2024

# Examining meaningfulness, caring, and culturally responsive teaching: a multiple case study of three instrumental performing ensembles

https://hdl.handle.net/2144/47928

BOSTON UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS

Dissertation

**EXAMINING MEANINGFULNESS, CARING,**

**AND CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE TEACHING:**

**A MULTIPLE CASE STUDY OF THREE INSTRUMENTAL**

**PERFORMING ENSEMBLES**

by

**CHARLES HENRY DOHERTY**

B.S., Duquesne University, 2004
M.M., Duquesne University, 2006

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Musical Arts

2024

Approved by

First Reader     _____

Paula A. Grissom-Broughton, D.M.A.
Assistant Professor and Chair of Music
Spelman College

Second Reader     _____

Karin S. Hendricks, Ph.D.
Associate Professor and Chair of Music Education

Third Reader     _____

Brian W. Kellum, Ed.D.
Lecturer in Music Education

## DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my loving, supportive, and infinitely patient wife Sarah. Thank you for always pushing me and always believing in me. I love you.

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

# EXAMINING MEANINGFULNESS, CARING,

# AND CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE TEACHING:

# A MULTIPLE CASE STUDY OF THREE INSTRUMENTAL

# PERFORMING ENSEMBLES

## CHARLES HENRY DOHERTY

Boston University College of Fine Arts, 2024

Major Professor:  Paula A. Grissom-Broughton, D.M.A., Assistant Professor and Chair of Music, Spelman College

## ABSTRACT

This multiple case study explores the influence of caring and culturally responsive teaching on the meaningful experiences of students within three secondary instrumental music programs. Employing Silverman's Tripartite View of Meaningfulness as a conceptual framework, in-depth interviews were conducted with three orchestra members and five jazz ensemble members, alongside interviews with three teachers from distinct schools and programs. Rehearsals, conducted both in-person and on Zoom during the coronavirus pandemic, were observed to analyze students' experiences within each group and identify overarching themes.

The findings highlight a strong correlation between teachers' expressions of care and meaningful experiences reported by students. Additionally, a profound emotional and cultural connection to selected repertoire emerged as a key facilitator of meaningful experiences. Students found meaning from their ensemble participation through various avenues, emphasizing the importance of teacher-student relationships, high expectations set by teachers, and the empowering effect of students' autonomy in their education,

fostered by teachers who exhibit care and foster learning communities. Additionally, some students found meaning in the inclusion of ethnic and cultural diversity content in the curricula, allowing for identification and representation.

This study contributes insights into how caring and culturally responsive teaching enhances the meaningfulness of students' experiences, particularly in instrumental music ensemble settings. Teachers who actively practice caring about, for, and with their students, while facilitating a connection to the ensemble's repertoire, play a pivotal role in fostering meaningful experiences. These findings add to the existing body of research supporting the significance of music education for all students and provide a nuanced understanding of student perspectives on what constitutes meaningful participation in instrumental music ensembles.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

# LIST OF FIGURES

**CHAPTER ONE**

"Meaningfulness arises when people find fulfillment and can connect positively with something beyond themselves" (Silverman, 2013, p. 28). Research suggests that music students find myriad experiences meaningful (Cape, 2012, 2013). A moving performance with a group of their peers, finally understanding and being able to play a difficult passage, or connecting to a piece of music at a deeper level are all examples of ways in which students may find meaning in their instrumental music experiences. Meaningful musical experiences appear most often to involve individual and group achievement and relationship building together (Cape 2012, 2013; Silverman, 2013).

I have not always been able to find meaning within making music. As a second-grade student, I began piano lessons, with only a small Casio keyboard on which to practice. Piano was something that I was good at, but as an 8-year-old boy, I did not even know I could find meaning in the sounds I was making on my keyboard. At the end of fourth grade, the time came to decide whether I wanted to join the school band and, if so, what instrument I wanted to play. I decided I wanted to play but was undecided as to which instrument I wanted to try. I had taken a liking to the cello during our exploratory music classes earlier that school year, so I thought that it might be a good fit.

Much to my dismay, my parents decided that I should play the trombone. Neither of them had a particular love of the instrument, but my cousin had played it when he was in school band and we had access to a free instrument, so the decision was made. I played trombone from grades five through eight, again being good at it without much effort, but not particularly loving the experience. I certainly would not have called it meaningful.

When it came time to sign up for courses in high school, I was ready to leave band. I had not enjoyed it in middle school very much and had stopped practicing altogether, though I was able to maintain my status as the first chair trombonist in the middle school band. Ultimately, I decided to continue in band for one year in high school, for no other reason than to earn my fine arts credit required by the state of Maryland to receive my diploma.

As it turned out, this was one of the best decisions I ever made. In high school band, I found a culture that fostered strong relationships and caring from other members of the ensemble, a teacher who seemed genuinely interested in both my success as a trombonist and the ensemble's success, and a place where I can definitively say I found meaning in what I was doing. I was a member of the concert band, jazz band, and marching band and found a group of people who "got me" like none had before. By the end of my ninth-grade year, I knew that I wanted to do for other people what my teacher had done for me: I wanted to be a band director.

Silverman (2013) wrote, "Surely meaning and meaningfulness are among the most important, worthy, and valuable aims and 'goods' of music teaching and learning" (p. 37). What was different about my experience in high school as compared to my elementary and middle school experiences? Why did I find more meaning in the experiences I had as an older musician than I did in my younger years? Finally, why were those meaningful experiences so difficult to recreate since that time?

Answers to these questions can be found within several theories of meaningfulness. McCormick and Scherer (2018) addressed meaningfulness as it relates

to understanding of educational concepts and how they can be related to students' lives. O'Neill (2017) discussed the role that musical identity plays in creating meaningful experiences for students, and Elliott and Silverman (2017) wrote about the role of musical identity in creating a meaningful life (p. 29). However, Silverman's (2013) Tripartite View of Meaningfulness, with its connection to compassionate caring, is ideal as a framework for this study.

## Statement of the Problem

Discourse around meaningfulness in music education has tended to focus on an adult professional or teacher-centered way of imposing value on students. As Cape (2012) stated, "inquiry into what is meaningful *to* students requires a shift in focus from the perspectives and values of those adults empowered to make educational decisions to the perspectives and values of those engaged in the day-to-day business of learning" (p. 15). Not only does this pedagogy involving a "master teacher" not allow for student voice in what they find meaningful or valuable, it also "runs parallel with societal notions of supremacy" (Hendricks, 2023, p. 13).

As the work of Hendricks (2018, 2021, 2023) has shown, compassionate care in music teaching is a way of showing "caring about, for, *and* with" students that "is also reflective of musical meaningfulness" (2023, p. 13). Involving students in determining what aspects of their education have value and meaning can make that meaning deeper. Culturally responsive teaching carries a mandate for what Gay (2010) calls "culturally responsive caring" (p. 48). This type of caring also involves caring *for* students and their academic success, rather than simply caring *about* them. This link between Noddings's

(1984, 2013) ethic of care, Hendricks's (2018, 2021, 2023) compassionate care, and Gay's (2018) culturally responsive caring are all key in arriving at meaningful experiences for students in music.

What happens when students are not having meaningful experiences? Many might simply quit and walk away from school music ensembles. We saw this in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. According to Weller (2021), there was an average of 8% loss in retention in junior high and middle school bands nationwide in the 2020–2021 school year. Many students, struggling with the isolation of virtual learning and inability to make music communally, did not find meaning in their school ensembles and left.

Others, when faced with a lack of meaningful experiences in band or orchestra, might remain in the program because they feel like they should or because they are being pressured by their parents, but they will likely not find joy in the act of ensemble music making. In fact, they may come to dislike music making as an activity all together when faced with a lack of meaningful experiences. This can be a worse fate than quitting the ensemble, as it actively teaches students to dislike making music.

Students may also struggle to find relevance to their lives beyond the ensemble when their experience is not meaningful to them. Although ensemble participation does not necessarily teach skills that are directly relevant to life outside of music, "it can, taught and learned well, impart rich meaning and purpose to people's lives" (Bowman, 2002, p. 63). A love of music making can be caried into adulthood and become a source for meaningful experiences for a person's entire life.

As Silverman (2020) wrote, "instrumental music education is *instrumental* in expanding the potentials of students' personhood" (p. 7). It is now more important than ever to provide an environment for students to have musical experiences that are meaningful *to them*. As students have navigated their ways through school in a global pandemic, many music programs have seen their numbers decrease significantly (Weller, 2021). The "need for human connection" discussed by Hendricks (2023, p. 5) was often not met by virtual teaching and music making, leading many students to decide to pursue other activities and experiences. Now, more than ever, students need experiences that are personally and communally meaningful, and the post-pandemic world provides an opportunity for music educators to evaluate, and likely rethink, the ways in which meaningful experiences can be offered.

### Meaningfulness

According to Silverman (2013), for musical experiences to have meaning, they should not only have subjective value to the individual, but also objective value in some other way, "*independent and outside of oneself*" (p. 28). This means that meaning does not exist simply because an individual finds fulfillment. It must also have value outside of that individual's experience to be meaningful, through intersubjectivity (having subjective value to multiple individuals) and objectivity (having value for other people based on its own merits). This is what Silverman, drawing on Wolf (2010), called the "Tripartite View or the Fitting Fulfillment View" of Meaningfulness, which incorporates an "objective" value of an action, person, or object into the amount of fulfillment a person receives from it (see a visual representation of this concept in Figure 1).
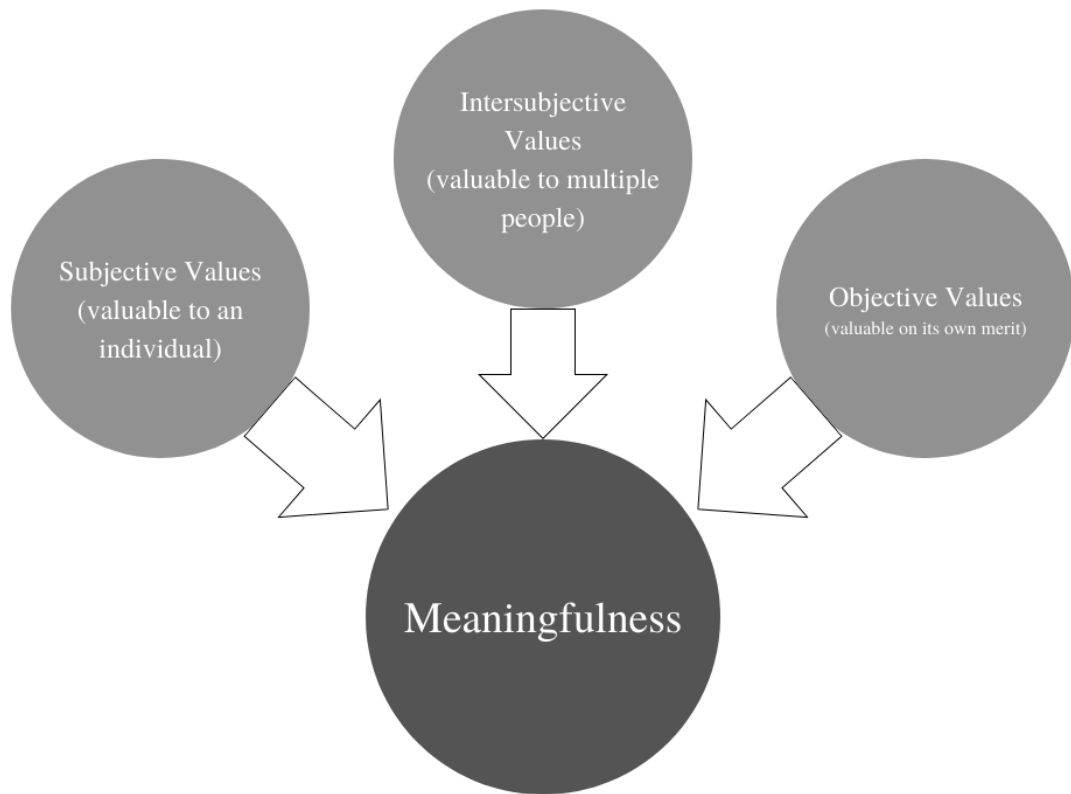
**Figure 1. Silverman's Tripartite View or Fitting Fulfillment View of Meaningfulness**

Music, however, does not always fit this view. As Elliott (2012) wrote, "making and listening to a special category of 'musical' sounds is rather unusual (if not downright odd)" (p. 63). At the same time, Silverman (2013) argued that "music cannot be reduced to sounds alone, or 'works' of music, as aesthetic philosophers often insist, and as traditional musicologists and theorists have believed. Music, conceived as 'musics,' in the sense of social-ethical practices, is much, much more" (pp. 34–35).

Silverman (2020) built on this idea by exploring the relationship between "a 4E concept of 'sense-making,' or a concept of mind that is embodied, embedded, enacted, and extended," and the Tripartite View of Meaningfulness as they relate to instrumental music education (p. 2). When considered from this 4E perspective, meaningfulness takes

on new dimensions.

> Its subjective, objective, and intersubjective dimensions come about because *we make it true* that such reasons of love are important because of the ways in which those persons, objects, and projects connect us both to ourselves and our works in significant ways. (Silverman, 2020, p. 8)

The myriad ways in which musical participation can occur provide many opportunities for students to find meaning in that participation. While I was not able to find meaning in my school experience by being "the best" or by simply making music in an ensemble in my elementary and middle school bands, I was able to find it in the community built in the high school music program. I did not find meaning in music making alone. Rather, I found it in making music with a group of people with whom I felt a strong connection outside of the music.

Silverman's (2013) concept of meaningfulness is complemented by research by Cape (2012), who addressed similar questions in her doctoral research. Whereas many studies prior to her research focused on what adults believed students ought to find meaningful, Cape's research focused on what the *students* found meaningful. Grounded in a pragmatic theory of symbolic interactionism and praxial philosophy, Cape (2012) found that "music was meaningful to participants in multiple, variegated ways" (p. 295). Participants across the multiple case study found the most meaning in achievement, both individual and group, and relationships formed and fostered within the ensembles. Similarly, Wolf (2010), using basketball as an example, said it "provides an opportunity for the cultivation and exercise of skill and virtue, for the building of relationships, and

for the communion that comes from enthusiasm for an immersion in a shared activity" (p. 128).

Although teachers, administrators, policymakers, and academics may believe they know what students *should* find meaningful in music courses, that may be different than what the students *actually* find meaningful. Cape (2012) posited that school music "should provide opportunities to be successful in ways that are meaningful *to the students in the group*, and they should take place withing a safe, supportive, and connected community" (pp. 320–321). Music teachers may be able to foster the sense of community that Cape described as so vitally important to meaningful experiences through caring and culturally responsive teaching.

**Caring and Meaningfulness**

According to Hendricks (2023), "care may be defined as demonstrations of benevolence, concern, compassion, or even love in relation to others" (p. 7). However, as she also made clear, "the notion of caring is sometimes misunderstood in practical contexts within music education—equated simply with kindness or associated with lowered expectations—and is often dismissed without consideration of its full value to music learning and teaching" (p. 7). If teachers practice caring from a perspective of student deficit rather than strength or potential, it can create a savior mentality on the part of the teacher that is not healthy or helpful for either person (Hendricks, 2018; 2023).

