achieving band program in an urban setting, and the extensive experiences I have had in implementing strategies that inspire and motivate students to achieve rigorous standards cannot be fully disregarded. As a result, a hermeneutic phenomenology was selected as the appropriate design for this study. The approach originates from an ontological and epistemological philosophical perspective grounded in constructivist thought. With constructivism, research is perceived as being socially constructed through social interactions. It

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217. M. Granger Morgan, Baruch Fischoff, Ann Bostrom, and Cynthia Atman, *Risk Communication: A Mental Models Approach*, New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

218. Greg Guest, Emily Namey, Mario Chen, "A Simple Method to Assess and Report Thematic Saturation in Qualitative Research," *PLOS One*, 15(5), (2020): 2.

219. Ibid.

is focused on the participants' perspectives, attitudes, and lived experiences, and all relevant perspectives identify clusters of meaning through an inductive process.[220]

As it relates to the research purpose and questions, each band director participant of this study offers experiences and delivery of information via their own unique perspective, thereby yielding idiosyncratic, subjective evidence. The diversity of their lived experiences constructs a reality worthy of examination. Reporting these unique perspectives as themes synthesized from the participant's responses is the responsibility of the researcher.[221] This section includes descriptions of the interpretive framework and philosophical assumptions that guide the researcher to better observe, examine, and offer an interpretation of the participants' experiences with this phenomenon.

Interpretive Framework

Although philosophical ideas remain primarily hidden in research, they still offer an influence on research conducted.[222] The philosophical worldview that will shape this study is one of duality found in Biblical and interpretive or constructivist thinking. The term worldview may be defined as a basic set of beliefs guiding action.[223] A Biblical (Christian) worldview considers God the standard for truth – He is all-powerful, all-knowing, unchanging, and the creator of the heavens and the earth. Through the teachings of Jesus, one may ascertain knowledge about oneself, the world, others, and God. Constructivism is a perspective that allows different

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220. John Creswell and Cheryl Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*, Los Angeles, CA: SAGE Publication, (2018).

221. Ibid.

222. Brent D. Slife and Richard N. Williams, *What's Behind the Research? Discovering Hidden Assumptions in the Behavioral Sciences*, Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, Incorporated, (1995).

223. Egon Guba, *The Paradigm Dialogue,* Newbury Park, CA: Sage, (1990).

perspectives and is a typical approach to qualitative research.[224] Individuals construct and develop varied, multiple, and subjective meanings as they engage with the world in which they live.[225]

      The philosophical worldview proposed in this study is that of social constructivism. The ideas of social constructivism derived from Berger and Luckmann's works and Lincoln and Guba's works, along with a few other of their colleagues. Crotty identified a few assumptions in discussing constructivism relating to qualitative research that will be adhered to during this study:

1. Researchers tend to utilize open-ended questions so that participants can share their perspectives.

2. Humans engage with their world and make sense of it based on their own historical and social perspectives. Qualitative researchers seek to understand the context or setting of the participants by visiting this context and gathering information personally. They also desire to interpret what they find, an interpretation shaped by the researcher's own experiences and background.

3. The generation of meaning is always social and arises in and out of interaction with the human community. The researcher generates meaning from the data collected in the field.[226]

This study will focus on the participants' unique perspectives and their lived experiences with the phenomenon through social interaction and will consider all relevant perspectives to identify

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224. Creswell et al., R*esearch Design: Qualitative…*, (2018), 7.

225. Ibid., 8.

226. Michael Crotty, *The Foundations of Social Research: Meaning and Perspective in the Research Process,* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publication, (1998).

similar clusters of meaning through an inductive process.[227]

Philosophical Assumptions

Philosophical assumptions may be defined as a set of beliefs that guides one's actions and the foundation on which one develops reality.[228] His or her reality includes lived experiences, the nature of the world (ontology), knowledge of the world (epistemology), and the role of values in the process of producing knowledge (axiology).[229] It is critical that the reader realize these assumptions and their influence on this phenomenological study's interpretive or constructivist framework.

Ontological Assumption

Spencer et al. define ontology as the study of the nature of reality.[230] Regarding qualitative research, ontology is discussed in terms of objectivity and a belief in the existence of a universal truth regarding a phenomenon.[231] At the other end of the spectrum, ontology considers the belief that reality is subjective and a universal understanding cannot be obtained, as it must be understood within the context of the occurrence.[232] The nature of reality is based on subjectivity determined by the lived experiences of the individual.

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227. Creswell et al., R*esearch Design: Qualitative*…, (2018).

228. Ibid.

229. Patricia Leavy, *The Oxford Handbook of Qualitative Research,* Oxford Library of Psychology*,* New York: Oxford University Press, 2014, 82.

230. Leavy, *The Oxford Handbook…*, 2014, 82.

231. Ibid.

232. Danica Hays and Anneliese Singh, *Qualitative Inquiry in Clinical and Educational Settings*, New York: Guilford Press, 2012.

Epistemological Assumption

Epistemology is the study of the process of knowing and is concerned with how one gains knowledge of what exists and the relationship between the knower and the world.[233] As the researcher and the research participants are considered independent of one another, the utilization of rigorous, systematic approaches to objectively studying participants without bias is promoted. There also exists an understanding of knowledge as being actively composed by the researcher and the participants who reciprocate mutual influence on one another.[234] This dynamic interaction is essential in capturing the participants' experiences while allowing the issue of rigor to assume different meanings and forms. While bias is not eliminated, the trustworthiness of the findings is enhanced with the inclusion of multiple perspectives on the focus of the phenomenon.[235] This study will be grounded in the epistemological view that through the participants' lived experiences, one will better understand how and what they know about this phenomenon. Knowledge will be obtained through an empathic understanding of the involvement and the process of the participants with their perspective on high school band programs. The researcher will collect details of each participant's personal experience with the phenomenon through observations, individual and follow-up interviews, and journal entries.[236]

Axiological Assumption

Much qualitative research assumes that research is profoundly relational and is inevitably shaped and intentionally informed by the researcher's orientation, values, and personal

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233. Leavy, *The Oxford Handbook…*, 2014, 82.

234. Ibid., 83.

235. Ibid.

236. Creswell et al., *Qualitative Inquiry & Research…,* (2018).

qualities.[237] In this study, the researcher will be guided by the values of fairness, respect, and a genuine fervor to discover truth, meaning, and knowledge. Advocacy for greater awareness and the ability to achieve high standards with students in underserved high school band programs is imperative. The Christian researcher recognizes that in John 13:34, Jesus commanded humans to love one another in the same manner He has loved.[238] This command is all-inclusive and excludes no individual based on race, socioeconomic status, intelligence, or ability. God's love is active and exemplifies a deeply held commitment to assist others in living out His calling on their life. The follower of Christ bears a moral responsibility to enable individuals in underserved band programs to reach their full potential. Participants in this study may not maintain these same values and/or perspectives. However, they have chosen music education as a field of employment, one in which the teacher is made more effective through empathy, dedication, and a commitment to others to achieve optimal desired outcomes.

Researcher's Role

I am a high school band director of twenty-five years, of which twenty-four years have been in an urban/inner-city setting. I am currently operating in my fourteenth year as the Director of Bands for DeSoto Independent School District (ISD) in DeSoto, TX. This program comprises minority-majority individuals, with 87 percent Black and 13 percent Hispanic students. The composition of this program is significantly dissimilar to the demographic makeup of the program when it experienced its greatest successes. Although the program is indeed experiencing high levels of success currently, it is still vying to achieve at the level at which it gained its

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237. Leavy, *The Oxford Handbook…*, 2014, 83.

238. Unless otherwise noted, all biblical passages referenced employ the New American Standard Bible (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001).

historical notoriety. I pursued this research study to contribute to the body of knowledge regarding the factors that may influence high musical achievement in high school music programs, specifically in underserved band programs. I am also one of the individuals who has obtained high musical achievements with high school bands in underserved settings. I have served on panels regarding the subject matter, presented at universities, and have been an invited presenter for the Texas Music Educators Association Convention detailing factors essential in high musical achievement in underserved music programs.

I assumed the role of the researcher and primary instrument for data collection in this study. Lincoln and Guba introduced the concept of the human being as a research instrument to emphasize the researcher's uniqueness and responsibility in the process of scientific inquiry.[239] The essence lies in the concept that only people construct and bring meaning into the world through their qualities of sensitivity, responsiveness, and flexibility.[240] This consequently makes them the most appropriate instrument for inquiries that aim to arrive at understanding and meaning.[241] My responsibility as the researcher will be to focus on the wholeness of the experience for the participants and search for the essence of those experiences while perceiving them as an integrated and inseparable relationship.[242] Lave purports that personal experiences are deemed the best instruments for obtaining information and understanding the participant's social and cultural situation.[243]

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239. Yvonna Lincoln and Egon Guba, *Naturalistic Inquiry*, Newberry Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1985.

240. Margarita S. Peredaryenko and Steven Eric Krauss, "Calibrating the Human Instrument: Understanding the Interviewing Experience of Novice Qualitative Researchers," *The Qualitative Report* 18, no. 43 (2013): 1.

241. Ibid.

242. Moerer-Urdahl et al., "Using Transcendental Phenomenology…," (2004): 21.

Procedures

This section will provide a detailed explanation of the required permissions for this study, the selection process for the participants, data collection, and how the data will be analyzed to enhance the credibility of the findings. Permission was granted by Liberty University Institutional Review Board.

A request was made (see Appendix C) directly to current high school band directors who conduct programs comprised of minority-majority students to participate in a study investigating the details of achieving success in their program. Once potential contributors agreed to participate, these individuals were included in the research study. Letters of support will be included in the IRB proposal.

The participants in this study were selected via purposive sampling from a sample pool of fifteen high school band directors who either currently work in the field or have recently retired from being a high school band director. Qualitative studies typically utilize purposively selected samples and focus more on the quality and richness of data rather than the number of participants.[244] While several different purposive strategies are available to researchers, criterion sampling appears to be the most utilized strategy in implementation research.[245]

Recruitment for this study will be conducted live via person-to-person contact. Consent forms (see Appendix D) will be distributed to the individuals agreeing to participate in the study. The consent forms will describe the purpose of the study, the expectations of those who choose

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243. Jean Lave and Steinar Kvale, "What is anthropological research? An interview with Jean Lave by Steinar Kvale" *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 8:3, (1995).

244. Hennink et al., "Code Saturation Versus Meaning…," (2017): 591.

245. Lawrence Palinkas et al., "Purposeful Sampling for Qualitative Data Collection and Analysis in Mixed Method Implementation Research," *Administration and Policy in Mental Health and Mental Health Services Research* 42, no. 5 (2015): 533.

to participate, a declaration that no compensation or incentives will be offered, how personal information will be protected, and procedures for withdrawing from the study. Directors will be allowed to review the consent form and ask questions about their participation in the study. A signed consent form will be submitted to the course instructor.

Data Collection Plan

In qualitative research, the interview is an essential element. Professional in nature, it is a conversation in which knowledge is developed through the interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee.[246] Qualitative interviewing will be a vital component of this study as it will allow the researcher to examine invisible, personal, and complex processes.[247] As a hermeneutic phenomenological study, data collected from the interview process will be imperative in understanding the participants' lived experiences and their discoveries regarding this phenomenon.

In research, an interview is a conversation with structure and a purpose that extends beyond the spontaneous exchange of perspectives that everyday interactions entail.[248] This study will employ a semi-structured, responsive interview model. Kvale and Brinkmann define this form of research interview as "an interview with the purpose of obtaining descriptions of the life world of the interviewee in order to interpret the meaning of the described phenomena."[249] Responsive interviewing relies heavily on the interpretive constructionist philosophy, is mixed

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246. Steiner Kvale and Svend Brinkmann, *InterViews: Learning the Craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing,* 2nd ed., Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, (2009): 2.

247. Herbert Rubin, and Irene Rubin, *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data*, 2nd ed., Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc., (2005): vii.

248. Kvale et al., "*InterViews: Learning the…*," (2009), 3.

249. Ibid.

with an indication of critical theory, and is shaped by the practical needs of executing

interviews.[250] Constructionist researchers aim to elicit the interviewee's perspective of their

world, work, and events as they have experienced or observed.[251] They examine the specific and

the detailed and attempt to develop an understanding based on those findings.[252] Constructionists

expect individuals to examine varying perspectives and devise somewhat different conclusions

regarding an object or an event.[253] Research that follows the critical theory emphasizes the

importance of discovering and rectifying societal issues.[254] In this model, knowledge does not

exist outside of the perceiver, waiting to be discovered by the researcher as a truth.[255] Instead,

knowledge is subjective, and what one perceives is determined by one's worldview.[256]

Responsive interviewing intermingles these two research philosophies to generate depth of

understanding instead of breadth.

The responsive interviewing model also recognizes that the interviewer and the

interviewee are both human beings with feelings, personalities, interests, and experiences.[257] The

researcher forms a relationship with the interviewee that generates ethical obligations and

responsibility of adherence to respect, consideration, and cooperativeness.[258] Lastly, flexibility is

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250. Rubin et al., *Qualitative Interviewing: The…, (2005), 30.*

251. Ibid., 28.

252. Ibid.

253. Ibid., 27.

254. Ibid., 25.

255. Ibid.

256. Ibid.

257. Ibid., 30.

258. Ibid.

emphasized, and the researcher is allowed to alter or modify questions in response to what is being learned from the participant.[259] In this study, responsive interviewing will assume that participants interpreted their experience as a high school band director and constructed their understanding of that experience. The researcher will be responsible for listening, balancing, and analyzing his expressions to better understand each lived experience.[260]

In this study, the responsive interview process will allow the researcher to attain depth and detail by combining main questions, follow-up questions, and probes. Primary questions will be developed in advance to ensure that all significant aspects of the research problem are addressed.[261] Follow-up questions will inquire about elaborations of themes, concepts, or events that the interviewee has introduced.[262] Probes will assist in managing the conversation by ensuring it stays on topic, signaling a desired level of depth, detail, nuance, and richness of the participant's experience.[263] Lastly, in this study, the reader will be able to recognize seven stages of an interview investigation: (a) thematizing an interview project, (b) designing, (c) interviewing, (d) transcribing, (e) analyzing, (f) verifying, and (g) reporting.[264]

Once all participant interviews have concluded, they will be transcribed utilizing the Otter.ai software platform. Each transcription will be reviewed with the original recording for accuracy, corrected as necessary, and forwarded to the appropriate participant for approval

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259. Rubin et al., *Qualitative Interviewing: The…, (2005), 30.*

260. Kvale et al., "*InterViews: Learning the…*," (2009).

261. Rubin et al., *Qualitative Interviewing: The…, (2005), 129.*

262. Ibid.

263. Ibid.

264. Kvale et al., "*InterViews: Learning the…*," (2009), 19.

(member checking). Each transcription will be anonymized and individually uploaded to the Delve analysis tool for coding.

The Delve analysis tool will allow the researcher to upload fully transcribed interviews and journals, create codes utilizing multiple coding methods, collate excerpts and group codes into themes, evaluate and revise themes and create subthemes, and write a narrative summary of the discoveries. The Delve analysis tool will also allow the researcher to add a description or definition of the code and automatically generate a codebook as codes are identified and entered.[265]

A thematic analysis will be employed to identify similar topics across all data. Interviews will be analyzed and coded utilizing a hybrid approach, incorporating deductive and inductive coding. The deductive codes will be generated based on the research questions. Inductive codes will be derived from the analysis of the data. The codes will be grouped into themes, evaluated, revised, and combined as necessary. They will ultimately be written into a narrative summarizing the findings. Code saturation will be addressed by a systematic review of the interview transcripts, recording new codes and characteristics as they become known, and identifying previous codes that were present in the interviews.[266]

Upon completing the thematic analysis of the initial interviews, interviewees will participate in a second semi-structured interview to delve deeper into their perspectives and experiences of being a high school band director in an underserved band program. These conversations' audio will be recorded via the Zoom videoconferencing platform and transcribed via the Otter.ai software. For member-checking purposes, transcriptions will be provided to each

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265. Hammersley, "Sampling and Thematic…, 2015.

266. Guest et al., "A Simple Method to…," 2020.

participant to confirm their statements' accuracy, meaning, and intent. Verified transcripts will

be anonymized and uploaded into the Delve analysis tool for thematic analysis utilizing the same

approach as the initial interviews.

This study will implement a method of assessing and reporting saturation in an inductive

thematic analysis as proposed by Guest, et al. This method consists of three distinct elements: the

base size, the run length, and the new information threshold.[267] When assessing saturation,

incoming information is weighed against already obtained information.[268] The base size refers to

the minimum number of data collection events the researcher should review/analyze to calculate

the information already gained.[269] The data collection event is the unit for analysis, and the

distinct codes representing the themes identified are the items of examination.[270] Run length is

the number of interviews within which the researcher examines, identifies, and calculates new

information.[271] New information threshold refers to the level of scarcity the researcher should

accept as indicative of saturation, such as $\leq 5\%$ new information or 0% new information.[272]

Guest purports that these new information thresholds can serve as benchmarks similar to how a *p*

<0.05 or <0.01 is utilized to determine whether sufficient evidence exists to reject a null

hypothesis in statistical analysis.[273] Guest and his colleagues illustrate a seven-step process

utilizing a hypothetical dataset (see Appendix A).

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267. Guest et al., "A Simple Method to…," 2020, 5.

268. Ibid.

269. Ibid., 6.

270. Ibid.

271. Ibid.

272. Ibid.

273. Ibid., 7.

Previous studies have shown that most unique information in a qualitative dataset is generated early in the process, followed by a waning in new information occurring after a small number of data collection events.[274] For this reason, this study will test six interviews as base sizes from which to calculate the total number of unique themes to be included in the denominator of the saturation ratio with the knowledge that no new themes may be identified after four or five interviews. While quantitative researchers rely on established levels of confidence intervals to support statistical analysis, no metric exists in qualitative research. The proposed thresholds do not guarantee saturation. However, they do provide a straightforward means of presenting data saturation that other qualitative researchers can interpret.[275]

Individual Interviews

Interview questions were developed that addressed the study's research questions. Sub-questions are supported by the core attributes of the diffusion of innovations theory: relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability, and observability.[276] The questions were formulated to provide sufficient detail to identify common concepts, practices, ideas, and themes describing the participants' experiences with success in underserved high school band programs. The research questions were generated with input from Directors of Fine Arts in public school districts in underserved areas. Individual semi-structured interviews will be conducted through the Zoom videoconferencing application. The interviews will be recorded auditorily to preserve the participants' actual words.

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274. Guest et al., "A Simple Method to…," 2020, 5.

275. Ibid.

276. Everett Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovations,* 5th ed, New York: The Free Press, 2003, 48.

Individual Interview Questions

Individuals will participate in an interview consisting of semi-structured questions designed to elicit details about the participants' experiences with serving as a high school band director who has achieved a high level of success in an underserved high school band program. These questions were developed to explore the participant's feelings, beliefs, and opinions as they relate to the five attributes of a successful innovation that may determine acceptance by the participant. These attributes may be described as relative advantage - the advantages of a) cultural responsiveness as a pedagogy over more traditional methods, b) effective teacher-to-student relationships, and c) rigorous standards; compatibility – personal relevance and appropriateness; complexity – ease or difficulty of implementation; trialability – practical experience or experiential learning; and observability – monitoring of positive outcomes.[277]

Relative Advantage

Geneva Gay posits that even without being consciously aware of it, culture strongly influences how one thinks, believes, communicates, and behaves, and these, in turn, affect teaching and learning.[278] She further believes that since teaching and learning are always mediated or shaped by cultural influences, they can never be culturally neutral.[279]

1. Based on your experience with students in an underserved high school band program, how do a student's background and cultural experiences outside the classroom influence your instruction?

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277. Rogers, "*Diffusion of Innovations…,*" 2003, 29.

278. Gay, *Culturally Responsive Teaching*…, (2018), 8.

279. Ibid.

2. Based on your experience with students in an underserved high school band program, how do your students' background and cultural experiences affect the standards you a) set, b) maintain, and c) uphold for the program?

3. Based on your experience with students in an underserved high school band program, how do your students' backgrounds and cultural experiences affect how you form meaningful relationships with them?

Questions one, two, and three were designed to facilitate a deeper understanding of the participants' impressions of teaching in an underserved band program, the depth of their belief in and opinions of the advantages or disadvantages of teaching in an underserved band program, and the significance that these impressions and perspectives have on their consideration for future operation and existence in their program as they relate to CRT.

Compatibility

Amy Campbell says that teachers who were raised in different environments different from those of their students (most teachers) may maintain very different cultural, racial, or socioeconomic backgrounds and often have a difficult time relating to their students.[280] The next three questions address these topics:

4. Now that you have been a high school band director for a while, you have developed a sense of your values as a music educator. How does working with students in an underserved area align (or not) with those values?

5. What are your thoughts on success and attaining success in a high school band program in an underserved area?

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280. Doyle, "Music Teacher Perceptions…," 2012, 33.

6. How have you created an environment in your band program that considers your

   student's background and culture?

Questions four, five, and six were designed to address the participants' perspectives on the

degree to which they believe their work is relevant and appropriate to their personal and

professional values as an educator.

Complexity

Jennifer Doyle states that teachers who were raised in different environments different from

those of their students (most teachers) may maintain very different cultural, racial, or

socioeconomic backgrounds and often have a difficult time relating to their students.[281]

7. How have the cultural characteristics of your students made it easier or more difficult to

   teach music in your program?

8. What challenges do you have in relating to the cultural backgrounds of students in your

   program?

9. What challenges do you experience with motivating students to learn in your band

   program?

Questions seven, eight, and nine were developed to probe the participants' judgment on the

complexity of teaching band students in underserved communities. Complexity reveals an

individual's challenges and how they were managed or resolved.

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281. Doyle, "Music Teacher Perceptions…," 2012, 33.

Trialability

Vanessa Bond postulates that if repertoires are limited to Eurocentric traditions, students may become indifferent to school music as it may not contain the same musical complexity or process orientation as music of a student's primary culture.[282]

10. How has the cultural background of your students affected music selection in concert and marching band for your program?

11. How has the cultural background of your students affected program traditions or program operations? (i.e., rehearsal schedules)

Questions ten and eleven aim to solicit responses that allow the researcher to understand the impact and influence students' culture and background have on the program.

Observability

Gay defines culturally responsive teaching as "using the cultural characteristics, experiences, and perspectives of ethnically diverse students as conduits for teaching them more effectively."[283]

12. Describe any positive or negative outcomes that you have experienced with teaching music to students to students in your program.

13. What have you learned about yourself through teaching students who maintain different backgrounds than you that will make you a better educator?

Questions twelve and thirteen encouraged participants to articulate their impressions and perceptions regarding outcomes they observed because of teaching in an underserved setting.

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282. Bond, "Culturally Responsive Education…," (2017), 160.

283. Geneva Gay, "Preparing for Culturally…," 106.

There will also exist a series of questions posed to ascertain information regarding the participant and their band program. The participant will receive these questions in the form of a questionnaire. These questions will include:

1. How would you describe your ethnicity? (Options will be provided)

2. What is your date of birth?

3. How long have you been a high school band director?

4. How long have you been in your current position?

5. How would you describe your band program as it relates to suburban, urban, inner-city, or other settings?

6. How familiar are you with cultural responsiveness as a pedagogy?

7. How have demographics of your program changed over the past 10, 15, and/or 20 years?

8. What is your opinion on the level of success of your program over the past ten years compared to the level of success ten years prior?

Upon completion of the initial interviews with each participant, their responses will be analyzed, and common concepts and themes will be identified. These concepts and themes will provide a basis for follow-up interviews with efficacy. This interview will allow participants to elaborate in-depth and in greater detail the essence – their feelings, thoughts, concerns, or anxieties – of their experience as a high school band director in an underserved setting.

Individual Interview Data Analysis Plan

Interviews will be transcribed via the Otter.ai software. The researcher will validate the accuracy of the transcription by listening to the recording while following along with the written transcription. Additionally, the researcher will record notes, comments, and corrections in the margins of the transcript to ensure the integrity of the interview. Once accuracy is confirmed, the

researcher will forward them to each participant for verification of the accuracy of the content. After each participant has approved their perspective transcript, the researcher will anonymize and upload them into the Delve analysis tool for thematic analysis and coding. Interviews will be analyzed and coded utilizing deductive and inductive coding methods. The researcher will thoroughly review the transcripts multiple times and apply content analysis to identify commonalities, create categories related to the participants' experiences, and code key phrases and sentences via open coding.[284] Once the initial coding is complete, the researcher will review the transcripts and codes again to ensure they are aligned with and preserve the participant's intended meaning. The researcher will revise and add codes as necessary as new topics and concepts emerge.[285]

An analyst triangulation approach will be administered to verify and validate the coding and interpretation of the findings.[286] This process will enable the researcher to gain a more in-depth understanding of the findings and alleviate the potential for selective perception and bias in the analysis.[287] To increase the credibility of the findings, the researcher will also engage an independent arbiter with expertise in qualitative research to act as an external auditor to examine and critique the data categorization, interpretation, and conclusions.[288]

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284. Mojtaba Vaismoradi, Hanneke Turunen, and Terese Bondas, "Content Analysis and Thematic Analysis: Implications for Conducting a Qualitative Descriptive Study." *Nursing Health Science Vol 15, 3* (2013): 402.

285. Johnny Saldaña, *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers, 2nd ed,* SAGE Publications, 2013.

286. Mitchell, Sullivan, "Multiple Triangulation: A Methodology for Nursing Science," *Advances in Nursing Science,* 8 (1986).

287. Ibid.

288. Robin Whittemore, Susan Chase, and Carol Mandle, "Validity in Qualitative Research," *Qualitative Health Research, 11*, (2001).

Journal Prompts

As part of this study, participants will be asked to maintain a journal of their personal experiences for two weeks. This approach will provide them with more autonomy and an additional avenue to share different aspects of their experience than the more focused questions of the interview.[289] While the interview will serve as a method of direct data collection, journals will be implemented as a space for participants to reflect in writing on their experiences.[290] The four guided prompts (see Appendix B) are:

1. Today I found myself thinking about how cultural responsiveness in my situation can…

2. One of the aspects that I have noticed about developing relationships is…

3. Some unique aspects of maintaining high standards in my situation are…

4. Regarding cultural responsiveness, I have noticed that I struggle with…

Each journal prompt was designed to encourage participants to contemplate reflectively and intentionally about their experience with the phenomenon of this study. The subjectivity of human experience is the primary focus of phenomenology, and the journal prompts will allow participants to express their lived experiences more deeply.[291] Each participant's experience is distinct and specific to their band program. This personal experience is valued and will allow for a more holistic study.

Journal Prompts Data Analysis Plan

Upon completion of the prompts, journal entries will be anonymized and imported into the Delve analysis tool for thematic analysis. Key phrases and sentences will be coded via open

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289. Laura Harvey, "Intimate Reflections: Private Diaries in Qualitative Research," *Qualitative Research, 11*(6), (2011): 664.

290. Ibid., 666.

291. Moustakas, *Phenomenological Research Methods…, (1994)*.

coding during the first cycle coding process.[292] The journal entries will be reviewed to ensure that codes are aligned with the text to maintain the integrity of the participant's meaning. In the second cycle coding process, highlighted words and phrases will be compared across all journal entries. If new themes emerge, codes will be revised, and new codes will be created.[293] Items will be organized by content similarity, and similar concepts will be compared with the intent of developing categories and themes.

Follow-up Individual Interviews

Upon completing the thematic analysis of the initial interviews and the journals, participants will participate in a second individual, semi-structured interview. This interview will be designed to examine deeper the participant's experience with their band program as it relates to their potentially heightened awareness of cultural responsiveness, development of relationships, and maintaining rigorous standards in underserved high school band programs. A follow-up interview will allow the researcher to explore in more detail any apprehensions and confusions expressed by the participants. I will also allow the researcher to address other topics of interest that may arise from the participants.

The audio of these interviews will be recorded utilizing the Zoom videoconferencing platform and transcribed with the Otter.ai software. Transcriptions will be provided to each participant to verify the accuracy and confirmation of the meaning and intent of their statements. Once verified, transcripts will be anonymized and uploaded into the Delve analysis tool for thematic analysis by applying the same coding process utilized in the initial interviews.

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292. Saldaña, *The Coding Manual…*, 2013.

293. Ibid.

Follow-up Individual Interview Questions

Participants will participate in an individual, semi-structured interview consisting of questions developed from the meaning units or themes identified through the analysis of the initial interviews and journal prompts. These questions will be designed to probe further each participant's experience with the phenomenon and generate a fuller understanding of the nuances and context of their experience. Once the interview and follow-up interview process has concluded, the researcher will identify sub-themes and formulate questions accordingly.

Follow-up Interview Data Analysis Plan

Follow-up interviews will be transcribed utilizing the Otter.ai software. The researcher will validate the accuracy of the transcription by listening to the recording while following along with the written transcription. Additionally, the researcher will record notes, comments, and corrections in the margins of the transcript to ensure the integrity of the interview. Once accuracy is confirmed, the researcher will forward them to each participant for verification of the accuracy of the content. After each participant has approved their perspective transcript, the researcher will anonymize and upload them into the Delve analysis tool for thematic analysis and coding. Content analysis will be employed to identify and code key phrases and sentences (meaning units) relative to the study's research questions.[294] Once the initial coding is complete, the researcher will continue to examine the coded meaning units to identify broader themes emerging from the analysis. These themes will also be examined, combined, and reorganized as needed to maintain the integrity of the intended meaning of the participants.

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294. Saldaña, *The Coding Manual…*, 2013.

Data Synthesis

Once the data analysis is completed, the findings will be synthesized into a comprehensive body of evidence that will address the research questions of this study. This synthesis will be accomplished through the developed chronicle of information that incorporates and summarizes themes identified by each of the participants. The qualitative analysis process is cyclic in nature with finite interpretation, requiring repeated coding processes throughout the analysis process.[295] Synthesis of this study will incorporate four phases of theme development: initialization, construction, rectification, and finalization.

Initialization

In this study's primary steps of data analysis, the researcher will transcribe data, take notes, and read them several times to describe a trend of the participants' perspectives.[296] This first phase prepares and organizes data to be analyzed and comprises three stages: reading transcriptions and highlighting meaning units, coding and investigating abstractions in participants' accounts, and writing reflective notes.[297]

Construction

Researchers reflect on the process of organizing codes and comparing them in terms of similarities and differences to assign a place to each cluster of codes in relation to the research questions, ultimately reducing them to themes.[298] The researcher of this study will adhere to this

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295. Mojtaba Vaismoradi et al., "Theme Development in Qualitative Content Analysis and Thematic Analysis," *Journal of Nursing Education and Practice*, Vol 6(5), (2016): 103.

296. Ibid.

297. Ibid.

298. Ibid., 105.

process while considering the comprehensiveness and mutual exclusiveness of the codes in each cluster.[299] This phase consists of classifying, comparing, labeling, translating, defining, and describing information.[300]

Rectification

In this phase, the theme is on the verge of full development. Still, the researcher needs to take stock, continue to reappraise the analysis process, and distance himself from the data for a period to increase his sensitivity and reduce the risk of incomplete data analysis.[301] The researcher of this study will identify associations between themes and subthemes and connect them to the phenomenon of this study. The researcher will maintain a sense of self-awareness and self-criticism of the analysis process and relate identified themes to established knowledge based on a comprehensive literature review.