Held (2006) discussed the ethics of care, including its development "as a moral theory relevant not only to the so-called private realms of family and friendship but to medical practice, law, political life, the organization of society, war, and international

relations" (p. 9). She also brought caring to the forefront in the larger structures of society, rather than relegating it only to interpersonal relationships, stating, "care is needed in such contexts of justice as the streets and the courts, where persons should be treated humanely, and in the way education and health and welfare should be dealt with as social responsibilities" (p. 15). Silverman (2020) connected this idea to music education, saying that to encourage musicians to be socially aware and ethical, an ethic of care is a requirement. In music education, an ensemble director that insists on the need for caring within the organization creates an environment in which members not only feel cared for by the teacher, but also by their fellow musicians, allowing them to thrive both personally and musically. This shared sense of caring is largely responsible for the meaning I finally found in my own high school band experience.

Nodding's (1984, 2013) ethic of care describes the differences between caring *about* and caring *for* things and people. Hendricks et al. (2021) expanded on this idea, discussing the differences between caring *about*, caring *for*, and caring *with* others in the context of meaningfulness. Caring *about* another person simply involves having an awareness of their needs while caring *for* another person means "assuming responsibility to attend to those needs" (Hendricks, 2023, p. 12). Caring *for* requires action, not just understanding (Hendricks, 2018). In caring *for* things and people, rather than simply *about* them, "it inspires a shift in educational thought from merely teaching concepts and ideas, to a state of presence and human connection" (Hendricks, 2023, p. 9). As Hendricks et al. (2021) explained, "Reciprocal, relational experiences (caring *for*), as well as deepened value for certain musical activities (caring *about*), crystalize further

experience of musical meaningfulness" (p. 2).

If students and teachers are attuned to the feelings, values, and goals of others, that may be indicative of caring *with*, in which, "relational experiences become mutually reinforcing" (Hendricks et al., 2021, p. 2). Gilligan (1988) refers to this way of caring *with* as "mature care" and, according to Silverman (2013), it is through a sense of "self-and-other that we begin to grasp the nature of 'meaningfulness'" (p. 24). A relational approach to caring, in which both teacher and students feel cared about, for, and with, facilitates the opportunity for deep, meaningful experiences in and around making music that are not otherwise possible.

There are, of course, many ways in which teachers can create a culture of caring in their ensembles. The difficulty lies in understanding the differences between individuals and their needs. What does Billy need to feel cared for? How is that different than what Mykah needs? The experiences students bring to the classroom with them will determine what and how they need to experience caring. One of the ways in which we can care for, about, and with students from a wide variety of cultural, ethnic, and personal backgrounds is through what Gay (2012) calls culturally responsive caring, a key part of culturally responsive teaching.

**Culturally Responsive Teaching and Meaningfulness**

Culture is the foundation through which we experience the world around us (Hammond, 2014). Culturally responsive teaching is defined as teaching that incorporates strategies that use "cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more

relevant to and effective for them" (Gay, 2010, p. 31). It is further informed by nine

strategies for teachers to create an environment that is culturally responsive, as set forth

by Lind and McKoy (2016): getting to know your students, creating a supportive

classroom environment, making program and curricular choices that are culturally

responsive, re-envisioning school culture, engendering pride in schools that are culturally

diverse, fostering positive connections, getting to know the community, drawing upon

community expertise, and learning outside the school room.

Culture is also mediated by politics, globalization, and context. Palmer (2007)

stated that we, as teachers, teach who we are—and if that is so, then teachers naturally

transmit, consciously or unconsciously, a form of cultural reproduction that is part of a

cycle. Bourdieu (1977) called this cultural reproduction habitus, which is the way culture

and societal norms are created and power is transmitted, created by an interplay between

free will and structures. Habitus is created and reproduced unconsciously, "without any

conscious concentration" (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 170). Habitus and culture often manifest

themselves in the music classroom in choices of repertoire and rehearsal techniques.

Music teachers, like all teachers, are concerned with curriculum content and teaching

strategies based on the cultural and societal norms of the place and time in which they

live. They decide how student-centered they will be, the kinds of goals they set for

student growth, and how they nurture their students becoming musical people (Abrahams

& John, 2017).

To be effective culturally responsive educators, Hammond (2014) argued that

teachers need an understanding of cultural differences among students and how those

cultures are constructed. According to Hammond, "culture operates on a surface level, an intermediate or shallow level, and a deep level" (2014, p. 22). Surface culture is the immediately observable aspects of culture, such as food, dress, and music. Shallow culture is made up of the unspoken rules that govern everyday social interactions. Deep culture is made up of the unconscious assumptions and ingrained knowledge that govern our worldview and is the most emotional charged level of culture. It is at this deep level where culturally responsive teaching is most effective. Hammond (2014) explored the archetypes of Collectivism and Individualism as the deep level of culture, stating that the dominant culture in the United States is individualistic while the cultures of many African American, Latino, Pacific Islander, and Native American cultures are more collectivistic. Instrumental music tends to be a mix of the two archetypes, especially in an ensemble setting, valuing individual achievement as well as interdependence and group success.

Instrumental music teaching in the public schools presents a set of challenges that include the cultural challenges discussed above. According to Lind and McKoy (2016), students are constantly evolving and developing their personal and musical identities, which are influenced by culture, gender, and sexuality. If students are "assured that the musical identities they are forming, whether individual or group identities, are valued and welcomed in the music classroom, they are more likely to view their musical experiences as meaningful and benefit positively from them" (p. 51). Cape (2012) found that students valued and found meaning in experiences that offered them "opportunities to achieve, to form and strengthen relationships, to construct identities as individuals and group

members, to express themselves and communicate with others, and to engage with and

through music" (p. ii). Meaningfulness is personal and students, especially in secondary

schools, are sometimes reluctant to share what makes something meaningful to them. The

overarching goal, of course, is to nurture children on their journey to become musical

people, and participation in the school instrumental ensemble is one way in which that

can occur (Abrahams & John, 2017).

Culturally responsive teaching, and specifically culturally responsive caring, is a

way in which teachers can make *all* students feel cared for and able to have similar

meaningful experiences to their classmates, regardless of their ethnic or cultural

background. In attempting to find ways to connect with and care for diverse students,

teachers demonstrate that they care both for and about them. Culturally responsive

teaching also creates space for students to care *with* each other by involving them in a

more democratic way in the development of their own musical instruction. While this is

most directly reflected in the selection of music for inclusion in the curriculum, it can

also be reflected in the myriad ways in which students can arrive at being musical.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this research was to investigate how one middle school and two

high school ensemble conductors in a large public school system in Maryland address

meaningfulness in their ensembles and if and how caring and culturally responsive

pedagogy has any impact on the experiences that students find meaningful. With this

study I have extended the body of research regarding meaningfulness in music and its

relationship to caring and culturally responsive teaching in music ensembles by

identifying patterns and themes I found among and between the cases. This study builds on the work of Cape (2012), Hendricks (2018, 2021, 2023), Lind and McKoy (2016), and Silverman (2013, 2020) by exploring not only the experiences that students in these ensembles find meaningful, but also whether those experiences are a product of caring or culturally responsive teaching in rehearsals and performances, as well as in interactions outside of these settings.

In outlining the research problem, I considered the need for implementing what Hendricks (2023) calls "compassionate care" (p. 12), and what Gay (2010) calls "culturally responsive caring" (p. 47). First, I examined the literature around meaningfulness, with specific attention to meaningfulness in music education. I then reviewed existing research regarding caring and meaningfulness, and how culturally responsive teaching is an outlet for caring in this context. Finally, I described Silverman's (2013) Tripartite View of Meaningfulness as the theoretical framework for this study.

As described in later chapters, the methodology implemented is informed by those applied to related research in meaningfulness and for case studies using open and focused coding to determine emerging themes from the data (Orcher, 2005). I then used cross-case synthesis to look for emerging patterns between each individual case. Compassionate caring and culturally responsive caring are two ways by which music educators can provide meaningful experiences for all students, and this study will illuminate the ways that this may be so in the context of secondary school instrumental ensembles.

## Research Questions

The following questions frame this research:

1. In what ways do students find the experiences in an instrumental ensemble to be meaningful?

2. In what ways do teachers who practice caring about, for, and with their students facilitate meaningful experiences for students?

3. In what ways do teachers who are invested in using culturally responsive teaching strategies foster experiences that students find meaningful?

These research questions provide a basis for inquiry into what students find meaningful, and how caring and culturally responsive teaching play a role in those experiences.

**CHAPTER TWO**

In this review of literature, I examine sources that provide insight into conceptions of meaningfulness, both generally and with regard to instrumental music education, with specific attention paid to caring and culturally responsive teaching. The first section explores theories of how students construct meaning in music and how caring and culturally responsive teaching can have an impact on meaningful experiences. In the final section, I will discuss Silverman's (2013) Tripartite View of Meaningfulness in music education and provide a rationale for it as the theoretical framework for this study.

**Meaningfulness in Music**

According to Gay (2002), the definition of culturally responsive teaching is "based on the assumption that when academic knowledge and skills are situated within the lived experiences and frames of reference of students, they are more *personally meaningful* [emphasis in the original], have higher interested appeal, and are learned more easily and thoroughly" (p. 106). From the 1950s through the 1990s, two differing philosophies regarding the value of and meaning in music education dominated the literature: aestheticism and praxialism. Aestheticism holds that the value of music, and by extension music education, is intrinsic to the music itself. Broudy (1950) wrote about achieving a richer and more satisfying life thorough an aesthetic approach to arts education. Reimer (1970, 1989, 2003) built on the work of Broudy (1950) to develop his aesthetic philosophy of music. He argued in the first edition that music is a "basic way of 'knowing'" (Reimer, 1970, p. 9) about the world. In his most recent edition of *A*

*Philosophy of Music Education*, Reimer evolved his stance on music and meaning as being "everything a person experiences when involved with it" (Reimer, 2003, p. 165).

Those teaching praxialism desire to determine musical meaning through music making and music listening. Alperson (1991) first attempted to understand what music means to people through "an endeavor that includes but is not limited to a consideration of the function of music in aesthetic contexts" (p. 234), and first suggested an alternative to aestheticism called praxialism. Elliott (1995, 2005) and Regelski (1997) developed Alperson's theory further. Elliott identified self-growth, self-knowledge, musical enjoyment, and self-esteem as the most important outcomes of music education, with music as being fundamentally a human action to achieve these aims.

Meaningfulness has been addressed by Cape (2012, 2013) with regard to high school music ensembles and classes in recent years. There are myriad ways in which meaningfulness can be defined, depending upon whose perspective is being considered. Jellison (2000), asked, "Who better to decide what music experiences are important and meaningful for students?" (p. 134). Cape (2012) pointed out the ambiguity in which the word "meaningful" can be used. In this context, "meaningful" means what is perceived to be meaningful by others, being swapped in for other words like "worthwhile," "valuable," and "significant" (p. 3). "Meaningful," in the context of her research, refers also to the experiences of the students involved in music making and exploring that in which they find meaning.

Cape (2012) recognized the need for research in the area between these two approaches, where students' perceptions of meaning and educational philosophy meet.

She explored ideas of motivation and experiences, the importance of what Maslow (1971) called "peak experiences," and various quantitative and qualitative studies of meaning and ensembles. Her study has its theoretical framework grounded in symbolic interactionism and praxialism, specifically a pragmatic conception of praxialism (Cape, 2012). Whereas Cape (2012) studied the experiences that students find meaningful in high school instrumental music classes, in this study I assume that caring and meaningfulness are interconnected and therefore attempt to expand upon Cape's (2012) research by specifically identifying how teachers use caring and culturally responsive teaching strategies to create meaningful experiences for students of diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

Barton & Riddle (2021) explored the many modes through which students learn music, how they create meaning, and how they communicate with the teacher and each other, through the lens of culturally responsive teaching (p. 345). They examined multimodal music teaching, in which students were taught music in ways other than typical Eurocentric, teacher-centered approaches. In using combinations of different modes of learning, such as aural/sound, gestural/embodied, language/linguistic, spatial, and visual/image, students were more likely to have experiences that were meaningful to them (p. 356).

Wolf (2010) distinguished "meaningfulness" from "happiness": happiness may be an outcome of pursuing meaning in life, it is not a valid indicator or barometer for meaningfulness. According to Wolf (2010), "meaning arises from loving objects worthy of love and engaging with them in a positive way" (p. 7). For one to have a meaningful

life, they must actively engage with an object or objects (person, activity, occupation, etc.) that they love, and that object or objects must have objective value of some kind. The view of meaningfulness is not dependent upon happiness or morality, but upon love to determine what is meaningful.

Silverman (2013) built on Wolf's (2010) work and applied it directly to instrumental music education. She argued that making and teaching music is meaningful because it offers opportunity for valuable activities in and around doing music and music has been ascribed some value by many people for many years. This means that music must have some characteristics that make it valuable because it has been considered valuable by so many for so long (Wolf, 2010).

Additionally, Silverman (2020) discussed the concept of "sense-making," specifically what she called a "4E concept," in which the mind is "embodied, embedded, enacted, and extended" (p. 2). Enaction is noted as the "core of 4E cognition" (Silverman, 2020, p. 2) and refers to our understanding of our own existence and how we engage in the world. Embedding is the way in which we use the context of our surrounding world to establish a sense of self. Embodiment refers to the ways in which our physical bodies, and our awareness of them, gives us a sense of ourselves and how we engage int eh world. Finally, extension refers to the ways in which our "brain, body, and the environments we participate within not only complement each other, but, moreover, enact our sense of self, the world, and our intimate, interconnectedness" (Silverman, 2020, p. 2). She explored both literal and physical sense-making: making sense of something and physically feeling a stimulus of some kind.

Silverman (2020) argued that meaningfulness, like sense-making, is also embodied, embedded, enacted, and extended. One of the main purposes of sense-making is to assign or define value, and meaningfulness is, in part, based on finding value in life and experiences. The two relate to music education because "engaging in instrumental musicing and listening ethically adds meaningfulness to the content and continuousness of one's sense-making, and therefore, one's life in the world" (Silverman, 2020, p. 8). Instrumental musicing is worth doing for ourselves and for others, establishing subjective, objective, and intersubjective value, and providing a way to bring meaningfulness into the lives of both teacher and student.

Using Wolf's (2010) conception of meaningfulness, Silverman (2013) said that "music educators are contributing to the significant possibility that students and teachers will feel fulfilled by engaging in musical actions and interactions and that ethical music educators do, in fact, contribute to students' development of ethical-moral goodness" (p. 36). Music has both subjective and objective value and therefore is an excellent vehicle for students and teachers to pursue meaningful lives.

Music educators can directly influence the ways in which students construct meaning in their experiences as young musicians. Hendricks et al. (2021) discussed the ways in which a group of people caring for each other can create meaningful experiences while participating in an activity, such as music making, that they all care deeply about (p. 2). Compassionate care for, about, and with students engaged in music making, as well as the care present in culturally responsive pedagogy, can lead to meaningful experiences for all involved.

## Compassionate Care

"Care is the most important aspect of being a teacher" (Rawls & Robinson, 2019, p. 21). Hendricks (2023) defines care as "demonstrations of benevolence, concern, compassion, or even love in relation to others" (p. 7). The ways in which educators can show their students that they care are myriad, and have been written about extensively, both within and without music education. Webb, Wilson, Corbett, & Mordecai (1993) defined care as follows:

> Caring requires action, going well beyond empathy — or the ability to see the world through the eyes of others — to accepting the responsibility to act (or refrain from action) based on what one sees. Caring is a value, but more than that, it is a moral imperative. Caring moves self-determination into social responsibility and uses knowledge and strategic thinking to decide how to act in the best interests of others (p. 33–34).

hooks (2003) discussed care for students as a facet of teaching with love, together with commitment, knowledge, responsibility, respect, and trust, to establish communities of learning (p. 134). For her, there is no correlation between the grade a student receives and the love the teacher has for that student. In fact, hooks (2003) said, "rather than blinding me to the true nature of their abilities, love for them was far more likely to enhance my understanding of their capabilities as well as their limitations" (p. 134). According to hooks (2003), caring for students does not mean that teachers give them an unearned good grade, but rather calls on teachers to be honest with students about their strengths and limitations while helping guide them to improve.

Rawls and Robinson (2019) discussed care as the central tenet of Youth Culture Power or Youth Culture Pedagogy. By embracing youth culture, creating a pleasant and easily approachable educational environment, forming and developing relationships with students, and an egalitarian belief in human equality, teachers display caring for and about their students (p. 21). Like Freire (1970, 1980), Rawls and Robinson (2019) view all learning as relational and that it only occurs through interactions between people. Approaching student relationships with culture, kindness, and equality is a way in which teachers can show true care for their students.

Noddings (1984, 2003) discussed caring as an ethic in which caring and being cared for are the foundation of morality, rather than the opposing model in which logic and reason determine what is ethical and moral. She wrote extensively about the distinction between "caring about" and "caring for" another person. To care *about* another person or group of people is to express some concern for them but does not guarantee action toward the one needing care. Caring *for* another describes direct action and response and requires the "establishment of a caring relation, person-to-person contact of some sort" (Noddings, 2003, p. ii). An ethic of care requires action to help better the cared for.

Noddings (2013) emphasized caring as a relational action, in which there is the "one-caring" and the "cared-for" (p. 5) and, along with Gilligan (1982, 1988), situated caring as a *feminine* trait. They did not mean that only women could care and that men were incapable of doing so. As a result of this confusion, Noddings (2013) revised this stance, changing the word "feminine" to "relational" to capture her intent correctly (p. ii).

Held (2006) expanded on the ethics of care as a theory of morality and identified

five characteristics of the ethics of care. First, the focus of the ethics of care is "on the

compelling moral salience of attending to and meeting the needs of the particular others

for whom we take responsibility" (ch. 1, Features of the Ethics of Care section, para. 2).

It recognizes the dependence that humans have on others, both when they are very young

and very old, as well as in instances of illness and other disabilities. It focuses on the

moral claims of individuals, regardless of universal principles of justice or "right and

wrong".

Second, the ethics of care values emotion, particularly sympathy, empathy,

sensitivity, and responsiveness. This is in opposition to many other rationalist approaches

to morality, which tend to rely on reason and rational thought. In contrast, the ethics of

care appreciates the nuanced emotional capabilities as being able to inform morality in

context of interpersonal relationships, informing what would be best for the situation

(Held, 2006, ch. 1, Features of the Ethics of Care section, para. 3–4).

Third, "the ethics of care respects rather than removes itself from the claims of

particular others with whom we share actual relationships" (Held, 2006, ch. 1, Features of

the Ethics of Care section, para. 5). It is wary of abstract thinking and universal claims of

morality when considering moral issues. The ethics of care focuses on the area between

the extremes of "selfish individual" and "humanity," in which it is recognized that a

person's individual interests are interconnected with the person they are caring for. The

caring person does not act on behalf of all of humanity, but much more specifically on

behalf of the people for whom they care (Held, 2006, ch. 1, Features of the Ethics of Care

section, para. 9).

Fourth, the ethics of care questions traditional ideas of public and private. Most dominant theories of morality have addressed public life but not private life, such as inside the home and family structure. In a family, it is common for the power dynamic to be unequal among members, with some of those family members having been unable to choose the circumstances in which they live. Children do not choose their parents but may have obligations to care for them. The ethics of care deals directly with the moral issues that arise among the unequal and dependent members of a family and notices how they also apply in wider society regarding gender, race, class, ethnicity, religion, nationality, and culture (Held, 2006, ch. 1, Features of the Ethics of Care section, para. 11–12).

Fifth and finally, "the ethics of care usually works with a conception of persons as relational, rather than as the self-sufficient independent individuals of the dominant moral theories" (Held, 2006, ch. 1, The Critique of Liberal Individualism section, para. 1). While what she calls the "dominant moral theories" believe that cooperation only happens if it benefits each of the parties, the ethics of care "sees persons as relational and interdependent, morally and epistemologically" (Held, 2006, ch. 1, The Critique of Liberal Individualism section, para. 2). It calls on individuals to take responsibility for the care of others, while the liberal individualism of dominant moral theories tells us to leave each other alone.

Hendricks (2018) discussed caring as compassionate music teaching, as well as reiterating the important difference between caring for someone and merely caring about

someone. She identified six qualities of a compassionate music teacher: trust, empathy, patience, inclusion, community, and authentic connection. All these traits and practices work together help to establish positive relationships between teacher and students.

Hendricks (2021) elaborated further on authentic connection, naming it the "ultimate compassionate quality, that would presumably follow after effective demonstrations" of the previous five qualities (p. 238). Here, she posited a third kind of caring: caring *with*, "in which the discussion of relationship is one of spiritual communion rather than roles to be performed, and where neither I nor You need be superior nor inferior" (p. 246). In a musical setting, this can be the result of working toward and connecting through a common sense of purpose.

Hendricks et al. (2021), in addition to caring about and caring for, described a third kind of caring – caring with – in which relations experiences of caring reinforce connections between members of a group engaged in activities with shared values. Individuals making music together who experience caring about, for, and with one another can forge meaningful connections with each other over and over, creating a perpetual cycle of caring and meaningfulness. One of the many ways in which educators demonstrate care for their students, as well as create an environment that fosters students' caring with one another, is through culturally responsive teaching.

**Culturally Responsive Teaching, Caring, and Meaningfulness**

There has been a significant body of work dedicated to cultural responsiveness in general education, and others have contributed literature on culturally responsive teaching in the field of music education. Delpit (2006) addressed the need to understand

that diverse students come from diverse cultures, and that to reach these students educators must understand how they are and are not connected to them. hooks (2003) discussed the importance of building communities in education that help to challenge institutionalized systems of domination. Gay (2000, 2010) places "cooperation, community, and connectedness" (p. 38) as central to culturally responsive teaching. Each of these authors is concerned with improving achievement in generally underserved communities of learners, most often Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino students. For clarity, Gay (2002, 2010, 2018) and others (Butler, Lind, & McKoy, 2007; Lind & McKoy, 2016) use the terms "culturally relevant" and "culturally responsive" interchangeably. For the purposes of this study and to avoid confusion, I only use the term "culturally relevant" when discussing a source that chooses to use this term. Lind & McKoy (2016) define culturally responsive caring as follows:

> Culturally responsive caring goes beyond just the feelings we have toward our students; it is connected to action. Teachers who demonstrate culturally responsive caring are concerned about the whole child and take responsibility for nurturing both academic success and psychological well-being (p. 65).

In 2002, Gay connected culturally responsive caring to the importance of building learning communities:

> Teachers need to know how to use *cultural scaffolding* in teaching these students – that is, using their own cultures and experiences to expand their intellectual horizons and academic achievement. This begins by demonstrating culturally sensitive caring and building culturally responsive learning communities. (p. 109)

Silverman's (2013) Tripartite View of Meaningfulness emphasizes the need for an experience or object to have objective, subjective, and intersubjective value if it is to be dubbed meaningful. Gay (2018) defined culture as "a dynamic system of social values, cognitive codes, behavioral standards, worldviews, and beliefs used to give order and meaning to our own lives as well as the lives of others" (p. 8). Therefore, culture is, by definition, a source of intersubjective value and an integral part of the Tripartite View of Meaningfulness, and culturally responsive teaching is a potential path to creating meaningful experiences for students.

### *Background and Evolution of Culturally Responsive Teaching*

The need for closing the achievement gap and determining its root cause began in 1954 when the landmark case Brown v. Board of Education desegregated public schools. Upon integrating schools, educators began noticing differences in academic achievement between their students in these new diverse classrooms (Banks, 2004) and began to look for root causes. One of the earliest ideas, developed in the 1960s, was known as the cultural deficit (Lind & McKoy, 2016). This model stated that there was an achievement gap because students of color did not have the home or cultural background or experience to be successful, and it was thus the job of the school to help students overcome these deficiencies (Bloom, Davis, & Hess, 1965; Foley, 1997). The paradigm that a cultural deficit existed and needed to be overcome dominated the development of school policy in low-income groups until the late 1970s.

Critical pedagogue Paolo Freire (1970, 1980) proposed that education should result in liberation of oppressed populations. Freire (1970) and others challenged the

"banking model" of education, in which knowledge is "deposited" to the students by the

teacher, and the student role is limited to receiving, filing, and storing the deposited

information. Educators using the "banking model" do not allow for critical thinking of

any kind and reinforce that "the individual is a spectator" in their interactions with the

world, not a part of the world with any ability to impact it (Freire, 1970, p. 75). Instead of

the "banking model," Freire (1970, 1980) argued for a critical pedagogy that "rejects

communiqués and embodies communication. It epitomizes the special characteristic of

consciousness: being *conscious of*, not only as intent on objects but as turned in upon

itself in a Jasperian 'split' – consciousness as consciousness *of* consciousness" (Freire,

1970, p. 79). Any other education, according to Freire (1970, 1980), is oppressive and

violent and meant to keep the oppressor in power and the oppressed subjugated. Apple

(2000) expanded on this idea and applied it directly to education in the United States,

stating that education policies are a huge contributing factor to racial and socio-economic

inequity. Culturally responsive teaching "lifts the veil of presumed absolute authority

from conceptions of scholarly truth typically taught in schools," similar to the Freirean

(1980) notion that critical consciousness and cultural emancipation are interconnected

and dependent upon one another (Gay, 2018, p. 43).

Other scholars (Baratz & Baratz, 1970; Erickson, 1987; Ramirez & Castandea,

1974; Ryan, 1971; Shade, 1982) theorized that the achievement gap was the result of

cultural conflicts in school that are experienced by many students of racial minority

populations. Although this was not the same as the cultural deficit model of the 1960s (in

that students were not seen as being victims of their cultural or racial circumstances),

there was an implicit expectation that to succeed, students must adhere to the dominant

cultural patterns—which may or may not be congruous with their own cultural patterns

(Ladson-Billings, 1995b). Concurrently, there was research (Cazden & Leggett, 1981;

Erickson & Mohatt, 1982; Ladson-Billings, 1995b) investigating how to bridge the

cultural gap between home or community and school. This approach is referred to as

culturally responsive teaching.

Theories of culturally relevant and culturally responsive pedagogy were

established by Gloria Ladson-Billings (1995a, 1995b, 2009) and Geneva Gay (2002,

2018). While these theories are largely similar, they do offer some differences in their

pedagogical approaches to relating to students and their cultures. I will discuss the

characteristics of each theory and the ways in which they are similar and different in the

next section.

### *Theories of Culturally Relevant and Culturally Responsive Teaching*

According to Gay (2018), culturally responsive teaching strategies have been

present in education since "education for and about cultural diversity" (p. 27) began.

Leonard and Guha (2002) described the importance of tapping into cultural contexts

when framing math problems. This approach allows students to solve math problems

from a variety of perspectives, offering them a greater chance of success. King discussed

the "importance of understanding how culture, ideology, and hegemony affect

knowledge, its production, and its social uses" (2004, p. 349). Although specifically

referencing only Black studies, this understanding is at the core of cultural

responsiveness in education. Understanding the role that cultural background plays in the

way students approach education is integral in developing a culturally responsive

classroom. In this section, I discuss two related theories of teaching: the first by Gloria

Ladson-Billings (1995b, 2009), which she names culturally relevant teaching, and the

second by Geneva Gay (2002, 2010), called culturally responsive teaching.

*Culturally Relevant Teaching.* Ladson-Billings (1995b, 2009) developed her

theory of culturally relevant pedagogy out of an attempt to bridge the cultural gap

between home and school by "valuing and validating students' lived cultural

experiences" (Lind & McKoy, 2016, p. 13). The key difference between culturally

relevant pedagogy and previous attempts to close the achievement gap is that, rather than

assimilating minority students into the dominant culture, it works to incorporate their

cultural experiences into the classroom. This allows students to be successful

academically, understanding of their own culture and those of others, and socio-

politically critical (Ladson-Billings, 1995b; 2009). To understand what it means to be a

culturally relevant teacher, Ladson-Billings (1995b, 2009) developed a theoretical

framework that focuses on three areas developed through observation of teachers in

schools that serve diverse populations: conceptions of self and others by, the manner in

which social relations are structured in the classrooms of, and the conceptions of

knowledge held by culturally relevant teachers.

*Culturally Responsive Teaching.* Gay (2018) noted the use of a variety of

different terms, including culturally relevant teaching and culturally responsive teaching,

though the ideas within each are virtually identical. She defined culturally responsive

teaching as, "using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and

performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them (Gay, 2018, p. 36). According to Gay (2018), culturally responsive teaching is characterized by six features: it is validating, comprehensive, multidimensional, empowering, transformative, and emancipatory. Additionally, five essential elements of culturally responsive teaching were identified by Gay (2002): "developing a knowledge base about cultural diversity, including ethnic and cultural diversity content in the curriculum, demonstrating caring and building learning communities, communicating with ethnically diverse students, and responding to ethnic diversity in the delivery of instruction" (p. 106).

According to Gay (2002), "explicit knowledge about cultural diversity is imperative to meeting the educational needs of ethnically diverse students" (p. 107). Part of this includes characteristics and contributions of different cultural groups (Hollins, King, & Hayman, 1994; J. E. King, Hollins, & Hayman, 1997; Pai, 1990; Smith, 1998). This knowledge goes beyond awareness, respect, and recognition of the differences between the values possessed by different cultural groups, requiring teachers to acquire specific information about varied ethnic groups and their contributions to the content area they are teaching.

"In addition to acquiring a knowledge base about ethnic and cultural diversity, teachers need to learn how to convert it into culturally responsive curriculum designs and instructional strategies" (Gay, 2002, p. 108). Curriculum often drives instruction, so it is important that students have an opportunity to see how their own ethnic and cultural backgrounds, as well as the backgrounds of others, have contributed to the subjects they

are studying. Inclusion of materials in the curriculum created by diverse contributors helps all students to feel seen and cared for.

Gay (2002) identified three categories of curricula: formal, which refers to regulated content and materials such as textbooks; symbolic, which refers to items of symbolic value such as bulletin boards; and societal, which refers to how different ethnic groups are portrayed in mass media. Even curricula with "minimum cultural content improve student achievement" (Gay, 2018, p. 196), making diversity with the curriculum an important factor for student success.

Gay (2002) discussed the importance of classroom climates that allow all students from ethnically diverse backgrounds to learn. "Pedagogical actions" are just as important as curriculum designs in terms of implementing culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2002, p. 109). The type of care Gay (2018) referred to "encompasses a combination of concern, compassion, commitment, responsibility, and action" (p. 48). It is "action oriented" by demonstrating high expectations and using imaginative strategies to ensure student success (Gay, 2002, p. 110). The concept of cultural caring is directly linked to compassionate care and meaningfulness, as outlined by Hendricks (2018, 2021, 2023), Hendricks et al. (2021), and Silverman (2013).

Wenger (1998), hooks (2003), and Ladson-Billings (2009) wrote about the importance of communities of learning for students from ethnically diverse backgrounds. The success of these communities is due in large part to the cultural environments in which many students of color grow up. It is important for teachers to know how these communities are built and to create an environment in which "personal, moral, social,

political, cultural, and academic knowledge and skills are taught simultaneously" (Gay, 2002, p. 110).