Finalization

In this last theme development phase, a narration is developed as written commentary describes and connects themes, answering the research questions.[302] A holistic perspective of the study phenomenon is presented, encompassing a storyline convincing of the possible theoretical data saturation and helpful in promoting further ideas regarding the phenomenon.[303] The researcher of this study will produce a coherent story that will connect and identify themes from the data and connect the storyline to the literature about which the content revolves.

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299. Vaismoradi et al., "Theme Development in…," (2016): 105.

300. Ibid.

301. Ibid., 106.

302. Ibid., 107.

303. Ibid.

Trustworthiness

Lincoln and Guba proposed four criteria for establishing fidelity in qualitative research: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.[304] Shenton considers these criteria in detail to address the reluctance of critics to accept the trustworthiness of qualitative research and to assure provisions the researcher may employ to meet them.

Credibility

One key criterion positivist researchers address is internal validity, in which they seek to ensure their study measures what was intended to be measured.[305] The qualitative researcher's equivalent concept is that of credibility. Ensuring credibility is one of the most essential factors in establishing trustworthiness.[306] For this study, the following provisions will be utilized to promote confidence that the phenomenon studied has been accurately recorded:

1. Utilization of research methods well established in qualitative investigation and information science. The line of questioning pursued, data gathering sessions, and the methods of data analysis will be derived from methods successfully utilized in previous comparable phenomenological studies.

2. Development of familiarity with the culture of participating organizations and individuals before data collection dialogue takes place. Consultation of appropriate documents and visits will be utilized to establish engagement between the researcher and the participants to gain an adequate understanding of the organizations and to establish a relationship of trust between the parties.

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304. Lincoln et al., *Naturalistic Inquiry…*, 1985.

305. Andrew Shenton, "Strategies for Ensuring Trustworthiness in Qualitative Research Projects," *Education For Information.* 22, no. 2 (2004): 64.

306. Lincoln et al., *Naturalistic Inquiry…*, 1985.

3. Triangulation – Using different methods to form the major data collection strategies. This includes examining any documents referred to by informants during interviews, verifying viewpoints and experiences, examining interviews to identify key phrases and sentences, and opening coding to categorize concepts and identify themes. Reflective papers and journals will be scrutinized to identify words and phrases that describe the participants' experiences that may not have been revealed in the interview process. Lastly, follow-up interviews will provide additional checks and balances, offering opportunities for participants to correct, clarify, and enhance themes from all data sources.

4. Tactics to ensure honesty in participants when contributing data. Everyone will be allowed to refuse to participate to ensure a genuine contribution. Participants will be encouraged to be frank from the onset of each session. The researcher will establish a rapport at the opening moments indicating that there are no wrong or right responses to the questions being asked. Participants will be encouraged to contribute ideas and talk about their experiences without fear of losing credibility from the perspective of the researcher and/or readers.

5. Frequent debriefing sessions. These will occur between the researcher and his superiors. The discussion will allow the vision of the researcher to be widened end enlightened as their experience and perceptions are internalized. Such collaborative sessions will enable the researcher to discuss alternative approaches with individuals who operate in a more supervisory capacity, drawing attention to flaws in the proposed direction of the study.[307]

6. Peer scrutiny. Opportunities for inspection and analysis of this study by colleagues, peers, and academics will be welcomed, and feedback made over the duration of this study will

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307. Shenton, "Strategies for Ensuring…," 2004, 67.

be considered. In qualitative research, the fresh perspective of these individuals may challenge assumptions made by the researcher, whose closeness to the study may inhibit his ability to view it with absolute detachment.[308]

7. Background, qualifications, and experience of the researcher. The researcher has over twenty-four years in the field of band directing in urban high school band programs, some of which may be considered high-achieving programs. The researcher has also presented at state conventions regarding educating and inspiring students in those programs to achieve rigor. The researcher's credibility is especially important in qualitative research as it is the person who is the principal instrument of data collection analysis.[309]

8. Member checking. Checks relating to the accuracy of the data will occur during data collection and at the end of data collection dialogues. Participants will be asked to read transcripts of dialogue in which they have participated to ensure accuracy and correct transcription of the intent of their words. Emphasis will be placed on whether the participants' words and intentions were accurately captured. Guba and Lincoln consider member checking the single most important provision that can be made to bolster a study's credibility.[310]

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308. Shenton, "Strategies for Ensuring…," 2004, 67.

309. Michael Patton, *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods*, 2nd ed. Newbury Park: Sage Publications, 1990.

310. Lincoln et al., *Naturalistic Inquiry…*, 1985.

Transferability

Transferability is concerned with the extent to which the findings of one study can be applied to other situations.[311] The researcher must ensure that sufficient contextual information regarding the fieldwork is provided to enable the reader to make the transfer of findings to their situation.[312] While one cannot assure transferability, the conditions of this study will be created for transferability by providing rich contextual information about the site, participants, background data, procedures, and a detailed description of the phenomenon being studied.

Dependability

Dependability is concerned with the consistency of the findings of the study and its ability to be repeated. The researcher will ensure reliability by following the provisions in demonstrating credibility, as these two are closely related.[313] Hermeneutic phenomenology was chosen for this study because it provides systematic procedures identified by Heidegger and a structured qualitative analysis methodology proposed by Moustakas. This study will implement overlapping data collection methods and report in detail the study processes, enabling a future researcher to repeat the work. This study will have sections devoted to the following:

1. The research design and its implementation describing what was planned and executed on a strategic level.

2. The operational detail of data gathering.

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311. Sharan Merriam, *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998.

312. Shenton, "Strategies for Ensuring…," 2004, 69.

313. Lincoln et al., *Naturalistic Inquiry…*, 1985.

3. Reflective appraisal of the study, evaluating the effectiveness of the process of inquiry undertaken.[314]

Confirmability

The concept of confirmability is the qualitative researcher's concern with objectivity and neutrality. Steps must be taken to help ensure as far as possible that the study's findings are the result of the experiences and ideas of the participants rather than the characteristics and preferences of the researcher.[315] This study will emphasize triangulation to promote confirmability and reduce researcher bias. Likewise, the researcher will admit his predispositions, acknowledge his beliefs within the research report, and disclose reasons for favoring one approach when others could have been taken. Adherence to this process will allow the integrity of the research results via careful examination and descriptions of the audit trail utilizing a data-oriented approach demonstrating the data were collected and analyzed.

Ethical Considerations

Several ethical considerations will be addressed throughout this study. Securing IRB approval from Liberty University before collecting data will be necessary (see Appendix G). Likewise, consent and permission from the study participants will be achieved to maintain clarity of intent. Once the study receives IRB approval, participants will be recruited, and informed consent documents will be obtained. All participant identifying information of individuals and band programs will be protected unless specified by the participants. Pseudonyms will be applied to preserve confidentiality. All collected data will be sorted on an encrypted, password-protected

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314. Shenton, "Strategies for Ensuring…," 2004, 72.

315. Shenton, "Strategies for Ensuring…," 2004, 72.

hard drive, maintained in a locked container for three years following the conclusion of the study, and will be destroyed upon expiration of the three-year period. As a form of reciprocity, participants will be informed of the results and implications of the study.[316]

Summary

The purpose of this hermeneutic phenomenological study is to identify methods, characteristics, and pedagogical systems of high-achieving band programs and band directors who operate high school band programs comprised mostly of minority-majority students via an examination of lived experiences. This chapter provided a thorough description of the hermeneutic phenomenological research design guiding this study and characterized the participants and research setting. It continued with an explication of the researcher's responsibility, including an explanation of the interpretive framework and philosophical assumptions. The chapter continued by outlining the research procedures, descriptions of the collection, analysis, and synthesis of the data, and the steps employed to establish trustworthiness. Lastly, the chapter addressed the ethical considerations to be encountered during the study and the measures implemented to assure and preserve the confidentiality of the participants and the integrity and confidentiality of the study data.

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316. Creswell et al., *Qualitative Inquiry & Research…*, (2018).

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

The purpose of this hermeneutic phenomenological study was to identify methods, characteristics, and pedagogical systems of high-achieving band programs and band directors who operate high school band programs comprised mainly of minority-majority students via an examination of lived experiences. Chapter four begins with a detailed description of the study participants, reporting the findings in four sections. In the first section, themes identified as outlined by Rogers are discussed.[317] Second, the themes identified by analyzing the journal entries are discussed. The third section explores additional themes derived from the follow-up interviews relevant to the thoughts, impressions, and opinions of the participants' experiences while experiencing a heightened awareness of cultural responsiveness. The final section presents the participants' responses to the research questions, followed by a summary of the chapter.

Participants

This study was introduced to high school band directors who operated in their position with several years of experience teaching students of various backgrounds by the researcher via individual conversations. After providing information regarding the study, seven individuals requested additional information and a consent form. Those individuals signed and submitted the consent form within the seven-day requirement period. Participants were 86% male and 14% female, with a median age of 43. In addition, the participants were 57% White, 29% Black, and 14% Asian. All participants completing the study are either a high school band director or a

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317. Rogers, "*Diffusion of Innovations…,*" 2003, 48.

recently retired high school band director in Texas. Pseudonyms are applied in Table 1 to

describe research participants.

Table 1. *Research Participants*

Participant	Gender	Age	Race
Nathaniel	**M**	**62**	**White**

Recently retired band director who now continues to work in the band directing field by mentoring other directors in a large school district in Texas. The directors that he mentors exclusively teach students who are in an underserved setting and their programs are minority-majority. He is compassionate and an effective motivator of students who are unaware of what their circumstance has limited them to believe about their own potential.

Robert	**M**	**43**	**Pilipino**

Former band director who has now ventured into another aspect developing band programs. His creativity has afforded him opportunities to interact with band programs of various styles and backgrounds. His influence is felt amongst affluent programs and programs in urban settings. He enjoys singing and coordinating marching band productions.

Eugene	**M**	**58**	**White**

Recently retired band director who now serves in the field of music education by mentoring directors and facilitating masterclass sessions for a school district comprised of minority-majority students. He is adamant about not being a savior for students in underserved settings but rather an individual who offers information to students in a manner that holds them accountable to a high standard regardless of their life circumstance.

Henry	**M**	**63**	**White**

Recently retired band director who now directs a community band comprised of the same individuals of whom he once taught, along with other alumni of bands within the same school district in the state of Texas. He enjoys providing opportunities for students in underserved areas to experience activities that they would not necessarily be afforded without being involved in the high school band; opportunities of which are typically afforded to students who are more affluent.

Vertner	**M**	**33**	**Black**

Although the youngest director participating in the study, Vertner is a band director of a minority-majority (primarily Hispanic) program in a suburban setting. His students benefit from his sufficient knowledge and application of cultural responsiveness. He has a strong passion for holding students accountable to achieving high standards. His marching and concert bands are well respected in his district, region, and area, as one of the top performing bands.

Table 1. *Research Participants*

Participant	Gender	Age	Race
Charles	**M**	**45**	**Black**

Charles is the director of a program comprised of mostly Black and Hispanic students. He exercises cultural responsiveness in a program that has achieved the highest results in Texas UIL marching band while utilizing a non-traditional style of marching often referred to as "show-style." He enjoys seeing his students benefit from a program that utilizes cultural responsiveness as a pedagogy, while attaining some of the same success as his suburban counterparts who operate programs that are comprised of students different than his, both economically and ethnically.

Participant	Gender	Age	Race
Annie	**F**	**42**	**White**

Annie is the director of a suburban program comprised of students who meet the qualifications of economically disadvantaged. Although she grew up similar to the students in her program, she experiences challenges relating to them because she does not look like them. Her students benefit from attaining high results in a rigorously operated program that includes high functioning marching, concert, and jazz bands.

In the past ten years, the programs directed and referenced by the participants have received ratings not lower than a division two but primarily are consistent recipients of the University Interscholastic League (UIL) Sweepstakes award. UIL is the governing body for the state of Texas and hosts region, area, and state marching contests. At the regional level, the contest is utilized by many school districts as the benchmark and standardized test for high school marching and concert band programs. UIL grants the Sweepstakes award to high school bands earning a division one rating in marching, concert, and sightreading in one calendar year of participation at the region level. In the past ten years, the programs examined have also participated in the Texas State Marching Contest on multiple occasions. They have all advanced from the region level to the Area competition, some on multiple occurrences. Some of the programs have become Area finalists, and some of the programs have advanced to the State Marching Contest. Some of the programs have become finalists at the state contest.

From a concert band perspective, the programs referenced in this study have progressed through the Honor Band process. Texas Music Educators Association (TMEA) is the governing body for the process of selecting the preeminent concert band in the state for each school division. All bands referenced in this study, except for one program, have advanced to the second round of the honor band process, and some of the programs referenced in this study have been honor band finalists.

According to Rogers' diffusion of innovations theory,[318] intent is guided by knowledge and persuasion, ultimately leading to a decision to implement an innovation. Participants for this study were recruited after an informal conversation (knowledge) on cultural responsiveness as a pedagogy and its varying effects on students in an underserved high school band setting. The persuasion and decision stages of diffusion were pre-determined for the participants because involvement in daily instruction with high school band students in an underserved setting for each participant, including the retired participants, serves as their current role. Consequently, the data analysis focused on the influence of stages four and five, implementation, and confirmation. Implementation is the application of the innovation in practice, and confirmation is seeking reinforcement of the decision to adopt or reject the innovation.[319] From this perspective, a hermeneutic phenomenological analysis considered (1) the participants' apprehensions and preconceived knowledge of cultural responsiveness as a pedagogy and (2) how participants revised their interpretation or understanding of the pedagogy through utilizing it in their lived experiences.

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318. Rogers, "*Diffusion of Innovations…,*" 2003, 166.

319. Ibid.

Results

Interview transcripts and journal entries were analyzed to identify words, phrases, sentences, or paragraphs that described the participants' experiences with operating a high school band program as it relates to the phenomenon. These meaning units were utilized to develop themes related to the core attributes of a successful innovation. The results are presented in four sections. In the first section, participant interview transcripts are analyzed. The themes identified by analyzing the participants' journal entries are discussed in the next section, followed by a discussion of additional themes that emerged from the follow-up interviews relevant to the participants' interpretation utilizing a heightened awareness of cultural responsiveness as a pedagogy. The final section presents the participants' responses to the central research questions, followed by a summary of the chapter.

Themes Explored in Interviews

In the final analysis, five main themes emerged from the data and were confirmed in the interviews and journal entries. Each of the five core attributes of a successful innovation served as the central concept header under which themes were deduced.[320] First, the initial interviews of each participant were analyzed through the application of the Delve analysis tool. Then, employing inductive coding, meaning units (common opinions, impressions, and concepts) were identified, coded, and organized into themes as each aligned with the respective core attribute.

In the initial analysis, forty-four significant main concepts emerged and were coded in the first four interviews. While two additional concepts emerged in the fifth and sixth interviews, no new information was revealed in the seventh, only confirming the themes previously identified in interviews one through six. Table 2 illustrates the process by which the saturation threshold was

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320. Rogers, "*Diffusion of Innovations…,*" 2003, 166.

achieved. The saturation assessment was determined by applying a base size of four and a new information threshold of $\leq 5\%$, resulting in thematic saturation at 4^{+1} interviews.

Table 2. *Thematic Saturation*

Interview Number	1	2	3	4
New themes per interview	24	14	3	3
# of base themes				44

Interview Number	5	6
New themes per interview	1	1
New themes in run		2

# New themes/run	=	2	=	5%
# Base themes		44		

Interview Number	6	7
New themes per interview	1	0
New themes in run		1

Note: A Simple Method to Assess and Report Thematic Saturation in Qualitative Research[321]

    Applying the hermeneutic circle, the researcher continued to examine, revise, and merge these initial themes to create a more detailed and nuanced interpretation of the participants' experience with culturally responsive pedagogical knowledge. The forty-six identified concepts were combined and reduced to five significant themes aligned with each of the five core attributes of a successful innovation. For example, "relationships" and "influence on instruction" were merged into the single theme of "culture's effects on the program" because they both are associated with and have a cause and effect on managing the band program. Another example is

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321. Guest et al., "A Simple Method to…," 2020, 6.

the merging of "relating to students" and "motivating learning" into the single theme of

"navigating the challenges." Other categories were identified as minor because 30% or less of

the participants identified with the concept. Minor categories included appropriate budgets and

rescuing students. These were removed from the collection of themes for core attributes. Table 3

presents the final inductive themes derived from applying the hermeneutic circle with their

respective definitions. Table 3 illustrates the number of participants whose comments align with

the identified themes, identified by an X in the appropriate place, during the initial interview.

Table 3. *Main Themes Aligned to Core Attributes*

Relative Advantage - the degree to which an innovation has an advantage over other methods

Theme	*David*	*Derrick*	*Stacey*	*Trent*	*Mark*	*Cameron*	*Michelle*
Effects of Cultural Background	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Comments relating to the effects that a student's background and culture have on the program.

Complexity - the degree to which an innovation is categorized on a complexity-simplicity continuum and is regarded as easy or difficult to understand and implement

Theme	*David*	*Derrick*	*Stacey*	*Trent*	*Mark*	*Cameron*	*Michelle*
Navigating the Challenges	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Comments relating to navigating the challenges of utilizing cultural responsiveness in an underserved setting.

Compatibility - the degree to which an innovation is relevant and appropriate to the values and experiences of the potential adopter.

Theme	*David*	*Derrick*	*Stacey*	*Trent*	*Mark*	*Cameron*	*Michelle*
Program Culture	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Comments related to shaping the culture of the program that considers the values of the directors.

Table 3. Main Themes Aligned to Core Attributes

Trialability - the degree to which an innovation may be tried before being fully put into practice.							
Theme	*David*	*Derrick*	*Stacey*	*Trent*	*Mark*	*Cameron*	*Michelle*
Personal Experiences	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Comments related to the personal experiences with program operations and traditions while utilizing culturally responsive practices.							

Observability - the degree to which the adopter can observe the positive outcomes of an innovation in the client.							
Theme	*David*	*Derrick*	*Stacey*	*Trent*	*Mark*	*Cameron*	*Michelle*
Reflections	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Comments related to the participants' observations, experiences, outcomes, growth, and perceived effectiveness as a result of operating a band program with an underserved population.							

Relative Advantage

Relative advantage refers to the degree to which the participants interpreted their experience with cultural responsiveness as a pedagogy instead of more traditional pedagogical practices. Rogers' theory posits that the more favorable the perceived relative advantage, the more likely the innovation will be implemented. All participants identified concepts directly related to this attribute, which are summed up in the theme *effects of cultural background*.

Effects of Cultural Background. All participants commented on the effects of the cultural background of their students and how it influenced instruction, affected program standards, and affected how relationships were formed. When speaking of instruction, their comments ranged from providing reassurance and filling in the gaps or deficiencies to having no effect. While referencing reassurance, Charles has to "go more into detail and give them

examples, to where there's relief to them and what's going on probably in their home or their

background."[322] Retired band director Nathaniel sums reassurance up in this manner,

> So, I ended up talking a lot more. I end up letting them see who they really could be and what their potential really is. And after I achieve that, and they're on board, and they are starting to see the world in a different way, at that point, they're now receptive to instruction. It's kind of like, I've got this student with all the potential in the world, and they have everything they need. It's like a master computer that is the best anywhere. It is the strongest and can receive the most data, but this machine isn't plugged into electricity, and it's not working. My whole goal in the beginning with that student that child is to get them plugged into electricity. And then at that moment, when that happens, they'll then receive all the data they need to run and operate and believe in who they are.[323]

Vertner asserts that instruction must be tailored to fit what students bring into the classroom each

day. He goes on to state that,

> I think it'd be irresponsible to teach as though their cultural experiences are irrelevant. So, the way that I teach, sometimes even the content of what I teach, as a music teacher, is directly influenced to or influenced by their culture because I know that if they don't have an interest or they have an issue, connecting to it personally, they will not study it at the level that they would material that they do have an interest with.[324]

Retired band director Eugene realized that in his situation, students were entering the program

without experiences that students in more affluent situations were afforded. As a result, he tried

to fill in the gaps and stated, "We discovered once you do that, if you're willing to do that, kids

can learn just as well as any other kids."[325] Three directors insisted the cultural background of

their students did not influence instruction. Former band director Robert compared his time in an

affluent setting to his most recent time in an underserved setting. He asserted that "how I taught

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322. Band Director Charles H. Chapman (pseudonym), interview by author, Grand Prairie, TX, March 2023.

323. Retired Band Director Nathaniel A. Murray (pseudonym), interview by author, Grand Prairie, TX, April 2023.

324. Retired Band Director Vertner W. Tandy, (pseudonym), interview by author, Grand Prairie, TX, April 2023.

325. Retired Band Director Eugene K. Jones (pseudonym), interview by author, Grand Prairie, TX, March 2023.

and the standards and the verbiage and what I had to do to get the groups to be successful, I don't think I really did anything different."[326] Retired director Henry insisted that a student's background and culture did not influence instruction but instead influenced how he handles them personally.[327] Lastly, band director Annie's sentiments were that of inclusivity, in that "regardless of their background, every child has individual needs and every group has individual needs."[328]

All participants agreed that a student's background and cultural experiences should have no effect on the standards that are being set, maintained, and upheld for the program. Most of the participants shared that the students will achieve at a high level when meeting the requirements of hard work and belief in them by the director. Lowering the standard is not something that should be thought about, discussed, or embraced, as claimed by Nathaniel.[329] He goes on to express, "You cannot use their deficiencies as the reason to lower your levels of expectations. The moment you lower your expectations, you're now allowing their circumstance to affect and ruin their potential."[330]

Lastly, all participants expressed the importance of establishing and maintaining meaningful relationships. Three of the participants cited the level of ease in establishing relationships in an underserved setting. In contrast, one participant expressed difficulty in this area because of perceptions maintained by the students. This same director also expresses

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326. Former Band Director Robert H. Ogle (pseudonym), interview by author, Grand Prairie, TX, April 2023.

327. Retired Band Director Henry A. Callis (pseudonym), interview by author, Grand Prairie, TX, February 2023.

328. Band Director Annie C. Singleton (pseudonym), interview by author, Grand Prairie, TX, April 2023.

329. Murray (pseudonym), "interview by author…," 2023.

330. Murray (pseudonym), "interview by author…," 2023.

inclusivity in the belief that relationships are essential for all students regardless of their cultural background. She describes, "Children are there to learn, and we're there to teach and to be mentors and to be guiders and help for them and to be resources for them."[331] Eugene postulates the need for continual self-evaluation, as he had to figure out the need to adjust himself instead of attempting to change a student. The responsibility is that of the adult to "make the adjustments that the kids need for them to be successful."[332]

Complexity

Complexity is the degree to which the participants on a complexity-simplicity continuum categorize an intervention. More specifically, how did the participants explain the ease or difficulty of the intervention to understand and implement into their fieldwork? All participants shared concerns about being a director in an underserved setting and implementing a culturally responsive pedagogy. Three topics emerged directly related to the attribute of complexity – ease of teaching, relating to students, and motivating learning. The participants' experiences are abridged in the theme *navigating the challenges*.

Navigating the Challenges. Four topics emerged as the participants discussed their challenges with the intervention. The first significant topic associated with navigating the challenges was the ease of teaching. Almost all participants framed their thoughts in the context of it being easier to teach students in an underserved setting because the students were more grateful, and it was more fun to be around them. Although retired, Henry proclaimed, "I don't think I would ever teach in another setting."[333] The participants expressed difficulty in teaching

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331. Singleton (pseudonym), "interview by author…," 2023.

332. Jones (pseudonym), "interview by author…," 2023.

in an underserved area due to not being able to easily relate to the students. Eugene shared that there were periods in his career when he unintentionally shut down a certain population within the program. He expressed that as he was attempting to maximize their potential, he was "pushing the wrong buttons for the right reasons. I was doing it in a way that looking back now, I can see that there was probably some cultural tension there, and my older self would have treated that situation totally different than my younger self."[334]

Three participants identically expressed no challenges relating to the students in an underserved setting. Their sentiments were framed with a high level of confidence. Most participants, however, did not relate to their position. Nathaniel expressed the need for directors who, like himself, do not have a great understanding of the culture and background of their students to "listen to the kids, understand that their circumstances are different, truly try to understand where they're coming from, and understand maybe the invisible chains that they're locked into."[335]

All participants communicated the most prominent challenge in an underserved setting was motivating students to learn. Their comments were unanimously framed in the context of students not believing in themselves and students having low expectations of achievement for themselves. Vertner, Robert, and Eugene stressed the need for multiple strategies and tactics for motivation. While most participants identified struggles relating to their students, almost all spoke of the importance of learning what inspires the child. Nathaniel shared, "The students that I had, they didn't believe they could do it. So that's where I spent a lot more time in the

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333. Callis (pseudonym), "interview by author…," 2023.

334. Jones (pseudonym), "interview by author…," 2023.

335. Murray (pseudonym), "interview by author…," 2023.

beginning, like really being a motivator, bringing them in counseling and talking to them, saying, 'Hey, you can do this.'"[336] Annie sums up this major issue, as expressed by the participants, in this manner:

> I feel like actually overcoming and getting the confidence in them and getting students to realize that they can be successful despite their situations is one of the biggest things. We must have high standards for kids that have not necessarily had high standards set for them or modeled for them. I find it really hard sometimes to try to get kids to meet the expectations because they're not standards or expectations that they have experienced or that have been modeled for them. And I would say that is probably the biggest challenge and the biggest roadblock.[337]

Compatibility

Compatibility refers to the degree to which the participants interpreted a culturally responsive pedagogy as relevant and appropriate to their personal or professional values. While participants offered numerous comments regarding the meaningfulness of the pedagogy, one theme materialized relating to compatibility – *program culture*. The importance of the culture of the band program was affected by the two emerging sub-topics of director and program values and program success. The participants appreciated this as an example of bringing evidence-based research into authentic experiences.

Program Culture. When establishing and maintaining the environment of their programs, almost all participants spoke of the importance of the values of the director being and matching the values of the band program; values which all participants expressed were not affected by the culture or background of their students. Robert expressed, "The best way to make sure that the band program succeeds is to effectively make sure that my values are the students'

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336. Murray (pseudonym), "interview by author…," 2023.

337. Singleton (pseudonym), "interview by author…," 2023.

values as well."[338] Most participants also expressed that instilling values in the program is the director's responsibility. Vertner stated, "It's important to note that the students' values of the program are shifting to match my values. I believe that that is an essential part of what we do. My job is not only to teach them the content but also to teach and instill values."[339] Most participants spoke of utilizing values to make better people and equipping their students to be successful individuals. Annie further states, "What we're really trying to do is teach kids how to be successful in life, and it does help that I teach an underserved population because we do our very best to show them that they can be successful, despite adversity and in the face of adversity."[340]

All participants commented on the importance of defining success to shape the program's culture. Almost all participants specifically mentioned success not being a rating, a trophy, or "the subjective judging of a fifteen-minute performance," as stated by Charles.[341] Likewise, all participants expressed that success was a possibility despite the limitations present and with blatant disregard for whether the child believed it or not. Henry stated, "If the person standing in front of them has knowledge of music and has an ability to communicate and connect with the kids, they're going to be successful."[342] Most participants also spoke of the refusal to operate with a deficit mindset to not reinforce the students' negative thoughts about their ability to be successful. Nathaniel expressed,

> Because most of the students in my band were either Black or Hispanic, and some of
> them coming from across the border, many of them, they just didn't believe things that

338. Ogle (pseudonym), "interview by author…," 2023.

339. Tandy (pseudonym), "interview by author…," 2023.

340. Singleton (pseudonym), "interview by author…," 2023.

341. Chapman (pseudonym), "interview by author…," 2023.

342. Callis (pseudonym), "interview by author…," 2023.

they could accomplish. What became clear very early was that it was about helping them achieve things in their own personal life and to feel empowered to make things better. And then the byproduct is the ratings. I guess my thoughts on obtaining success, success is building the culture and building the student.[343]

Trialability

Trialability is the degree to which an innovation may be tried before being fully implemented into practice. The participants in this study utilized an innovation (cultural responsiveness as a pedagogy) while operating aspects of their program. Two major concepts emerged in the analysis – tolerance and music selection. These are aggregated into the theme *program operations*.

Program Operations. Each participant expressed an adjusted tolerance level and lessening of consequences regarding rehearsal attendance. Almost all participants acknowledged the need for students to take on adult responsibilities that conflicted with band rehearsals, including working, babysitting, and picking up siblings from school. Henry expressed the need also to tolerate issues with transportation. He states, "A lot of times, they have issues regarding I can't come in the morning because my mom has to leave at 4:00 am. And it's a single-parent mom, and she is the only breadwinner of the family. So, you have to be willing to make changes in your schedule to accommodate their needs."[344] Most participants revealed instances demonstrating how the culture and background of their student on some level dictated how the director arranged rehearsals. Annie mentions the need to "schedule marching band rehearsals with as much sensitivity as possible. I would say I try not to punish a kid if they have to stay

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343. Murray (pseudonym), "interview by author…," 2023.

344. Callis (pseudonym), "interview by author…," 2023.

home and watch their siblings or if they're not able to make it for certain reasons."[345] Lastly,

Nathaniel and Eugene spoke about intentionally communicating with parents regarding

quinceañeras. Eugene stated, "Parents are shelling out a lot of money, and they have to plan

years in advance. Sometimes calendar dates just don't work out, and we have become a little bit

more lenient on things like that. That would be a cultural motivation for changing what we

do."[346]

Most participants expressed that the student's culture and background have no effect on

music selection. Annie expresses, "I try to really pick music that I feel fits the ensemble always.

I'm not always trying to be hyper-aware of their backgrounds."[347] While Henry felt it important

to have music of various cultural identities, he also stated, "I think it's important that we don't

specifically cater to the color of the kids in our program and our music selection, but we expose

them to all kinds of music. We teach them about music; it's all music. We just teach the

music."[348] Robert summarizes his perspective in this manner:

> I didn't use their culture or background or anything. I just felt like I know what these kids
> can do, and so I would just pick appropriate music. So, for me, it was just picking
> appropriate music that I needed to be successful with. Sometimes if it happened to match
> culturally with the students I had, then that's an added plus.[349]

Some directors communicated that a student's culture and background should have an effect on

music selection. Eugene expressed evolving with the community and the students. Similarly,

Vertner stated,

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345. Singleton (pseudonym), "interview by author…," 2023.

346. Jones (pseudonym), "interview by author…," 2023.

347. Singleton (pseudonym), "interview by author…," 2023.

348. Callis (pseudonym), "interview by author…," 2023.

349. Ogle (pseudonym), "interview by author…," 2023.

There has to be something for our audience. There just has to be. I don't just get up there and play unrelatable things when we're, for example, at a football game and the community is sitting right there. If the kids are unable to get some type of reaction out of their family members or people who are at the school and they say that support the school, that's demoralizing for them. So, I make choices about what happens in the stands that are not necessarily always looked highly upon, but I do it because I know it's important for the students to get positive feedback from their family and from the community at large.[350]

Observability

Observability refers to the degree to which the participants' perceived outcomes of cultural responsiveness may influence their decision to adopt or reject this pedagogical approach in the future.[351] All participants offered their thoughts and opinions on this attribute based on observations and reactions of their students and their internal responses. Three concepts emerged from the analysis of the participants' interviews – positive/adverse outcomes, gratitude/enjoyment, and professional/personal growth. These concepts are encapsulated in the theme *reflections*.