"Determining what ethnically diverse students know and can do, as well as what they are capable of knowing and doing, is often a function of how well teachers can communicate with them" (Gay, 2002). It is imperative that culturally responsive teachers are familiar with and can decipher the "culturally encoded" patterns to teach ethnically diverse students more effectively (Gay, 2002). Students who communicate in ways that are outside of the norms of a school or community will likely have a more difficult time succeeding in classes in which teachers do not explore culturally responsive ways of communicating with them and with their parents.

"If teachers are to do effective culturally responsive teaching, they need to understand how ethnically diverse students learn" (Gay, 2018, p. 202). This final aspect of Gay's (2002, 2010, 2018) theory of culturally responsive teaching deals with the praxis of teaching ethnically diverse students. Culturally responsive teachers "need to develop rich repertoires of multicultural instructional examples to use in teaching ethnically diverse students" (Gay, 2002, p. 113). Culture is constantly evolving, and culturally responsive teachers demonstrate care for their students by being aware of and incorporating these changes as they occur.

### *Culturally Responsive Teaching in Music Education*

The late 20th and early 21st centuries saw "multicultural music" become an established part of curriculum in many places. Textbooks were readily available to assist teachers in integrating multicultural music into the curriculum. Teacher attitudes toward

non-Western music, student preferences for Western and non-Western music, and teacher

preparation for teaching non-Western music were being researched by scholars in music

education. However, simply including music from non-Western cultures into curricula

was not sufficient. Many feared that the approach to multicultural music education was

oversimplified, though the issues surrounding diversity and music education are quite

complex (Lind & McKoy, 2016, p. 16). Teachers needed clarity about why music of

different cultures should be taught, what perspectives on music and culture support the

practice of teaching them, what cultures and aspects of these cultures were taught and

assessed, and what background teachers must have to effectively teach this music

(Lundquist, 2002).

The profession of music education has moved from a focus on Western European

"classical" music to recognizing the value of music from many cultures around the world

in its curriculum. According to Lind and McKoy (2016), this is a positive first step, but

the next phase will "have to focus on developing understandings about how teachers and

learners negotiate influential cultural factors during the education process" (p. 17). This is

best accomplished through the exploration and implementation of culturally responsive

teaching (Lind & McKoy, 2016).

Walter (2018) discussed the need for a shift from the multiculturalism described

above to culturally responsive teaching. Multicultural music education, as defined by

Volk (1998), is "the teaching of a broad spectrum of music cultures in the music

curriculum, primarily focused on ethnocultural characteristics" (p. 4). Inclusion of ethnic

content in multiculturalism is a *curriculum-centered* approach. Culturally responsive

teaching, however, is a *student-centered* approach.

At the beginning of the 21st century, music teachers began to understand culture as not merely a reflection of race and ethnicity, but it was also associated with "beliefs, motivations, and even social groups and norms" (Walter, 2018, p. 25). Culturally responsive teaching uses many of the same curricular materials of multiculturalism. However, whereas in multiculturalism the simple inclusion of these materials is enough, culturally responsive teaching makes explicit connections from content knowledge and skills to the students' cultures (Walter, 2018).

Shaw (2012) discussed a concept of utilizing culturally responsive teaching in the choral ensemble setting, emphasizing the importance of breaking the Eurocentric perspective from which choral music is often approached. This includes choosing repertoire from a culturally responsive perspective by asking four questions when choosing repertoire: "What music would build upon my students' prior experiences? What pieces would capitalize on their cultural knowledge? What selections could my students experience through their preferred learning styles? What would showcase their culturally informed performance styles?" (Shaw, 2012, p. 76). Additionally, Shaw (2012) discussed the importance of authentic rehearsal and performance strategies when working with music from diverse cultures, as well as the importance of developing sociopolitical competence and empowering students toward social action, as prescribed by Ladson-Billings (1995a).

In a qualitative study by Shaw (2016), choral students' perceptions of culturally responsive teaching were seen as honoring their cultural backgrounds while expanding

their knowledge about and appreciation of other cultures. The teachers in the study made efforts to ensure that performance practices were appropriate to the diverse musical genres studied and attempted to bridge musical experiences at home and at school. In doing so, connections were established and nurtured between the musical and cultural identities of the students.

Kruse (2020) explored the potential of a Hip-Hop curriculum in "recalibrating popular music education toward culturally responsive teaching" (p. 496). The potential of Hip-Hop culture to reach and connect with students is great, particularly when considering the high popularity of the genre (Nielsen Music, 2019). As a result, Hip-Hop courses and curricula may help to decenter whiteness in music education and allow more students to see themselves in the curriculum.

**Theoretical Framework**

Silverman's (2013) conception of meaningfulness, the "Tripartite View," or "Fitting Fulfillment View," provides the principal theoretical framework for this study. The Tripartite View states that for meaningfulness to be obtained, one must "be involved with something or someone that has value *independent of and outside of oneself*" (p. 28). This means that it must have objective value, subjective value, and intersubjective value, in which one finds fulfillment and connects in a positive way to something that is beyond also their own happiness and fulfillment. I discuss each of these types of value in the remainder of this chapter.

**Objective Value**

Objective value can be distinguished by examining objects or activities that have value for more than just a few people, but "for which the standard of judgement exists outside the subject" (Silverman, 2013, p. 29). The act of determining objective value is problematic because it is difficult to say, definitively, what does and does not have value. Who determines what has objective value?

Wolf (2010) suggests that in identifying what is lacking from some projects, making their pursuit lack meaning, ideas can be formed about what is important to find meaning. Activities that are useful in some way, challenging, and offer opportunity for growth and realizing potential are better candidates for objective value than those that are none of these things. Activities such as "creating art, adding to our knowledge of the world, [and] preserving a place of natural beauty" are generally considered valuable, even though they may not provide obvious improvement to the welfare of others (Wolf, 2010, p. 36–37).

Wolf (2010) said that anyone can make determinations about what is and is not worthy of attention in the pursuit of meaningfulness (p. 38). The possibility of elitism in determining objective value is very real. As Wolf (2010) said, "the views of any one person or any group that sets itself up as an authority on values are liable to be narrow-minded or biased" (p. 38). By pooling our individual conceptions and experiences, we may be able to better answer questions of value and worthwhileness. These ideas of objective value will likely change over time (Wolf, 2010).

Ultimately, for an object or activity to have objective value, it must have value, at

least partially, outside of the person who is interacting with the object or performing the activity (Wolf, 2010). This is a fluid concept and what is objectively valuable may change over time. However, it is important to the Tripartite View of Meaningfulness that this external value exists to contribute to a meaningful experience.

## Subjective Value

Subjective value refers to objects or activities that are enjoyable or worthy of love for the person interacting with them, independent of any value outside of that person (Wolf, 2010; Silverman, 2013). Subjective value is the focus of what Wolf (2010) calls the Fulfillment View of meaningfulness. Wolf sees this as a form of hedonism, in which there is no larger meaning in simply pursuing one's own loves or interests to find fulfillment.

Although self-fulfillment is not sufficient to find meaningfulness, Wolf (2010) and Silverman (2013, 2020) see it as an integral part of this pursuit. Just as a purely subjective fulfillment is insufficient to a meaningful life or experience, so is a purely objective value, or a "greater good." One must find enjoyment and fulfillment on a personal level if they are to live a meaningful life or have meaningful experiences.

## Intersubjective Value

Intersubjective value is value placed on an object or activity by more than one person or a specific group of people. Silverman (2013) discussed several activities she engaged in that have value on an intersubjective level – playing golf, writing a paper, and practicing the flute – and placed value on the "social practices" inherent in each activity

(p. 33). The social and community aspect of these activities is what results in their having meaning.

It is in intersubjective value that many musical activities solidify their meaning. Elliott (2012) noted that, taken at face value, there is not anything inherently valuable about a group of people making music together. Part of its value, Silverman (2013) says, comes from the shared interest and dedication of people who enjoy music. Music, like sports and other art forms, has value that "emerged *from* the interests and commitments of people who were attracted to them" (Wolf, 2010, pp. 128–129). It is the shared subjective value in a group of like-minded individuals that brings the intersubjective value of an object or activity into being.

Wolf (2010) discussed the Fulfillment View and the Larger-than-Oneself View of meaning as lacking something that the other possesses. The Fulfillment View places too much emphasis on the value or love a person has for an object or activity as the sole determinate of its meaning, without considering whether it is worthy of that value or love. Similarly, the Larger-than-Oneself View removes personal fulfillment from the equation of meaningfulness, relying on the objective value of an object or activity to determine whether it is meaningful.

Wolf's (2010) Bipartite View borrows elements from each of these. Wolf (2010) defines meaningfulness as something that "the subject finds fulfilling and contributes to or connects positively with something the value of which has its source outside the subject" (p. 19). This view does not take these subjective and objective components separately but fits them together "to constitute a coherent feature a life might or might not

possess" (pp. 19–20).

Silverman's (2013) Tripartite View of Meaningfulness emphasizes intersubjective value and builds on Wolf's (2010) Bipartite View. Although Wolf discusses intersubjectivity in her work, she does not specifically distinguish it from objectivity. Silverman (2013) made the connection between objective, subjective, and intersubjective elements fused together, in which "people find fulfillment and can connect positively with something beyond themselves" (p. 28).

Silverman's (2013, 2020) Tripartite View articulates the spirit of collaboration and shared value that allows musicians to find meaning in the act of music making. Just as Wolf's (2010) Bipartite View combined elements of the Fulfillment View and the Larger-than-Oneself View of meaning, the Tripartite View introduces the element of intersubjective value into the Bipartite View to more clearly articulate how meaningfulness can be achieved in instrumental music ensemble experiences. It is where all three types of value meet that one is able to find meaning in music making.

**Chapter Summary**

In Chapter 2, I reviewed studies related to the genesis and evolution of culturally responsive pedagogy. I also examined two theories of culturally relevant and culturally responsive teaching: Ladson-Billings (1995b, 2009) and Gay (2002, 2010, 2018) to establish cultural caring as a part of compassionate caring and to relate culture to meaningfulness. Finally, I reviewed studies of meaningfulness, specifically regarding culturally responsive pedagogy and caring, and established Silverman's (2013, 2020) Tripartite View, or Fitting Fulfillment View, of Meaningfulness as the theoretical

framework for this study.

Ultimately, Silverman's (2013, 2020) Tripartite View of Meaningfulness formed the theoretical framework for this study because it includes concepts of compassionate caring within it. Additionally, culturally responsive teaching provides a way in which intersubjective value, often influenced by cultural norms and practices, can be determined. In the next chapter I will describe the methodology for this study.

**CHAPTER THREE**

In this study I examined the relationship between caring—through compassionate care and culturally responsive teaching strategies—in middle and high school instrumental music ensembles, and what students found meaningful about their participation in these ensembles. I preferred a qualitative approach for this study due to the need for a deeper understanding of the impact that caring and culturally responsive teaching may have on perceptions of meaningful participation by students. This study was best served by a qualitative approach because, according to Eisner (1998), "qualitative researchers are interested in matters of motive and in the quality of experience undergone by those in the situation studied" (p. 35). Qualitative inquiry is designed to help researchers understand the deeper meaning behind why people behave the way they do (Creswell, 2013).

**Research Design**

The current study followed a case study research method (Yin, 2009). Case studies are defined as "the in-depth study of one of more instances of a phenomenon in its real-life context that reflects the perspective of the participants involved in the phenomenon" (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007, p. 447). A case study explores a bounded system or systems over time, "through detailed, in-depth data collection involving *multiple sources of information* (e.g., observations, interviews, audiovisual material, and documents and reports), and reports a *case description* and *case themes"* (Creswell, 2013, p. 97).

Yin (2009) wrote that a case study can be a single- or multiple-case study. Single cases are often used to study "the unusual or rare case, the critical case, and the revelatory case" (p. 47), whereas multiple cases are often used to create a more robust study. When given the choice and resources to use a multiple-case design, Yin (2009) recommended doing so over a single-case design. This is because it increases the chances of a good case study and allows for direct replication between cases, which creates the opportunity for more powerful analytic conclusions between cases.

I used a multiple-case study design for this study, attempting to replicate, as closely as possible, the conditions for each case, i.e., gender and/or ethnicity of conductor and size of group (Yin, 2009). Each of three ensembles constituted a case. In a multiple-case study, the researcher provides a detailed within-case analysis and description for each individual case, as well as a cross-case synthesis, or an analysis of themes present across the cases (Creswell, 2013). Yin (2009) stated that "'how' and 'why' questions are more *explanatory* and likely to lead to the use of case studies, histories, and experiments as the preferred research methods" (p. 9). Among these methods of inquiry, case studies are preferable because they examine current events and outcomes in which the variables cannot be manipulated (Yin, 2009, p. 11). I intended for this multiple-case study to facilitate a rich understanding of both how and why meaningfulness may or may not be influenced by compassionate caring. To establish a background on which these cases took place, I discuss demographic information about the school system in the next section.

**Contextual Information on Research Sites**

The current study took place in Montgomery County, Maryland in the United States.  Montgomery County is the most populated county in Maryland with a population of approximately 1,052,567 (U. S. Chamber of Commerce, 2018). The Montgomery County Public Schools is also the largest school district in Maryland, with 158,232 students enrolled in the 2020–2021 school year. Demographically, the school system is 33.4% Hispanic/Latino, 25.3% White, 21.9% Black or African American, 14.1% Asian, and 1.5% belonging to other demographic groups. There are 209 schools in the district including 135 elementary schools, 40 middle schools, 26 high schools, 5 special schools, 1 alternative program, and 2 early childhood learning centers.

I selected three schools in Montgomery County Public Schools because of their student diversity and the school system's existing emphasis on culturally responsive pedagogy as a way of closing the achievement gap. Of the 25 high schools and 40 middle schools in the school district, one high school and two middle schools were excluded from consideration because of my involvement at those schools: the high school is the school in which I teach, and the middle schools are both feeder schools to mine.

Correspondences were sent to each of the remaining middle and high schools explaining the purpose of the study and inviting teachers who actively used compassionate caring and culturally responsive teaching strategies to participate with their students. I received responses from three teachers who were willing to participate. Each of these teachers taught multiple instrumental music classes in their schools. After asking the teachers which ensembles would be the best fit for this study, I ultimately

selected the Jazz Ensemble at Bernstein High School, the Symphonic Orchestra at Robert Wells High School, and the Concert Band at Oakmont Middle School for participation in this study. As described below, these names are pseudonyms.

## Participant Selection

In each participating ensemble I requested student volunteers, specifically looking for students who have found their participation in the ensemble to be meaningful. Purposeful and random sampling were used and students with a variety of cultural backgrounds were chosen within each ensemble to "show different perspectives on the problem, process, or event" (Creswell, 2013, p. 100). I selected five student participants from the Jazz Ensemble at Bernstein High School and three students from the Symphonic Orchestra at Robert Wells High School to participate in the study, representing a variety of cultural backgrounds. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, I was unable to recruit any student volunteers from the Concert Band at Oakmont Middle School for interviews. I decided to include the ensemble in the study as I was able to gather a lot of data from the observations and the interview with the teacher. Each ensemble conductor also served as additional participants. *Figure* 2 shows information about all participants from each school in the study.

| School | Robert Wells HS | Oakmont MS | Bernstein HS |
|---|---|---|---|
| Student Participants | Sally - Bass Grade 12 Spanish/Columbian/ Philippine American | | Paul - Trombone Grade 12 African American |
| Student Participants | Grace - Viola Grade 10 Spanish/Columbian American | | Kimberly - Bass Grade 12 White |
| Student Participants | Bethany - Violin Grade 10 Indian American | | Bruce - Drums Grade 11 Hispanic/Latino Brazilian |
| Student Participants | | | Mickey - Piano Grade 11 White |
| Student Participants | | | Ben - Piano Grade 12 Caucasian Hispanic ethnicity |
| Teacher Participants | Veronica Kollins White/European American | Sara Hanson Mexican American/ Adopted Anglo-Saxon | Wyatt Paulson White/European American |

**Figure 2. Study participants, by school**

**Ethics, Confidentiality and Disclosure of Data**

This study was approved by the Institutional Review Board at Boston University. All prospective subjects 18 years of age or older were provided with an informed consent form. All subjects 17 years of age or younger were provided with a parental consent form and an assent form was reviewed with each of these subjects prior to the start of the study. I conducted interviews only after the appropriate consent forms were signed and returned.