Reflections. Most participants commented favorably on their students, program, and program setting. Opinions shared were almost always framed in the context of teaching students in an underserved setting being a positive experience because the students are more grateful and more appreciative. Eugene stated, "It has become easier to teach as we have progressed from higher socio-economic down through lower socio-economic. It's just easier to teach the kids as far as classroom management. I'm just thinking the last ten years; if I just evaluated teaching my students, I just had more fun every year of just surely teaching them."[352] Robert felt as if students

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350. Tandy (pseudonym), "interview by author…," 2023.

351. Rogers, "*Diffusion of Innovations…,*" 2003, 48.

352. Jones (pseudonym), "interview by author…," 2023.

in his underserved setting "were like sponges. The moment you gave them praise or information that could seriously enhance the way they saw music or enhance their lives, they were so grateful for just having that attention and given that opportunity to learn."[353] Participants also framed their comments in the context of the positive outcomes being an even more rewarding experience in comparison to more affluent settings with fewer obstacles to overcome. Annie stated, "I think it has been really rewarding when we realize that the kids are starting to buy into the fact that they can be successful despite and in the face of adversity."[354]

The participants additionally shared their opinions regarding the undesirable aspects of serving in an underserved setting. The common frustrations shared centered around the prioritization of music education and students' low expectations for themselves due to their lived experiences. Henry explains, "The parents did not understand the importance of music education as part of the child's life. They viewed having to come to their child's concert as an imposition, rather than 'I get to go see my child grow up and help my child advance in life.'"[355] Vertner paralleled the participants' feelings when he stated, "You know, I actually have lost some high achieving students because their families insist that they need more time to focus on academics. I've also lost some students whose families say that they need their student at home to watch siblings and do other duties and responsibilities around the house or even take up a job to pay for household expenses."[356]

All participants expressed satisfaction with teaching in an underserved setting while utilizing certain culturally responsive methods. From a personal and professional growth

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353. Ogle (pseudonym), "interview by author…," 2023.

354. Singleton (pseudonym), "interview by author…," 2023.

355. Callis (pseudonym), "interview by author…," 2023.

356. Tandy (pseudonym), "interview by author…," 2023.

perspective, most participants expressed being a better person as a result of working in an underserved area. The majority of the participants emphasized the need to adjust themselves to meet the needs of their students willingly. Nathaniel shared, "When something would happen, or something in their life was important that I wasn't used to, I had a lot of empathy for that, and I would make accommodations for that."[357] Vertner expressed, "Here, particularly in this role, I've learned to really highlight the value in listening to the students and being responsive, like actually taking the time to hear what they have to say."[358] When speaking about teaching in an underserved setting, Eugene stated,

> It has evolved me as a human being. I shudder to think what type of person I would have been if I had not been exposed to different cultures, different ethnicities, different socio-economic backgrounds, different situations, and different student lives and stories. Yeah, I don't think I would like me very much, because I know people like that and I don't like them.[359]

Themes and Sub-Themes Explored in Journals

All participants were asked to maintain a journal of their experiences while operating with a heightened awareness of cultural responsiveness as a pedagogy. This approach gave them more autonomy in sharing various aspects of their experiences than the more focused individual interviews. The researcher offered prompts for their reference to encourage them to think more introspectively and meditatively about their engagement with a culturally responsive pedagogy. By analyzing the journals, the researcher identified four sub-themes aligned with the five main themes discovered in the initial interviews. These sub-themes are also directly associated with the participants' experience with a culturally responsive pedagogy.

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357. Murray (pseudonym), "interview by author…," 2023.

358. Tandy (pseudonym), "interview by author…," 2023.

359. Jones (pseudonym), "interview by author…," 2023.

Table 4 presents these four sub-themes, their definitions, and their alignment with the main themes that emerged from the initial interviews. It also illuminates the number of participants whose statements aligned with the identified themes in their journal entries. Those statements are signified by an X in the appropriate box.

Table 4. *Themes and Sub-Themes Explored in Journals*

Theme	Eugene	Charles	Nathaniel	Henry	Robert	Vertner	Annie
Main Theme: Effects of Cultural Background							
Sub-Theme: Outcomes	X		X			X	
Comments relating to the outcomes of working in a culturally responsive environment in an underserved setting.							

Theme	Eugene	Charles	Nathaniel	Henry	Robert	Vertner	Annie
Main Theme: Navigating Challenges							
Sub-Theme: Advice to Give	X		X	X		X	
Comments relating to suggestions for navigating the challenges of utilizing cultural responsiveness in an underserved setting.							

Theme	Eugene	Charles	Nathaniel	Henry	Robert	Vertner	Annie
Main Theme: Program Culture							
Sub-Theme: Maintain Standards	X	X	X	X	X		X
Comments related to maintaining the standards and its effects on the culture of the program.							

Theme	Eugene	Charles	Nathaniel	Henry	Robert	Vertner	Annie
Main Theme: Program Operations							
Sub-Theme: None defined		X		X		X	X
Comments related to the operations of the band program while utilizing culturally responsive practices.							

Table 4. Themes and Sub-Themes Explored in Journals

Theme	Eugene	Charles	Nathaniel	Henry	Robert	Vertner	Annie
Main Theme: Reflections							
Sub-Theme: Self-Conscious	X	X					X
Comments related to the participants' feelings and opinions about themselves as a result of operating a band program with an underserved population.							

Effects of Cultural Background

When the participants wrote of the effects that a student's background and culture had on the program, their comments were in the context of how it influenced instruction, affected program standards, and affected how relationships were formed. The sub-theme *outcomes* emerged from the participant's responses to the prompt, 'Today I found myself thinking about how cultural responsiveness…' It directly aligns with relative advantage, the first core attribute of a successful innovation, as detailed by Rogers' diffusion theory.[360]

Outcomes. This sub-theme emerged from the participant's responses to the prompt, 'Today, I found myself thinking about how cultural responsiveness…' The participants' responses to this prompt covered a variety of subject matters. However, the most common responses concerned the outcomes of the effects that the student's background and culture have on the program. Nathaniel specified, "We have to look at the culture and determine where the student is educationally."[361] Vertner expressed interest in maximizing each student's capabilities. He wrote, "If I can relate their experiences to the way they view the world, I can unlock more of

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360. Rogers, "*Diffusion of Innovations…,*" 2003, 48.

361. Nathaniel A. Murray (pseudonym), Journal Entry, May 2023.

their potential and help them find the most meaning in their experience."[362] Eugene's sentiments

of accountability were expressed as he wrote how the effects of cultural responsiveness in his

situation can "affect the outcome of student success in a positive or negative manner, all based

on how I engage with them as individuals."[363]

Navigating the Challenges

When participants wrote about their challenges with utilizing a culturally responsive

pedagogy, they were framed in the context of desiring to assist others in similar situations. The

sub-theme *advice to give* emerged from their entries. Their guidance materialized from the

prompt 'I notice that I struggle…" Their comments were related to complexity, the second core

attribute defined by Rogers' diffusion theory.[364]

Advice to Give. Almost all participants journaled that they endure struggles with a

culturally responsive pedagogy in some fashion. Most reflectively offered their expertise while

making statements from which others may benefit. As Vertner expresses his frustrations with his

peers and coworkers who do not consider the importance of cultural responsiveness, he believes

it beneficial to support his students. He explains, "I am constantly in situations in which I have to

advocate for even the opportunity for culturally responsive pedagogy to exist. But you should

incorporate culturally responsive pedagogy and outperform your colleagues and be prepared to

reference it and point out how you incorporated it in your program."[365] Eugene advises that when

attempting to form meaningful relationships, "dropping all preconceived ideas about a person

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362. Vertner W. Tandy (pseudonym), Journal Entry, May 2023.

363. Eugene K. Jones (pseudonym), Journal Entry, April 2023.

364. Rogers, "*Diffusion of Innovations…,*" 2003, 48.

365. Tandy (pseudonym), Journal Entry, May 2023.

leads to learning about who they really are."[366] Henry rationalizes the importance of trust and how it determines other aspects of a positive experience when utilizing a culturally responsive pedagogy when speaking of his experiences. He writes, "Students of low socio-economic households are usually slow to trust but become very loyal once trust is established. To get a strong level of commitment from a student, you must first establish trust."[367] Lastly, Nathaniel ponders his students' issues and concludes that "Maybe they are just trying to exist, and school seems like a waste of time. As educators, we have to first explain why education is important. No student will listen unless they understand the 'why.' They need to know the 'need,' and they have to know you care."[368]

Program Culture

The initial interviews revealed that the participants had meaningful experiences with cultural responsiveness as a pedagogy. These are summarized in the theme program culture, which is aligned to the third core attribute of Rogers's diffusion theory, compatibility.[369] The sub-theme of *maintain standards* emerged from the participant's responses to the prompt, 'Some unique aspects of maintaining high standards…' Although a few participants wrote about the uniqueness, most of the participants journaled about the importance of not compromising the standards.

Maintain Standards. Charles expresses that there are no excuses to negotiate the standards regardless of the situation of one's band program. He states, "Even though we are

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366. Jones (pseudonym), Journal Entry, April 2023.

367. Henry A. Callis (pseudonym), Journal Entry, April 2023.

368. Murray (pseudonym), Journal Entry, May 2023.

369. Rogers, "*Diffusion of Innovations…,*" 2003.

underfunded in comparison to our neighboring schools, there's still an expectation of excellence that must be achieved."[370] Henry emphasized the need to maintain high standards while being flexible to "individual achievement, student attendance and participation, work ethic, and commitment."[371] He deems it vital not to risk it all for the sake of upholding a standard.

Annie highlighted the importance of meeting the needs of the students to hold them accountable to a high standard. Many layers of support are required. She revealed that "in an effort to give students the same opportunities as other districts, my booster club and administration will find ways to provide the goods and services necessary to be successful."[372] Nathaniel utilizes the standards for longevity as the students take more and more ownership of the program. He proclaims that the results of maintaining high standards are "duplicatable leadership skills taught to student leaders that allow the leaders to become mentors in your program."[373] Lastly, Vertner underlined justice and equity in maintaining high standards for students in underserved communities. He affirms that in his situation, "the students' lives outside of the classroom is something I always have to take into account as I communicate the program standards. However, I still insist on setting high standards because I feel it would be a disservice to the students if I do not do the work to expose them to the highest levels of performance."[374]

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370. Charles H. Chapman (pseudonym), Journal Entry, April 2023.

371. Henry A. Callis (pseudonym), Journal Entry, March 2023.

372. Annie C. Singleton (pseudonym), Journal Entry, May 2023.

373. Murray (pseudonym), Journal Entry, May 2023.

374. Tandy (pseudonym), Journal Entry, May 2023.

Program Operations

Each participant expressed an adjusted level of tolerance and lessening of consequences regarding *program operations*, the fourth significant theme that emerged in the data analysis. Their comments related to the perceived value of operating a program utilizing a culturally responsive pedagogy. This theme is aligned with the fourth core attribute, trialability, of Rogers' diffusion theory.[375] Upon analyzing the journal entries, no sub-theme emerged related to the program operations while utilizing a culturally responsive pedagogy. Two participants regarding program operations wrote statements similar to opinions shared in the initial interviews.

Reflections

Almost all participants shared their thoughts and opinions regarding the outcomes of utilizing a culturally responsive pedagogy in their situation and how those conclusions affect their future actions and thoughts. Their judgments directly align with the final core attribute of Rogers' diffusion theory, observability.[376] Upon analyzing the journal entries, one sub-theme emerged related to the reflections in the initial interviews that would reveal the true level of comfort and apprehensions that some of the participants maintained.

Self-Conscious. This sub-theme was revealed from the participant's responses to the prompts 'regarding cultural responsiveness, I notice I struggle with…' and 'Today, I found myself thinking about…' Annie aspires to meet her students' needs to a high degree of execution and has found herself questioning her current methodology. She reveals that she desires cultural responsiveness to be of more significance in her teaching approach. She expresses, "Am I really

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375. Rogers, "*Diffusion of Innovations…,*" 2003.

376. Ibid.

doing right by them? I need more education and training. I want to give my students what they need to be successful adults after they graduate and while they are in my program. I don't know how to effectively meet all the needs at the same time."[377]

Eugene understands that cultural responsiveness can "affect the outcome of student success in a positive or negative manner, all based on how I engage with them as individuals."[378] He discovered that he grapples with "figuring out how to engage females from male-dominated cultures in such a way that leads to their equal success rate as compared to all other students."[379] While meeting the needs of his students and consistently utilizing cultural responsiveness in his program, Charles noticed that he "often over programs 'cultural' musical selections to appease the masses in our program."[380] He seeks balance by offering his students a program that suits their needs. Lastly, Nathaniel asserts that a culturally responsive pedagogy "can make all the difference in the world" as he attempts to show his students how much he genuinely cares about them.[381] He desires them to care about the program, yet he does have difficulty with "giving the students more responsibility so that they have much greater ownership of the program."[382]

Themes and Sub-Themes Explored in Follow-Up Interviews

The hermeneutic circle is a dialogical approach that incorporates feedback and further discussion with study participants that considers the perspective and experiences of the

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377. Singleton (pseudonym), Journal Entry, May 2023.

378. Jones (pseudonym), Journal Entry, April 2023.

379. Ibid.

380. Chapman (pseudonym), Journal Entry, April 2023.

381. Murray (pseudonym), Journal Entry, May 2023.

382. Ibid.

researcher and the phenomenon being studied.[383] Following the initial interviews and journal

entries analysis, the researcher identified topics and thoughts prompting more in-depth

examination. Consequently, the researcher conducted follow-up interviews with the participants.

Utilizing the Delve analysis tool, the researcher thematically analyzed the transcripts of the

follow-up interviews to explore the connection between the initial themes to the last two stages

of Rogers' five stages of the innovation-decision process.[384] The first three stages of knowledge,

persuasion, and decision were addressed while implementing a culturally responsive pedagogy

by the participants in their band programs or current setting for the retired directors, as noted

earlier. The inductive concepts explored in the follow-up interviews were directly related to the

last two stages of the process: implementation – the application of the innovation in practice and

confirmation – seeking reinforcement of the decision to implement a culturally responsive

pedagogy.

Through an analysis of the follow-up interview responses, the researcher identified five

sub-themes associated with the participants' experiences and aligned these with each of the five

main themes discovered in the initial interview. Table 5 presents these five sub-themes, their

definitions, and their alignment with the main themes identified in the initial interviews. It also

illustrates those participants whose statements during their follow-up interview aligned with the

emerged sub-themes, as indicated by an X in the appropriate box.

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383. Dowling, "From Husserl to…," (2007).

384. Rogers, "*Diffusion of Innovations…,*" 2003.

Table 5. *Themes and Sub-Themes Explored in Follow-Up Interviews*

Theme	Eugene	Charles	Nathaniel	Henry	Robert	Vertner	Annie
Main Theme: Effects of Cultural Background							
Sub-Theme: Inadequacy	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Positive and negative comments relating to the participants sentiments of working in a culturally responsive environment in an underserved setting.

Theme	Eugene	Charles	Nathaniel	Henry	Robert	Vertner	Annie
Main Theme: Navigating Challenges							
Sub-Theme: Unengaged			X	X	X	X	

Comments relating to student and parent effort given while utilizing cultural responsiveness in an underserved setting.

Theme	Eugene	Charles	Nathaniel	Henry	Robert	Vertner	Annie
Main Theme: Program Culture							
Sub-Theme: No Excuses	X		X	X			

Comments related to there being no excuse when establishing and maintaining the culture of the program.

Theme	Eugene	Charles	Nathaniel	Henry	Robert	Vertner	Annie
Main Theme: Program Operations							
Sub-Theme: Balance	X	X			X	X	X

Comments related to addressing the individual needs while not giving excessive attention to one certain aspect of culturally responsive practices.

Theme	Eugene	Charles	Nathaniel	Henry	Robert	Vertner	Annie
Main Theme: Reflections							
Sub-Theme: Lessons Learned	X	X	X		X	X	X

Comments related to the participants' revelations of their own ability, as a result of operating a band program with an underserved population.

Effects of Cultural Background

The first significant theme was identified as the *effects of cultural background*. This theme is aligned with the first core attribute of a successful innovation, *relative advantage*.[385] The analysis of the follow-up interviews recognized one sub-theme associated with relative advantage. This sub-theme of *inadequacy* described the positive and negative comments that the participants expressed regarding their lived experiences while utilizing a culturally responsive pedagogy with their band program.

Inadequacy. Almost all the participants affirmed experiencing positive feelings or emotions about the effect that the student's background and culture imposed on their operations while utilizing a culturally responsive pedagogy. These emotions were prompted by their observation of their students' responses to their methodologies and their own internal thoughts about effectiveness. Henry expressed that there were no occasions where he felt inadequate about his ability to teach students who do not share the same background and/or ethnicity as him. He stated, "I am very comfortable with this environment."[386] Charles asserts that he and his staff and students have "built a family-like atmosphere," and he has not felt a sense of unease or inadequacy. [387] Nathaniel has not felt inadequate, but he holds himself accountable by operating in a "sense of inadequacy to keep myself continually questioning myself and my ability."[388] Lastly, Eugene's comfort level revealed, "I can honestly say I haven't felt uneasy or inadequate

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385. Rogers, "*Diffusion of Innovations…,*" 2003.

386. Henry A. Callis (pseudonym), Follow-Up Interview by author, Grand Prairie, TX, May 2023.

387. Charles H. Chapman (pseudonym), Follow-Up Interview by author, Grand Prairie, TX, May 2023.

388. Nathaniel A. Murray (pseudonym), Follow-Up Interview by author, Grand Prairie, TX, May 2023.

with students from different backgrounds or ethnicity from me. I've actually felt uneasy a few times when working with students of the same ethnicity."[389]

Both Robert and Annie shared feelings of inadequacy in their teaching ability on some level when interacting with students who were not of the same background as themselves. Robert was concerned with appropriate compassion for students and sufficient resources. He states, "Sometimes dealing with students and adults who feel entitled seems to be a problem. And, even if they are people who do not have financial problems, they still have to be handled sensitively."[390] Of the participants, Annie appears to be most concerned with her level of adequacy. She shared that she is "nervous that I am not doing enough to meet the diverse needs of my students. I am not sure if my standards are appropriate for the clientele of my school population."[391]

Navigating the Challenges

Each participant's lived experience with a culturally responsive pedagogy was interpreted through the perspective of its complexity or their ability to *navigate the challenges* of understanding and implementing the pedagogy. The follow-up interviews allowed them to highlight this aspect of their experience. One important sub-theme emerged in this analysis as more than half of the participants expressed the challenge of motivating students and families who are yet *unengaged* even when the participants are utilizing methods comprising inclusivity as a critical factor.

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389. Eugene K. Jones (pseudonym), Follow-Up Interview by author, Grand Prairie, TX, May 2023.

390. Robert H. Ogle (pseudonym), Follow-Up Interview by author, Grand Prairie, TX, May 2023.

391. Annie C. Singleton (pseudonym), Follow-Up Interview by author, Grand Prairie, TX, May 2023.

Unengaged. Henry noticed that his students were "slow to self-initiate when faced with a high goal or daunting task. Also, timelines and deadlines often do not seem to matter because we make too many accommodations regarding due dates."[392] Although Vertner worked to meet his student's needs via music selection, some of his students "chose not to engage in the process of music for personal feelings and/or reasons which interfered with our experience this semester."[393] Robert would attempt to investigate further to involve his students and would sometimes be placed in uncomfortable situations. He expressed, "Sometimes there is backlash in asking innocent questions that I am inexperienced with handling."[394]

Among all the participants who shared concerns with unengaged students and families, one dominant thought was maintaining the program standards. Nathaniel's considerations were accountability and strategizing. He stated, "My feelings were very focused on what traditions and values parents and students held. I knew I could not come into 'their home,' 'their city,' and make changes that I wanted. I felt like I was the one who needed to make changes but never lower expectations."[395]

Program Culture

In both the initial interview and the journal entries, the participants strongly identified the value of the culture of the band program as highly revered. This theme aligned with the third core attribute of Rogers' diffusion theory, *compatibility*.[396] One sub-theme emerged in the

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392. Callis (pseudonym), "Follow-Up Interview…," May 2023.

393. Vertner W. Tandy (pseudonym), "Follow-Up Interview by author, Grand Prairie, TX, May 2023.

394. Ogle (pseudonym), "Follow-Up Interview…," May 2023.

395. Murray (pseudonym), "Follow-Up Interview…," May 2023.

396. Rogers, "*Diffusion of Innovations…,"* 2003.

journal entries as the participants emphasized the need to *maintain standards* within the band program. A related but different sub-theme became evident in the thematic analysis of the follow-up interviews – *no excuses.*

No Excuses. Of the participants who spoke more in-depth regarding the culture of their band programs, all alluded to their students' capabilities to achieve rigorous standards regardless of their situations. As a retired director, Henry aims to motivate teachers in underserved communities and provide them with the skills necessary to succeed in their setting. His conversation centered around the director's ability to deliver practical information to the students. He remarked, "All students are capable of achieving if given the tools and correct information to achieve. To lower standards due to socio-economic situations or race would be an insult and is not fair to those students."[397] Nathaniel elaborates further on his point of defining how the traditions in the culture can work together with the band program so that both can serve each other. He demonstrates how to eliminate traditions as an excuse as follows:

> It is undeniable that a culturally responsive pedagogy is critical to build your own band's culture. My understanding of a quinceañera was critical when I was teaching. I had to understand the cultural importance, let them know I respect their cultural roots, and help them make the best decisions when to celebrate this important milestone without interfering in responsibilities they have within the band program.[398]

Program Operations

This study focused on the participants' lived experiences as band directors utilizing a culturally responsive pedagogy within their band programs. These personal experiences revealed themselves in distinctive ways. In the initial interviews, the participants interpreted their

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397. Callis (pseudonym), "Follow-Up Interview…," May 2023.

398. Murray (pseudonym), "Follow-Up Interview…," May 2023.

experience with a culturally responsive pedagogy and its effectiveness if tolerance of the

students' responsibilities is established. No sub-theme was identified in the journal entries, as all

comments aligned with the initial theme. In the follow-up interviews, the participants disclosed

further insight into their similarly themed initial and journaled responses. The sub-theme of

balance emerged from the participants' responses.

Balance. Charles consistently operates cultural responsiveness as a pedagogy and has

expressed high confidence in its utilization. However, his Hispanic students revealed that they

"play too many Hispanic selections."[399] Nathaniel strives to utilize a culturally responsive

pedagogy in other professional settings as he extends his classroom operations. As a retired

director, he has numerous opportunities to interact with varying clientele. He expresses, "I find

myself evaluating cultural influences as part of my own objectives when doing a clinic for a

school district. It was always on my radar, but now it is part of my analysis and objective before

doing a band clinic."[400] Eugene asserts, "It's my role to adapt myself to the needs of each student

and to figure out what the most effective and honest approaches are to get the best results for

them."[401]

Vertner also expresses a high level of confidence in consistently utilizing a culturally

responsive pedagogy. However, he often takes his own "knowledge of culturally responsive

pedagogy for granted. I realize that I need to take the time to ensure my entire staff is aware and

takes a unified approach to incorporating culturally responsive pedagogy in our program."[402] He

sums up the need for balance when he states

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399. Chapman (pseudonym), "Follow-Up Interview…," May 2023.

400. Murray (pseudonym), "Follow-Up Interview…," May 2023.

401. Jones (pseudonym), "Follow-Up Interview…," May 2023.

I feel a great deal of weight, being that I represent a minority subpopulation within the system in which I teach. Often times my views are seen as abstract, unnecessary, or frivolous. I often find myself having to explain my thinking and actions seemingly more than colleagues who do not belong to a minority subpopulation within the system I teach in or our profession at large. I believe that this is largely due to low awareness of or value ascribed to culturally responsive pedagogy or related concepts.[403]

Reflections

The theme *reflections* embody many aspects of the lived experiences of the participants. As each participant shared their observations about a culturally responsive pedagogy, their personal growth, motivation, frustrations, insecurities, and confidence was demonstrated. *Observability*, the final core attribute of Rogers' diffusion theory, is critical to adopting or rejecting an innovation.[404] The follow-up interviews revealed *lessons learned* as a sub-theme when all the participants recognized aspects or qualities about themselves that were discovered through the utilization of a culturally responsive pedagogy.

Lessons Learned. Initially concerned with being sensitive to her students' needs but not coming across as insincere or insensitive, Annie revealed that she needs to be "more educated and sensitive on this topic to meet the needs of my staff, students, and community."[405] Henry shared, "I have learned to take my eyes off my own needs and become more aware of other people's needs. I have learned to ask myself why a student does not engage and how to look for ways to engage them."[406] Vertner declared, "I've learned that I need to be more vocal about culturally responsive pedagogy within my own team and communicate clearer frameworks for

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402. Tandy (pseudonym), "Follow-Up Interview…," May 2023.

403. Ibid.

404. Rogers, "*Diffusion of Innovations…,*" 2003.

405. Singleton (pseudonym), "Follow-Up Interview…," May 2023.

406. Callis (pseudonym), "Follow-Up Interview…," May 2023.

monitoring implementation."[407] Nathaniel reveals that he "truly learned to listen more and speak

less."[408] Eugene proclaimed that he likes himself "as a human being better as I've learned over

time to accept and embrace the differences of my students."[409]

Summary of Themes

Heidegger's hermeneutic circle was applied to examine the participants' lived

experiences in using a culturally responsive pedagogy in their band programs and/or past

situation. In this process, understanding is revealed by transitioning from the phenomenon to the

personal interpretations of the researcher and back to the phenomenon. The researcher analyzed

the data and continued to assess, amend, and merge initial themes to create a more detailed and

refined interpretation of the participants' experiences. Table 6 contains the main themes and sub-

themes that emerged throughout the process of the hermeneutic circle. Table 6 also includes the

definitions for each theme and sub-theme and their alignment with the core attributes of Rogers'

diffusion theory.[410]

Table 6. *Themes and Sub-Themes Aligned with Core Attributes of a Successful Innovation*

Relative Advantage	**The degree to which an innovation has an advantage over other methods.**
Effects of Cultural Background	Comments relating to the effects that a student's background and culture have on the program.
Outcomes	*Comments relating to the outcomes of working in a culturally responsive environment in an underserved setting.*
Inadequacy	*Positive and negative comments relating to the participants sentiments of working in a culturally responsive environment in an underserved setting.*

407. Tandy (pseudonym), "Follow-Up Interview…," May 2023.

408. Murray (pseudonym), "Follow-Up Interview…," May 2023.

409. Jones (pseudonym), "Follow-Up Interview…," May 2023.

410. Rogers, "*Diffusion of Innovations…,*" 2003.

Table 6. *Themes and Sub-Themes Aligned with Core Attributes of a Successful Innovation*

Complexity	**The degree to which an innovation is categorized on a complexity-simplicity continuum and is regarded as easy or difficult to understand and implement.**
Navigating Challenges	Comments relating to navigating the challenges of utilizing cultural responsiveness in an underserved setting.
Advice to Give	*Comments relating to suggestions for navigating the challenges of utilizing cultural responsiveness in an underserved setting.*
Unengaged	*Comments relating to student and parent effort given while utilizing cultural responsiveness in an underserved setting.*
Compatibility	**The degree to which an innovation is relevant and appropriate to the values and experiences of the potential adopter.**
Program Culture	Comments related to shaping the culture of the program that considers the values of the directors.
Maintain Standards	*Comments related to maintaining the standards and its effects on the culture of the program.*
No Excuses	*Comments related to there being no excuse when establishing and maintaining the culture of the program.*
Trialability	**The degree to which an innovation may be tried before being fully put into practice.**
Program Operations	Comments related to the personal experiences with program operations and traditions while utilizing culturally responsive practices.
None defined	*Comments related to the operations of the band program while utilizing culturally responsive practices.*
Balance	*Comments related to addressing the individual needs while not giving excessive attention to one certain aspect of culturally responsive practices.*
Observability	**The degree to which the adopter can observe the positive outcomes of an innovation in the client.**
Reflections	Comments related to the participants' observations, experiences, outcomes, growth, and perceived effectiveness as a result of operating a band program with an underserved population.
Self-Conscious	*Comments related to the participants' feelings and opinions about themselves as a result of operating a band program with an underserved population.*
Lessons Learned	*Comments related to the participants' revelations of their own ability, as a result of operating a band program with an underserved population.*

Diffusion of Innovations[411]

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411. Rogers, "*Diffusion of Innovations…,*" 2003.

Research Question Responses

This study was guided by three research questions designed to investigate the lived experience of current or retired band directors who operate programs achieving rigorous standards. The aim was to identify methods, characteristics, and pedagogical systems of high-achieving band programs and band directors who operate high school band programs comprised mainly of minority-majority students. Five themes were identified from the interviews and journal entries in the previous sections. This section associates the emerging themes with the appropriate research question.

Research Question One

How does cultural responsiveness affect director efficacy in underserved high school band programs?

Relative advantage refers to the degree to which the participants interpreted their experience with cultural responsiveness as a pedagogy to be advantageous, as opposed to more traditional pedagogical practices.[412] All participants identified concepts directly related to this attribute, which were summed up in the theme *effects of cultural background*. Each participant experienced unique encounters while utilizing cultural responsiveness as a pedagogy in their band programs. Almost all participants expressed their support and the need to implement cultural responsiveness in their band programs. Eugene affirms, "All teachers should be proactive in their thinking about and planning for the most effective ways to present lessons to students of all cultures that will achieve the most effective learning."[413] Nathaniel generalized his

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412. Rogers, "*Diffusion of Innovations…,*" 2003, 48.

413. Jones (pseudonym), "Follow-Up Interview…," May 2023.

perception and commented, "As I review my experiences, it is undeniable that a culturally responsive pedagogy is critical to build your own band's culture."[414]

All participants expressed their thoughts and beliefs about utilizing a culturally responsive pedagogy in their future practices. The majority remarked favorably on the usage of the pedagogy. However, concerns were expressed regarding its familiarity. Annie acknowledged that she needs to "be more educated on this topic to properly meet the needs of my students."[415] Vertner concluded that "more educators should be aware of the concept and that we as a profession can do a better job ensuring that new teachers have a greater awareness of it. Further, the recognition systems in our profession should be revised to reflect the ideals of culturally responsive pedagogy."[416]

Complexity is the degree to which the participants on a complexity-simplicity continuum categorize an intervention.[417] More specifically, how did the participants explain the ease or difficulty of a culturally responsive pedagogy to understand and implement into their band programs? The participants identified three concepts – ease of teaching, relating to the students, and motivating learning – directly associated with this attribute, which was summed up in the theme *navigating the challenges*. Almost all participants framed their thoughts in the context of it being easier to teach students in an underserved setting because the students were more grateful, and it was more fun to be around them. All participants communicated that motivating students to learn was the most significant challenge with a culturally responsive pedagogy. Their

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414. Murray (pseudonym), "Follow-Up Interview…," May 2023.

415. Singleton (pseudonym), "Follow-Up Interview…," May 2023.

416. Tandy (pseudonym), "Follow-Up Interview…," May 2023.

417. Rogers, "*Diffusion of Innovations…,*" 2003, 48.

comments were unanimously framed in the context of students not believing in themselves and students having low expectations of achievement for themselves.

Research Question Two

How does the director-student relationship affect achievement in underserved high school band programs?

Compatibility refers to the degree to which the participants interpreted a culturally responsive pedagogy as relevant and appropriate to their personal or professional values.[418] The participants appreciated the pedagogy as an example of bringing evidence-based research into authentic experiences. The two concepts, program values and program success aligned with this aspect of Rogers' diffusion theory and were summed up in the theme *program culture*. Almost all the participants spoke of the importance of the values of the director being and matching the values of the band program, values of which all participants expressed were not affected by the culture or background of their students. They also provided insight on the importance of defining success to shape the culture of the program, explicitly mentioning success not being a rating, a trophy, or "the subjective judging of a fifteen-minute performance," as stated by Charles.[419] The prerequisite for an effective program culture is establishing meaningful relationships, as expressed by almost all participants. Henry summarized the participants' stance: "I see kids in both areas, and with students in underserved communities and schools, relationship is most important. So, you have to build a relationship with the kid first, then they will respect you. Then they will do what you ask them to do because, again, relationship is the most important thing to

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418. Rogers, "*Diffusion of Innovations…,*" 2003, 48.

419. Chapman (pseudonym), "interview by author…," 2023.

them."[420] He goes on to state, "Once that is done, there is an openness and a trust that I have never experienced while teaching in wealthier suburban school districts."[421]

Research Question Three

What are the effects of rigorous standards and accountability on achievement in underserved high school band programs?

Trialability is the degree to which an innovation may be tried before being fully implemented into practice. It refers to how the participants interpreted the perception of the practicality of cultural responsiveness as a pedagogy while utilizing its characteristics in other aspects of their program.[422] Almost every participant encouraged an increased tolerance of individual situations and intentionality with music selection so that it is relevant and reflective of the student's cultural background in the program. These two topics encapsulated the theme of *program operations*. Participants spoke extensively as they connected program operations and program culture while placing emphasis on maintaining high standards. Charles expresses that there are no excuses to negotiate the standards regardless of the situation of one's band program. He states, "Even though we are underfunded in comparison to our neighboring schools, there's still an expectation of excellence that must be achieved."[423] Vertner underscored justice and equity in maintaining high standards for students in underserved communities. He affirms, "It would be a disservice to the students if I do not do the work to expose them to the highest levels of performance."[424]

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420. Callis (pseudonym), "interview by author…," 2023.

421. Ibid.

422. Rogers, "*Diffusion of Innovations…,*" 2003, 48.

423. Charles H. Chapman (pseudonym), Journal Entry, April 2023.

All participants spoke of their ability to witness the effects that rigorous standards and accountability maintain on their programs. *Observability* refers to the degree to which the participants' perceived outcomes of cultural responsiveness may influence their decision to adopt or reject this pedagogical approach in the future.[425] Participants framed their comments in the context of the positive outcomes being an even more rewarding experience in comparison to more affluent settings with fewer obstacles to overcome. Annie declared, "I think it has been really rewarding when we realize that the kids are starting to buy into the fact that they can be successful despite and in the face of adversity."[426]

<div align="center">Summary</div>

This chapter began with a detailed description of the study participants and reported the findings of their input in four sections. The significant themes identified from the participant interviews were discussed in the first section. These themes were aligned with the five core attributes of a successful innovation as outlined by Rogers' diffusion of innovations theory. The central theme associated with *relative advantage* was the effects of cultural background on using a culturally responsive pedagogy. For the attribute of *complexity*, participants considered *navigating the challenges* of the intervention to be easy to implement. The negative comments offered by a few participants were connected to an inability to relate to the students easily. Likewise, the most significant challenge communicated by the participants was motivating the students to learn. Third, the attribute of *compatibility* was singularly associated with the participants' value and emphasis on establishing a high-integrity *program culture* regardless of

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424. Tandy (pseudonym), Journal Entry, May 2023.

425. Rogers, "*Diffusion of Innovations…,*" 2003, 48.

426. Singleton (pseudonym), "interview by author…," 2023.

the student's background. Fourth, participants interpreted the *trialability* attribute as an essential aspect of their *program operations*. Their perception of the practicality of cultural responsiveness as a pedagogy while utilizing its characteristics in other aspects of their program emphasized tolerance and sensitivity to music selection. Finally, the fifth core attribute, *observability*, was addressed by each participant's perceived positive/negative outcomes, gratitude/enjoyment, and professional/personal growth based on observations and reactions of their students and their internal responses to utilizing a culturally responsive pedagogy.

Second, the themes identified by analyzing the journal entries are discussed in the next section. Their journals revealed their personal opinions regarding the *outcomes* of operating in a culturally responsive environment centered around utilizing the students' culture to maximize their potential. They also comprised *advice to give*, reflectively offering their expertise while making statements from which others aspiring to utilize a culturally responsive pedagogy may benefit. They noted the importance to *maintain standards* and not compromise the standards regardless of the student's background and culture. Finally, almost all participants shared their thoughts and opinions regarding the outcomes of utilizing a culturally responsive pedagogy in their situation and how those conclusions affect their future actions and thoughts. Although *self-conscious,* they would each reveal their true level of comfort and apprehensions maintained. Each of these sub-themes was associated with the main themes that emerged from the analysis of the initial interviews.

The third section explored additional sub-themes derived from the follow-up interviews with each participant. They discussed their positive and negative sentiments regarding their level of adequacy in utilizing a culturally responsive pedagogy in an underserved setting, voiced concerns regarding unengaged students and parents while utilizing a culturally responsive

pedagogy, and declared there to be no excuses when establishing and maintaining the standards and its effects on the band program. They acknowledged the need for balance when addressing individual needs to not give excessive attention to any aspect of culturally responsive practices. Finally, many of them exposed their lessons learned from operating a band program employing a culturally responsive pedagogy with an underserved population.

The final section presented the participants' responses and the identified themes to the research questions. Each participant's personal experience with utilizing a culturally responsive pedagogy was summarized and associated with the appropriate question. Through their relationship with the pedagogy, they gained clarity and understanding of the connection between certain aspects of education, one's culture and background, and how they may influence the effectiveness of the educator and the band program. The five significant themes that emerged from this study were the effects of cultural background, navigating the challenges, program culture, program operations, and reflections.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Overview

The purpose of this hermeneutic phenomenological study was to identify methods, characteristics, and pedagogical systems of high-achieving band programs and band directors who operate high school band programs comprised mostly of minority-majority students via an examination of lived experiences. Chapter Five begins with a summary of the findings written from the perspective of the themes that emerged in the data analysis. In addition, the theoretical and empirical implications are explored. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the delimitations, limitations, and recommendations for future research.

Discussion

Many studies have examined and identified characteristics of high-achieving high school band programs. However, the application of CRE is a relatively new pedagogy. In recent literature, research has neglected to explore programs in urban/inner-city settings that have achieved at the highest levels with band directors who do not originate from the majority background of their students (i.e., White band directors with Hispanic and Black students). No specific research was found that examined those programs and provided information detailing their application of CRE, the effectiveness of their relationships with the students, and their ability to establish a particularly rigorous standard while holding students accountable in situations where it is perceived that students are only capable of attaining a certain level of success because of their circumstances. Furthermore, no research was located that investigated the lived experiences of the directors of those band programs. The director's perspective is vital to gaining a more vigorous and meaningful understanding of the factors that motivate them to incorporate methods, techniques, and pedagogical systems into their program operations. There

is minimal information related to minority-majority students in urban/inner-city high school band programs and the methods utilized to inspire them to participate, excel, and achieve at or above the same level as their suburban counterparts. This study may be the first to investigate this gap in the literature.

Upon a thematic analysis of three data sources (interviews, journal entries, and follow-up interviews), five main themes emerged that aligned with the core attributes of a successful innovation as outlined by Rogers' diffusion of innovation theory.[427] The proceeding sections will address the interpretations of those themes. Afterward, an examination of the implications for practice and the theoretical and empirical implications will be discussed. A discussion of delimitations and limitations is considered before the researcher's recommendations for future study.

Interpretation of Findings

This section opens with a summary of the five main themes resulting from analyzing each data source, as discussed in Chapter Four. The researcher then provides an overview of the significant interpretation of the themes. Lastly, two significant interpretations are identified: the importance of the innovation-decision process and core attributes as purported by Rogers' diffusion theory and the implications of trialability being most central to the effectiveness of this study.

Summary of Thematic Findings

Figure 5 details the themes and sub-themes originating from the participant interviews and journal analysis. These themes are associated with each of Rogers' five core attributes of a

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427. Rogers, "*Diffusion of Innovations…,*" 2003.

successful innovation.[428] They are all pertinent to the purpose of the study and serve as a

foundation for the interpretations of the research (see figure 5).
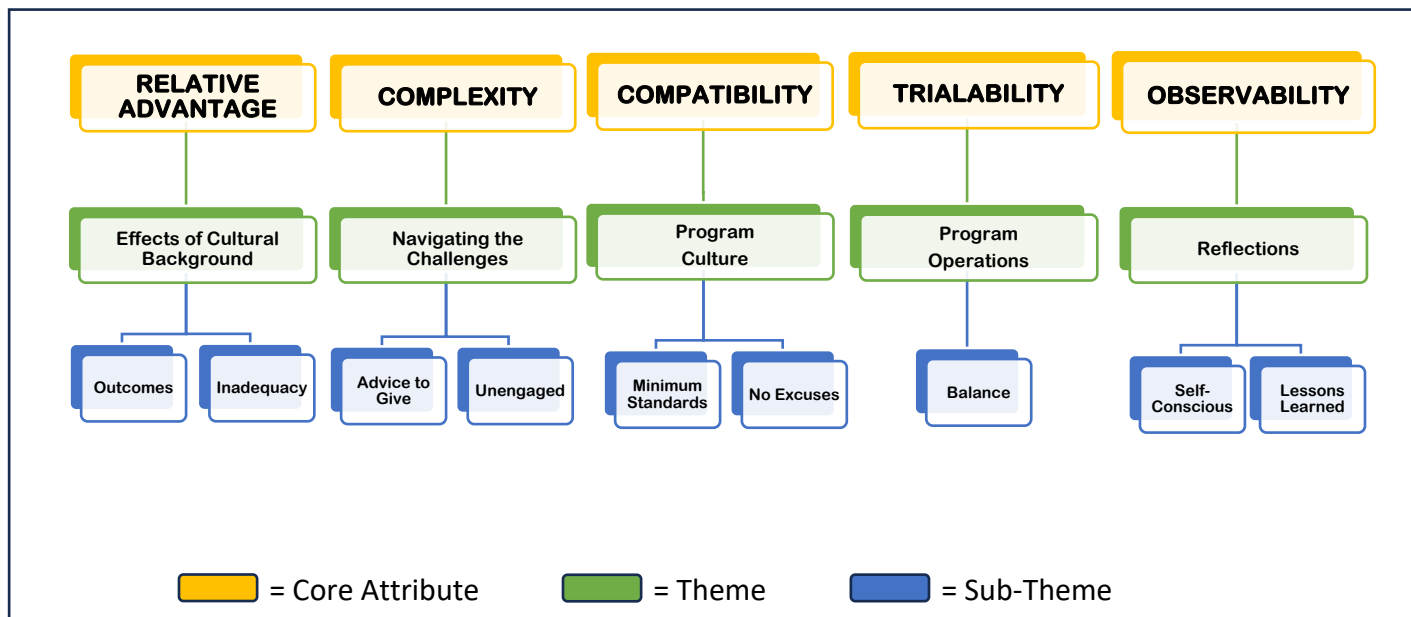
Figure 5. Summary of Themes & Sub-Themes. Thematic findings aligned with Core Attributes[429]

First, the researcher discusses his interpretation of the diffusion theory's value in

examining the band directors' lived experiences. This theory provided the framework that

allowed the researcher to apply his expertise as a band director experienced in utilizing a

culturally responsive pedagogy in a minority-majority high school band program to understand

the participants' experiences more profoundly and systematically. Next, the researcher discusses

the value of trialability in guiding the participants through their experiences while either

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428. Rogers, "*Diffusion of Innovations…,*" 2003.

429. Ibid.

operating their programs utilizing culturally responsive practices or possessing a heightened awareness of a culturally responsive pedagogy.

The Value of Diffusion Theory. This study utilized Rogers' diffusion of innovations theory as the theoretical framework. Based on this framework, it examined the employment of cultural responsiveness as a pedagogy from the perspective of current or retired band directors.[430] The researcher interpreted the conclusions of this study to confirm two essential aspects of this theory. The first was the effect that the five stages of the innovation-decision process had on the directors throughout their experience. Second was the relationship between the five core attributes of a successful innovation and the directors' approach to operating their band programs utilizing a culturally responsive pedagogy.

Innovation-Decision Process. The five stages of the innovation-decision process consist of (a) *knowledge* – exposure to the innovation and some understanding of how it operates; (b) *persuasion* – development of a positive or adverse attitude toward the innovation; (c) *decision* – engagement that leads to adopting or rejecting the innovation; (d) *implementation* – the application of the innovation in practice; and (e) *confirmation* – seeking reinforcement of the decision.[431] While some participants were already operating programs and utilizing cultural responsiveness as a pedagogy, providing all directors with brief information regarding the pedagogy strategically aligned with the first stage – *knowledge*. The *persuasion* and *decision* stages were pre-determined for the participants because teaching students while serving as their high school band director was required for inclusion in the study. As a result, the researcher's

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430. Rogers, "*Diffusion of Innovations…,*" 2003.

431. Ibid.

interpretation of the findings was focused on the influences of the *implementation* and *confirmation* stages of the process. Implementation occurs as the directors teach while utilizing the innovation/pedagogy, and confirmation ensues once the directors examine their effectiveness or seek reinforcement of the decision to utilize or not the pedagogy.

The researcher recognized how influential both stages were throughout the analysis of the participants' lived experiences as they attempted to utilize cultural responsiveness as a pedagogy in their band programs. The findings revealed that through their active engagement (implementation) with the pedagogy, the participants were well-positioned to observe both the consequences of their utilization of cultural responsiveness and its effects on their students and the overall program (confirmation). These stages were central in determining their impressions of the pedagogical effectiveness and, therefore, their decision-making process.

Five Core Attributes. Rogers' diffusion of innovations theory seeks to explain how new ideas or innovations (such as CRE) are adopted. This theory proposes that there are five core attributes that affect the adoption of the innovation: (1) *relative advantage* is the degree to which an innovation has an advantage over previous or commonly utilized methods; (2) *compatibility* is the degree to which an innovation is relevant, significant, and appropriate to the values and experiences of the potential adopter; (3) *complexity* is the degree to which an innovation is categorized on a complexity-simplicity continuum, and the level of comfort is regarded as easy or difficult to understand and implement; (4) *trialability* is the degree to which an innovation may be executed before being fully put into practice (experiential learning); and (5) *observability*

is the degree to which the adopter can perceive the benefits or positive outcomes of an innovation.[432]

The findings of the research revealed the significance of the core attributes in the participants' experiences with a culturally responsive pedagogical approach to music education and gaining a more comprehensive understanding of their lived experiences. The themes emerging from this study aligned with each of the five core attributes. The researcher's limited previous knowledge of these attributes allowed for no recognition of their function in the adoption process. The researcher is more appropriately informed because of the findings of this study, of their significance and influence on the participants. Rogers' theory serving as a framework for this study, allowed the researcher to analyze the participants' lived experiences effectively and systematically. This analysis engendered viewpoints, apprehensions, operations, and meanings synthesized into relevant themes.

The Value of Trialability. The participants' ability to employ a culturally responsive pedagogical approach to their situations has exhibited the value of trialability in this study. This core attribute allowed me to gain considerable insight and a more comprehensive understanding of the participants' lived experiences. Furthermore, trialability also allowed the participants to reflect and understand in depth their individual concerns, strengths, weaknesses, apprehensions, and successes. While operating with a heightened awareness of CRE, trialability allowed the participants to understand better its demands and connection to meaningful individual student growth. The researcher discovered that trialability is associated with the fourth stage of the innovation-decision process, *implementation*. How the participants perceived their effectiveness

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432. Shannon Scott et al., "Factors Influencing the Adoption of an Innovation: An Examination of the Uptake of the Canadian Heart Health Kit," *Implementation Science* 3, no. 41, (October 2008).

with cultural responsiveness application in their situation and trialability significantly affected their decision to utilize this approach.

The findings revealed that the participants became increasingly aware of their incorporation of cultural responsiveness, or at least their interpretation of its meaning. Initially, only a couple of the participants expressed skepticism and/or unfamiliarity with the pedagogy. However, by the study's conclusion, all participants were more familiar with cultural responsiveness as a pedagogy and were interested in utilizing it further. Additionally, all participants journaled regarding their positive experiences when utilizing a culturally responsive approach to operating their program. Garcia-Moya posits that learning from a teacher as a significant adult in students' lives produced positive effects in several essential areas, including increasing effort and engagement, developing academic skills, the perception of a more positive learning environment, and enhanced student well-being.[433] Their perception was that of satisfaction with their execution of cultural responsiveness and of personal and professional development.

This study confirmed that the directors progressed to appreciate and acknowledge the effectiveness of a culturally responsive pedagogy, irrespective of their level of comfort and/or familiarity with the approach. However, they also recognized that this approach requires intentionality on their behalf when the opportunity avails itself to incorporate the pedagogy. Furthermore, almost all participants acknowledged this pedagogy's positive effects on their students and the relationships formed with them. Developing positive relationships with teachers is vital to students who maintain academic and social issues as they needed both types of support.[434] Participant observations increased and strengthened their desire for future application

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433. Garcia-Moya, *The Importance of…,* 2020, 5.

and, in some instances, a passion for additional methods of effectiveness within the pedagogical system.

Implications for Practice

The findings of this study may have practical significance for various stakeholders, including researchers, higher education instructors and professors, clinicians and professional development presenters, and music educators in all situations. Additionally, the lived experiences of these participants may provide each of the stakeholder groups to initiate recommendations to consider potential adjustments, modifications, and adaptations to current pedagogical systems aimed at inspiring learning in an underserved setting. Figure 6 illustrates these potential stakeholders (see figure 6).
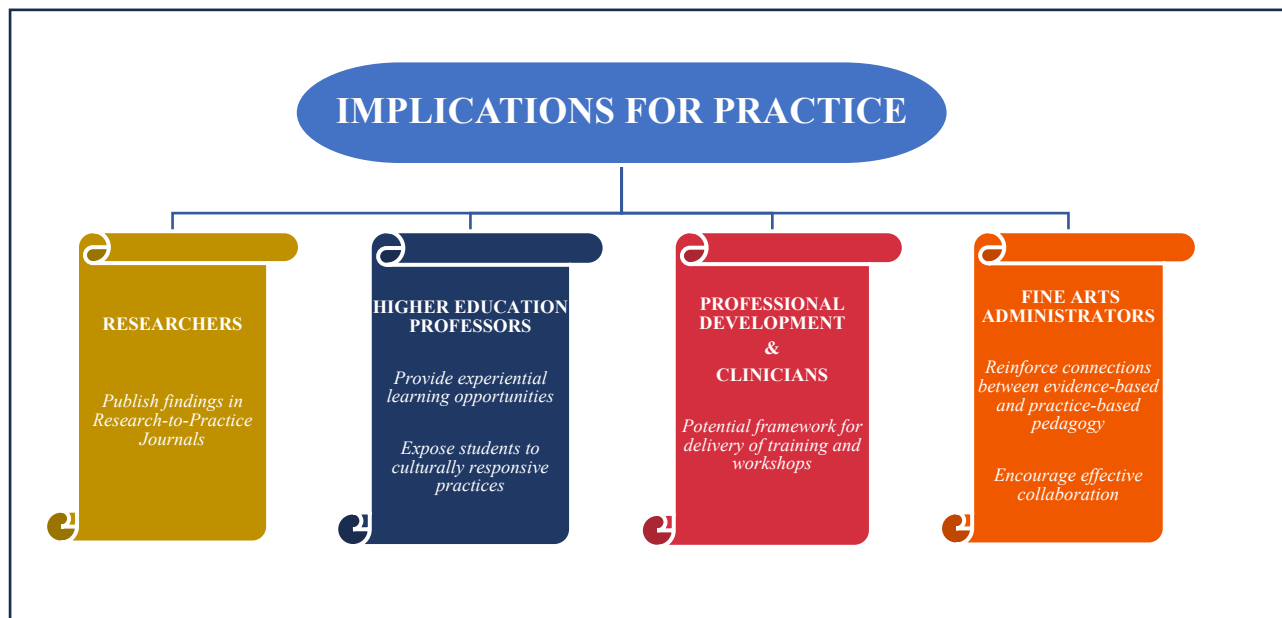
IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

RESEARCHERS

Publish findings in Research-to-Practice Journals

HIGHER EDUCATION PROFESSORS

Provide experiential learning opportunities

Expose students to culturally responsive practices

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT & CLINICIANS

Potential framework for delivery of training and workshops

FINE ARTS ADMINISTRATORS

Reinforce connections between evidence-based and practice-based pedagogy

Encourage effective collaboration

Figure 6. Implications for Practice

434. Fredricks, "Why Relationships Matter…," (2017).

Researchers

This study revealed that more research results are needed to advance an increased implementation of cultural responsiveness as a pedagogy. Establishing trust in CRE should be a significant motivating factor in addressing its relevance, and providing research-based evidence is needed, especially considering the scarcity of currently available findings. Rogers purports that intent is guided by knowledge and persuasion.[435] Without knowledge, persuasion is inconceivable and intent impossible. Educators often rely on practice-based evidence from their peers when deciding to implement strategies and pedagogical systems in their programs. This highlights the critical influence of trialability in the decision to adopt or reject a new approach. Researchers should publish their findings in research journals and should also consider research-to-practice journals that associate their results (knowledge) with practical application (persuasion) to foster implementation (intent).

Higher Education

For higher education professors and instructors, the findings of this study may inform of more practical and effective strategies to inspire learning in band programs of all types, but more specifically, students in underserved areas who are being taught by teachers who do not share the same cultural background as their students. While strategies and knowledge alone may not be sufficient to encourage future educators to implement a culturally responsive pedagogy, experiential opportunities must also be provided. This may be accomplished through in-person demonstrations, student teaching opportunities, and expert interactive presentations. The goal is to provide numerous avenues of exposure to the pedagogy and its characteristics (knowledge), which may lead to a more comfortable level of familiarity with the pedagogy (persuasion). As

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435. Rogers, "*Diffusion of Innovations…,*" 2003.

knowledge and persuasion guide intent, providing these opportunities may influence (decision) them to apply a culturally responsive pedagogy as they operate their band program (implementation). Ultimately, applying this pedagogy may influence them to seek reinforcement of their decision and adopt the method (confirmation) as their approach to education.

Professional Development and Clinicians

For clinicians and professional development presenters, this study demonstrates the influence of each of the five core attributes on one's decision to adopt or reject a new approach. PD providers should consider these characteristics when establishing an effective framework for presentations and workshops. These attributes may inform presenters on more efficient methods to deliver content when seeking immediate implementation of an innovation. Active engagement (trialability) with the content via interactive activities may improve individual confidence and comprehension and assist in examining relative advantage, complexity, and compatibility. Adopting a culturally responsive pedagogy may be encouraged by utilizing this process.

Clinicians often work with students as an invitee or visitor. The findings of this study should be applied to guide the decision-making process when selecting music to be performed if applicable and when determining how to effectively communicate with students, how to inspire learning, and how to model effectiveness to observing peers and educators. This may create exposure to the pedagogy and intrigue by others, leading to potential opportunities for sharing information (knowledge).

Fine Arts Administrators

Fine arts directors and coordinators are critical members of the ancillary team. They support student outcomes academically and in their area of the arts. The success of fine arts (band) students hinges on each student's ability to achieve. As a result, it is in the educator's best

interest to be skilled in inspiring learning for all students in the program. The success of each student often relies on the relationship and effective collaboration between the fine arts administrator and the educator. These administrators frequently value practice-based evidence from their own experience or closely observed experiences of their peers. The participants' lived experiences in this study further emphasized the significance of practice-based evidence – *trialability* and *observability* – in adopting a new approach. Fine arts administrators should apply the results of this study to encourage and demonstrate to their colleagues and educators the effects of a culturally responsive pedagogy and encourage collaboration amongst staff members to share successful methods of the approach.

Theoretical and Empirical Implications

This section examines the theoretical and empirical implications of the findings. The theoretical implications were reviewed from the perspective of Rogers' diffusion of innovations theory. The interpretations of the findings were considered through two concepts that outlined Rogers' theory – the five stages of the innovation-decision-making process and the five core attributes of a successful innovation. The empirical implications were examined through band directors' lived experiences and their implementation of a culturally responsive pedagogy.

Theoretical Implications

Guided by the theoretical framework of the diffusion of innovation theory, this study examined band directors' lived experiences in programs comprising minority-majority students while incorporating the innovation-decision perspective and the five core attributes of a successful innovation.[436] The results confirmed these two foundational paradigms. First, the band

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436. Rogers, "*Diffusion of Innovations…,*" 2003.

directors were exposed to cultural responsiveness as a pedagogy (*knowledge*). Second, their

interactions with their students while operating as a band director determined their attitude and

engagement with the phenomenon (*persuasion and decision*). Third, applying cultural

responsiveness in practice was an integrated part of being a band director (*implementation*).

Finally, reflecting on their experience while utilizing cultural responsiveness with the band

program provided the underpinning to support their decision to accept or reject a culturally

responsive pedagogy (*confirmation*).

The study also examined the five core attributes of a successful innovation, the second

component of this theory. The themes that emerged from the participants' experiences with

cultural responsiveness within their band programs aligned with each of the five attributes:

effects of culture and background (*relative advantage*), navigating the challenges (*complexity*),

program culture (*compatibility*), program operations (*trialability*) and reflections (*observability*).

The researcher's interpretation of the findings substantiated the belief that the diffusion of

innovations theory was an appropriate theoretical framework for this examination. The results of

this study revealed that both components of the theory were influential throughout the

participants' lived experiences with cultural responsiveness. These structures were valuable in

attaining a more detailed understanding of the factors influencing the adoption or rejection of an

innovation or phenomenon.

Empirical Implications

This study aimed to examine the lived experiences of band directors who operated band

programs comprised of minority-majority students while utilizing a culturally responsive

approach to instrumental music education. While a modest number of studies examine the lived

experiences of music educators, the researcher did not source any material related to high school

band and high school band directors. A review of the literature found no studies investigating high school band directors' lived experiences, attitudes, beliefs, and implementation of a culturally responsive approach to music education. This study is significant because it contributes to the body of knowledge associated with closing the research gap related to adopting and implementing evidence-based, arts-integrated practices.

In a systematic review of the literature addressing the practices of music educators, Gay posits that teaching is most effective when ecological factors, such as prior experiences, community settings, cultural backgrounds, and ethnic identities of teachers and students, are included in its implementation.[437] Gay further purports that while addressing culture and other differences can be difficult and complex, it can also be an empowering experience for teachers and their students.[438] The missing component of the literature was an examination of the influential factors that relate to the music educator's decision to adopt or reject this cultural responsiveness as a pedagogy. The findings of this study are significant and advance the body of knowledge in this area. This phenomenological study found that an aspect of trialability must be included to gain confidence in the successful implementation of new, evidence-based approaches.

Phenomenology was selected because its primary purpose is to discover meaningfulness in the first-person experiences, impressions, feelings, and beliefs of an individual's or group's involvement with a phenomenon.[439] All participants, upon completing this study, expressed their belief in the significance and importance of operating in a culturally responsive manner. Almost

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437. Gay, *Culturally Responsive Teaching*…, (2018), 28.

438. Gay, "Teaching to and…," (2013): 61.

439. Creswell and Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry & Research…*, (2018).

all participants (86%) communicated the value and necessity of developing relationships with their students, especially in a minority-majority setting, as a value of operating a program in a culturally responsive manner. All study participants insisted on maintaining high standards as a quality of a culturally responsive approach. Lastly, all participants expressed operating their program in a culturally responsive manner to be beneficial to the students and empowering to themselves.

Trialability (learning by participation) was significant in how the participants of this study perceived the effectiveness of their experience with cultural responsiveness and how it influenced their decision to incorporate this approach further. Their experiences with this approach created opportunities for reflection that validated their experiences, moved them through a process of self-discovery, allowed them to recognize qualities about themselves, and ultimately produced a change in their thinking regarding the benefits, purpose, functionality, and effectiveness of a culturally responsive pedagogy.

Since no previous research investigating high school band directors' experience with utilizing a culturally responsive pedagogy was identified, contrasting, or comparing the findings of this study was problematic. However, the lived experiences examined and discussed in this study support previous research that experts rely on practice-based evidence acquired via experience and consider it more reliable than research-based evidence.[440] Furthermore, trialability constructs practice-based evidence and influences the decision to adopt or reject a new approach. Researchers must consider the significance of trialability when bridging the research-practice gap.

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440. Bryan G Cook and Lysandra Cook, Leveraging Evidence-Based Practice Through Partnerships Based on Practice-Based Evidence, *Learning Disabilities: A Contemporary Journal*, *14*, (2) (2016): 143–157.

This study's findings suggest that Bond, Lind, McKoy, and Gay's stance on the effectiveness of cultural responsiveness as a pedagogy cannot fully be recognized until there is a significant amount of training regarding its implementation. Almost all the participants of this study claim to operate their programs in a culturally responsive manner. However, many of their practices are categorized as being an effective band director more than intentionally utilizing culturally responsive methods. While being an effective teacher and utilizing cultural responsiveness are not mutually exclusive characteristics, there appears to be a necessary dependency of one factor on the other. Most of the directors of this study are not (or did not) operate their programs in alignment with the actual characteristics of a culturally responsive pedagogy. This is especially the case with the directors who were not Black. For example, regarding music selection, none of the directors mentioned implementing pieces that the *students* desired or suggested to play. A commitment to the application of varied music sends the message that a student's music of their culture is relevant, and it also helps educators avoid unintentional marginalization of world and popular music.[441] The staggering fact is that the directors of this study, who were not Black, appear to operate programs whose results are recognized as more superior (honor band, state marching band contest, etc.) while somewhat operating in a culturally responsive manner. Annie expresses the need to be more educated and sensitive on this topic to meet the needs of her students, staff, and community.[442] On the contrary, the Black band directors in this study holistically implement a culturally responsive approach. Charles Chapman went as far as questioning whether he is overly culturally sensitive because of his methodology.[443] However, these programs do not achieve the same level as the non-Black

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441. Bond, "Culturally Responsive Education…," (2017), 160.