To maintain confidentiality, participants and schools were each assigned a pseudonym at the start of the study. The pseudonyms were linked to actual names on a

master list, which was stored in a locked filing cabinet in a secure office. Additionally, these pseudonyms are used throughout this document.

## Researcher Positionality

For this study, I was an observer as participant, in which I was primarily an observer, but had some interaction with study participants (Glesne, 2011, p. 64). I did not teach or assist any students or teachers involved in the study. I did not participate in any group activities during rehearsals or otherwise. However, I did interact extensively with the students and teachers participating in the study through interviews and observations, as well as other students before and after rehearsals by exchanging greetings and pleasantries, saying hello and goodbye and smiling at them as they entered and exited the room.

According to Creswell (2013), one of the characteristics of qualitative research is reflexivity, which refers to the way in which researchers involve themselves in a study (p. 47). In a qualitative study the researcher is the primary research instrument and must be aware of any subjectivity and bias brought into the study. Reflexivity is used to make research "more accurate, legitimate, or valid" (Glesne, 2011). I have been both a music student and a music teacher and the experiences I have had in both of those roles have shaped my ideas and perceptions about music education. I am also a White, heterosexual, cisgender male. I recognize that this background carries with it a great deal of privilege and an inherent lack of understanding of issues many other cultural groups may face.

At the time of this study, I was living in Frederick, MD and teaching full time at a school in Montgomery County Public Schools, Damascus High School.  I taught two

bands, two orchestras, and a jazz ensemble, as well as a marching band that was completely extracurricular. I purposefully excluded the school in which I teach, as well as its feeder schools, from the study.

<div align="center">**Data Collection**</div>

I collected data from a variety of sources between contacting and enrolling the teachers in each of the three cases in October 2019 and the conclusion of the final observation of and interview with the third teacher in January 2021. There was a period of 8 months between March and November 2020 in which no data were collected due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The data were obtained through individual interviews and observations, as well as collection of documents and artifacts. Data collection procedures are described below.

## Interviews

According to Yin (2009), "one of the most important sources of case study information is the interview" (p. 106). Glesne (2011) describes interviewing as the "process of getting words to fly" (p. 102). Interviews allow the researcher to learn more deeply about the phenomenon that are seen through observations, providing important context and potential explanations for observed actions (Glesne, 2011).

I conducted in-depth, conversational style interviews with students and teachers at times and locations that were convenient to both them and to me. The conversational nature of the interviews allowed me to recognize and respond to the qualitative cues provided by the interviewees and gain a better understanding of each student's experience (Eisner, 1998, p. 18). Students and teachers participated in one interview, generally

lasting 30–45 minutes each.  The interviews with student participants focused on three overarching questions:

1.  What is it like to participate in this ensemble?

2.  What aspects of your participation in this ensemble do you find to be the most meaningful and why do you think these aspects are meaningful to you?

3.  As a member of the ensemble, do you feel as though your cultural background is represented and respected?

The interviews with teacher participants focused on two overarching questions:

1.  How do you incorporate elements of culturally responsive teaching into the ensemble?

2.  What strategies do you use to help create meaningful experiences for the students in the ensemble?

Sample interview questions are available in Appendices A and B.

I audio recorded and transcribed all formal interviews with participants for coding and analysis. In conducting this study, I also engaged in many informal conversations with primary (teachers and students) participants. All informal conversations with participants and non-participants were documented in field notes.

**Observations**

Yin (2009) stated that "observational evidence is often useful in providing additional information about the topic being studied" (p. 110). I conducted direct observations of ensemble rehearsals and informal classroom activities outside of rehearsal time (i.e., students eating lunch or otherwise spending non-rehearsal time in the

classroom). During these observations I took detailed field notes. In addition to descriptive notes taken during observations, I also took extensive reflective notes. In these observations, I attempted to observe both teacher behavior, specifically those behaviors that related to culturally responsive teaching, and student behaviors and reactions to the actions of the teacher. The observation protocol used for observing rehearsals can be found in Appendix C.

**Document Review**

In a case study, documents and other artifacts are used to corroborate or enhance evidence collected from other sources, such as observations and interviews. They are helpful in verifying information collected through interview or observation, providing more specific details to corroborate information collected from other sources, and infer clues for further inquiry by other means (Yin, 2009, p. 103). As primary sources, I collected multiple documents and artifacts, including concert programs and syllabi. I then used these items to corroborate and verify data that was collected through interviews and observations, specifically any data that could support the use of compassionate care or culturally responsive teaching strategies by the teacher.

**Field Notes**

According to Esterberg (2002), writing accurate and inciteful field notes is one of the most critically important aspects of a case study (p. 73). Throughout the study I took extensive field notes electronically and by hand, noting "descriptions of people, places, events, activities, and conversations" (Glesne, 2011, p. 71). To monitor my own

subjectivity and biases, I took extensive reflexive notes in addition to descriptive notes, presenting these to peers from time-to-time to aide in my own reflexivity.

**Data Analysis**

In this study data analysis was guided by "insight, intuition, and impression" (Day, 1993, p. 78). As suggested by Creswell (2007), I used a data analysis spiral as a guide, rather than a linear approach. I moved cyclically through and between the procedures of managing data, reading and memoing, reflecting and writing notes, describing and interpreting, categorizing, and creating representations and visualizations of data, to generate narratives of meaningful experiences in each case. Using the qualitative analysis software *NVivo*, I organized the data into files grouped by school. I then read all transcripts, field notes, and artifacts, making notes as a read. I then developed codes based on emerging themes within the data. Once the codes were refined and combined into themes, I began analyzing and interpreting the data based on the research questions for the study and within Silverman's (2013, 2020) theoretical framework of meaningfulness. Using Creswell's procedural stages, I generated accounts of meaningful experiences as they relate to caring and culturally responsive teaching within each case. I then analyzed the thematic data across all three cases and presented my interpretation of the findings (Yin, 2003).

I followed coding procedures outlined by Saldaña (2016, pp. 73–74) and allowed codes to emerge from the data rather than using "prefigured" categories (Crabtree & Miller, 1992). Saldaña (2016) recommended coding in two cycles. First, to code field notes, documents, and artifacts, he suggested using "Descriptive Coding" as well as "In

Vivo Coding, Process Coding, and/or Values Coding" for interview transcripts. Saldaña

then recommended using "Pattern" or "Focused" coding to categorize the coded data for

analysis (pp. 73–74). I chose these methods of coding based on Saldaña's (2016)

recommendation to begin with them as a starting point for coding data. I used NVivo

software to code the data and assist in identifying themes, as well as to sort and organize

the data.

## Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness, or validity, refers to the credibility of qualitative research

(Glesne, 2011). Creswell (2013) recommends using multiple validation strategies for a

qualitative approach. According to Glesne (2011) and Creswell (2013) trustworthiness

can be increased through processes such as prolonged engagement and persistent

observation, triangulation, peer review and debriefing, negative case analysis,

clarification of research bias, member checking, rich, thick description, and external

audits. Below, I describe how I addressed each of these approaches.

Through prolonged engagement and persistent observation over the course of

several weeks, I built trust with participants, learning the classroom culture and

environment of the ensembles I observed through my interactions and interviews with

teachers and students, as well as my observations of rehearsals, and checked for potential

misinformation, as recommended by Creswell (2013). Comparison of multiple data-

collection methods, such as interviews, observations, and artifact collection facilitated

triangulation. Case studies using multiple sources of data tend to be stronger than those

using single sources of data (Esterberg, 2002; Yin, 2009). I sought peer review and

debriefing for the case study report to confirm the essential facts and evidence in the case

report (Yin, 2009). When the evidence required it, I engaged in and reported negative

case analysis throughout the study to provide a "realistic assessment of the phenomenon

under study" (Creswell, 2013, p. 251). I will explain my personal bias in the discussion

chapter to clarify any "past experiences, biases, prejudices, and orientations that have

likely shaped the interpretation and approach to the study" (Creswell, 2013, p. 251). To

ensure that I have represented the ideas of the participants accurately, the participants, or

members, checked transcripts of interviews, analysis, and drafts of the final report prior

to its conclusion, using guidelines provided by Glesne (2011). No changes were needed

based on the feedback I received. I engaged in rich, thick description by providing details

when describing the case so that readers can make decisions regarding transferability to

other settings. Finally, my dissertation advisor assessed both the process and the product

for accuracy (Creswell, 2013).

**Chapter Summary and Outline of the Remainder of the Document**

In Chapter 3, I discussed the rationale for choosing a multiple case study design. I

then established some context for choosing the research sites and the participant selection

at each site. I also described the data collection and analysis processes. Finally, I

established the trustworthiness of the study.

In the following three chapters, I describe each ensemble, as well as their teachers

and members. The first section of each chapter is dedicated to thick description of the

site, the participants, and the activities in which they engage. The second section of each

chapter explores the experiences students find meaningful in the ensemble and how those

experiences relate to culturally responsive teaching. In the final two chapters, I provide a

cross-case analysis in which I discuss the themes present in all three groups and conclude

with a discussion of the implications of this research.

**CHAPTER FOUR**

Robert Wells High School was a high school in Montgomery County, MD, the 14th largest school system in the United States. Students enrolled were in grades 9 through 12. In the 2019–2020 school year, the school had 2,091 students, with 37.7% being non-Hispanic White, 29.5% Hispanic and Latino American, 16.8% Black or African American, 11.7% Asian American, and 4.3% identifying as other ethnicities. 43.5% of the school population is enrolled in the Free and Reduced-price Meals System and 10.5% are enrolled as English to Speakers of Other Languages. The professional staff identified as 77.5% non-Hispanic White, 7.5% Hispanic and Latino American, 8.1% Black or African American, 6.9% Asian American, and 0% identifying as other ethnicities. 7.5% of staff worked as a teacher for fewer than five years, 41.9% from five to fifteen years, and 50.6% had been working for more than 15 years. The school was known for its strong athletic and arts programs.

**Context**

The music department was composed of band, orchestra, choir, and general music courses, split up and taught between three different teachers. The choral program was made up of three choirs: one general choir that does not require an audition, one SATB auditioned chamber choir, and one auditioned treble choir. The band program was made up of three ensembles: Concert Band, Symphonic Band, and Jazz Ensemble. The Concert Band was open to any students that play a typical band instrument, and the Symphonic Band and Jazz Ensemble require an audition to enroll. There were also six general music courses, including guitar, piano, and AP music theory.

The orchestra program, which was the focus of this study, consisted of two orchestras: Concert Orchestra and Symphonic Orchestra. The Symphonic Orchestra required an audition to enroll, and contained 36 students, most of whom were in grades 11 and 12. Mrs. Kollins taught both orchestra classes and, as a result, had the same students for up to four years as they progressed through high school. This allowed her to build a very strong rapport with them that is often not possible in other content areas. At the recommendation of the director, data for this case study were collected from observations of and interviews with the members of the Symphonic Orchestra.

**"The Land of Unicorns and Rainbows" – Rehearsal Observation**

I arrived early and entered the room for the final minutes of a guitar class. Students were scattered around the room, working independently while Mrs. Kollins brought students to the front of the room to hear them play individually. She saw me come in and waved, indicating that she would be with me shortly. I took the opportunity to begin setting up for my first observation with the orchestra. I chose a chair at the far end of the room, away from the entrance and where I would be able to clearly observe the whole room. It was a large room, very neatly kept with a lot of room to move around. It had four tiers, and one had to enter on the top level and move down to the lower level, where the teacher and conductor's podium were situated. The front wall on the lowest level had a screen and projector, as well as two chalkboards and a stereo cabinet.

The back wall had many instrument storage lockers along it, with percussion equipment in, around, and on top of many of them. Much of the percussion equipment were marching drums, suggesting the importance of the marching band within the music

program at Robert Wells. The walls were decorated with many musical posters and trophies from festivals and competitions, representing both band and orchestra awards. The lockers in the back of the room also had a substantial number of trophies on top of them. It is clear from the tidiness of the room and the prominent display of trophies that there was a great deal of pride in the quality of the instrumental music program at Robert Wells High School.

At 10:18 a.m., the bell rang to dismiss period three. Students stood, put away their guitars, and began leaving the room, heading to their next class. Mrs. Kollins walked over to where I have set up and asked if I need anything or if there is anything I want to see. I told her that I was just there to observe what she does in a normal class and to carry on as usual. A 17-year veteran teacher, Mrs. Kollins had been teaching band and orchestra for 15 years at Robert Wells High School.

As the Symphonic Orchestra students began to enter, they were very excited to see Mrs. Kollins. "Happy birthday!" exclaimed one. "We missed you yesterday," said another in a cheery tone. Students began getting their instruments out, and a majority of the group began singing "Happy Birthday," to her.

As students took their seats, Mrs. Kollins sounded an A 440 through the stereo system so that they could begin tuning their instruments. The bell rang to start period four and she said, "Close your mouths and open your ears." The students all started tuning their A strings, proceeding to tune the others once it was in tune. Once they were all in tune, Mrs. Kollins turned on a metronome and instructed them to play "Eb Major Warmups" (composed by Mrs. Kollins herself) as she circulated throughout the room.

Mrs. Kollins moved deftly around the room, adjusting bow placements and hand positions as students played through a series of warm up exercises that she composed. When the students finished the exercise, she explained the reason for her absence from the day before. "We had a sick kid, and one of us had to stay home," she said.

She then discussed the agenda for the day and objectives for the lesson. They were going to talk about their upcoming performance assessment, and then rehearse music for their upcoming concert. She then asked for their input about their impending performance assessment.

The students were faced with a choice between performing a rhythmic sight-reading assessment on Friday or a scale and arpeggio assessment on Monday. Mrs. Kollins asked students their preference between the two options and required a reason for their choice. The students overwhelmingly chose to take a rhythm sight reading assessment on Friday, so they immediately started practicing rhythmic sight reading. Mrs. Kollins set a metronome at 60 beats per minute and allowed the students to practice on their own and with their stand partners. She encouraged them to work together and preempt any issues with some of the specific patterns.

The class attempted the sight reading together. It was mostly accurate, but Mrs. Kollins asked the students for specific issues they heard in their performance. One student said, "The third measure was a hot mess." This elicited some laughter from the class, and a, "How exactly was it a mess?" from Mrs. Kollins. The student said that the dotted-eighth/sixteenth note rhythms were not accurate, which was true. She gave them 10 seconds to practice that measure before they performed it again. The second time, it

was correct.

As the students took out their first piece, "Pavane" by Maurice Ravel, arranged by Shirl Jae Atwell, a student entered late and handed Mrs. Kollins a pass. She looked at him, and asked, "Am I the first one to mention your hat today?" He shook his head and then, sheepishly, removed his hat to conform to the school rules. He took his seat to some chiding among the rest of the second violin section and joined the rehearsal.

The group was familiar with the impressionist piece of music and were able to play it in its entirety. As the group played, Mrs. Kollins gave some direction to fix small issues as she moved through the ensemble, rarely standing at the podium. When their performance concluded, she asked the principal cellist to help one of the other members of the section with a passage as she worked with the second violins and violas to fix a rhythm in the piece.