442. Singleton (pseudonym), "Follow-Up Interview…," May 2023.

directors' programs. The non-Black directors appear to be utilizing a culturally responsive approach to the best of their knowledge while not risking their understanding of operating a high-functioning program to implement a CRE. Not operating their program in a purely culturally responsive manner may not be the fault of the directors, as they sincerely believe they are indeed utilizing a culturally responsive approach to managing their band program. There is simply insufficient information, training, and/or literature available regarding implementing a culturally responsive pedagogy for high school band programs. They are, therefore, executing pedagogy at their level of comfortability based on what they know will yield high musical achievements for a high school band program. This alone challenges the effectiveness and significance of a culturally responsive pedagogy. While this study does not examine the habits of implementing a CRE, the attitudes and sentiments during the interview portions of this study, suggest that if those directors are achieving rigorous results while operating in a mildly culturally responsive manner, they will continue operating in the same manner while believing they are meeting the requirements and demands of a culturally responsive pedagogy.

Limitations and Delimitations

Limitations

The most significant limitation of this study was the amount of knowledge and information available to the participants regarding how to implement a culturally responsive pedagogy properly. Participants expressed that they researched the topic and found information regarding a CRE but needed more information regarding its implementation in a high school

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443. Chapman (pseudonym), "Follow-Up Interview…," May 2023.

band setting. No standard definition was provided to the participants. Despite this limitation, all participants expressed the value of operating their program in a culturally responsive manner.

Other limitations of this study are inherent to qualitative research. Qualitative research is an approach for exploring and understanding meaning individuals ascribe to a social or human issue.[444] Limited to the examination of the responses shared by the participants, the researcher must rely on the accuracy, trustworthiness, and intentions of the information shared by the participants. This form of research intends not to generalize findings but to seek out meaning and interpret data. [445] Generalizability of findings was neither a focus of this study nor a possibility, considering the number of participants examined.

The sampling pool also limited this study since most of the high-achieving high school band programs in Texas appear to comprise students in more affluent settings, as this study focused on underserved communities. For example, of the fourteen 6A high school finalist bands competing in the 2022 Texas State Marching Band Contest, all originated from areas of affluence.[446] Likewise, none of the ten 6A high school honor bands advancing as finalists for the 2023 TMEA honor band award originated from underserved communities.[447]

Delimitation

The delimitations from this study stem from selecting a hermeneutic phenomenological approach. Phenomenology, a qualitative methodology, was chosen for this study because of its

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444. Creswell et.al., R*esearch Design: Qualitative…*, (2018), 4.

445. Ibid., 202.

446. University Interscholastic League (UIL), *Texas State Marching Band Contest Results*, 2022, https://smbc.uiltexas.org/.

447. Texas Music Educators Association, *Honor Band History,* 2023, https://www.tmea.org/band/honor-band/history/.

primary purpose in searching for rich meaning in the first-person experience, impressions, beliefs, and feelings of an individual's or group's involvement with a phenomenon to produce an in-depth analysis. The researcher maintains extensive knowledge and experience with utilizing a culturally responsive pedagogy and could not wholly disregard or bracket his personal experiences. Hermeneutic phenomenology values the experiences of the researcher with the phenomenon being examined. The researcher maintained an insider's perspective with a CRE. This perspective was beneficial in understanding the participants' experiences with the phenomenon during the interview and data analysis process. The hermeneutic approach allowed the researcher to integrate Rogers' diffusion of innovations theory to serve as the theoretical framework for the study.[448] Lastly, hermeneutic phenomenology provided a systematic data analysis process via the hermeneutic circle, allowing the researcher to examine, revise, and merge themes upon identification. This process was crucial to developing an exhaustive interpretation of the band directors' experiences with the phenomenon.

Recommendations for Future Practice

This study focused on high school band directors and their lived experiences utilizing a culturally responsive approach while operating their band program. Future research may replicate the study and investigate the experience of middle school directors. This may provide a more holistic perspective of the benefits and challenges of implementing a culturally responsive pedagogy.

Of interest to this researcher is the examination of band directors' perception of operating a culturally responsive program and its value in attaining high musical achievement. Research in this area may focus on why directors may or may not elect to utilize a culturally responsive

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448. Rogers, "*Diffusion of Innovations…,*" 2003.

approach, the level of CRE importance as it relates to achieving high results, and the effect from the perspective of the students in programs. Preliminary findings show that these factors may influence how programs comprised of minority-majority students are operated. However, further research could provide an even greater understanding of the effects of a culturally responsive music education.

Future research should also replicate this study in programs comprising majority White programs and affluent band programs. Research in this area may focus on how and if those directors utilize cultural responsiveness. The theory of CRE should be examined for validity with various student populations. Research in this area may also include comparing the usage of CRE in underserved programs to that of affluent programs.

Lastly, future research should also include a mixed methods (exploratory sequential) analysis of the data discovered regarding the usage of a culturally responsive approach to teaching high school band. This study should be replicated and a quantitative phase added to achieve an even more extensive understanding and examination of the phenomenon. Data from the qualitative phase should be utilized to identify the appropriate instruments for the quantitative phase.[449]

Conclusion

The purpose of this hermeneutic phenomenological study was to identify methods, characteristics, and pedagogical systems of high-achieving band programs and band directors who operate high school band programs comprised mostly of minority-majority students via an examination of lived experiences. Rogers's diffusion of innovations theory was the theoretical framework that guided this study. This research strived to explain how, why, and at what rate a

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449. Creswell et.al., R*esearch Design: Qualitative…*, (2018), 16.

concentrated community adopted or rejected a phenomenon. This adoption or rejection process was examined through a five-stage decision-innovation sequence and an inventory of the five core attributes of a successful innovation. The findings of this study affirmed the importance of these two systems.

The five-stage decision-making-innovation sequence consists of knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation, and confirmation. The knowledge, persuasion, and decision stages were predetermined for the participants because the requirement to participate in this study included operating as a band director servicing a minority-majority student population. The five core attributes of a successful innovation include relative advantage, complexity, compatibility, trialability, and observability. The fourth stage of the innovation-decision process, *implementation,* is correlated with *trialability*, the fourth core attribute of a successful innovation. Likewise, *confirmation*, the fifth stage, is also associated with *observability*, the fifth core attribute. The results of this study revealed that confirmation was often achieved through meaningful positive outcomes observed.

The value of trialability and the opportunity for the directors to be engaged in culturally responsive practices was significant in the decision to implement the pedagogy further. Trialability was also critical for each director when determining how they perceived their effectiveness with the phenomenon. Therefore, trialability should be considered the most influential factor in promoting the successful adoption of a new intervention or approach. Based on Rogers' five core attributes of a successful innovation and the five-stage decision-innovation process, the participants' lived experiences with a culturally responsive approach to music education were meaningful and influential toward the future implementation of the pedagogy.

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Appendix A

A Simple Method to Assess and Report Thematic Saturation in Qualitative Research

Guest et al. illustrates the seven-step process using a hypothetical dataset in their research article, *A Simple Method to Assess and Report Thematic Saturation in Qualitative Research*.

Step 1 – Find the number of unique themes for base size by summing the unique themes identified in the first four interviews. Using the hypothetical dataset, 37 unique themes were identified in the first four interviews.

Interview number	1	2	3	4
New themes per interview	17	8	5	7
# Base themes				37

https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0232076.t002

Step 2 – Find the number of unique themes for the first run. In this example, a run length of two would include data for the subsequent two interviews after base set (interviews five and six). Four new themes were identified in interview five and three in interview six, making the number of new themes seven in this first run.

Interview number	5	6
New themes per interview	4	3
New themes in run		7

https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0232076.t003

Step 3 – Calculate the saturation ratio by dividing the number of new themes (seven) by the number of unique themes in the base set (thirty-seven), yielding a quotient of 19% new information. This is not below the $\leq 5\%$ threshold; analysis continues.

Appendix A (Continued)

# New themes/run	=	7	=	19%
# Base themes		37		

https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0232076.t004

Step 4 – Find the number of new unique themes for the next run (interviews six and seven), generating a sum of four new themes.

Interview number	6	7
New themes per interview	3	1
New themes in run		4

https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0232076.t005

Step 5 – Update the saturation ratio by dividing the number of new themes in the last run (four) by the number of themes in the base set (thirty-seven), yielding a quotient of 11%. This is not below the ≤ 5% threshold; therefore, analysis continues.

# New themes/run	=	4	=	11%
# Base themes		37		

https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0232076.t006

Step 6 – Find the number of new unique themes for the next run (interviews eight and nine), generating a sum of one new theme.

Interview number	7	8
New themes per interview	1	0
New themes in run		1

https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0232076.t007

Appendix A (Continued)

Step 7 – Update the saturation ratio by dividing the number of themes in the last run (one) by the number of themes in the base set (thirty -seven), yielding a quotient of 3%. This is below the ≤ 5% threshold of new information indicating a point of saturation. Therefore, analysis stops after the eighth interview.

# New themes/run			1		3%
# Base themes	=		37	=	

https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0232076.t008

The saturation assessment in this example would be reported by writing: using a base size of four, a ≤ 5% new information threshold was reached at 6^{+2} interviews.

Appendix B

Journal Prompts

1. Today I found myself thinking about how cultural responsiveness in my situation can…

2. One of the aspects that I have noticed about developing relationships is…

3. Some unique aspects about maintaining high standards in my situation is…

4. As it relates to cultural responsiveness, I have noticed that I struggle with…

Appendix C

Recruitment Script

Hello [Potential Participant],

As a graduate student in the School of Music at Liberty University, I am conducting research to better understand the factors that influence the high musical achievement in underserved high school band programs to incorporate findings in all high school band programs.

The purpose of my research is to examine your experiences with a high school band program you have either taught or are currently teaching.

If you are interested in participating, I would like to invite you to join my study.

To participate, you must (1) be a high school band director or a retired band director, (2) have taught in an underserved program, (3) be present for the initial interview, (4) be present for a follow-up interview. Interviews will be held via the Zoom videoconferencing platform.

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following things:

1. Participate in a pre-interview questionnaire to gain an understanding of your background and your thoughts and level of familiarity with culturally responsive pedagogy.
2. Participate in an audio-recorded, interview (approximately 30-45 minutes) to gain an understanding of your fieldwork experience as a high school band director and the methods utilized to attain high achievement in your program.
3. Keep and submit for our review a written journal of your personal experiences with teaching in an underserved setting. Four written prompts will be given to you to assist in this.
4. You may be randomly selected to participate in a focus group to discuss themes that are identified in the analysis of the interview and journal data. The focus group will last approximately 60 to 75 minutes.

Your name and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but the information will remain confidential.

Would you like to participate? [Yes] Great, can we set up a time for an interview? [No] I understand. Thank you for your time. [Conclude the conversation.]

Here is a consent document for you to read. The consent document contains additional information about my research. If you choose to participate, you will need to sign the consent document and return it to me within 7 days.

Thank you for your time. Do you have any questions?

Appendix D

Research Participant Consent Form

Title of the Project: High Achievement in Underserved High School Band Programs: A Qualitative Study.
Principal Investigator: Delton Brown, Doctoral Candidate, Liberty University; Director of Bands, DeSoto High School.

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be a high school head band director or retired high school band director in the state of Texas, have at least 5 years of experience teaching students in an urban/inner-city band program, and have experience teaching students in a minority-majority setting. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research project.

What is the study about and why is it being done?

The purpose of this hermeneutic phenomenological study is to identify methods, characteristics, and pedagogical systems of high-achieving band programs and band directors who operate high school band programs comprised mostly of minority-majority students.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following things:

1. Participate in a questionnaire (approximately 15 minutes) to gain an understanding of your thoughts and assumptions about cultural responsiveness; the value of research in music education pedagogies; and personal opinions about new, research-based practices and their connection to real-world practice in music education.

2. Participate in an audio-recorded interview via Zoom (approximately 30-45 minutes) to gain an understanding of methods you utilize to inspire students to achieve rigorous standards, attitudes, and thoughts regarding student-teacher relationships; attitudes and thoughts regarding culturally responsive pedagogy in music education.

3. Participate in an audio-recorded follow-up interview via Zoom (approximately 30-45 minutes) to gain an understanding of what changes in attitudes or assumptions you might have gained about your students' abilities utilizing a new approach; any changes in your attitude about your role in music education in the future; and any special challenges you might have managed (and how you managed them) during your fieldwork experience.

Appendix D (continued)

4. Verify the accuracy and intent of your comments as interpreted by the researcher's written depiction of your verbal responses once delivered to you via email (approximately 30-45 minutes).

5. Keep a written journal (prompts provided via email, approximately 30-45 minutes) of your personal experiences with a heightened awareness of cultural responsiveness as a pedagogy. Participants will complete the written journal one time over the course of the study and return via email.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study.

Benefits to society include practical significance for researchers, higher education professors and instructors, professional development providers for music educators, continuing education trainers for music education, and band directors. For researchers, this study may reveal more effective ways to disseminate research findings to make them more accessible and respectful for band directors. For providers of continuing education and professional development, this study may reveal better methods of delivering research findings that encourage collaboration between band directors and related music educators. It may also initiate more creative approaches for inspiring learning experiences for band directors. This may motivate them to explore the advantages of newly discovered evidence-based practices, demonstrate the ease with which they can be implemented, and extrapolate potential positive outcomes for their students.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Published reports will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records. Data collected from you may be shared for use in future research studies or with other researchers. If data collected from you is shared, any information that could identify you, if applicable, will be removed before the data is shared.

- Participant responses will be kept confidential through the use of pseudonyms.
- Interviews will be conducted in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.
- All personal interviews and diary/journal entries will be recorded and stored on a password-protected computer. All interviews will be transcribed, and written documents will be stored on a password-protected computer. Access will be limited to the

Appendix D (continued)

researcher. All interview recordings and written documents will be retained for three years upon completion of the study and then deleted.

How will you be compensated for being part of the study?

Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please inform the researcher that you wish to discontinue your participation by contacting him at the email address and/or phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, personal data collected from you will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study.

Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

The researcher conducting this study is Delton Brown. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact him at +1-817-683-1875 or dmbrown42@liberty.edu. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Dr. Nathan Street, at nstreet4@liberty.edu.

Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu.

Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.

Your Consent

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

Appendix D (continued)

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

☐   The researcher has my permission to audio record me as part of my participation in this study.

_____

Printed Subject Name

_____

Signature & Date

Appendix E

Interview Questions

1. Based on your experience with students in an underserved high school band program, how do a student's background and cultural experiences outside of the classroom influence your instruction?

2. Based on your experience with students in an underserved high school band program, how do your students' background and cultural experiences affect the standards you a) set, b) maintain, and c) uphold for the program?

3. Based on your experience with students in an underserved high school band program how do your students' backgrounds and cultural experiences affect the way you form

4. Now that you have been a high school band director for a while, you have developed a sense of your values as a music educator. How does working with students in an underserved area align (or not) with those values?

5. What are your thoughts on success and attaining success in a high school band program in an underserved area?

6. How have you created an environment in your band program that considers your student's background and culture?

7. How have the cultural characteristics of your students made it easier or more difficult to teach music in your program?

8. What challenges do you have in relating to the cultural backgrounds of students in your program?

9. What challenges do you experience with motivating students to learn in your band program?

10. How has the cultural background of your students affected music selection in concert and marching band for your program.?

11. How has the cultural background of your students affected program traditions or program operations? (i.e., rehearsal schedules)

12. Describe any positive or negative outcomes you experienced that you have experienced with teaching music to students to students in your program.

13. What have you learned about yourself through teaching students who maintain different backgrounds than you that will make you a better educator?

Appendix F

Follow-up Interview Questions

1. How has your view regarding culturally responsive pedagogy changed since our last conversation?

2. Describe your initial concerns or apprehensions regarding a culturally responsive pedagogy.

3. Describe your feelings and your perception of the role you play.

4. Describe if there were occasions when you felt uneasy or inadequate since our last interaction about your ability to teach students that were not of the same background and/or ethnicity as you.

5. Describe one big idea that you discovered through this experience.

6. Describe any events that surprised you or were unexpected, resulting from your attempt to utilize cultural responsiveness in the classroom.

7. Describe any positive experiences that you encountered as a result of heightened awareness of culturally responsive pedagogy.

8. Describe any characteristics about yourself that you may have learned while operating with a mindset of being culturally responsive in the classroom.

Appendix G

Journal Transcripts

Henry A. Callis

1. Today, I found myself thinking about how cultural responsiveness in my situation can…

   Help improve student participation and achievement as well as change the life direction

   of my students.   In our classroom situation, students are often subject to outside stimulus

   that are derived from the home environment and family limitations such as single-parent

   work schedules and financial limitations.

2. One of the aspects that I have noticed about developing relationships is…

   Students of low socio-economic households are usually slow to trust but become very

   loyal once trust is established. To get a strong level of commitment from a student you

   must FIRST establish trust.

3. Some unique aspects of maintaining high standards in my situation are…

   Being flexible yet maintaining a high standard of expectation with regard to: individual

   achievement, student attendance and participation, work ethic and commitment.

4. Regarding cultural responsiveness, I have noticed that I struggle with…

   Appearance (Dress) of general population students and sometimes my students. As a

   result of being shot by a man wearing a Huddie, I struggle with fear from time to time

   when I see a student or students standing together wearing a Huddie with the top on, I

   realize this is probably related to PTSD and work to overcome it each day that I am on a

   campus.

Charles H. Chapman

1. Today, I found myself thinking about how cultural responsiveness in my situation can effectively change the culture and outlook on my program here in ████████████████ ████.

2. One of the aspects that I have noticed about developing relationships is that the more positive relationships you build with your students, the harder they seem to work for you and your program.

3. Some unique aspects of maintaining high standards in my situation are that even though we are underfunded compared to our neighboring schools, there's still and expectation of excellence that must be achieved.

4. Regarding cultural responsiveness, I have noticed that I struggle with often over programing cultural musical selections to appease the massing in our program.

Eugene K. Jones

1. Today, I found myself thinking about how cultural responsiveness in my situation can…effect the outcome of student success in a positive or negative manner, all based on how I engage with them as individuals.

2. One of the aspects that I have noticed about developing relationships is…dropping all pre-conceived ideas about a person leads to learning about who they really are.

3. Some unique aspects of maintaining high standards in my situation are…lower socio-economic situations of students lead to fewer opportunities for their exposure to and awareness of what's "out there" and possibilities for them to achieve. It becomes more and more important for me to fill in as many missing gaps as possible so that they can see what they are capable of achieving.

4. Regarding cultural responsiveness, I have noticed that I struggle with…figuring out how to engage females from male dominated cultures in such a way that leads to their equal success rate as compared to all other students.

Nathaniel A. Murray

1. Today, I found myself thinking about how cultural responsiveness in my situation can make all the difference in the world. Is more of my class going to need educational information or educational inspiration. We have to look at the culture and determine where the student is educational. Maybe they are just trying to exist and school seems like a waste of time. As educators we have to first explain why education is important. No student will listen unless they understand the "WHY". They need to know the "NEED" and they have to know you "CARE".   H.A. VANDERCOOK said, "No man or women can be rightly taught unless he or she is aware of a need in their life and in their work".

2. One of the aspects that I have noticed about developing relationships is personal one on one time is key to quickly developing a relationship with a student.

3. Some unique aspects of maintaining high standards in my situation are duplicatable leadership skills taught to student leaders. Then allow the leaders to become mentors in your program.

4. Regarding cultural responsiveness, I have noticed that I struggle with giving the students more responsibility than the students have much greater ownership of the program.

Robert H. Ogle

1. Today, I found myself thinking about how cultural responsiveness in my situation can…

Affect the overall social and learning environment of students and adults. And, how it can impact the success of the program through individual and group assessments.

2. One of the aspects that I have noticed about developing relationships is…

The investment and continuing reinvestment of the students and adults into the forward progress of the band program.

3. Some unique aspects of maintaining high standards in my situation are…

The constant reminders that who you are and become is directly related to how much work you put into your lessons and assignments.

4. Regarding cultural responsiveness, I have noticed that I struggle with…

Making sure to observe and collect information through passive and active methods to develop a more informed relationship with the adults and students of the program.

Vertner W. Tandy

1. Today, I found myself thinking about how cultural responsiveness in my situation can…

Cultural responsiveness in my situation can transform the lives of my students. Students, when intrinsically motivated can display a form of resilience, not well understood by research. Culturally responsive pedagogy can bridge the gap between students like mine, and the height of creative expression. If I can relate their experiences to the way they view the world, I can unlock more of their potential and help them find the most meaning in their experience.

2. One of the aspects that I have noticed about developing relationships is….

One of the aspects that I have noticed about developing relationships is that there is no one right way to do it. Even within cultural groups, you can find other factors of diversity as well as life experiences that distinguish one student from another. I think about some

of the pairs of siblings that I have in my band program. Even though two students come
from the same household, they still individually have things that excite them or things
that will cause them to shut down. Part of culturally responsive pedagogy is also a degree
of individualization. It would be a mistake to assume that one could automatically group
students based on what we think we know of a student's cultural identity.

3. Some unique aspects of maintaining high standards in my situation are…

   The first unique aspect of maintaining high standards in my situation are that I have to
   explain the standard before I can set it. Unfortunately, the majority of my students come
   to my classroom initially as outsiders. They have very little exposure to the highest forms
   of our art or little grasp of the work that it takes to achieve at a high level. Essentially, I
   have to teach them the game before they can play it. Secondly, the high standards that I
   set have to be constantly reinforced because of several community factors. Some
   programs have the luxury of functioning in isolation without much interference from the
   outside world. In my situation, the students' lives outside of the classroom is something I
   always have to take into account as I communicate the program standards. However, I
   still insist on setting high standards because I feel it would be a disservice to the students
   if I do not do the work to expose them to highest levels of performance.

4. Regarding cultural responsiveness, I have noticed that I struggle with…

   I have noticed that I struggle with colleagues and situations that do not consider the
   importance of cultural responsiveness. I am constantly in situations in which I have to
   advocate for even the opportunity for culturally responsive pedagogy to exist. In our
   profession, some of the systems that have existed for decades do not leave much
   opportunity for culturally responsive pedagogy, although I do believe we are beginning to

make strides in some ways. For example, the Sightreading portion of the UIL Concert and Sightreading contest now allows teachers to interact with their students in a manner more consistent with their home classroom environment as opposed to the previous situation which forced teachers to limit their instructional approach in ways that did not always set students up for success. In other words, teachers were previously limited in ways they could relate to their students.

Annie C. Singleton

1. Today, I found myself thinking about how cultural responsiveness in my situation can…

   Be more of a part of my teaching approach. I want to meet the needs of my students, and I've lately found myself questioning my approach. Am I really doing right by them? I need more education and training.

2. One of the aspects that I have noticed about developing relationships is…

   An integral part of success and building trust with your students. Students deserve to feel seen and valued and it's very hard to connect with students when you don't put forth the effort to build and establish relationships.

3. Some unique aspects of maintaining high standards in my situation are…

   Over 60% of my students are economically disadvantage, and in an effort to give students the same opportunities as other districts, my boosters and administrators will find ways to provide the goods and services necessary to be successful. Which seems like a good idea in theory, but I have found that students are less motivated to achieve because they have not personally financially invested in the process. Just a thought???

4. Regarding cultural responsiveness, I have noticed that I struggle with…

Doing right by my students as a whole. I want to give my students what they need to be successful adults after they graduate, and while they are in my program. Since UIL doesn't take any of this information into account when giving ratings, I don't know how to effectively meet all the needs at the same time.

Appendix H

Interview Transcripts

Henry A. Callis

DB
Based on your experience with students in an underserved high school band program, how do a student's background and cultural experiences outside of the classroom influence your instruction?

HAC
The main way that it influences my it doesn't influence by instruction. It influences how I handle them on a personal basis. For example, they might need a lot more deference, with regards to after school rehearsal times, rides, a lot of times they have transportation issues, so you have to be willing to be flexible with that. I help them arrange rides, arrange rides for them, take them yourself. And also, a lot of times, they have issues regarding I can't come in the morning because my mom has to leave at 4am. And it's a single parent mom, and she is the only breadwinner of the family. And so, you have to make be willing to make changes in your schedule to accommodate their needs.

DB
Based on your experience with students in underserved high school band programs, how does your student's background and cultural experiences affect the standards you set, maintain, and uphold for the program regarding the standards?

HAC
Well, in the district that I taught in, we were very fortunate that we had a very good budget and got a lot of support from the district. And so that was helpful. The main difference that I see because I do work in high schools that are affluent and then underserved as well. And the main difference is that they don't have the private study and additional benefits outside of the classroom that kids in more affluent areas have. So we just accommodated for that in my program by almost everything we fundraised. Almost everything in our budget was devoted to giving the kids lessons if they wanted and needed them and were willing to practice. The vast majority of our budget, probably 80% of it was devoted to private study and master classes and things like that.

DB
So that didn't did that, per se affect how the standards that you set?

HAC
Not at all? It did not I had a high standard, and we were going to do what was necessary to maintain a high standard.

DB

Okay, based on your experience with students in an underserved high school band program, how does your students background and cultural experiences affect the way you form relationships?

HAC
It's very interesting. Um, because again, I see kids in both areas, and with students and underserved communities and schools, relationship is most important. And so, you have to build relationship with the kid first, then they will respect you, then they will do what you ask them to do. But there they tend to wait and not just do what you say. They're kind of checking you out, so to speak, because again, relationship is the most important thing to them.

DB
Now that you have been a high school band director for a while, you have developed a sense of your values as a music educator. How does working with students in an underserved areas align or not with those values?

HAC
It aligns perfectly with my values. I will share from a personal experience. I was teaching at ███████ high school as an assistant and every year I take students to the ██████ Symphony. I think it's important that they see a live orchestra. And we teach them to support the arts, post high school education regardless of whether they follow through with music or not. And so, I take students to the symphony every year, and I was taking students to the symphony and we were sitting there and we had just come in from intermission. And I'm sitting there and I have 10 or 12 students there with me that are all of color, Hispanic and African American. And I just happened to be watching as people were coming in and I asked myself this question: where are all the black and brown people? And what I realized, or what it seemed to me is that those students don't have the opportunity to experience those things as young kids. So, they have no, they have no understanding of that. So, there's no interest in it. And so, our job as educators, regardless of the skids of the skin color of the kids, regardless of the socio-economic background of the kids, our job is to turn them on to music, turn them on to music, and they will go and attend those things. And that's, and I've seen that time and time and time again. Again, one more quick anecdote. About four years ago, it was four years ago, this spring, I took kids to hear the Mahler Second Symphony at the ██████ Symphony. And it was one of the most amazing performances live I've ever heard. It was truly amazing. And I had this young man, his name was ██████████, that had gone with us. And after it was over, he sat there in the chair and just kind of stared into space for a second. And he looked up at me and his eyes were a little bit teared, he says, I want to do this for a living. And he's now going to head he was a senior that was in the fall of his senior year. And that's what he made the decision. And he's now a senior and CO principal horn in the ████████████ Wind Ensemble. He's going to be a master band director when he graduates. But we just give them those experiences.

DB
So, what are your thoughts on success and attaining success in a high school program with in an underserved area

HAC

It's all about the person standing in front of them. If the person standing in front of them has knowledge of music, has an ability to communicate and connect with the kids, they're going to be successful. If the person is not a good musician, they don't understand music, they don't know how to connect to kids, they're not going to be as successful and the same is true. I'll be quite honest with you. It's the same in any classroom situation, any music classroom, it's all about the person standing in front of them.

DB
How have you created an environment in your band program when you are a director that considers your students background and culture?

HAC
Um, okay. It's really interesting. Um, when we first opened ▮▮▮▮▮ high school, we were predominantly African American. And so, we tried to do marching shows that catered to that cultural group. For example, our first marching show that we did competitively was called ▮▮▮▮▮ and we did music from Motown. The next show, we did music from ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮. The next show, we did muse, we did sweet music and called a ▮▮▮▮▮▮, because of the historic significance of ▮▮▮▮▮. And after about the fourth show, literally, some of the leaders in my band program who were African American came to be here, they said, Mr. ▮▮▮▮, why do we always have to do a show about black people. That is a direct quote. And all of a sudden, the light went on ding, ding, ding, ding, ding, ding, ding, ding, ding. They just want to be kids. They don't want to be looked at for their skin color. They just want to be kids. And I was like, there you go. You just treat them like kids. They're my kids. They were my kids. And I was gonna give them every opportunity to be successful and work hard for their success. I hope that answers your question.

DB
How have the cultural characteristics of your students made it easier or more difficult to teach music in your program?

HAC
I don't think I would ever teach in another setting. I love the kids. Okay. Again, I spoke earlier about how relationship is most important. Establishing relationship first with my kids, okay. Once that is done, there is an openness and a trust that I never experienced it teaching in wealthier suburban school districts. I love it. I would not want to teach in another setting.

DB
What challenges do you have in relating to the cultural backgrounds of your students in your program?

HAC
I'm, again, I'm white. So, I was raised differently. And I'll never forget, I was going with one of my students who had graduated. And we were going to see the ▮▮▮▮▮ Symphony and we were going to, I was going to J walk across the street, and just kind of zigzag across that zigzag bit diagonally across the street. And he says, I'm not about to cross there with you. He says, Dude, I said, why? Let's go. He says, Dude, I'm black. I said, so. And I didn't get it. There are things that

I don't understand. So, I don't I try to understand. This is a hard question to answer. I hope I'm doing a good job. As a white man, I can't always identify with a Hispanic child whose parents came here, potentially illegally. And they were born here and their parents aren't citizens and have work issues and providing issues because I can't relate to that, because I've never experienced that. Now, have I experienced socio economic challenges? Yes, I grew up in a very poor family. But I had a mom and a dad. I had them there every day. I had them at every concert. I had them at every football game. So, it's really hard for me, to be honest with you, it's hard for me to understand where they're coming from, but I tried to be prepared to accept it. And just take them where they are and take it from there. So, I hope that answered the question. What challenges do you did you experience with motivating students to learn in your band program? The parents. The parents don't understand the importance in most cases, in most cases. The parents did not understand the importance of music education as part of the child's life. They're just trying to keep the lights on. They viewed having to come to their child's concert as an imposition, rather than I get to go see my child grow up and help my child advance in life. And I'll never forget, I had a parent of a crazy me this this, it was a crazy situation. She literally kicked the child out of the house. Brought his clothes up to the band hall, threw them on the ground outside the band hall and says, you are no longer living in my house. I had to call the sheriff's department and I had to call CPS and arrange a different place for him to live for the rest of his senior year. And he ended up graduating and he went to college for a year and now he's doing other things. But we made it through high school. He ended up being an All-State tuba player. But she literally kicked him out of the house. He's not coming back. And that kind of goes back to what you asked before. I can't understand that. Because I had parents that were at everything. Even up until a year before my mom died. She was still attending my concerts at ██████ High School. My father too. So that's kind of foreign for me. And it's hard for me to understand that.

DB
How has the cultural background of your students affected music selection in concert and marching band for your program? You kind of touched on that already.

HAC
Yeah, I touched on that a little bit. Let me say this. I think it's important that we have music of various cultural identities. Let me say it like that. For example, I conduct the ████ ISD alumni band and we're going to be performing at ████ this summer. And we're gonna premiere a piece that we're having arranged by ████████████. A lot of people don't know his music. And it's fabulous music and we're trying to get some of his stuff on the UIL list. And I think it's important that we, we don't specifically cater to the kid, the color of the kids in our program and our music selection. But we expose them to all kinds of music. There's nothing wrong with kids of color playing something if they're African American playing something that is Hispanic pasa doble March or something like that. We teach them about music, it's all music. We just teach the music.

DB
How has the cultural background of your students affected program traditions or program operations, like rehearsals and schedules and different traditions?

HAC

I spoke about that. Um, we tried to think that I would need to think on that for just a second here. I spoke about that already to some degree. We worked around their sectionals their after-school rehearsals and things like that.

DB

Are there any traditions that you all implemented because of the cultural background of your students that are in place?

HAC

No. And again, I think that goes to what I said, when the kid said, why do we have to always do shows about black people? They just want to be kids and be treated as kids

DB

Describe any positive or negative outcomes you experienced that you have experience with teaching music to students? In your program? You've already done that. You've already answered, yeah. Okay, this is the final question. What have you learned about yourself through teaching students who maintain different backgrounds than you that that will make you a better educator?

HAC

This is really hard, and embarrassing to share. But I'm going to share something very personal that many of my kids know. But before I say this, would you repeat the question one more time, I want to make sure I speak exactly to your question.

DB

What have you learned about yourself through teaching students who maintain different backgrounds in you that that will make you a better educator or that has made you a better educator?

HAC

Okay, I want to make sure I said it correctly, we are not always a product of our background. We choose to be what we want to be. And I would say that as a white person, because my great-great grandfather was a grand dragon in the KKK. And I grew up listening to members of my family, not all and not my immediate parents at all our grandparents, but members of my family, using derogatory words to people of other races. And I remember thinking, why are they so mean? Why do they speak like that to people? Why do they speak about and I remember thinking that as a young kid. And what I've come to realize, through my work at ▓▓▓▓▓, and ▓▓▓▓▓ High School is kids are kids. When I'm in front of my kids, or when I was in front of my kids, I didn't look at them and go look at my black and brown kids. I looked at him and said, Look at my kids. I never thought about their skin color, until somebody asked me. And I'll never forget, somebody says what you're doing with those kids is amazing. And I looked at him and I said, what do you mean, those kids? I said, all kids are the same. We have to choose to view them the same and expect the same from them, with regards to our expectations and the standard we hold them to. The standard doesn't change because of their skin color. And that's one of my frustrations about I'm about to get on my soapbox here. But one of my frustrations about districts where we have

practice testing and practice testing and over and over and over and we don't train them to be accountable for themselves. If we hold them to a standard and say this is the standard, you have to learn to do it. Not we do it for you. We prepare them for life. And I think so many times, particularly in underserved community schools, they don't teach the kids personal accountability for themself. I hope that made sense.

Charles H. Chapman

DB
Based on your experience with students in an underserved high school band program, how does a student's background and cultural experiences outside of the classroom influence your instruction?

CHC
In being that I've taught in several different economic, socio economic areas where I am now, I really have to like rethink all my lessons to be like, Okay, this is going to hit home with certain students, this is going to, you know, I just can't say, Well, the answer is blank, blankety blank, I have to go more into detail and give them examples, to where their relief to them and what's going on probably in their home or their background.

DB
Based on your experience, in the same setting, how do your students background and cultural experiences affect the standards, you set, maintain, and uphold for the program?

CHC
No, it doesn't affect my standards, my standards is always going to be my standard, my standard is just gonna be the standard of what we think is best in music, education. Regardless of their background, it's more of me and my staff. What can we do to make sure we meet the standard and meet the kids halfway? Regardless of what their socio-economic background is, and their cultural background. We must still meet that standard of music. Whether it be extra lessons, free lessons, whatever we can do to try to meet that standard. We don't go back and say, well, just because you come from this, we can't give you that.

DB
Based on your experience with students in an underserved high school band program, how does your student's background and cultural experiences affect the way you form relationships?

CHC
It helps it because we, have something in common. I come from that background. So, I know what could be possibly going on at home. I know from dealing with a lot of single parents, from dealing with sometimes, you know, some of our kids come to school, and they're worried about what they're going to eat later on. And not what's being presented to them in your classroom. I and my staff, we have to think about those things. You can tell when you've been teaching long enough, we have 100-minute classes, when the kids are burnt out. And you can often tell, so we have to kind of, you know, determine can we go from point A to point B, without burning these kids out? You know, knowing that background, you know, it makes us rethink a lot of our

lessons, you know. How can I get a point? How can I get this point across to this kid, when I know something that's not going right at home? How can I start using these real-world examples to help that kid, learn the music and overcome what's possibly going on at home without letting everybody know his business?

DB
Now that you have been a high school band director for a while, you have developed a sense of your values as a music educator, how does working with students in an underserved area align or not with those values?

CHC
It does, it gives you the challenge. I've worked in a system to where I had countless contracted services, and the kids look different than me. And I got certain results. Now that I'm in the system, to where our contracted services is decent and it's not the bottom of the barrel, but it's still not the neighboring schools that we were often having to compete against. On that several that same level as in six A, it forms a challenge to say, hey, we're going to try to get those same type of results with less. And I'm going to push you more because ideally, sometimes people judge us by just the look of us and not what we sound like. Especially switching over to the region that we're in, because no one looks like us. So, we come in and the kids say, man everybody keeps looking at us. You know, I say it's okay. We're going to perform music. That's the key. We're going to perform music so man, I think I'm pushing them even more because it's I have a chip on my shoulder. Because we're going to prove to them that hey, we can do it. Yes, we don't have the $80,000 in contracted services like the school over here. We have $7000. So, I'm gonna do the best that I can do with that $7,000 to stretch it. Rather it be marching checks in the fall, or clinicians in the spring or masterclasses. I'll do my best to, to help out our kids in their background.

DB
What are your thoughts on success and attaining success in high school band programming and underserved area?

CHC
To me, it's more rewarding. It is more rewarding because when you go to these assessments, they're only seeing a snapshot of what you do on a daily basis, they take 15 minutes. So, I don't base my success on the subjective judging of a 15-minute performance. I look at the scholarship dollars, at the end of the year. I look at the colleagues from other universities and other band directors who are reaching out saying, hey, what can we do to help your program? To me that goes a lot more than a 15-minute assessment. So, it makes us as directors work a little harder for our students. Because we take a personal dive into their lives, whether it be their backgrounds, and we often looking past the high school nature and still, checking on those same students, because we formed that bond, because we have that bond, because we're so much alike.

DB
Have you created an environment in your band program that considers your students background and culture?

CHC

Yes, yes. We often have. And it was funny, because last week, a lot of schools had black history programs. And we were asked to play but what they wanted us to play, I'd say, well, that's not too much black history. And we're not gonna perform, I don't want black history is just not the marching band. I'm just gonna say that. So, we want to perform A but you don't want A. You won't B. No, we're not going to do that, so we're not going to perform. So, I'm all about the culture. But I'm all about understanding the needs of our students. The students don't need to see a boogie woogie band for Black History Month. It's just my opinion. Because that's not my history. That's not my history. You know, we had something else planned. My kids culturally understand that. I understand their backgrounds. You know how it is as a band director. They think we can just hop in and start a parade just like that. And that's not that's not what it's all about. And I definitely understand the cultural needs of our kids. But at the same time, to continue to educate them the right way, we must stick to our guns and say, hey, we're working on this right now. We're working on this; we could continue that path to work on this. Regardless of our cultural background. This is just what it is. We're not we're not going backwards. This is what we're doing. And we moving forward. I got some slack from it but oh, well.

DB

How has the cultural characteristics of your students made it easier or more difficult for you to teach music in your program?

CHC

At first, it was seven years ago, it was difficult, because we had kind of like started to change. There was a lot of pull back. The kids were used to kind of do it one way. We replaced the staff that was culturally different than the students at the school. So now we're pretty much on the same page. So back then, it was more of a tug of war type of thing. Now our students, because we've had some type of success, our students understand that in this area, we have to do this to go to B, to go to C to go to D, and there's no push back going through those different phases. They know that there's a time to have fun. There's a time for Boogie Woogie. There's a time to be serious and worried about our tone and our control. There's a time where we need to be working on our literature. There's a time to where we need to be studying who is the best instrumentalist on your particular instrument. Who is the best instrumentalist that is Hispanic on your particular instrument? Who's the best instrumentalist that is African American that's on your instrument? Who's the best instrumentalist that is Caucasian, that is on your instrument? These are cultural things that we make sure we study with our kids. Although we have a melting pot of kids, most of them look like me.

DB

What challenges do you have in relating to the cultural backgrounds of your students in your program?

CHC

No challenge. No challenge.

DB

How has the cultural background of your students affected music selection in concert and marching band for your program?

CHC

Oh, going back to what I said about the different instrumentalists for those instruments. Oftentimes, the kids I give them the list for the wind symphony and say, hey, we're going to play fours and fives. I give them the UIL list. And we kind of go about looking at that list together. Now it was a big question this year because it came up and they said Mr. ████, we don't have a lot of African Americans on our UIL PML for fours and fives. I say you are absolutely correct. And they said, well, what can we do about that? And I said, well, we might need to, start writing to committee and saying, hey, why can't we get more than just Willie Owens on the PML? I've reached out to Ayateez Shabazz who's on several lists in Mississippi, Louisiana, but he's not he's not on the Texas list. You do have a couple of things in Quincy Hilliard but it's the grade one is the grade two. Why are we just devoting everything to standards? To Ticheli? Yes, we do have Omar Thomas. But I don't know if my kids are at the level to where they can tackle Omar Thomas. And then you can only play one piece from that one composer. So, it's a challenge because they want to play something by someone that looks like them. We have future composers in our band, and they wonder saying, well, I want to be able to learn from some of these people. What are they doing different than Robert Sheldon? What are they doing different from Michael Story? This year, it was a challenge because for the first time in my career, those questions were asked to me and I couldn't really give an answer.

DB

How has the cultural background of your students affected program traditions, or program operations, like rehearsal schedules, or sectionals. How has their background affected that those type of program traditions.

CHC

It's very hard to maintain, especially in the spring time. Fall time is easy, because everybody knows, hey, with the marching band, it's after school, everything is done after school. We don't practice any marching band things during the school day. Even during the class time. We may spend the last 10 minutes of that 90 block to go through the show music. So, there's, no such thing as getting a job in the fall. And we kind of had to cut a deal with the parents because a lot of our kids are helping out at home with bills. So, in the spring time, my group rehearses in the morning. Before school. Because they have to get jobs. They got to help pay the electric bill. So that economic, that's a big step for them. So, we can't have practice every day and I'm talking about the wind symphony. Oftentimes, Mr. ████ is over the second group and his kids are just gonna miss practice because he has to have it after school. And they're just gonna miss because they have to work. We can't kick them out of band because there's some some top tier and we understand what's going on going on at home. They have to help pay either the car insurance or something. Because they're helping out at home. They don't have the privilege to have a new Jeep Wrangler and stuff like that.

DB

Describe any positive or negative outcomes you experienced, that you have experienced with teaching music to students in your program. Any positive or negative outcomes that you experience?

CHC
Really no negative. Positive outcomes will always be to see them in those University bands that they worked so hard to get in. Whether it be University of Texas, University of Texas at Arlington, Texas Southern, Prairie View, or Grambling. Just seeing them go to that dream school. A lot of our kids are first generation college students. That little scholarship or maybe be an out of state band waiver or a partial scholarship is the only reason that they're able to further their education. The ████████████ is good, but a lot of kids just want to get away for a minute. And then come back and serve the community like they should.

DB
What have you learned about yourself through teaching students who maintain either different cultural backgrounds and you or students that are in your situation that will make you a better educator?

CHC
Hmm. Think on that one. Because you know when you've been doing it so long, you pick up different stuff, but you don't know why you're picking up different stuff. I've learned over the last five years; I've gained more patience. Coming from the state of Louisiana, it was easier to make that change that transition here from the last school that I taught at. The school before that, ████████████████████ school. The kids' cars were better than mine. If I sent out a message to the parents and say, hey, we want to fundraise for this and... Well, you know, I really don't want to fundraise. Can I just go ahead and write you a check for $200 and that will be his portion? So that's where I came from. But it didn't feel as rewarding when we did certain things. It was just like, well that's what he's supposed to do. I could easily and this is when, when Dr. ████, Dr. ████████████ was a, grad assistant. And I think he was finishing up his doctorate at that time before he was on staff. And, we had a partnership to where those kids will come in and give the lessons, and all kinds of stuff. So, to me, you know, I feel at that time that I kind of lost some of my pedagogical skills, because it was easy just to say, hey, yall going to work with such and such. Now that I don't have that, hey, I gotta go back 20 some years, and remember going back to class and pick up that flute and pick up that clarinet and say, hey, remember those alternate fingerings? You're flat here because you got to play that alternate fingering. So, it makes me have to go back, and like they said shed on my instruments to make sure that I am reaching out and making sure that my kids know these things. That's making me a better band director because I have to go back to those basic fundamentals. Even when it comes to sports, you still got to start with your fundamentals. I don't care who it is. If it's ███ out there, he gotta warm up just like everybody else with the fundamentals.

Eugene K. Jones

DB

Based on your experience with students in an underserved high school band program, how does the student's background and cultural experiences outside of the classroom influence your instruction? How did it influence your instruction?

EKJ
Well, I just had to recognize that there were kids that were coming to us who hadn't had the life experiences that other kids had had, in more privileged and Upper socio-economic areas and stuff. And so, the way that influenced me was that I just me and my staff, (and I encouraged my staff to do this) was to just fill in the gaps. You know, if a kid came to us who had never been to the ███ symphony, and didn't really have an understanding of what "classical music" was, or what we were doing, or the study of an instrument. We just tried to fill in the gaps and what we discovered was once you do that, if you're willing to do that, kids can learn just as well as any other kids. So, I think it was, I use the phrase, potty up and fill in the gaps, and that's what we as teachers had to do there at ██████ High School. And, you know, for some of the gaps were financial gaps. And so, we had a robust booster program that helps support financially, kids with taking lessons. And we also, I tried to minimize the number I tried to minimize the expense of just being in band. Like, while I was there, we never had a band fee, although kids did have to buy, you know, shoes and shirts and things like that. But they didn't have to pay for a band fee just to be in band, you know, to pay for buses and things like that. And the district has been, and was very supportive financially, of the program and so we didn't have to resort to asking the kids to pay for things that you know, that I feel like the district should be paying for.

DB
Okay, based on your experience with students in an underserved high school band program, how did your student's background and cultural experience affect the standards you set, maintain and upheld for the program?

EKJ
It didn't change anything. The only thing it made us do was just work harder to achieve the same results with the kids. And I fully believe that we were able to maintain some past levels and, in some cases, I think we surpassed a few areas of past levels of success. That's one of the things that I think is so important for teachers in that situation is that as soon as you start making excuses, it's over. You just can't. And when I say excuses, I mean excuses for the kids and why the kids aren't able to achieve at a higher level. Because when it just comes down to it, if you're willing to put the work in the kids can be just as good here as anybody else.

DB
So based on your experience, how did your student's background and cultural experiences affect the way you formed relationships?

EKJ
I had to learn that. And not just while I was director at ██████. I had to figure out how I needed to adjust myself, in order to be able to relate to an ever-changing population. Every place that I've taught, and even there in those times when I was head director at ██████, the population gradually shifted from one aspect to another and you have to constantly I found I had

to constantly reevaluate myself, in order to meet the needs of the kids that were coming up to me. So, it wasn't about trying to change them because when I was younger, yeah, I tried to do that. And as I got older and wiser, I discovered no, you're the adult. You make the adjustments that the kids need for them to be successful.

DB
Okay, so now that you were a director for a while you had the opportunity to develop a sense of your own values as a music educator. How does working with students in an underserved area align with or not your values.

EKJ
It really doesn't change like the, the kid in an underserved situation or kid and in a privileged situation, it just doesn't change, because my philosophy has always been that when they leave my band hall, they are better people, and they are more equipped to be successful individuals on their own. I've landed on a philosophy of teaching early, early, early on, was that I wanted to give kids the amount of knowledge that they need, where they don't need me anymore. They don't need somebody else telling them what to do, I want them to be empowered to be their own individual. People make their own decisions. And that's, to me, whether it's band directing, or teaching English or history or any, that's what that's what public school is all about is developing kids to be independent thinkers, so they can be independent adults and contributing adults to our society.

DB
So, what are your thoughts on success and attaining success in a high school band program in that area?

EKJ
My thoughts on that is just I want to see improvement every day. And that's, that's what success is. I didn't you know, as a younger teacher, I didn't always view it that way. But as I got older and gained a little bit of wisdom, and, the people that I was able to, to teach with, develop this idea that in satisfaction, that if a kid got better, or the band got a little bit better each day, that's progress. And that's all you can ask for, and professional satisfaction is achieved. That's how I got professional satisfaction was just feeling like I helped somebody, whether it's a group or an individual get a little bit better each day. It stopped being about trophies, and accolades and all that stuff a long, long time ago. And I think that's why I was able to stick with teaching for being a band director, as long as I was it was that I get satisfaction out of teaching. I just think it's the coolest thing in the world, and, you know, trophies and recognition, and all that stuff that may or may not come. But the true happiness is, knowing that you made a positive impact on somebody else.

DB
So how did you create an environment in your band program that considered your students background and culture?

EKJ

Um, no, not really. I just taught at the highest level that I could, and tried to get the kids to achieve at the highest level that they can. It goes back to I just didn't, I never, I tried to never allow myself to have any reason, even in the back of my head for a reason why a kid could not be successful. You know, if they were the poorest of the poor, or the roughest child I ever taught, there's, I wanted in the back of my head that this kid, there's, there's a little diamond in there somewhere. And I just wanted to see if I can puzzle it out of them. Because that's, that's the fun of teaching and that's the art of teaching is figuring out what buttons to push, what buttons not to push, and I pushed a lot of wrong buttons in my career. But figuring it out how to get the very best out of another human being. And that's kind of fun.

DB
So how has the cultural characteristics of your students made it easier or more difficult to teach music in your program?

EKJ
Well, I had to, I've had to do this my entire career. I had to make myself hyper aware of how me as, teaching predominantly in minority schools most of my career. I never I don't know if I'm getting to this question but I never wanted to be the shining knight on the white horse riding in to say, I'm gonna save you. Because I just never felt like people needed to be saved, they just need to be taught. And so, I tried to be hyper aware of how I reacted to things, affected kids. And some of that I just had to learn by trial and error. And some of that I look back now over the years, and I know there are periods in my career, where I shut down a certain population within my program. Because I was pushing the wrong buttons. I was pushing the buttons for the right reason I was trying to get the most out of them. But I was doing it in a way that looking back now I can see that there was probably some cultural tension there. And, you know, my older self would have treated that situation totally different than my younger self. But I think the big thing is just, I've just always had this sense of how I come across to people of different levels, whether it's ethnic differences or economic differences, I just tried to always our gender differences. You know, one of the, one of the other soft areas of discrimination is boys and girls. I'm meaner than a snake to a boy, then I may not push the girls as hard. And what's the end result? The end result is that the boys are being pushed to achieve and the girls aren't. And I think that's a good enough, probably getting off on a tangent now. But that's one area of concern that I have in the state is that the ratio of males and females making region bands, area chairs, all state chairs, is it's about two to one, or you I think it's two to one, it's at least to at least that it might be even more heavily. Which, you know, if we're thoughtful, we got to think, why is that? And I don't know what the answer is. But I know it's something that if we're a thoughtful human being, that's something that we want to address so that we can we can get our girls achieving just as high as the as the boys.

DB
What challenges do you have in relating to the cultural background of your students in your program?

EKJ
The big thing is trial and error and taking responsibility as the adult that I am the one. I have to meet them, where they are, whatever group it is. One of the challenges that I had as ▮▮▮▮▮▮

became more and more Hispanic was, and I don't think I ever was really as successful as I wanted to be. But one of the challenges was Hispanic females. I wish I had been able to figure out how to motivate them to higher levels of achievement.

DB
What challenges did you did you experience that motivated students to learn in your program?

EKJ
Yeah, that was one of them. And it's just, trial and error. For me, it was just trial and error allow, I'll try this tactic. I'll be Mr. Nice Guy. I'll be Mister, I'm gonna ride you. I'm gonna be Mister, I'm gonna kind of back off and leave me alone and let you kind of do your own thing and figure it out. And then maybe jump in here and there with a little bit of guidance or a little bit of praise or a little bit, you know, just evaluating each student you know, as to what's going to get them to achieve at the highest level possible. And trial and error and with trial and error, there's lots of error. And you got to push on and just believe that eventually you're going to hit the right buttons. You don't know that you can.

DB
How did the cultural background of your students affect music selection in concert and marching band for your program?

EKJ
Um, I think with concert band, it really didn't. You know, we always tried to pick the highest level of, literature for the kids to play. Music that would engage them, maybe not immediately. Like we played some things that it took a month or two for them to finally wrap their heads around what it was we were asking them to do, but eventually they did. As far as the marching band, we evolved with our community and with our students. Or we tried to. We tried to evolve out of just purely classical programs. Which is what we had been doing in the past and then we started branching out into more, popular type things, whether it was, you know, movie themes, or all the way up until I was involved in the planning of this last year show, all the way up until, you know, bringing in some, some pop music and stuff. That being said, we always tried to make sure that especially you know, even during marching season that the music that we were playing, number one you could sing the lyrics to your grandmother. And you know, she wouldn't blush and it was also written in such a way that was conducive to correct pedagogy. Correct learning of the instruments, and that would continue to develop the kids musically as players.

DB
How did the cultural background of your students affect program traditions or program operations, like rehearsal schedules or things of that nature?

EKJ
I don't think it did. I think the changes the program traditions evolved over time. Because of changing society as a whole. Like, you know, there was a there was in this was with most programs, a tradition of wasn't I wouldn't say with our kids, it was hazing. But there were initiations to be a part of the tribe, which is the trombone group. And there was tradition of each section had their little initiations that they did with the freshmen. And while I was there, and

even before, we always monitored that very closely, and made sure we had parental participation in that. But over time, especially as society changed, and as the news started broadcasting issues that other programs had been having, and programs being shut down because of it. We had finally it took us several years, but we finally brought that aspect, that tradition. We just, we just did away with it. And whether or not it's fully gone now, it's probably not. But it is totally disassociated with anything with the band program as much as we can. And that's, that's for safety and common-sense reasons. But as far as culturally, I will say this. We have made more exceptions to attendance policies, for things like quinceañeras that have become a huge part of our community's, background. Parents are shelling out a lot of money, and they have to plan years in advance. And sometimes calendar dates just don't work out. And so, we have become a little bit more lenient on things like that. So that would be a cultural motivation for changing what we do.

DB
So just two more questions here. Describe any positive or negative outcomes you experienced that you have experience with teaching music students in your program, any positive or negative outcomes based on their cultural background.

EKJ
Based on their cultural background? The only thing I can think of is positive. And it seems to me my impression has been that it's become easier to teach as my as we have progressed from higher socio economic down through lower socio economic. It's just you easier to teach the kids as far as classroom management. And I don't mean it's easier to to it's harder. It's harder to teach because of some of the shortcuts, not shortcomings, but some of the experiences that they come to us lacking, you know, once again, fill in the gaps. And so that part is harder. But as far as students being appreciative of the program, and the work that we put into them, that's become so much more obvious, and it's become, and it's made teaching so much more fun. I had you know, I'm just thinking the last 10 years, is if I just evaluated teaching my students, I just had more fun every year of just surely teaching them. And now, other things got on my nerves, but had nothing to do with children.

DB
What have you learned about yourself through teaching, students who maintain different backgrounds in you, that made you a better educator?

EKJ
Oh, well, like I said, I went into this early on, knowing and believing that if I was going to serve whoever it was that I was teaching, that it would have to be me, that's willing to do the adjustment. And when you're young, you have these ideas of, well, this is how the world works. And then through years of experience, you figure out there's 40,000 different ways that the world works, depending on someone's background and their perspective and stuff. And that's okay. And so, the biggest change in me, it's evolved me as a human being. I shudder to think what type of person I would have been, if I had not been exposed to different cultures, different ethnicities, different socio-economic backgrounds, different situations, different student lives and stories. And I just thought of the world as black and white, like we do when we're young, because that's all that we know. And we never exposed ourselves to other people that were radically different

than us in the way that they were brought up or the way that they look. Yeah, I don't think I would like me very much. Because I know people like that and I don't like them.

Nathaniel A Murray

DB
Based on your experience with students in an underserved high school band program, how do a student's background and cultural experiences outside of the classroom influence your instruction?

NAM
Well, in the beginning, when I first get the students there, they require a lot more speaking, or a lot more talking to them, to help them understand and see their own potential. So, in this kind of, I'm gonna say, I would say a very low socio-economic level, their own personal belief in themselves is not as strong. So, I ended up talking a lot more, I end up letting them see who they really could be, and what their potential really is. And after I achieve that, and they're on board, and they, are starting to see the world in a different way, at that point, they're now receptive to instruction. So, to me, it's kinda like, I've got this student with all the potential in the world, they have everything they need. So, it's like a master computer, that is the best anywhere. It is the strongest and can receive the most data, but this machine isn't plugged into electricity. So, it's not working. So, my whole goal in the beginning with that student, that child, is to get them plugged into electricity. And then at that moment, when that happens, they'll then receive all the data they need to run and operate and believe in who they are.

DB
Based on your experience with students in an underserved high school band program, how do you a student's background and cultural experience affect the standards, you set, maintain, and uphold for the program?

NAM
Well, their upbringing, their socio-economic depravity, I'm gonna say low socio-economic level does not affect the standard. The standard is still the same. So, I'm creating a culture of expectations in the band hall. And lowering your standard, is just not even part of it. You cannot use their deficiencies as the reason to lower your levels of expectations. The expectations remain high. And they honestly always achieve it as long as you believe in them. The moment you lower your expectations, you have because of their circumstance, you're now allowing their circumstance to affect and ruin their potential. And it's not something that should even be thought about, discussed, or embraced. So, it does not affect the standard that you have set for the program.

DB
How does your students background and cultural experience experiences affect the way you form relationships?

NAM
That is affected greatly, because in many of these circumstances, that leadership position or that I almost hesitate to say parent, you know, may not be as active in the child's life. They're just

trying to survive themselves. They're just trying to make it. And so, in those circumstances, sometimes it has affected my relationship greatly where I'm more involved. Like maybe I'll say to a student, because of the eligibility requirements, let's use that. In the state of Texas, you have to be passing all classes for eligibility. Well, in many cases, in a very strong socio-economic family, successful the parents coming home and evaluating their grades daily. So, in this circumstance, I'll look at a young man or young lady and I'll say, hey, listen, I've noticed you're having a little bit of a hard time in math. And you know, what I'd like you to do tomorrow morning, come in before school, and let me see your assignment. I just want to see what you've done. And kind of you and I go over it together. So, in that sense, I have to be more involved, and I have to try to I guess take on some of that parental role, where I'm a little closer and a little bit more involved in their life. You know, I've had circumstances where some students, you know, because of maybe domestic violence, that mother and child, they're in a hotel. They're not even in a home anymore. They've left. And so, at that point, coming to the school and being in the band hall, or in that environment has created a safe place for them to be where they can actually relax and feel safe. And so, in those circumstances, again, I'm also a little bit more involved. And definitely more active into how the student feels, what's bothering him, maybe we can talk about it. Those are circumstances that we deal with every day.

DB
Now that you have been a band director for a while and have retired, you have developed a sense of your own values as a music educator, how does working with students in an underserved area align with those with the old or not those values?

NAM
Well, I came from a very low social economic family. My father went to finish the fifth grade. So, he didn't finish sixth grade. And because of that awareness, and knowing how I lived, you know, when I finally got out in the world, I went through school college, I realized that everyone lived like we did. When I was young, I realized, you know, my world, I thought everyone lived like I did. So that's given me a perspective, to understand that sometimes students, they don't even know what it's like, to live in a different circumstance. They think the whole world lives the way they live. And so, as an administrator, now, I have a real calling for that level of student. I had, you know, people in my life, that helped me believe. They helped me dream. They helped me just do things that I never thought was possible. And so now that I am retired, that's my calling. I want to reach those students, and let them know that they can do whatever they desire to do, and they don't have to stay where they're at. So sometimes a circumstance might be where I'm with a student and say, look, you know, do you want out of the pathway, you're going? Do you want to have a better life then you or your family has? Well, now this is how you do it. So, I have maintained and stayed in that kind of an environment, because I want them to succeed, and then have a beautiful life. And that doesn't mean they all go into music; it just simply means that I can help them pursue the dreams for themselves or life and their family.

DB
What are your thoughts on success and attaining success in a high school band program in an underserved area?

NAM

The real goal is not a rating. Sometimes we get so focused on our rating, getting a one this or that? What became very early, I mean, from my very first year teaching 38 years ago, it was about helping them achieve things in their own personal life and to feel empowered to make things better. So, you know, it's so hard to, for me to express everything that I'd like to say about this whole circumstance, it's very difficult. I guess my thoughts on obtaining success, success is building the culture and building the student. And then the byproduct is the ratings. So once the child believes in themselves, once they're pursuing this and they have some discipline, and they're working hard at it, that trait can affect everything, not just music. So, ratings are simply a byproduct. A successful program is a byproduct of caring about them, and them caring back. And they see that you care about them more than just teachers saying, I need you to learn this, I need to learn this, I need you to learn this. I would prefer they say, you know, Mr. ██████ really cared about me. And then because I cared about them, they care back. And they don't want to let me down just like I don't want to let them down. And so, what happens when you walk into this program, you'll just see a climate of caring. A climate of helping younger people. Older students caring about younger students. So that, to me, is success. It's not a rating.

DB
During your time as a director, how did you create an environment in your band program that considered your students background and culture?

NAM
Well, if you come from a deprived cultural background, where maybe you're not afforded opportunities, maybe there is social favoritism, maybe you don't even these great opportunities, you're not even offered these opportunities. The way that was affected my program, is, I would say that it was possible. I would tell them that we can break down these barriers. We don't have to accept these things that are happening, the social norms. We can create our own. And then also, when things don't go the way you want them to go, never relent. Never stop. Just keep pursuing and keep striving to do the accomplishments and the things that you want to do with your life. So, I guess what I had an awareness of life not being fair.

DB
How have the cultural characteristics of your students made it easier or more difficult to teach music in your program?

NAM
I guess a way it made it easier, is I don't think they had as many distractions. Meaning that my students were not in dance on Thursday, karate, on Friday. And then on Monday, they were attending a social gathering, my students didn't have as much opportunities, you know, Mom and Dad aren't saying, hey, okay, let's hop in the car, and let's go to Colorado and go skiing. So those kinds of things never interfered. So, in that sense, it gave them more time to be involved in band, if that became important enough to them. The way it didn't help is because when you're in that kind of a low socio-economic circumstance, where maybe people are treating you badly, or you're not getting as many opportunities, you become more used to that kind of treatment, and then you don't try to excel. Hmm. Whereas if you've got this other child, they're like, they believe they can do anything, they just aren't interested enough to do it. These students that I had, they didn't believe they could do it. So that's where I spent a lot more time in the beginning, like

really being a motivator, bringing them in counseling and talking to them, saying, hey, you can do this. That became huge. I would have a lot of people look at me and say, why did you tell that kid he could go to make region? He can't even play right now. And I would say because he doesn't know how great he can really be.