The class then moved on to their second piece of repertoire for the day, "Folk Tune Air and Fiddler's Fury" by Alexander Safford. At the end of a phrase about one minute into the piece, the ensemble began to pull apart as many members of the group missed a "rallentando" marked in the music. "What does rallentando mean?" asked Kollins. "It means I get to slow down. And now you get to slow down as a result of my win." This set off a chorus of laughter from the students, and the next time through the passage they were right with her. After struggling through a passage in the piece that modulates briefly to another key, they landed on a G major chord, to which Mrs. Kollins said, "Ah, back in the land of unicorns and rainbows," again eliciting laughter from her students.

The orchestra was still playing as the bell to dismiss the group rang. They waited patiently for Mrs. Kollins to dismiss them, and they began to pack up. I heard conversations happening all around me. A small group of students gathered together and began discussing their upcoming history test as they left the room to go to lunch. Many students were discussing the difficult passage they just rehearsed in the Safford. Mrs. Kollins stayed behind with a student to help them with some upper position work on the bass for an upcoming audition for the All-County Senior Orchestra. Most, if not all, of the students said some version of, "Thanks!" as they exited the room.

**Work Ethic**

Mrs. Kollins and I sat in a practice room discussing the rehearsal that I had just observed. "I try to communicate work ethic, and practice, and the importance of practicing and how the kids practice," she said, "and the way I've kind of woven that in is that my class is like a practice session." She admitted that it can be a bit tedious to rehearse that way at times, but the attention to detail pays off in the end.

The students recognize the emphasis on a class work ethic as well. "I think it's because Mrs. Kollins holds us to such a high standard," Sally told me. "Makes me push myself a bit harder, like overall, because I know now that just good enough isn't good enough." Grace added, "she wants us to be successful, which is why she's really beating the music and the rhythms into our brains."

Sally, a string bassist, had been in the Symphonic Orchestra for three years. She identified herself as a senior with a diverse ethnic and cultural background: her father, born in New York, was the product of Columbian and Spanish immigrants and her

mother immigrated to the United States from the Philippines. "I feel like I'm doing something creative and productive with my time to create something that's so beautiful and knowing I'm working and putting a lot of effort towards."

The high standards were evident from the moment I set foot into Mrs. Kollins's rehearsal room. It was obvious that she and her students had a lot of pride in their orchestra and they all, collectively, were striving for high levels of achievement. She required the same level of effort from all students in the orchestra and did a masterful job of scaffolding instruction to ensure that they could be successful.

Mrs. Kollins expected all students in the ensemble to participate. On several occasions, I witnessed her using popsicle sticks to call on students or to assign a concert piece to which they would respond. "I was resistant to it at first," she said, "but I like it because of the kids know I'm not in charge of who I'm calling on at random, and they're all ready."

Grace, a violist in 10th grade, was in her first year of Symphonic Orchestra. As a member of the concert orchestra the previous year, she said, "It was just a very welcoming environment, and I felt a hundred percent comfortable to play in there." Grace was a second generation American with both of her parents having immigrated to the United States from different countries, her mother from Columbia and her father from Spain. She described her musical tastes as "pretty much everything," citing a wide variety of musical styles that her parents exposed her to, including the blues, "classical" music, and reggaeton. She was asked to move up to the Symphonic Orchestra going into her 10th-grade year and decided to do it. "Mrs. Kollins asked me to bump up and I said yes,

and I really didn't think."

These standards did not just apply to performing music in Mrs. Kollins's room. I observed a lesson in which students were participating in a Socratic seminar as they listened to a recording from their concert the week before. The rules for the exercise were simple: Everyone had to speak at least twice, back up any claims with evidence, be additive, not repetitive, and use appropriate musical terminology. They were assigned, at random using the popsicle sticks, to a piece that they were expected to discuss. As the students listened, they were expected to use a graphic organizer to collect their thoughts about the piece. This was collected at the end of the lesson.

The seminar was received positively, at least by the students that I spoke with afterward. Grace said it, "stood out to me because it's something we do more in English than in an orchestra." She felt very at ease to express herself with her fellow orchestra members. "I'm more shy in a class I don't feel comfortable in," she said, "but at the same time I will talk more and I feel more comfortable, which is why it's kind of easier for me to speak there."

The reasoning behind this culture of high expectations is simple: retention. "I think that that success is really attractive to them and the fact that they are part of that success also makes them feel really good," Mrs. Kollins said. "They know when they sound really terrible at something, and when we worked through month after month, day after day, period after period, and can be like, 'Wow, we sounded great!' I think that's something they come back for."

**Classroom Environment**

Mrs. Kollins strove to create a classroom environment in which students felt valued as individuals, felt a part of a larger community of musicians in the class, and felt comfortable taking risks. "I feel like in that class we're more than just classmates, we're our own family," said Sally when we spoke after I had observed the second lesson at the school. "It's called an ensemble. You have to work collaboratively as a group to make your overall sound better. You're not focused on trying to make yourself as an individual sound better. You want your whole section, and essentially your whole ensemble, to sound good."

Grace talked about the classroom environment as being very welcome and accepting. "It was just a very welcoming environment, and I felt a hundred percent comfortable to play in there." She spoke of the collaborative nature of the ensemble, saying, "I think that playing music with the right group of people, I don't think I would ever want to give that up."

Bethany, a violinist in the orchestra, was in tenth grade at the time of our Zoom interview in the fall of 2020. She had been in ninth grade and a part of the Concert Orchestra in the fall of 2019 and spring of 2020 when I was visiting the school and interviewing her classmates. She auditioned for Symphonic Orchestra at the end of that school year and was moved into the group at the start of the 2020/21 school year.

Bethany lamented the loss of this collaborative community of players once we entered the pandemic. "It's all individual pieces," she said. "I don't even know if I'm first or second violin."

All of the students interviewed remarked on Mrs. Kollins's demeanor and energy as a significant factor in the collaborative and comfortable class environment. "Mrs. Kollins, as a person, she's very kind and understanding," said Bethany. Sally's face lit up when she talked about Mrs. Kollins. "She wants to connect with her students on a more personal level," said Sally. "I feel comfortable talking to her and coming into her class she knows when to be personal with us." Many of the students felt less anxiety going to Symphonic Orchestra than many of their other classes. According to Grace, "it's a place where I can really relieve stress and I'm not anxious to go to that class, and it's more like a class I look forward to. And it's like my class I think everyone should take."

Mrs. Kollins has had a philosophy around the importance of being collaborative and playing as an ensemble since she was in high school. As a drummer in her high school marching band, she realized what it was like to be a part of a larger group. "I finally realized my one stupid, little part that was easy to play made so much of a bigger contribution to the whole thing," she said in our interview. Her goal in all of her classes is, "that everybody be playing music and everybody be doing something to contribute."

**Quality Repertoire**

My first visit in the fall of 2019 was the week before the first concert of the school year. After a brief warm up in the key of Eb Major, and a short rhythmic sight-reading exercise, they moved into rehearsing "Pavane." The group had been studying and rehearsing this piece for just about two months at this point, and it was just about performance ready. As the students played, Mrs. Kollins provided feedback in real time, speaking to them as they continued playing and offering constructive criticisms and

praise. Only stopping twice to fix problems, she relied on the principal cellist to help the rest of the section with a fingering issue as she fixed a shifting issue in the second violins.

Kollins then asked the group to open "Folk Tune Air and Fiddler's Fury" by Alexander Safford. The piece began with a violin solo, bearing more than a passing resemblance to "Ashokan Farewell" used the Ken Burns documentary series *The Civil War.* I could see the change in body language from the previous piece and watched as the back of the second violin section stopped playing entirely in one passage. This piece had a little more work to be done before it is performance ready, and through the wrong notes and rhythms the group could sense that.

Mrs. Kollins spent a great deal of time and energy choosing repertoire for her orchestra students. "I think about what my instrumentation is, obviously where my stronger players are. I think about, you know, what my kids can do and theoretically what I could get them to scaffold to be able to do learning that piece."

The result was a body of repertoire that the students could perform at a high level and be excited about. For many, the repertoire was one of the main reasons they enrolled in the course. As a ninth grader, Bethany said she "saw the way that all of the Symphonic kids and they were playing all these advanced pieces, and it just looks so much fun!" She felt the repertoire was challenging and enjoyable.

Grace enjoyed the challenge of the repertoire in Symphonic Orchestra. "I like how we could play harder pieces that are not necessarily impossible, but really are a challenge for me as a player," she said. "We honestly play a bit of everything." Both the variety of styles in the repertoire and the challenge of playing the music were valued by

the students.

Sally, a longtime member of Symphonic Orchestra, was able to connect some of the pieces she played with the group to people and events in her life. "We've played some music that has Spanish flair, and I am part Spanish. I could think about my family and think, 'Oh my gosh, this is so them,' or 'this is music that they would listen to.'"

Mrs. Kollins and I discussed the "Pavane" that I heard them rehearse during my first visit. "I also look at what the piece offers to teach them, past technique or rhythm, or looking at me, the conductor. Something that has a historical significance like this Pavane, getting them to really look at a composer's intent." She chose repertoire that askes students to move beyond the notes printed on the page and really understand where the music is coming from and what it means.

But it went beyond that for Kollins. She wanted her students to be lifelong lovers of music. To aid in this, she helped them to dig deeper by asking questions. "What does this music represent? What is it supposed to convey? How does this music make me feel about myself?" Understanding the composer's intent was paramount to Kollins's approach. The notes and rhythms were the means to that end.

Specifically, regarding the "Pavane," she discussed the concept of grief with the students, saying:

The composer's intent is grief, which you would know immediately because you're talking about death. And I put up a hand-drawn sketch of someone laying on a bed and grieving. And we talked about, "what is the composer doing to try to get this intent? What things in the music are you doing that help convey that

message?"

The students felt comfortable sharing some of their own experiences with each other. They discussed, as a group, the various ways in which they could convey grief musically, and in their next rehearsal tried to apply what they discussed to their performance. Students found more meaning in their performance as a result of activities like this.

**Student Leadership**

"So, I do remember the way in which he organized us," said Mrs. Kollins, reminiscing about her experience in high school marching band. "I felt like there was a lot of emphasis on students and helping run rehearsal, that you'd have section leaders that would be able to step out of the drill and measure off paces and fix spacing that he trusted a lot, put a lot of faith in." This experience in high school marching band was a big influence on Kollins. "I think marching band helped me find who I was as a person," she confided.

I had already observed the principal cellist in the Symphonic Orchestra helping some of the players in the back of the section with a difficult passage in rehearsal as Mrs. Kollins fixed an issue in the second violin section. She clearly placed a high value on student leadership in her ensembles. As leader in the bass section, this emphasis was something that Sally took very seriously.

"You're not just focused on trying to make yourself, as an individual, sound better," said Sally. "You want your whole section and essentially your whole ensemble to sound good." Sally was the principal bassist in the Symphonic Orchestra, and was a

student that Kollins relied on substantially to motivate and assist the other students in her section.

"We talked about my experience in Symphonic Orchestra and the part that I play there, but I'm also in the Concert Orchestra, which is traditionally majority freshmen," Sally told me. "It allows me to get a new perspective on things because I'm able to see where these people have started off and I'm able to provide my insight to them and help them become better musicians." As a senior in a class primarily composed of freshmen, she was able to impact and motivate the younger students in a way that Kollins was just not able to from the podium.

Grace, who was not officially a student leader, talked about the impact that the current and past leadership had on her. "We have this one person that's amazing and she has her own concert [recital]. She goes to her own lessons, and I feel comfortable around her, and I look up to her a lot," she recalled about a student that was in the viola section with her at the time. Ultimately, Grace was motivated by this other student, but it could be intimidating. "Sometimes it could be overwhelming, because I do have private lessons, but can I ever be on her level? She's been playing much longer than I have."

The virtual learning that took place in the school system as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic made it very difficult for students to interact in meaningful ways. As a student that joined the Symphonic Orchestra during the pandemic, Bethany did not have the same experience with student leadership that the other two students had. "It's all very independent work," she said.

**Meaningfulness in the Ensemble**

Members of the Robert Wells High School Symphonic Orchestra found meaning in their participation through the repertoire and the teacher's demonstration of caring and building learning communities in the ensemble. Students spoke about the challenge of playing difficult repertoire, the enjoyment of and connection with the repertoire, and making a deeper connection with the repertoire, beyond the notes and rhythms on the page. The teacher's demonstration of caring provided members with a sense of belonging and accomplishment, on which they place a high value, through a strong work ethic and high standards, empowerment and student ownership of the ensemble, and purposeful relationship building. Figure 3 shows how these factors come together to produce meaningfulness among members of the ensemble. These elements are then explained in the remainder of this chapter.

# Robert Wells HS Symphonic Orchestra

REPERTOIRE                                        CARING

Level of difficulty ⎯⎯⎯＼  ／⎯⎯⎯ Work ethic and
                                                high standards

Enjoyment of    ⎯  MEANING  ⎯  Student ownership
repertoire

Connection with
repertoire (beyond  ⎯⎯⎯／  ＼⎯⎯⎯  Relationship
notes & rhythms)                          building
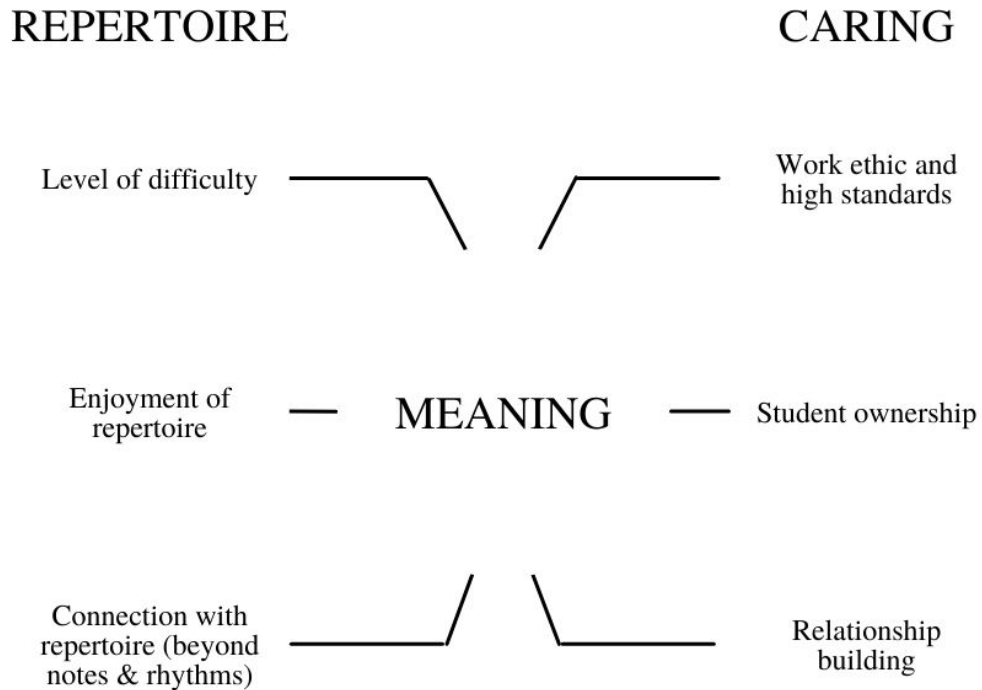
**Figure 3. Factors of meaningfulness within Wells HS Symphonic Orchestra Repertoire**

      The students in this ensemble attached a significant amount of meaning to the repertoire that they performed. Three aspects of music selection were shown to be important to the members of the orchestra: the level of difficulty of the repertoire, their enjoyment of performing the repertoire, and their ability to identify and connect with the repertoire beyond the notes and rhythms on the page. The students and teacher all recognized the potential value attached to the repertoire chosen, and sometimes worked collaboratively to make choices regarding the music the group performed.

*Difficulty of Repertoire*

"It was extremely challenging. We had a really fast tempo, fast pace. There were, like, a lot of sixteenth notes and eighth notes," said Grace, talking about a piece of music the orchestra had begun working on but never performed:

> It's my first year going from the orchestra I had last year, [which is] the lower level to just a high level, without much of a transition. It was difficult to adapt because we can't really start off slow because more than half of the class are seniors.

Mrs. Kollins purposefully chose and programmed music that would challenge the students but that was achievable. "I think about, you know, what my kids can do and, theoretically, what I could get them to scaffold to be able to do in learning that piece," she said. For Kollins, difficulty was often not measured by technical passages:

> And then I also look at what the piece offers to teach them, past technique or rhythm, or past looking at me, the conductor. And that's something that has a historical significance or, like this *Pavane*, getting them to really look at a composer's intent. That piece is very famous, yes, but it's famous for a reason, because of how well Ravel used all of these different compositional constructs to create this piece and express something.

Sally, too, enjoyed the challenge of playing difficult music, and understood the value that Mrs. Kollins placed on working through and improving their performance:

> She did this thing at the beginning of the school year, where she wanted us to record our first attempt at ever playing a passage, and then we would practice it

and then we'd submit the final copy. And then we would reflect on our first passage and then talk about the mistakes that we made and what we did to overcome them. And I feel like that's very unique. Teachers usually only want to see the end product, but she wants to hear about how we got to the end product.

Though Bethany's first year in the Symphonic Orchestra began during the pandemic lockdowns in the fall of 2020, she had a sense of the level of challenge the students in the orchestra faced when she was in the Concert Orchestra. "I saw the way that all of the Symphonic [Orchestra] kids were, and they were playing all of these advanced pieces, and it just looked so much fun," she said. However, participating in the Symphonic Orchestra as a virtual learner did not give her the challenge she was hoping for. "I felt like I'd make more progress and challenge myself more in Symphonic [Orchestra] this year," she lamented. When I asked about her best memory as a member of the ensemble, she had trouble answering for this year. After almost a full minute of thought, she described a memory from her time in the Concert Orchestra the year before. "The best memory I have was when we did quartet work and I had a really good quartet and we worked together [very well], and we were very collaborative, and the music was challenging," she said.

### *Enjoyment of Repertoire*

"I like how we could play harder pieces that are not necessarily impossible, but really are a challenge for me as a player, because violas almost never get the melodies," said Grace. She was discussing some of her favorite aspects of being in the Symphonic Orchestra. "The pieces that Mrs. Kollins chooses, the melody is included [in the viola

part] for many of them, so I feel like that's a good challenge for me." When I asked her

about her favorite style of music to play in orchestra, she said it depends:

> I would say fiddler music, solo, but not as an orchestra. As an orchestra, I like
>
> slower songs, I think. It's more the beauty in the slower pieces that make it fun for
>
> me. I know a bunch of people hate slow songs.

> Sally's answer about her favorite style of music to play was different. "I really

like when we play holiday music," she said. "I think it's just the feeling that we give

during the holiday concert, and having a younger audience and seeing how happy we can

make them, just by playing some silly Christmas music."

Once again, Bethany had a very different perspective on membership in the

ensemble. Having not joined Symphonic Orchestra until the fall of 2020, her experience

in the group had, so far, been entirely virtual. She preferred to play "classical" music and

enjoyed Mrs. Kollins's choice of repertoire during virtual learning:

> We've been using SmartMusic [MakeMusic Cloud]. She's been giving us pieces
>
> and then we have to record one piece per week. It's mostly just classical, which is
>
> what I'm used to. We've tried jazz before, like a jazz orchestra. I didn't like it. It
>
> has too many rests.

After a concert performance, I observed the class participating in a Socratic

seminar as they listened to and then discussed their performance with one another. While

there was a lot of discussion about the technical aspects of their performance, some

students engaged in discussion about the ensemble's confidence as they executed the

pieces. Mrs. Kollins asked, "Do you think that confidence should be considered when

evaluating a concert?" Most students agreed that it should. Sally, raising her hand, suggested that the level of confidence with which the ensemble played was reflective, at least in part, of how invested in the piece they were. "I noticed that we played *Pavane* with more confidence than the other piece. I think that's because we liked to play it more. I know I did, anyway."

### *Connection Beyond Notes and Rhythms*

Kollins tried to find a variety of ways to help students connect to the music that they are playing. "It's not just banging your head and doing '1 e + a 2 + 3 e + a 4 +,' or 'Miss-iss-ipp-i Hot-dog,'" she said. "It's about 'What does this music represent? What is it supposed to convey? How does this music make me feel about myself?'"

Kollins told me about a lesson she implemented to get the members of the ensemble to connect emotionally to the *Pavane*:

> I put up a picture of a hand-drawn sketch of someone laying on a bed-side
> grieving. And we talked about if the composer is trying to get this intent, what
> things in the music are you doing that help convey that message? And, for Carter,
> he was like, 'I really kind of see the pizzicato like tears.' And we talked about the
> dissonances that you're hearing in the music are kind of how grief is really
> complex. It's not just sad: there's anger, and rage, and questioning.

Kollins also made an effort to choose repertoire that will help the students see not only their own culture, but the cultures of others. "The first thing that I started trying to do was [to] be on the lookout for music that represented different cultures," she said, when specifically discussing how she has implemented culturally responsive teaching

strategies into the Symphonic Orchestra:

> I don't like pieces that are traditionally 'classical' music. I don't like Mozart, I
> don't like Handel, I don't like Haydn. I don't like things like that for personal
> reasons. So, I try to pick things that are more contemporary and things that are
> from a diverse cultural background.

Sally certainly found some of her own cultural heritage in past repertoire. "I think we play a lot of contemporary pieces and a lot of; I feel like we've done some world pieces too. I feel like we do a lot of Latin/Spanish music sometimes," she said. When asked if she felt like her own culture was represented in their music, she immediately answered, "Yes," referring to the "Spanish flair."

Gay (2010) defines culturally responsive teaching in this context as "using the cultural knowledge, prior experience, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant and effective for them" (p. 31). In choosing music with a "Spanish flair," Kollins validated and affirmed Sally as a learner, by bridging the gap between home and school.

As a senior, it was Sally's third year in the Symphonic Orchestra. Some of the younger members, for whom this was their first year in the ensemble, did not necessarily feel that their own cultures had been represented in the music they had played so far that year. "We play, honestly, a bit of everything," said Grace, when asked about the type of repertoire they play. However, as the daughter of Columbian and Spanish immigrants, she did not feel that cultural representation in their music this year:

I would say, maybe, on my dad's side, because he's European, it's a bit more seen

because we're playing like a bunch of German, and French, and English music,

but not really because Spanish has that flamenco vie to it, and it's not really

possible to play for an orchestra. And also, for the Hispanic side, on my mom's

side, I don't see it in the orchestra.

It was even less so for Bethany, an Indian American in tenth grade. As a new

member who joined during the virtual instruction of the COVID-19 pandemic, she had

not seen any of her own culture represented in the repertoire they had worked on. "I feel

like the pieces we do play, and it's early in the year, so that could change for sure, but

most of the pieces that we play, we play a lot of English [Western European] pieces," she

said.

In speaking about the availability of music by composers of diverse backgrounds,

Mrs. Kollins had some concerns. "There's not a lot of it out there," she said. "There's a

lot of Hispanic and Spanish music, but it's not written by Spanish people." She looks to

provide diversity in ways beyond ethnicity, looking to gender as well. "I look at music of

historical significance, different background, different cultures. A woman composer

instead of a guy composer, things like that."

Choice of repertoire was a very important part of providing meaningful

experiences for the orchestra members at Robert Wells High School, but it was not the

only aspect of the class that provided meaningfulness. For the students in the Symphonic

Orchestra, they had meaningful experiences because Mrs. Kollins demonstrated caring

and built learning communities (Gay, 2002) that allowed them to feel seen and

empowered.

**Demonstrating Caring and Building Learning Communities**

The students in the Symphonic Orchestra had a strong sense of belonging to the ensemble and attached meaning to that feeling. Through demonstrating caring and building learning communities Mrs. Kollins was able to create meaningful experiences for the students in three areas: developing a work ethic and setting high standards, helping students to take ownership of the ensemble, and building relationships with the students and fostering learning communities. This type of caring is found as a pillar of culturally responsive pedagogy (Gay 2002), as well as in the work of Hendricks (2018, 2021, 2023), Hendricks et al. (2021), and Silverman (2013, 2020).

*Work Ethic and High Standards*

"Think back to the first ensemble that you were in that you really loved being a part of," I said to Sally. "What was it about being in that group that made you love it?" She responded:

> I think it's because Mrs. Kollins holds us to such a high standard. I feel like I'm really pushing myself, but not in the traditional sense that, 'Oh, I feel challenged,' in a math class or an English Class. I feel like I'm doing something creative and productive with my time, to create something that's so beautiful and knowing I'm working and putting a lot of effort towards.

"I try to communicate work ethic, and practice, and the importance of practicing and how the kids practice," said Mrs. Kollins after I observed the first Symphonic Orchestra rehearsal. She continued:

The way I've kind of woven that in is that my class is like a practice session. There's a lot of repetition, there's a lot of tediousness and attention to detail. There's a lot of metronome work where we're slowing something down, we're doing a lot of literacy teaching where I'm teaching how to play a rhythm and giving a strategy to count it. I'm showing how to use the metronome to subdivide it.

Lind & McKoy (2016) described the importance of setting and maintaining high expectations for all students. "Having high expectations for all students," they wrote, "means teachers must be able to see the bigger picture of future possibilities that their students may not yet be able to envision" (p. 68). This work ethic is something that is evident in virtual every aspect of being a member of the ensemble. Kollins described, "Your ensemble gets to be really, really good when 100% of your kids can play 98% of the music. And so, I structure the work ethic and the practicing strategies and that's more of what my rehearsal is."

Several aspects of the rehearsals and classes I observed showed this high standard and work ethic as well. Mrs. Kollins used popsicle sticks to call on students to answer questions. It created a situation in which any student could be asked at any time to answer a question and avoided having the same students answering all of the time. "I like it because all of the kids know I'm not in charge of who I'm calling on randomly, and they're all ready," she said.

The students were very aware of the work ethic and the high standards that Kollins set for them, and they thrived on it. Grace saw it as a means to an end. "I think

she wants us to be a successful music player, which is why she's really beating the music and the rhythms and the counting all into our brains," she says. The end result was a performance that was polished and of which the members of the ensemble could be proud. "It's something that we finally pushed for and did successfully." Gay (2002) wrote that part of cultural caring is being very invested in achievement of ethnically diverse students and accepting "nothing less than high-level success from them" and working diligently to reach a goal" (p. 109).

Sally, more than the other students in this study, saw the value in the high expectations set by Kollins. "She has very high expectations of us," she said:

Seeing the standards that [Kollins] holds us to kind of makes me push myself a little bit harder overall, because I know now that just good enough isn't good enough. I have to go the extra mile to be just a little bit better. And putting in the work makes it worth it.

She also recognizes what it means for other aspects of her life, outside of the orchestra.

I was very not motivated to be better in the sense that I was just satisfied with being average, not feeling any desire to push myself any further. But just being in this class and feeling the pressure she pushes on all her students. Not in an aggressive way, I'm not bashing her. I love her so much, but just that push really, I think it's changed me.

*Student Ownership*

The students in the Symphonic Orchestra placed a great deal of meaning on their feelings of ownership of the ensemble. Building communities of diverse learners "enables learners to see themselves as having knowledge that can contribute to the learning process (Lind & McKoy, 2016, p. 71). As I observed the Socratic seminar following the first performance of the school year, I was struck by how invested each student in the room seemed to be in improving the performance for the next set of pieces.

The seminar began, with Kollins keeping track of the time and the students discussed the first piece, *Pavane*. Students discussed many musical aspects of their performance, including tone, intonation, bow control, dynamic contrast, accuracy of tempo and rhythm, and, most often, confidence. The discussion was, as required by the rubric, additive and not repetitive. Each comment built on what came before and, without Mrs. Kollins's assistance, the students critiqued their performance and made concrete suggestions for how to improve what they were doing together. They took responsibility and ownership of their own music making.

There were some disagreements between students as well, though no one took any comments personally. "The first violins weren't ready for the shift in measure 40 and the intonation was not good," said a member of the first violin section. "Well, I heard different," said another student in the section. The class laughed at this, and then returned to the task at hand.

Kollins was careful not to neglect the needs of the individuals, but to address their needs within the context of the group, a core aspect of culturally responsive caring (Gay,

2002). Later, in our interview, Sally and I discussed the importance of an ensemble feeling close to one another. She began:

> I do think it's important because it's called an "ensemble." We're supposed to be performing as a group. It's similar to a sports team. There's no "I" in "team." You have to work collaboratively as a group to make your overall sound better. You're not just focused on trying to make yourself, as an individual, sound better. You want your whole section and essentially your whole ensemble to sound good.
>
> In addition to being a member of the Symphonic Orchestra, Sally was also enrolled in the Concert Orchestra. Through her leadership role and past experiences, she was able to provide inside and support to the younger musicians in the group.

### *Relationship Building*

"I care that all the kids that I teach are lifelong lovers or learners of music, and I care that they are decent human beings, that they are caring and compassionate human beings," said Mrs. Kollins, when asked about what was most important to her as a teacher. It was clear from the first moment I observed students interacting with her that there was an effort made to develop meaningful relationships with each of her students. She addressed each orchestra member by name to greet them as they came into the classroom and had brief conversations with most of them. As I would come to learn, this was an intentional practice on her part, and it was consciously tied to culturally responsive teaching and caring.

"The second thing that I do to try to be culturally responsive is along the lines of,

I would call it just relationship building," says Kollins. She was being "culturally caring," an active process that goes beyond simply feelings and into measurable action to help students achieve (Gay, 2002). Hendricks (2018, 2021, 2023) referred to this as compassionate caring. Kollins described her approach:

> I try to say each kid's name at least once a day, so that they hear me saying their name and just so that they know that I'm aware of who they are. It's not like, "Hey, you in the back", or whatever. It's, "Hey Abby, how's it going?" Or, "You know Genevieve, I really like that sweatshirt. Where did you get it?" I try to always personalize it so that it humanizes the kids I'm working with.

> Kollins used accrued knowledge and strategizing to determine how to act in the best interests of her students (Gay, 2002) and to provide "spaces and relationships where ethnically diverse students feel recognized, respected, valued, seen and heard (Gay, 2010, p. 51). Kollins said:

> I think by acknowledging the cultural backgrounds of all the students that you're teaching, you're not leaving anybody out…Just being aware of what your students bring to the table in terms of their culture, their ethnicity, their age, whether or not they're born here. Those are all things that they bring to the table that I feel like when you acknowledge, you're acknowledging who they are as a person.

> Bethany saw the value in the relationship she had with Mrs. Kollins. "She's very kind and understanding," remarked Bethany. "I like that she makes sure we understand everything and just making sure we understand the foundation of notes and rhythm and all of that." Bethany was able to make a connection with Kollins, even in a virtual

environment. "She always checks in with us every day. It's nice knowing that she cares about us."