DB
What challenges did you have in relating to the cultural backgrounds of your students in your program?

NAM
Well, I would say, in a sense, I related to them very much again, because of my upbringing, because of my family. Like, we shopped at Goodwill. So, in many senses, all the shoes I ever owned came from Goodwill. And so, in that sense, I understood it. However, when it comes to ethnicity, I'm white. So, my understanding of the Asian culture, of the Black culture, of the Hispanic culture. Sometimes, I would just have to listen to the kids, and understand that their circumstances are different. And truly try to understand where they're coming from. And understand maybe the invisible chains that they're locked into. Because sometimes, there's invisible damage in different cultures, we don't even understand, because we didn't come from that upbringing. So, I had to listen a lot to the kids, and sometimes they say, Hey, Mr. ███ for me, that's different. I can't go do that. And then I'm like, Wow, I'm sorry. So, I guess I would develop empathy, and try to understand their social background.

DB
What challenges did you experience with? You spoke about this time, but what challenges did you experience with motivating students to learn in your band program?

NAM
Well, because most of the students in my band were either Black or Hispanic and some of them coming from across the border, many of them, they just didn't believe things that they could accomplish. They just didn't understand that. And so that's where conversations were very strong. And this is where you're one on one in the office, pulling them in, giving them a private lesson, building a relationship with them, checking on their homework, letting them know you're interested, maybe you hear something they love. I had one little girl that played trombone, and she loved ice cream, but she also was going through a lot of problems at home. So, I went and bought the little Braums cups of ice cream. And I would look at her and we'd be doing a lesson and I could see she was really bothered. And I'd say, you know what, I think it's time. She'd say what? I'd say I think it's time. She'd say what Mr. ███? I think it's time that we open the fridge and get ourselves out a cup of ice cream. And she gets to get this smile. And it was just a shock that I thought of her and what she loved enough that I went and bought that and had the fridge for her. Or maybe another little kid comes in and he has a string on his sweater. And he just can't take it. He's just like, oh my god, Mr. ███, this string this string, and he ran out of rehearsal. And in some cases, if we're not really tuned into how they feel, you would say What are you doing? Get over here. You can just walk out. Well, we're sensitive to how they feel. I understand that he had some form of autism. So, I said, Wait, wait, ███, come here. come here, man. So, I grab a pair of scissors and say dude, come on. We got to get rid of that. And then I cut the string off and he starts to go, ah, oh, oh, thank you, Mr. ███. So, it's those kinds of circumstances

where I think we have to be in tune to how the child feels. And we have to take into account these things. We can't just go in arbitrarily and start teaching and expect them to do everything. No one What's that old saying? No one cares about what you know until they know that you care about them. I think that's paraphrase. But no one really cares about any knowledge I have. Until that they realize I care about them. That's how I've gotten the most out of any student I've ever had. And then the natural reaction when they know you care, they care back about me. So, it's more than just being that teacher. Many times, my baton would drop and I'd look at those 60 students, and they're looking back at me with fire in their eyes like Mr. ███, don't you worry. Every note that's there, I'm gonna play it, and that's going to be as solid as I can do to give back to you. So, you're not afraid on the podium?

DB
How has the cultural background of your students in your program affect music selection in concert and marching band for your program?

NAM
Well, that's a beautiful question. Because sometimes you're playing music that depicts how people felt culturally throughout the world. So, it helps me tap into, they're not alone. You know, like this piece of literature I'm reading, maybe this is from Russia, maybe this happened during the Second World War. And so, you're just saying, these are the things that happened, what you could say, like Carl Husa, you know, in writing the pieces that he wrote, you know, his fear for the whole world, and the evolution of the world, and the chaos that could be coming if we don't fix things. And so, in that sense, many cultures are in the same circumstance they are. And it helps you understand that you're not alone.

DB
How has the cultural background of your students affected program traditions, or program operations, like rehearsals and schedules, etc.

NAM
Well, teaching students how to manage circumstances are different. So, I'm not again, I'm not managing, I got dancing on Tuesday, I've got taekwondo on Wednesday, I've got Thursday afternoon, or Thursday evening, my family's doing such and such, that wasn't the problem. The problems in this setting are more like, hey, I have to babysit. Or I have to go home today, just to feed the dog. The problems were completely different. And they were basically them taking on maybe some adult responsibilities. And so, I would have to talk to parents, I would have to talk to the children. And I would have to explain to them, that what you say you're going to do something, you also have to make family accommodations to do that. And I would tell parents and children, I'd say, so what this means is, on Monday nights, I need you here from 4:30 to 6:30, every night. And if you have babysitting responsibilities, you may have to talk to a parent and tell mom or dad that you can't do it, maybe have an aunt or an uncle. Maybe you would have even sometimes, I would have the student go to the elementary school and pick up their brother or sister and bring him to the band hall. So sometimes there would be students sitting in the back every rehearsal, it was just their little brother or little sister. And sometimes I would put on video. Something like that, or connect to the internet, and let them watch educational programs sometimes. Those are the kinds of things that we would deal with, that were different than in

other circumstances. That in the communities I was in. Sometimes the child's pregnant. That may happen too. So, when those things happen, I don't single the child out in any way, shape or form, but I may have to have a big meeting. Maybe I find out in the first month or two. And so, I would then have training during the week, and we would talk about encouraging other people and what we're there for. And we would talk about circumstances like that or pressures from that that children could have and I have a meeting about it. It sounds unusual, maybe but I would cover it all. So, if somebody was pregnant, then I would have a meeting about that before the pregnancy was seen in class. And then how we would support each other, and be there for each other and to never say bad things about other people. Sometimes I would buy wristbands that would say some special slogan. Something, let's say an opinion or attitude I thought we should focus on. So that's what I would deal with. And once the things like that would happen, I would have a training session on it. Like, for example, bullying. We talked about Don't bully? Well, that doesn't really tell me much. You know, what is bully? How does it occur? Where does it occur? When should I disconnect from social media? How can social media hurt me? Well, I would do training on social media, and unplugging from social media and not doing social media literally staying off of it. Because I don't think it's a good thing. So, then we would have somebody come in and speak about social media and the harm of social media in your life.

DB
Describe any positive or negative outcomes you experienced that you have experienced with teaching music to students in your program. I think you already kind of covered that. We've already covered that one.

NAM
 Yes.

DB
Last question, what have you learned about yourself through teaching students who maintain different backgrounds, than you that make you a better educator?

NAM
Well, I would say that my very first job was in Brownsville, Texas. And the cultural background of 100% of my students was Hispanic. So, none of them were Caucasian, or White and none of them were Black and none of them were Asian. So, my classes, like 300 students, was all 100% Hispanic. Well, I didn't understand a lot of things. Like, I didn't know what a quinceañera was. I didn't know how important that was. So, I guess what, happened, luckily when I went to college, my eyes were open to the world. I had culture shock, definitely. And 17 years old is when I went. And so I was, like, shocked that people had a different life than I did. And I would press into that, and I would see them with their families and with their parents. So naturally, when I started teaching at 22, I was very aware of the fact that people do have different ways of living. They are different. And I was super open to it. And I was very understanding. And I don't want excuses. My favorite slogan, which I had on the walls of my band hall my whole career is: results, not excuses. So, they saw that. All the students I've ever had saw it on the wall. And so, when something would happen, or something in their life was important, that I wasn't used to, I had a lot of empathy for that. And I would make accommodations for that. And I would also again, have training meetings, and I will talk to parents. So, what I would do is I remember in the

valley, we had a meeting about quinceañeras. So, I talked to all the parents. A required parent night, all the students hundreds were there. And I told him, I said, look, I'm aware of something I've never heard of. I said it's a beautiful tradition. It's called quinceañera. Man, they were all happy and shouting and making all these sounds of cheering that I said that and recognized the quinceañera. And I said these are the things that I would like you to consider when you're scheduling the quinceañeras. And it will really help me know ahead of time, because in many cases, mom and dad, when you're doing your rehearsals, you're pulling students from band. And your rehearsals involve lots of traditional dancing and things like that. And it's every week. Well, Monday nights is full band. So, I'm asking right now, for everyone right now to not put anything or quinceañera rehearsals on those nights. And then I'm also handing out my rehearsal schedule for like flute sectionals are on Tuesday. So, if you could all be aware of this when you're building the students that are going to be involved in a quinceañera, could you please put in rehearsals that don't interfere with this schedule? So that's how I do it.

Robert H. Ogle

DB
Based on your experience with students in an underserved high school band program, how does a student's background and cultural experiences outside of the classroom influence your instruction?

RHO
I've taught in, really the broad spectrum or a wide spectrum of backgrounds of what students I've had in front of me. And so, I've had everything from very fluent, back then all the way to kids that struggle really like their family struggled financially. As far as looking back on how I approached each, or the difference that different types of clienteles and the band program, I really don't think that I, as far as like, the social part of which is I think, being in band, since it's such a social, I guess, the social environment, or when you're how we teach, I don't know if I really taught differently from either affluent student to financially struggling students. And what I mean is that I as far as making sure that the group was successful, the standards of what I was trying to do was the same. So regardless if they had money or not, I've never took that into account as far as making sure that the kids could succeed. Now, from another point of view, as far as like, the financial struggles of the band program, that part, there was a difference. So, what I had to do, as far as like making sure that the band program succeeded from a financial standpoint, was way different from either end of the spectrum. But how I taught and the standards and the verbiage and what I had to do to get the groups be successful. I don't think I really did anything different.

DB
Based on your experience with students in an underserved high school band program, how do your students background and cultural experiences affect the standards you set the standards you maintain, and the standards you uphold for the program?

RHO
Right. I think with something with music, it's so or really anything that like anything where someone has to coach someone through something, I think that it's, we have our standards. And regarding to me, like I don't, I tried my best to not see that this child and as a band director,

because we required fees, and we see them for four years in high school. We know their financial status as a family. That becomes very obvious either through when we ask them to pay dues, and then the parents come up and say, can we do a payment plan? In contrast to some parents that may say, okay, how much is it? I'll write you a check. Here's the full amount. Right? So, as band directors and coaches in general, we ultimately saw or easily saw that information was almost it was in front of us as far as like, who was struggling who was not. So, what I'm trying to say is that I don't think that when I was teaching, I tried to not think about those things, not to think about those characteristics that I knew and the background of each of the students. Including, where they came from, how do I have like the information that may have been given to me or shown to me through seeing their families interact? I try not to see any of that as far as like, anything that would help make it a struggle. And so like, I really feel like I tried to make it everyone I tried to view everyone as the same. And that way when you give those standards that may be unachievable sometimes or those standards that definitely that the kids have to work really hard for. I feel like if I felt like everyone was on the same playing field, then that's how I got the most success. Because I don't think that any kid, especially in something like band or music, I don't know if any kid has because of financial struggling or background I don't think that a kid has or a student has any more advantage than any other student because it's completely almost physical. Its physical and how hard they want to work. So, if you give the standards of the if you get the stands up, we're gonna work this hard and it has to be evaluated somehow and they have to be held accountable for how much they work, and then be able to achieve this level of achievement, then I don't really see how anything, any kind of like background or coming from a single parent family to having grandparents that are supportive, that are also involved. So, I really felt that it didn't really matter their background just so long as a kid worked hard and did what was asked of them, then they were going to become that all state performer or they're going to become that Grand National Championship band.

DB
Based on your experience, with students in underserved high school band program, how does your students' background and cultural experiences affect the way you form relationships?

RHO
Okay. That's where I think it's a little different. So, I feel like being a minority myself, I'm Asian, of Asian descent, there's definitely, I felt like there were based off how I felt, and how the parents were comfortable with allowing me to observe how they themselves treat their children, or whatnot. Like, for instance, there's some characteristics that are just common, and sometimes people make fun of them for. But like, just for an Asian household, and some of the cultural experiences the parents have, that they're, that they're also implementing into their children's life, and how they view their culture. I felt like sometimes, there were times when I had to kind of learn about what goes on at home, culturally, to help motivate the kids almost like from an intrinsic level, right. So, like, for instance, I have noticed, and this is just an observation by myself, trying not to be like a global stigmatism of a different culture. But what I've noticed is that Hispanic families are very, extremely family oriented. And so, it's so that kind of mentality, as far as speaking to kids, or speaking to Hispanic children that I have taught in the past, they felt like because of that's what they were feeling at home, I tried to create a pseudo environment of home and family within the band program, so that at least they felt like this could be their home, too. And I'm not saying that that's just Latino Hispanic families. It can be anyone. But I just felt

that in my career, that's where I felt the most pull towards that kind of, hey, I've observed this, their families seem very tight, and just very, like, I even felt like the kids would do anything for their parents and all that. So just that for an example. But yes. I do agree that sometimes, maybe observing or getting exposed, naturally, because you do see kids for four years. So, you do see the interaction between child and parent. So, watching those interactions and seeing how the parent interacts with the child, either from a cultural standpoint, or a family standpoint, or financial standpoint, seeing how that is all handled and exposed to a band director. I mean, these kinds of things, you could see at a football game. When a parent is chaperoning their kids, and how they talk to them and you can see what their values are. And so, I felt like it was really important to observe those items. And what you see is then you have to understand the values of how they were brought up by their family, either culturally, again, financially, culturally, or whatever. And so, once you find those values and make it relate to how you want the values of the band program to be, then I think you have this perfect meld of what's going on at home is matching what's going on the band program. So, let's all work together to make the band program better.

DB
Now that you were when you spent time as a band director for a while you had the opportunity to develop a sense of your own values as a music educator, how does working with students in an underserved area align with own or not with your own values?

RHO
I think like I said earlier, my values of the band program and what I pushed for to strive in the kids in the band program, and of myself had nothing to do with their background. I set the levels of what I thought would be successful at like the state or national level. And to me, my values, ultimately, the best in my career, the best way to make sure that the band program succeeds is to effectively make sure that my values are the students values as well. So, we work as a team. But now going back to what I said in the previous question, some of those tools I used was to observe somewhat of their background, or at least the cultural or home life of the student, to help align the values of what I felt was important in their personal lives to what's gonna be important their band life. So, but I guess to answer your question, the standards of how to achieve success in a band program, I really again, just really tried to not see color, not see financial struggles. Because those things to me were secondary. If I said, you got to take lessons. You have to take private lessons. You have to have a specialist on your instrument that's teaching you at least once a week to get better on your instrument. Because number one, there's like 300 of you, and there's one of me. So, you need the individual. So, when a kid came to me and said, hey, I cannot pay for private lessons. Then that's why it's like, it's a secondary thing. So, number one, the standard is there. I'd say this is what you'll do: your scales, you got to pass them off with, like ████████████ ██ ██ ██. But then when a kid is struggling, you say, well, maybe you need private lessons, maybe this. But then that becomes of financial responsibility. I think that's more like secondary because, then that's another problem to solve. So, the first problem to solve is, how is the kid? What did the kid need? Set the standard for the kids, so the kid has an obstacle to achieve. But then, after that, there'll be other secondary things where like, we talked about, like private lessons, or band fees or whatnot. But again, back

to your original question. I just I really, from the surface level, all the kids are the same. One of my mentors had always told me, and she told me this, and it makes so much sense. Kids are kids. Kids are the kids, no matter where they come from, or what their upbringing is, or whatnot, kids are kids. All you have to do is give them some kind of level, some kind of obstacle to achieve, and some kind of standard to get to, and just see what they do. So yeah.

DB
What are your thoughts on success and attaining success in a high school program in an underserved area?

RHO
Okay, so success, to me, it's kind of like the the quote, I can't remember. Success is in the eye of the beholder or whatever. Success is relative to, again, to what you want success to be. Right. So, I mean, just for instance, there's different levels, right at sixth grade level of success at the end of the year could be Oh, my gosh, you can play all of your skills, one octave, and depending on the instrument. Right? Then senior year, it's like, all of your skills are, you know, eighth notes, a metronome 100, but you're playing all of them and 16th notes now or whatever. Right? And so, I think success is varied from levels. So, I think that, again, success to me is based off building off previous years. So, like, if I were to go into a program, for instance, ████████████████ ██ ██ ██ ██ ██ ██ ██ ██ ██ ██ ██ So, success for a program where I was at, and we got we made ████████████████ ███. So, like that's the standard, it's just a different standard, because I knew what they were capable of doing because of what they had coming from their other schools before we opened. But again, when I went to ████████ and

knowing what they had been doing previously, from competition wise, I had to set that goal. Now, I would have done that at any school. So going back to what I said. If I had gone to another school that was wealthy, and had won the grand nationals and had not been attending and done this or that I would have done the exact same thing. I don't see any point in thinking, oh, because they're struggling financially or because you're struggling, whatever. When there's a will there's a way. Money can always come from somewhere. Either you fundraise it or whatnot. I'm a firm believer for a program like a band, money will always be there. You just have to find it, or you have to ask for it. So as far as like the level and the success, I just said, we're gonna go do this. So, I am assuming that we're not going to place very well. But that's year one. Year two, maybe we can cut that number in half. So, if we're 28, maybe we can be 14. Then after that, we can cut the number in half, and bam, you're a finalist. I guess that's my answer to the question. And like I said, that's kind of like my story of what I did when I went ███████████████ was just push them out there. Say, I don't care what you think. I don't care what you think you might get. And also teach them not to be afraid of failure. Right? And I would teach that to any kid. Don't be afraid of failure, because in order for you to be good, you have to fail a million times to get that first place. So yeah. Okay. I don't know if that is, again, not just talking.

DB
How did you create an environment in your band program that considers your students background and culture?

RHO
I think back to I don't, that I think is more of an individualized question. I like I said, for myself, regardless of the band program that I was in front of my standards were the same. But I think that how I dealt with individuals, that's where it differed. So, band program globally, no different whether I was at a wealthy school in a wealthy community versus underprivileged kids in underprivileged society or underprivileged school. How I approached the band program, nothing changed. Individuals? Yes. So that's where I think the difference is. So, if I knew that a child had financial issues. Then maybe when I said things, there was more sensitivity to that part of the life that I know about. So, if I knew they were struggling with money, then maybe I would just definitely as a global statement, maybe not so much talk so much about band dues being due like at this date. Maybe it's a very global statement, and something like that is done personally. And so, I felt like that was probably the best way to handle that. And I know, the question was about how do you how do you? How do you teach differently? How do you affect how do you finally do something with underage, but under that underage, but under, underprivileged kids, it's going to be I think that's just done on an individual basis. So yeah.

DB
How has the how did the cultural characteristics of your students make it easier or difficult, whichever you choose to teach music and your program?

RHO
Okay, so I will say that teaching music to in my experience to underprivileged kids was way easier and way more fun. Because, like, I felt this is I can be candid, right, Delton? I'm supposed to tell the truth, right? So, I felt like the underserved children were way more grateful for the information that was given from the instructors. With the kids that got everything that they

needed in life, I felt that when you did try to explain... Every piece of music has a cultural background. Whether it's done by in the Baroque period of Mozart and Beethoven, or it's done by Omar Thomas. So, I don't know his background or whatnot, but I just know that there's very gospel and so, there's a lot to talk about there that's not even just about the notes and rhythms, but like, what is the piece mean, right? And every piece has that. Every piece of music has that part about it. And I just always felt, in my experience, that kids that are underserved, once you give them information, or once you give them like attention in a very positive way, that they were very grateful for just having that attention and given that opportunity to learn. And I felt that kids with money or kids that kind of had everything given to them more or less; and that's a very relative term, right? I'm talking about that from a financial standpoint, right? I don't want to be talking about like, the emotional, or the social side, I'm just trying to really talk about the financial side. So, kids that kind of can afford everything, or they get everything they need, there was a sense of... I don't want to say it's entitlement, but a sense of ungratefulness. That, oh, well, you know, I could have used that information or not, I don't care. But with an underserved kid, I felt like they were like sponges, The moment you gave them praise or information that could seriously enhance the way they saw music or enhance their lives. They were so grateful. And I also saw that most of the time, from my experience, received more notes of thanks from parents of underserved children than I did from parents that could afford what they needed for their kids. So, I try not to, you know, like pinpoint, too negatively, but that's from my experience. It was much more fun to be around children that were grateful. So

DB
What challenges did you have in relating to the cultural backgrounds of your students in your program?

RHO

I was lucky enough to watch a modest or privilege school turned into an underserved school. So, I think that was a very unique experience. And that became from Hurricane Katrina, in 2004 2005, something somewhere around then, or one of the hurricanes that kind of wiped out New Orleans. So, watching that shift, was very interesting to watch. So once again, going from a school that was very privileged, and watching them go through a change, and watching an influx of students coming from another state. And almost forced. It was a forced move for them. I mean, they were leaving their home. And so and watching a school go do that shift from, like a privileged school or really students with kids that had no issues about money to a school now that part of the population was growing. So watching that was very interesting. And as far as like, from my experience, I felt that I kind of changed with the school. So I don't know, I can't necessarily say that I had a challenge, because I was changing with them. So I don't know if I'm the right person to ask that question. Because like I said, I didn't go from a privileged school to an unprivileged school. Or the other way - underserved school to a privileged school. Most of my years, I felt like I was in

transition from that standpoint. From the background of students and their lives and how they lived their lives from a financial and social and whatever emotional standpoint. I felt like I shifted with them. So like I said, I don't I just don't know, I don't know if I can ask that question. Probably. So yeah.

DB
Okay, what challenges did you experience with motivating students to learn in your program?

RHO
I think I answered that earlier, it's the challenges were with a underserved household or underserved kids was trying to learn more about them. Trying to learn more about what makes them tick, what makes them want to do well. And a lot of that I learned from the interactions with them and their parents. I mean, all kids at that age, they all like video games, and they all like, like tennis shoes, and getting this and that whatever. But learning their core values was very, very important. And so that meant to be involved with the parents and, talking to them a lot and getting them into socials to where the parents, came to the band hall, either it was before a football game, or at a football game, or just whenever I get parents into the band hall booster meetings, just getting really talking to them. Sometimes not even talking about the kids. We're just talking about the parents and what do they do for fun? Or what do they do to make life happen? And so, once I found the values of the parents, which almost 150% echoed in the values of the kids, then I use that to overcome any kind of motivational challenges I had. Because I knew more of what was important to them.

DB
How has the cultural backgrounds to background of your students affect the music selection in concert and marching band for your program?

RHO
None. Not at all. I didn't use their cultural or background or anything. I just felt like, okay, I know what these kids can do like and then so that I would just pick appropriate music. So, for me it was just picking appropriate music that I needed to be successful with. Sometimes if it happened to just match culturally with the students I had then that's an added plus. But I think that just picking the right music, to making sure that they could sound good on it. That was like my number one thing.

DB
Describe any positive or negative outcomes you've experienced that you that you experience with teaching music to students in your program, any positive or negative outcomes

RHO
to the underserved kids. Yes. I think I think like I said, it's like, teaching the music teaching the background to underserved kids and talking about the cultural. It was just about like, they just the gratefulness and it was just it was awesome. So.

DB

What did you learn about yourself through teaching students who maintain different backgrounds than you that made you a better educator?

RHO
Oh, yeah. I mean, so I learned, like I said, I learned that kids are kids. And it did not matter. It did not matter where they came from, or what they had at home. Just set the standards high, and all kids can achieve from any background. And I am a firm believer of that because I did it myself. Like, I've had kids that had no money, and nothing in their life. And from what I hear and what I hear from the parents like they're the struggles were real Delton. The struggles of some of the kids at ▮▮▮▮▮▮ were real. But yet they came to the band hall. And they sat down and they put instruments to their face, and then they became All-Staters. ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ ▮▮▮▮▮▮. And it was like one of the most remarkable things I've ever seen in my life. But that's when I knew that just put a standard there and kids are kids. It doesn't matter where they come from all kids can achieve.

Vertner W. Tandy

DB
Based on your experience with students in an underserved high school band program, how does a student's background and cultural experiences outside of the classroom influenced your instruction?

VWT
I think that all of our instruction has to be tailored fit to what the students bring into the classroom each day. And I think it'd be irresponsible to teach as though that that their cultural experiences are irrelevant. So, the way that I teach, sometimes even the content of what I teach, as a music teacher is directly influenced to or influenced by their culture because of I know that if they don't have an interest or they have an issue, connecting to it personally, that they will not study it at the level that they would material that they do have an interest with.

DB
Based on your experience with students in an underserved high school band program, how do your students background and cultural experiences affect the standards you set, maintain, and uphold for the program?

VWT
I am mindful of I think there's a difference between cultural differences as opposed to socio economic and I'm very careful not to equate the two because I think that we do a disservice to students in setting expectations that are lower because we assume that a student cannot achieve at the same level as someone else who is not a part of a perhaps minority sub population. So, I'm very careful to make sure that the standards I set are pedagogically sound regardless of the student that I'm teaching. However, I am sensitive to the methods that we use to get there so that that directly affects instruction in that you know, and being that we know that the end goal and the expectation for high performance is unchanged, but I have to be sensitive to the fact that my student, you know, may or may not be able to afford $1,000 bill for private lessons and masterclasses throughout the school year. So, I have to tailor my instructional techniques to ensure that the students get to those goals. And the only way or the only reason that I would alter

those goals would be if I could not identify the method for the student to fairly have the opportunity to achieve the goal. So, my goals are most certainly 100% attainable, and they are high goals. However, I am very careful to ensure that the students have every opportunity to actually meet those goals. In terms of maintaining them, I am very also very careful not to operate and function insensitively. Meaning that there are just some areas and there's some students who come from a cultural background that I don't identify with, and I am very sensitive to and open to the fact that some of the things that I implement, may not actually resonate or work with their culture. You know, for example, I have students that identify as Jehovah's Witness, and there are some celebration guidelines and things that are a part of their religion. Some people have fasting and so you think about marching band, you know, sometimes the marching band gets called to be a part of a celebration. I have some people who practice to the extent that they don't want to be a part of that or that that conflicts with their cultural background. Then, for example, in the fasting, you know, because oftentimes their cultural background relates to other you know, norms, and values and belief systems that you have. It's very hard to work with students who are fasting and yet you're asking them to be out in 100-degree weather. So needless to say, I set high expectations, I am sure to maintain them and what I view as the fairest way possible, because I think doing so doing otherwise would be a disservice. But I'm also not blind to the fact that I have cultural blind spots. And I think a part of my job is to ensure that I know how to identify those blind spots and I also know how to work with students and their parents to find solutions to get them to achieve in a way that also was in line with what they believe in their normal day to day activity.

DB
Based on your experience with students in an underserved high school band program, how does your student's background and cultural experiences affect the way you form relationships?

VWT
Um, because I identify as a member of a minority subgroup myself, I think I pick my story is probably a little bit different, because I find that those who have some type of similarity with me based on that I relate to them fairly easily. And then also other students very generally, although there are some differences, I think, having a teacher as a person of color, it makes building those relationships, a little bit different than it would some of my counterparts who are not, who don't identify as a part of a minority subgroup. That being said, I'm very, I instructionally, I stick to the material to the content. However, in terms of building relationships, I, you know, I'm careful to include you know, just things that they find relevant things that they can relate to experiences that they can relate to. So, I believe that, you know, with me, being able to match the cultural background of several of my students, or at least just being a person of color. I think that it's essential and I think that it has only made it easier to relate to the students. And I also recognize the importance of that because I was also in the classroom as a student. And I remember wishing that I could work with professionals that looked a little bit more like me, or could maybe even just relate to the fact that you know, nobody else in the room or there weren't as many people in the room at that time, that looked like me. So, I knew the importance of having people that I could identify with, just as people and I've not forgotten that as I've taken on my role in the classroom.

DB

Now that you have been a high school band director for a while you have developed a sense of your value as a music educator. How does working with students in an underserved area align with or not those values?

VWT
The students, so first of all, I guess, it's important to note that the student's values of the program are shifting to match my values because I believe that that is an essential part of what we do. My job is not only to teach them the content, but my job is also to teach and instill values especially as it relates to music. So, my values are not different because I serve in a minority majority High School, musically. My values are not any different. In fact, if anything, I make it a point to ensure that the students have the opportunity to have just as high quality and experience or just a relevant experience, one that they feel proud of what they are passionate about, as with any student, you know. So, I don't let that change and in fact, I would say it's a point of mine, personally in terms of my philosophy to ensure that I'm imparting that value to the students because in a way it becomes a mechanism for affirming who they are, and letting them know that yes, you can perform at a high level regardless of where you're coming from. And once you get to that point, you know, I believe music and the height of it is being able to be expressive and extremely creative. So, I always like my grading rubrics, for example. The grading rubric read the highest level read that students should be challenging the notion of the ideal. And what that points to and what that leads to the fact is that people should listen to them and not doubt the quality that they're performing with the sound or the technique. It's not about that at that point. They should be performing to the extent that someone might even be able to disagree with their interpretation. But they respect the approach and they respect the discipline and the preparation that it took for the performance. So, I don't know if that about answers the question but to me, my values are unchanged with regards to what I believe the students should be able to achieve and do. And I don't basically create a set of sub standards for them, because I feel like in a way that's almost neglectful, and it again does a disservice and also just unfair, if you know if I could say that.

DB
What are your thoughts on success and attaining success in a high school band programming in underserved area?

VWT
I think two things I think we have to define what success is for our students. But I also think we have to do it's like walking a fine line. Because unfortunately, in working in an underserved area versus one that might be more affluent or one that serves a different population of students. Unfortunately, the standardized models that we have for students to display and perhaps achieve success in our system are not always considerate of or friendly towards or as beneficial as they could be towards students that you know, are in underserved populations. And I have to be very careful with how I define success with students. I have to I find that for example, you know, there's a competition that we attend every single year. It's a statewide organization. And for me, I find that I actually have to print out the rubrics, and I have to teach the content of the rubric I have to teach how the rubric is set up. I have to show the students how they can compete within that system. And also, I extend that further and I put them in the place of the evaluator, and I let them go through exercises so that they can have an understanding as to what an evaluator's or an

adjudicator's perspective might be. And I say all that to say it is constantly a push and pull, because the students have that information, they do you know, and may have received awards and such, but their level of success has not been the same as some other programs that are just in a different situation in a different environment. And one of my jobs as the director of an underserved program, is to ensure that the students constantly recognize their growth without handicapping their notion of the ideal and their notion of success. Because at the end of the day, the standard does not change and the competition is still fierce and to give them a mindset that they cannot achieve that is impossible, is detrimental, and I think also irresponsible. So, I define what success is and I make sure that that definition of success relates to you know what everyone else also deals with. Because I think the opposite end of the spectrum is that some directors try to set up this protective bubble around their students and try to create, I don't know like this exemption from the rest of the schools surrounding them because they feel like their students have a disadvantage. But I think doing so reinforces a mindset in the students that they cannot achieve well, and that I refuse to believe that's true. And I refuse to participate in any action that causes a student to have a deficit mindset of their abilities.

DB
How have you created an environment in your band program that considers your students background and culture?

VWT
It's very difficult. The first part is is musical selection. I try very hard to make sure that I don't play pieces that the students cannot relate to at all. I don't care how standard it is. I don't care how you know well known it is within the profession. I think that the students can't enjoy the music or if they can't relate to it. I don't play it. That's as simple as it is. There has to be something about our marching shows that are interesting. There has to be something about the music that we play for the concert season that the students can relate to. Also, I very specifically and this is just me, I theme our programs, very similar to what is done in the marching season where you have like visuals and concepts that you build around. In the concert season, I do the same because I find that if we're in a situation where a student cannot relate to the material, I can at the very least I can teach a theme. I can show them how the music is all connected and how we are trying to build and work towards a common theme and I can treat it as something that the students can actually get behind if it's something that they don't initially relate to. That also being said, I think in the marches, specifically thinking about marching season. There has to be something for our audience. There just has to be. I don't just get up there and play things that you know we're at a football game and the community is sitting right there. And if the kids don't, if they're unable to get some type of reaction out of their family members, or people who are at the school and they say that support the school that's demoralizing for them. So, I make choices about what happens in the stands that are not necessarily always looked highly upon, but I do it because I know it's important for the students to get positive feedback from their family and from the community at large. So that's another example of things that I do to make sure in the classroom the students relate to what they do. The other thing is community performances. You know, you don't just do evaluations that you're required to do. I can think of one student who identifies as biracial he's half African American and half Latin American, and there was a black history program it can be in the black history program that someone reached out to the school about. And I thought it was important to give the student an opportunity to participate in a

program like that. He'd never done anything like that. So, I used the community performance as an opportunity for the student to build his own connection to the material. So, I say that to say I do things intentionally as a teacher. I plan things intentionally as a teacher to ensure that you know the materials relatable, but then also I support activities and opportunities for students to build their own connections. Because the reality is, especially if I don't have that same experience and although that student, you know, is at least half racially congruent to myself, ethnically, I should say, I still don't have his experience, you know. And it's important to create the opportunity for him to build and construct his own meaningful experiences and his own relationship and connection between what he does and the community and what he finds and values as important.

DB
How has the cultural characteristics of your students made it either easier or more difficult to teach music and your program?

VWT
Me personally, I think okay, so difficult in the sense that my students have to perform music at times that is written in a way that it's very different than what they might innately encounter at home. And I mentioned church, I mentioned church because, for example, if a student has a gospel background at their church or contemporary sound at their church, that's music that they grow up around, but it is not the same as the music that we might play for a formal evaluation. And that being said, I have to teach the content you know, like the rhythm and the just the basic tonal elements of the music, but I also have to teach, I have to kind of assert the material's value. I have to explain what's happening so that the students can actually relate what they need to do to the demands of the peace. However, and I say that because there are some of my students whose churches, you know, they have a pipe organ and they hear wind ensembles, playing for special occasions and they are actually used to and immersed in that sound. So, there are some students who automatically click and relate to what's going on to some of the challenges that we do, and there are some other students who it's completely new to them. So, with the diversity of my program, I find that I have to basically establish common ground before we can all move forward together. However, I think that there are some advantages because I think that my students because of the music that might be played at home because of just the general approach to music making, I find that my students possess some natural abilities, to be honest, their sense of rhythm and pulse at times can be heightened. You know, and it does vary by, you know, student by student, but you know, especially I have some students that come from an afro Latina background, and they're the music that their family listens to, is very rhythmically challenging and complex. So that being said, when I you know, am doing a project or I'm playing a piece that has some challenging rhythms and meters, I noticed that those students don't struggle the same way that some of my other students who, who maybe grew up around some more straightforward music. I don't know if that is making any sense, but there are some advantages culturally because as a trend in especially classical Wind Ensemble literature, we're starting to try to address and find ways to include diversity in our sound and I find that if I match the music to what some of the cultural experiences are of our students, I can really create situations in which the students shine. And that is a part of, I believe, culturally responsive teaching, which is, you know, making sure that I give the students opportunities to shine with their natural and innate abilities, as at the same time, as I challenged them to be flexible and adaptable to whatever is in their face. So, I

think there are pros and cons and I also believe that the pros outweigh the cons. It just, it's just all about teaching, but I never I refuse to adopt the mindset that the students have a deficit of some sort because they don't identify with a certain subgroup or population group.

DB
What challenges do you experience with motivating students to learn in your program?

VWT
If they well it's two things Number one, it they're not interested in what we're doing, they they check out as simple as it is. So, it's always a constant challenge to make sure that I maintain interest, or the ability for them to relate or connect to what we're doing. And unfortunately, the way that things are set up, it can be we can ask situations to where we can have situations to where the students don't relate to what they're doing. And yet we have to do it as a part of the demands of our program, either by district policy, or statewide initiative, is we just have to do it so I have to, I have to play that game of sparking their interest. But then also, I can Would you mind repeating the question also so I can make sure I address it fully.

DB
What challenges do you have with motivating students to learn and your program?

VWT
The other the other thing is also they're teenagers, you know, and the long story short also is sometimes they really lacked motivation. And I also find that the way because my program is extremely diverse, motivating them requires a diverse approach to technique, meaning that I have to motivate different people in different ways. And I have to have multiple motivational strategies at play at once to get everybody to that same common ground that I mentioned before. Whereas in some programs that may not be as diverse there's less strategies at play, and therefore things are a little bit more simplified. So, I don't know if that's if that's making any sense or addressing your question, but the challenge is, yeah, the challenges are you've got to apply multiple strategies and you've also got to be open to the fact that your strategy might not be working, and you got to go back to you gotta go back to square one more often than some people you know, and that's the challenge.

DB
How has well, you've answered these two questions pretty good. These next two questions, and I said, I'll just give them to you. So you know, how as a cultural background of your students affected music selection in concert and marching band, but you've answered that already high as a cultural background of your students affected program, traditions, or program operations, if you want to elaborate on that just a little bit you can the program traditions or program operations, like rehearsals, etc. Okay?

VWT
Now, that's actually a very interesting, a very interesting consideration, because I find that some tradition did not and do not match the current student populace. And if as a teacher, who is I actually happen to grow up in the community that I teach, and so that's something to note and consider. But I don't continue traditions that don't serve the students in any way. Because there's

not a situation on my campus where the alumni are extremely active, and or vocal. And so, if there's something that's happening, and I find that it doesn't serve the students, and they're not it's not something that they feel connected to. I have to be very careful with my resources. And so as depending on what the action is, depending on you know, what that tradition entails, there are some things that I will let go of. But I also I do start new traditions. For example, in senior recognitions, the students at my school actually are predominantly Hispanic serving or Latin American serving. And family is something that I think is highly valued with the population of students that I serve. So, on senior night, the student's kind of actually have a tradition of acting as a family and they set up chairs and celebrations for the students. That's something that I had never seen done before. But they make it. All I did with that tradition, was make sure that every single senior was recognized fairly. So, the students every year they make committees of themselves and they ensure that every senior has a chair set up and there's at least one or two people who contribute to decorating the chair and giving gifts. So, I think that's an example of you know, there's a tradition standing with the program. And I maintain it because it serves students. It's something that makes them feel at home. Something that gives them a sense of connection to the program. So, that's what I do, you know, in that instance. However, I don't keep anything that doesn't, that does not serve the current population of students. I'm not going to do that. And then I'm also just thinking, I'm just trying to think of other examples is like seeing your chairs and recognition. Yeah, I think that's That about sums that up.

DB
Describe any positive or negative outcomes you've experienced that you have experienced with teaching music to students in your program?

VWT
Positive outcomes, we are the highest ranked district in the state Honor Band competition. We have two years running a superior rating with the wind ensemble. We've not scored anything lower than an excellent rating. We have initiated new programs. Our jazz program has been rebooted and it is now getting local recognitions. We have started an indoor percussion team and so they've been bumped up in their competition. We have a colorguard program that is the silver champion of North Texas Colorguard Association, and has been recognized in WGI as well Winterguard International. And we had the highest number of students advance to phase two in the TMEA All-Region competition, and we have had over 45 students each year be named as members of the region band. This year I think we reached the double digits of students who advanced to area in that competition. No All-Staters yet, but we're working on it. We have also in the last year we have had over collectively over 150 students advanced qualify and advanced to the Texas State solo and ensemble competition and we have several students who have gone on to be music majors earning scholarships across the country. Oh, those are achievements. Challenges. We have had students who have left our program because of the rigor and the challenges and this doesn't line up with their home situation. You know, I actually have lost some high achieving students because their families insist that they need more time to focus on academics. I've also lost some students whose families say that they need their student at home to watch siblings and do other duties and responsibilities around the house or even take up a job to pay for household expenses. So those are some of the challenges that we've had. We've lost some personnel. But in terms of recognition, there's no shortage of recognition for our program.

DB
What have you learned about yourself through teaching students through teaching students who maintain different backgrounds than you that will make you a better educator?

VWT
I have an appreciation for my ability to just listen to students. I have always known that you know, I have been known as an effective communicator. But here particularly in this role, I've learned to really highlight the value in listening to the students and being responsive. Like actually taking the time to hear what they have to say. But then also, I've learned that there have been situations where I'm having to assert what I have to say. And that being said, that's a part of taking care of the kids. It's all about the kids and we have to take care of them. So, you can't take care of them without listening to you know, their perspectives and their just their experience. But you also can't take care of them without being very firm and very vocal and adamant about the direction of the program and what that means in terms of their responsibilities. I think it's both you have to do both. I also will say that I know that I do not want to teach in an environment that is not diverse and that does not have at least some presence of the types of students that I that I teach now. I feel connected to that. I feel a sense of responsibility. I feel a sense of fulfillment in teaching students with diverse backgrounds. And I also feel uniquely qualified because I watch some of my other colleagues struggle in areas that I don't struggle in, namely picking material that the students relate to. But then also just being able to relate to them personally and take care of them. And just really push the students. I feel that I have some unique qualities that qualify me to do the job that I'm doing. And I also, over the years have learned that you know, I can do it because as a teacher, you take on a position and you always have your moments of you know, basically doubting your ability. But I think the things that we've been able to accomplish, but more importantly the lives that we've been able to change, it affirms the fact that I am in the right place and I'm doing what I need to be doing.

Annie C. Singleton

DB
Based on your experience with students in an underserved high school band program, how does a student's background and cultural experiences outside of the classroom influence your instruction?

ACS
All right, read it to me one more time. How do their background influence

DB
How does a student's background and cultural experiences outside of the classroom influence your instruction?

ACS
Well, I think regardless of their background, every child has individual needs and every group has individual needs. And so really, we assess and I really just do my very best to meet those needs. Taking into account what the students need individually and I try to be very aware of their backgrounds and their, their home lives and those situations.

DB
Based on your experience with students in underserved high school band program, how do your students background and cultural experiences affect the A standards you set, the standards you maintain, and the standards you uphold for the program?

ACS
That doesn't affect any way that we set standards. We have very high standards, regardless of what school or what population that I'm teaching. I believe that kids can meet any standards that are set for them regardless of their backgrounds. I have the highest standards for my students. Again, we assess them based on their abilities not based on their backgrounds or their financial situations or their home situations. We take every child where they're at and we try to push them as far as we can push them thinking through, again, what their needs are as we go outside of, you know, what's given to us or what type of what they have to help them meet their needs, monetarily if we have to do more fundraising, we do more fundraising. If they need more lessons, just based on their talent and ability levels, if they don't have the money to get lessons, then we find a way to provide that for them. But I would say I never ever changed my standards based on their financial needs or their financial backgrounds or needs.

DB
Okay, based on your experience with students in an underserved of high school band program, how do you a student's background and cultural experiences affect the way you form relationships?

ACS
Again, it doesn't, we don't I don't see them that way, or think of them that way. Children are there to learn and we're there to teach and to be mentors and to be guiders and help for them and to be resources for them. It doesn't change. I would say that I connect more probably with students that don't have as much money but are willing to do the work or that have a passion for our activity because it's very similar to my background. I grew up very poor. And my parents didn't have a whole lot of money and they were creative and I was creative and finding ways to get what I needed to be successful. The same thing with college and my seniors as they're getting ready to graduate. They say, I don't have any money. Well, that doesn't stop you from going to college. So, based on my past experience that actually helps me to connect with those students probably on a more meaningful and deeper level. And I would say I'm a good resource in that aspect. I think it's something that students don't necessarily know about me right away. But as they learn about it, I think it helps them to connect with me. Which is again it's not something that I share with every student. But if a student has a pretty similar situation, I would say I share that information and it helps them to realize that people can still be very successful despite their current situations or monetary advantages, I guess.

DB
Now that you have been a high school band director for a while you have developed a sense of your values as a music educator. How does work with students in an underserved area align with or not those values?

ACS

Again, I've never really tried to look at it in those terms. The activity that we do, I feel is very important for students' growth and development and there's so much more to life after band. What we're really trying to do is teach kids how to be successful in life and it does help that I teach an underserved population because we do our very best to show them that they can be successful, despite adversity in the face of adversity. And that's not a limitation and it doesn't have to be a limitation and that they don't have to have low standards for themselves or they don't have to think less or that they can be less successful just because of their situations. I just feel like all students deserve the opportunity to have music education and to be successful and to learn those life lessons. So regardless again, of their backgrounds, we're just trying to teach them how to be successful members of the community beyond high school.

DB
What are your thoughts on success and attaining success in a high school band program in an underserved area?

ACS
I think it's possible. I do think that there are limitations because I do think it is a money game. I think schools with more money and students with more parent involvement and more monetary investment are more set up to be successful from those standpoints. But I don't believe that your population defines whether or not your program can be successful. I think all students can be successful. Whether they believe it or not. I think I work with a lot of students who don't believe or have been told that they can't be successful, but they can be successful. There are many examples of programs that are underserved, and that are still being very, very successful and very competitive.

DB
How have you created an environment in your band program that considers your students background and culture?

ACS
I think we try not to actually focus on it or make it an issue or an item because I don't want it to be something that they focus on. I want it to just be everybody is capable and that the people have put in the work will get the results. Personally, I feel it's very, very important not to focus on you know what you don't have, but to focus on how to get what you want.

DB
How have the cultural characteristics of your students made it either easier or more difficult to teach music in your program?

ACS
Well, I think lot of our kids have been told throughout their lives that don't expect much of themselves. Don't think about college. You're basically just going to help raise your family and then go into a trade from there. I think they have really low standards for themselves and low expectations for themselves. Not all but some. And I feel like actually overcoming that and getting the confidence in them and, getting students to realize that they can be, again successful despite their situations. It's one of the biggest things. Having high standards for kids that have

not necessarily had high standards set for them or modeled for them. I find it really hard sometimes to try to get kids to meet the expectations because it's not standards or expectations that they have experienced or that have been modeled for them. And I would say that is probably the biggest challenge and the biggest roadblock.

DB
What challenges do you have in relating to the cultural backgrounds of your students in your program?

ACS
I think because now that I am educated and successful, I think students have the perception of me that I have a whole lot of money. And I think they think that I can't relate to them, because I'm not like them. I feel like I've had some trouble historically reaching my students because I think they have a perception of me that's not necessarily true. And once they get to know me and know my background, I think they understand a little bit more about that. And I use it as sort of a rags to riches or, a success despite the odds type of a thing. But I would say just based on my look, I think people do get the wrong idea about me and I think they don't know my background. So, I think it gives them the wrong impression. And I think they have trouble relating to me until they know about me.

DB
How has the cultural background of your students affect music selection in concert and marching band for your program?

ACS
I try to really pick music that I feel fits the ensemble always. I'm not always trying to be hyper aware of their backgrounds. But I will say when I pick marching shows, I do try to pick music that I feel that my clientele will enjoy and understand. But I don't always pick it for them. It's usually what I would like too. So, I feel if I would enjoy listening to it, the average marching band crowd member at our Friday night games would like it. But I am always aware of that, especially in the marching band venue. But I try to make sure that it is still educational and appropriate. And not just what students want to play. But I don't know that students from all backgrounds, they want to just play what they hear on the radio. So, again, we're trying to make sure it's educational in the band setting. But I am aware of it, but I will say more my choices are affected and picked based on what's going to match their abilities, and what they're going to enjoy and what is going to be a musically fulfilling experience for them or what they're going to enjoy playing musically. I don't know that kids from different backgrounds like or hate different pieces of concert music based on their economic backgrounds. I guess I don't think of it that way.

DB
How has the cultural background of your students affect program traditions or program operations, like rehearsal schedules, things like that?

ACS
Yeah, that's a good question. We do have to be aware that many of our students have part time jobs outside of the classroom. And so, we do have to schedule marching band rehearsals with as

much sensitivity to that as possible. But again, I think kids at all schools have to have part time jobs. So, I mean, we are aware of their needs, but I would probably, again, make the schedule the same anywhere because, like I said, all kids are going to have to work and all in kids and all programs are going to have to be responsible for watching their siblings. I am aware of it and I will say I am sensitive to those needs. I would say I try not to punish a kid if they have to stay home and watch their siblings. Or if they're not able to make it for certain reasons. But again, we try really hard to say if it's important to you, you'll find a way and to really push the no excuses side of it again, but being aware of their situations on an individual basis.

DB
Describe any positive or negative outcomes that you have experienced with teaching music to students in your program.

ACS
I think it has been really rewarding when we realize that the kids are starting to buy into the fact that they can be successful despite in the face of adversity. I would say that's really rewarding. It is difficult to get kids to that point. They see all the groups around us, like in as marching band is a good example. They see all the groups around us with all of the very expensive looking things, and so it's hard to convince them that they can be that successful too, if they just work really hard. But again, it all goes back to you put in the work you get the results.

DB
What have you learned about yourself through teaching students who maintain different backgrounds in you that will make you a better educator?

ACS
I will say, it's definitely helped me to look at things from all perspectives and from all sides. Again, I can understand my students and where they're coming from, but my situation is completely different than all of their situations. And so, I would say it's definitely made me more sensitive and more aware and more understanding, and at the same time, knowing that they can still be successful. So, continuing to we just don't do excuses. We don't let kids have excuses and we don't we don't do excuses. We don't let them have excuses. It's just kind of our big thing.

Appendix I

Follow-Up Interview Responses

Henry A. Callis

DB
How has your view regarding culturally responsive pedagogy changed since our last conversation?

HAC
I really have not changed anything in my approach or expectations.

DB
Describe your initial concerns or apprehensions regarding a culturally responsive pedagogy.

HAC
In my opinion, a culturally responsive pedagogy should not lower correct and/or high musical standards. ALL students are capable of achieving if given the tools and CORRECT information to achieve. To lower standards due to socio-economic situations or race would be an insult and is not fair to those students.

DB
Describe your feelings and your perception of the role you play

HAC
I try to be a motivator of teachers in under-served communities as well as give them the pedagogical tools to succeed.

DB
Describe if there were occasions when you felt uneasy or inadequate since our last interaction about your ability to teach students that were not of the same background and/or ethnicity as you.

HAC
None. I am very comfortable with this environment.

DB
Describe one big idea that discovered through this experience.

HAC
All students can learn. However, I have noticed that students are slow to self-initiative when faced with a high goal or daunting task. I think this has been programmed into them from an early age through our rigorous and relentless testing and retesting. Students learn how to postpone learning because we do it for them rather than guiding them to discover it for

themselves. Also, timelines and deadlines often do not seem to matter because we make to many accommodations regarding due dates.

DB
Describe any events that surprised you or were unexpected resulting from your attempt to utilize cultural responsiveness in the classroom.

HAC
I have always been struck by how loyal and generally kind students were from this background.

DB
Describe any positive experiences that you encountered as a result of heightened awareness of culturally responsive pedagogy.

HAC
I have seen students exceed at a very high level in a short amount of time, I have seen students become increasingly motivated to reach others and want to become teachers.

DB
Describe any characteristics about yourself that you may have learned while operating with a mindset of being culturally responsive in the classroom.

HAC
I have learned to take my eyes off my own needs and become more aware of other people's needs. I have learned to ask myself why a student does not engage and learned how to look for ways to engage them.

Charles H. Chapman

DB
How has your view regarding culturally responsive pedagogy changed since our last conversation?

CHC
It has not changed as I pride myself in always being a culturally response director

DB
Describe your initial concerns or apprehensions regarding a culturally responsive pedagogy.

CHC
No initial concerns

DB
Describe your feelings and your perception of the role you play.

CHC
I love it! I'm always very culturally responsive

DB
Describe if there were occasions when you felt uneasy or inadequate since our last interaction about your ability to teach students that were not of the same background and/or ethnicity as you.

CHC
None so far. We've built a family-like atmosphere here

DB
Describe one big idea that discovered through this experience.

CHC
No ideas discovered

DB
Describe any events that surprised you or were unexpected resulting from your attempt to utilize cultural responsiveness in the classroom.

CHC
Funny story: I had a couple of Hispanic students tell me that we play to many Hispanic selections

DB
Describe any positive experiences that you encountered as a result of heightened awareness of culturally responsive pedagogy.

CHC
It's been about the same before and after the interview.

DB
Describe any characteristics about yourself that you may have learned while operating with a mindset of being culturally responsive in the classroom.

CHC
Maybe I'm overly culturally sensitive.

Eugene K. Jones

DB
How has your view regarding culturally responsive pedagogy changed since our last conversation?

EKJ
Nothing has really changed in how I think about this topic, other than a reaffirmation of by belief that all teachers should be proactive in their thinking about and planning for the most effective ways to present lessons to students of all cultures that will achieve the most effective learning.

DB
Describe your initial concerns or apprehensions regarding a culturally responsive pedagogy.

EKJ
My only concerns are "getting it right" without being perceived by students as being patronizing. Students can see through uncomfortable or forced approaches from their teachers and will respond (or not respond) accordingly.

DB
Describe your feelings and your perception of the role you play.

EKJ
It's my role to adapt myself to the needs of each student and to figure out what the most effective, honest approaches are to get the best results for them.

DB
Describe if there were occasions when you felt uneasy or inadequate since our last interaction about your ability to teach students that were not of the same background and/or ethnicity as you.

EKJ
I can honestly say I haven't felt uneasy or inadequate with students from different backgrounds or ethnicity from me in this time period. I've actually felt uneasy a few times when working with students of the same ethnicity (and probably higher socio/economic level).

DB
Describe one big idea that discovered through this experience.

EKJ
Again, a reaffirmation of my belief that it's the teacher who has to be willing to adapt to the needs of all students, but also take a proactive approach to learning about and accepting those from different backgrounds and ethnicities, without any personal judgement, in order to guide all students to the same levels of achievement.

DB
Describe any events that surprised you or were unexpected resulting from your attempt to utilize cultural responsiveness in the classroom.

EKJ
I really haven't been surprised by anything. When students are met with respect and understanding in a natural and honest manner from their teachers, they always respond in a positive way.

DB
Describe any positive experiences that you encountered as a result of heightened awareness of culturally responsive pedagogy.

EKJ

Although not perfect, I've always been pleased with the overall culture of the programs I've been a part of over my teaching career due to the embracement multi-cultural and mixed-race student groups.

DB

Describe any characteristics about yourself that you may have learned while operating with a mindset of being culturally responsive in the classroom.

EKJ

I like myself as a human being better as I've learned over time to accept and embrace the differences of my students.

Nathaniel A. Murray

DB

How has your view regarding culturally responsive pedagogy changed since our last conversation?

NAM

As I review my experiences it is undeniable that culturally responsive pedagogy is critical to build your own bands culture. For example: My understanding of a "quinceañera" was critical when I was teaching in ⬛⬛⬛⬛⬛, Texas. The shortest description is a celebration of a girl's fifteenth birthday and her transition from childhood to adulthood, typically involving a mass followed by a party. These traditions go back to the Aztec civilization. I had to understand the cultural importance, let them know I respect their cultural roots and help them make the best decisions when to celebrate this important milestone without interfering in responsibilities they have within the band program.

DB

Describe your initial concerns or apprehensions regarding a culturally responsive pedagogy.

NAM

All of my concerns where in myself. I tried to learn all I could from the students both in ⬛⬛⬛⬛⬛ and here in ⬛⬛⬛⬛⬛. I didn't come here to change their culture; I came here to learn their culture and co-exist with mutual respect for each other.

DB

Describe your feelings and your perception of the role you play.

NAM

My feelings were very focused on what traditions and values parents and students had in the ⬛⬛⬛⬛⬛. I knew I could not come into "their home", "their city" and make changes that I wanted. I felt like I was the one who needed to make changes but never lower expectations.

DB

Describe if there were occasions when you felt uneasy or inadequate since our last interaction about your ability to teach students that were not of the same background and/or ethnicity as you.

NAM
I have to say I have-not felt that but I do keep myself in a sense of inadequacy to keep myself seeking and continually questioning myself and my ability.

DB
Describe one big idea that you discovered through this experience.

NAM
I have talked to several colleagues since our discussions and I have realized many colleagues have allowed these cultural differences to interfere and stifle students' potential. They have allowed cultural beliefs or behaviors be an excuse for failure or even reasons why some students cannot learn. The real problem is not the cultural differences, it is the teacher allowing these differences to interfere instead of showing understanding and respects then re-directing to equally respect each other.

DB
Describe any events that surprised you or were unexpected resulting from your attempt to utilize cultural responsiveness in the classroom.

NAM
I don't have anything to add here.

DB
Describe any positive experiences that you encountered as a result of heightened awareness of culturally responsive pedagogy.

NAM
I find myself evaluating cultural influences as part of my own objectives when doing a clinic for a school district. It was always on my radar but now it is part of my analysis and objective before doing a band clinic.

DB
Describe any characteristics about yourself that you may have learned while operating with a mindset of being culturally responsive in the classroom.

NAM
Truly learn to listen more and speak less.

Robert H. Ogle

DB
How has your view regarding culturally responsive pedagogy changed since our last conversation?

RHO
It has allowed me to re-evaluate my perspective and allowed me to pin point any struggles to work on.

DB
Describe your initial concerns or apprehensions regarding a culturally responsive pedagogy.

RHO
I did not have any initial concerns with this topic

DB
Describe your feelings and your perception of the role you play

RHO
I feel strong and confident in my views and methods regarding culturally responsive pedagogy

DB
Describe if there were occasions when you felt uneasy or inadequate since our last interaction about your ability to teach students that were not of the same background and/or ethnicity as you.

RHO
Sometimes dealing with students/ adults who feel entitled seems to be a problem. And, even if they are people that do not have financial problems, they still have to be handled sensitively.

DB
Describe one big idea that discovered through this experience.

RHO
Continue to observe passively and actively to gain a better understanding of student's background and culture.

DB
Describe any events that surprised you or were unexpected resulting from your attempt to utilize cultural responsiveness in the classroom.

RHO
Sometimes there is backlash in asking innocent questions about what happens at home or within a community that I am inexperienced with.

DB
Describe any positive experiences that you encountered as a result of heightened awareness of culturally responsive pedagogy.

RHO
Being able to expose myself to different cultures and ways of life is always a positive experience.

DB
Describe any characteristics about yourself that you may have learned while operating with a mindset of being culturally responsive in the classroom.

RHO
Developing a more open and loving heart has been an amazing experience throughout this process.

Vertner W. Tandy

DB
How has your view regarding culturally responsive pedagogy changed since our last conversation?

VWT
My view regarding culturally responsive pedagogy has not changed since our last conversation. I do find that I have thought about it as I have reflected on various events that have occurred since our conversation.

DB
Describe your initial concerns or apprehensions regarding a culturally responsive pedagogy

VWT
I do not have any concerns or apprehension regarding culturally responsive pedagogy. If anything, I believe that more educators should be aware of the concept and that we as a profession can do a better job ensuring that new teachers have greater awareness of it. Further, the recognition systems in our profession should be revised to reflect the ideals   of culturally responsive pedagogy.

DB
Describe your feelings and your perception of the role you play.

VWT
I feel a great deal of weight being that I represent a minority subpopulation within the system that I teach in. Often times my views are seen as abstract, unnecessary, or frivolous. I often find myself having to explain my thinking and actions seemingly more than colleagues who do not belong to a minority subpopulation within the system I teach in or our profession at-large. I believe that this is largely due to low awareness of or value ascribed to culturally responsive pedagogy or related concepts.

DB
Describe if there were occasions when you felt uneasy or inadequate since our last interaction about your ability to teach students that were not of the same background and/or ethnicity as you.

VWT

I have not had any such occasions. However, I have felt alone in implementing initiatives and new ideas in preparation for the next marching season.

DB
Describe one big idea that discovered through this experience.

VWT
Oftentimes, I take my knowledge of culturally responsive pedagogy for granted. As a lead teacher, I realize that I need to take the time to ensure my entire staff is aware and takes a unified approach to incorporating culturally responsive pedagogy in our program.

DB
Describe any events that surprised you or were unexpected resulting from your attempt to utilize cultural responsiveness in the classroom.

VWT
I have not experienced any such events. I will say that I worked really hard to program music that the students would find interesting and engaging. However, some students chose not to engage in the process of music for personal feelings and/or reasons which interfered with our experience this semester.

DB
Describe any positive experiences that you encountered as a result of heightened awareness of culturally responsive pedagogy.

VWT
I have not experienced any distinctly negative or positive experiences directly related to culturally responsive pedagogy.

DB
Describe any characteristics about yourself that you may have learned while operating with a mindset of being culturally responsive in the classroom.

VWT
Most profoundly, I don't feel it takes a great deal of effort to operate with a mindset of being culturally responsive in the classroom, but that may not be the perception or experience of many of my other colleagues. I've always operated as a voice for diverse students/families as we shape district policy. However, I've learned that I need to be more vocal about culturally responsive pedagogy within my own team and communicate clearer frameworks for monitoring implementation.

Annie C. Singleton

DB
How has your view regarding culturally responsive pedagogy changed since our last conversation?

ACS

Honestly, I had to research culturally responsive teaching after our initial interview. I have started to learn more about the concept and have started to become more aware of how I approach teaching and guiding my students.

DB

Describe your initial concerns or apprehensions regarding a culturally responsive pedagogy.

ACS

Trying to be sensitive to my students and their needs but coming across insincere or insensitive.

DB

Describe your feelings and your perception of the role you play

ACS

Nervous!

DB

Describe if there were occasions when you felt uneasy or inadequate since our last interaction about your ability to teach students that were not of the same background and/or ethnicity as you.

ACS

Same! Nervous that I am not doing enough to meet the diverse needs of my students. I am not sure if my standards are appropriate for the clientele of my school population.

DB

Describe one big idea that discovered through this experience.

ACS

I need to be more educated on this topic to properly meet the needs of my students!

DB

Describe any events that surprised you or were unexpected resulting from your attempt to utilize cultural responsiveness in the classroom.

ACS

We talked after the school year ended, but I am committed to learning more and becoming a better teacher for my students.

DB

Describe any positive experiences that you encountered as a result of heightened awareness of culturally responsive pedagogy.

ACS

Increased relationships with students and parents.

DB
Describe any characteristics about yourself that you may have learned while operating with a mindset of being culturally responsive in the classroom.

ACS
I need to be more educated and sensitive on this topic to meet the needs of my staff, students, and community!

Appendix J

IRB Approval

This study was approved under Liberty University IRB-FY22-23-564.