Because of the meaning placed on this relationship by Grace, Mrs. Kollins was able to motivate her and push her beyond her comfort level. "Mrs. Kollins asked me to bump up [to Symphonic Orchestra] and I just said, 'Yes,' and I didn't really think. She found it meaningful that Kollins is a strong female role model for her students.

Mrs. Kollins is a fun, energetic woman that knows that she's in charge and she gets her point across. I think that's really good for a director and for being a woman it's even better. It's very hard to find women directors or conductors in general, and I feel like, for us, that's important.

According to Gay (2018), "teachers must be *involved* in students' lives" (p. 63). As a senior, Sally had an opportunity to form a very close bond with Mrs. Kollins. "She wants to connect with her students on a more personal level," she told me during our interview:

I notice [with] a lot of my other teachers, I don't have that connection. But with her, I do have a connection, and I feel comfortable talking to her and coming into her class. She knows how to be personal with us.

Sally recalled a moment from the group's final concert of the previous school year:

I remember looking up and she looks out at our ensemble and she just, this is something simple, she looked at us and mouthed something like, "I love you seniors," and just looking around and you saw some seniors shed a tear. And you're just like, "Oh my gosh." That's when you realize this is more than just an

ensemble playing a song.

Mrs. Kollins used caring, often culturally responsive caring, to create meaning for her students in programming repertoire that challenges them, that they can relate to, and that they can created a deeper connection with beyond the notes and rhythms on the page. Additionally, she demonstrated caring by holding students to high standards, empowering them to take ownership in their own learning communities, and building caring relationships with each student. Her students were validated and affirmed because their cultural backgrounds were recognized and celebrated.

The students also found meaning through their collective striving toward their musical goals. They found subjective and intersubjective value in the repertoire they rehearsed and performed, as well as objective value in the skills they were developing as they learned how to play and learned about the music. As Wolf (2010) and Silverman (2013, 2020) would have agreed, the meaningful experiences these students had were, in part, through myriad connections they made through their shared learning and appreciation of the art of orchestral playing.

**CHAPTER FIVE**

Bernstein High School was a high school in Montgomery County, MD, the 14th largest school system in the United States. Students enrolled were in grades 9 through 12. In the 2019–2020 school year, the school had 1,815 students, with 15.3% being non-Hispanic White, 29.8% Hispanic and Latino American, 41.4% Black or African American, 9.9% Asian American, and 3.6% identifying as other ethnicities. 44.5% of the school population was enrolled in the Free and Reduced-price Meals System and 5.5% were enrolled as Emergent Multilingual Learners. The professional staff identified as 67.7% non-Hispanic White, 7.1% Hispanic and Latino American, 19.7% Black or African American, less than 5% Asian American, and less than 0.6% identified as other ethnicities. 13.4% of staff had been teaching for fewer than five years, 33.9% from five to fifteen years, and 52.8% had been working for more than 15 years. The school was known for its strong athletic and arts programs.

**Context**

The music department was composed of band, orchestra, choir, and general music courses, taught between four different teachers. The choral program was made up of three choirs: a treble choir, a concert choir, one auditioned SATB ensemble. The orchestra program was made up of two ensembles: concert orchestra and symphonic orchestra, with symphonic orchestra being an auditioned ensemble. There were also four general music courses, including guitar, piano, music technology, and AP music theory.

The band program consisted of two percussion classes, concert band, symphonic band, and jazz ensemble. The top percussion class, symphonic band, and jazz ensemble

required an audition to enroll. The Bernstein Jazz Ensemble, directed by Mr. Paulson, was the focus of this case, based on the teacher's recommendation and due to the diversity of backgrounds and ages in the group.

Mr. Paulson had only been at this school for two years, and already had a positive rapport with his students in the jazz ensemble. Prior to his time at Bernstein, he taught instrumental music, including band and orchestra, at another high school in the same district. The students at Bernstein enjoyed the diversity of music and camaraderie they experienced, as well as the special status that the jazz band was awarded as part of the Signature Arts Program housed at Bernstein High School.

**"President of Tempo" – Rehearsal Observation**

It was a cold morning in early January when I arrived at school and entered the band room for the second time since this study began. I found a combined percussion and color guard class working in small groups, clearly being run by students in the class. The class was ending, and the students began socializing as the bell neared. There was an excitement in the air, brought on by the possibility of an early dismissal from school due to impending inclement weather.

The bell rang and the students in the classroom departed, saying goodbye to their teacher, Mr. Ebert, as they leave. Mr. Paulson entered the room to prepare for the jazz ensemble's arrival. He looked at me and smiled, waving and gesturing to an empty seat he had prepared for me.

It was a large, open room, with two of its walls covered by lockers and cages for instrument storage, as well as filing cabinets containing music. Along the front wall of

the room sat many trophies and banners commemorating the large number of awards and

recognition that the instrumental music groups have earned over the years. The band was

arranged facing the front corner of the classroom, with the rhythm section to the right of

the horn sections facing them. To the left of the band members, a screen listed the

objectives, agenda, and announcements for the day. As band members entered the room,

they were excitedly discussing the weather and potential for school to close early. A few

of them said hello to me and smiled, welcoming me back.

Students began taking out their instruments and music, getting everything situated

for the upcoming rehearsal. Mr. Paulson was in the front of the room, chatting with some

of the students and answering their questions as more and more students started to play

their instruments, some playing sections of the music they are working on in the band and

others improvising on their own.

As the bell rang, the students continued warming up and talking with each other.

After a few minutes, Mr. Paulson raised a hand at the front of the ensemble to get

everyone's attention. "I'm sure some of you have heard, but Michelle's dad passed away

suddenly yesterday," he said. "She's going to be struggling when she comes back to

school, and I know some of you are close with the family, so if you need anything I'm

here. Let's keep them in our thoughts." Some of the students were visibly upset by this

news and they comforted each other by exchanging hugs.

Mr. Paulson had a couple of other announcements regarding a jazz festival at

Towson University that was coming up later in the week, then began discussing their

annual "Swing Night" fundraiser at the school. He distributed a list to the students of the

music he would like them to play for the performance. "I took into account your request to play some 'non-swing stuff' for Swing Night," he said, making air quotes with his fingers as he speaks. "This list has some of that stuff on it. My goal for this year is to have everyone improvise at least once."

For a group warm up, the band played through their F and Ab major scales. The Ab major scale was very sloppy due to numerous wrong notes, so Mr. Paulson gave them 30 seconds of time to practice the scale on their own. Once the time was up, they played it again together, with clear improvement.

For the upcoming festival at Towson, the band was repeating some music from the county jazz band festival in December: "Two Seconds to Midnight" by Alan Baylock and "When I Fall In Love" arranged by Dave Wolpe. Mr. Paulson had the students take out "Two Seconds to Midnight" and began discussing some of the feedback they received after the previous festival. "The biggest comment on this tune was that it was too loud all the time," he said. He counted off the band and they started to play. Within ten seconds, Paulson shouted over the band that the tempo is slowing down at the softer dynamic level and the band corrected itself.

Cutting off the band, Paulson said, "All it took to fix the tempo was for me to draw your attention to it and you fixed it. So how do we fix this together without me having to say anything?"

"It's kind of hard to hear everyone," said one of the trumpet players from the back row.

"OK, well let's take some time and reset ourselves," replied Mr. Paulson. The

students rearranged their chairs and formed a box, with the four sides being made up of the saxophones, trombones, trumpets, and rhythm section, with all members facing in toward the center.

"Alright, before we try this again, who is responsible for tempo?" asked Mr. Paulson.

"Everyone!" replied the group in unison. Paulson counted off the band again and they began *Two Seconds to Midnight* in the new configuration. After about two minutes, he stopped them.

"What do you think of the new set up? Let me have a thumbs up, in the middle, or thumbs down," he said. The students responded accordingly, most with their thumbs up enthusiastically, and a few with their thumbs in the middle. No one had their thumb down.

"Did you hear anything that was louder than any other instrument?"

"Keyboard," one student responded. After a few moments of silence, Mr. Paulson said, "It was cowbell for me." The class chuckled: they had all clearly seen the old *Saturday Night Live* skit in which Christopher Walken can't get enough cowbell. "As silly as it sounds," he continued, "I need your cowbell to blend into the drum set."

After playing a few more bars of the song, Paulson stopped again. "How did you guys feel about that cowbell?" asked the cowbell player.

"I couldn't really hear it anymore," said a saxophone player.

"Me neither," agreed a trombone player. All concurred, including Paulson, that they did, in fact, need more cowbell, which caused another round of laughter.

They jumped to rehearsing the solo section of the piece, with a trombonist and guitarist improvising solos. At the conclusion of each solo, the other members of the band clapped for the players and offered words of encouragement. They were all so supportive of one another in this setting.

After the piece concluded, Mr. Paulson asked the ensemble, "How did you feel like you did with volume? Did you maintain your volume throughout the piece?"

"No, we got louder and we got faster," replied the drum set player.

"You have to take responsibility for your own volume," said Mr. Paulson. "And we need to put a governor on the speed. Anyone into cars? Does anyone know what a governor is?" Silence from the ensemble. "A governor is something that keeps your car from going too fast," he said.

"We need a president, not a governor," exclaimed the cowbell player. The ensemble laughed and Paulson smiled, walked over to the student, and took the cowbell away from him, which elicited more laughter.

"Let's take out 'When I Fall in Love,'" suggested Mr. Paulson. The students shuffled through their music, and a young woman stood up from the trombone section to sing the song. "Where do we need to worry about playing too loudly in this piece?" asked Paulson.

"Anywhere Melanie is singing," responded the bassist.

At that, Mr. Paulson counted off the band and they began playing. After about four measures, he cut them off to address some intonation issues, after which he restarted the band and they ran the tune.

"Ok, nice job everyone. Let's get things set up in here for the next class, and I'll see you all tomorrow. The students busied themselves setting up chairs and stands for the next rehearsal. The bell rang, and students filed out, resuming their conversations about the impending weather and discussing the odds of an early dismissal.

**Student Collaboration and Camaraderie**

"What, if anything, does being in this ensemble bring into your life that would not be there without it?" I asked Ben, a pianist in 12th grade, during our Zoom interview. He thought about it for almost 30 seconds, then answered:

A lot of collaboration that I wouldn't have had otherwise. Just the feeling of getting to work with a lot of your friends and, you know, produce such a high-quality product that you wouldn't be able to do other places.

This idea of student collaboration was something that the students kept coming back to in our time together. Mr. Paulson placed a lot of emphasis, particularly in this ensemble, on everyone working together and contributing to the way the ensemble sounds and functions. This contributed to a sense of pride in the ensemble, which is evident in the way the students spoke about their experiences.

"I just remember feeling ridiculously proud of the whole ensemble," said Mickey. Mickey was an 11th-grade student in the band and played the piano. He was also a violist in the orchestra and described his cultural and ethnic background as "White across the board." He really enjoyed listening to orchestral music, Shostakovich in particular:

I thought we sounded amazing at our first concert. And, you know, as you play more, you listen more for the things you did wrong and stuff. But since it was my

first performance with them, I was just so psyched and so pumped. I just remember Ben and I were just laughing after. It was great. It was just a really good time.

This camaraderie was a sentiment echoed by other students in the ensemble. Bruce, one of the drum set players in the band, was in 11th grade and felt the support of his peers as well. He described himself as, "Hispanic and Latino," and his parents were both Brazilian immigrants.

Describing one of his best memories in the band, he told me about an occasion in which Mr. Paulson brought in a former student to help the drummers in the band:

He used to be a drum set player at Mr. Paulson's old school, and he was very skilled. He kind of came over to help me and my friend and, you know, I'm a little bit of a nervous guy, so it gets a little weird when everybody's looking at me and the attention is on me. But, I felt like I could really feel the support from everybody, you know? Everyone was understanding of my ability, and I tried my best and everyone was fine with that. And I really remember that time because it felt like, "Wow," you know, "this is really nice." There's no ridicule, there's no bad taste in my mouth after that experience.

Kimberly, one of the bassists in the jazz band, also felt this sense of togetherness. She was a 12th-grade student and, like Mickey, identified herself as White. She found the importance of a family feel in an ensemble in her middle school orchestra. "When I was there," she said, "I made a lot of friends that I sort of kept in orchestra when I went to high school. And I think that was the first time it kind of felt like a family."

In the Bernstein Jazz Ensemble, Kimberly continued to find that bond and feeling of collaboration with her bandmates:

> You definitely make friends in there, probably, with people you wouldn't be friends with outside of it. I like the camaraderie that we have when we're playing well and everything's sort of falling into place. I like those moments because we're all sort of together, but then also if we need to practice a little bit more or things just aren't lining up the way they're supposed to, we pick each other up and I like those moments just as much.

Paul, a 12th-grade trombone player in the ensemble that identified himself as African American, had been in the ensemble since he was in ninth grade. "The guitar player and I were the only two freshmen in the band," he said. The experience of playing in the band as a 9th grader was made easier by the efforts of the former director, Mr. Hartly, in that first year. "We had a performance at the Rockville Town Center. And then, after that, there was a barbecue at his [Mr. Hartly's] house, and that really developed and formed relationships."

I asked Paul about the importance of the band getting along, he replied, "Everyone needs to be in sync." He continued:

> I feel as though if you don't like somebody, then that attitude is going to carry throughout [the band]. Like it's a fungus, it's going carry throughout the rest of the band. And if two people don't click, then it can just throw off the whole lot.

**Towson University Jazz Festival**

According to the course handbook, The Bernstein Jazz Ensemble required a high level of skill and dedication. As a member of the ensemble, it was expected that students perform more often, and in different settings, than other ensembles in the school, including at an annual fundraiser that the music department produced called "Swing Night," in which the jazz ensemble, as well as members of the top choir at the school, performed during dinner for parents and community members that purchase tickets. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, "Swing Night" could not take place in the spring of 2020 as planned.

Students were, however, able to participate in a jazz festival hosted by a local college, Towson University, in January of 2020, days after my second observation of the ensemble. This is an annual event that, "features educational rotations of performing groups, a demonstration concert after lunch, followed by afternoon learning sessions and a Master Class for all!" (Towson University, 2021). After the pandemic closed schools in the spring of 2020, Ben told me:

> My favorite memory of being in this ensemble was our day trip to the Towson
> Jazz Festival. And I think my favorite part of that day was [when] we were
> working with the clinician and he asked the vocal soloist and I to do a
> spontaneous piano/vocal duet, and it just worked out really well.

Mickey also remembered this experience as a significant one:

> We went to the Towson Jazz Festival, and we did the master class with Jeff
> Coffin, and he asked our singer Maria and Ben to do our ballad, "When I Fall In

Love," but just piano and voice, nothing else. And he asked her to really turn

away from everyone else and just focus in on the emotion and the delivery and

everything. And it almost brought me to tears and every single person in the room

was feeling the same way. Ben was, like, sniffling.

As one of the only band members to participate in the group for four years, Paul

remembered this particular festival as an annual tradition since Mr. Paulson took over the

band in his 10th-grade year. He recalled:

Going to the Towson Jazz Festival these past few years was definitely a great

opportunity for us as a band to get closer together, but also be able to hear other

bands and get critiqued on how we could sound better.

Kimberly echoed Paul's sentiment that the experience was great for creating a

stronger bond within the band, though it had little to do with the musical experience at

the festival:

There was a time last year we were going to festival, and since jazz band is so

small, we don't actually get a bus, we have to carpool. So, I was riding with one

of my friends in jazz band and another sax player, who was older than us, who

could actually drive. And at a stop light, he turned his car off completely as a

joke, and when it turned green, we had to hustle up to try to turn it back on again.

That's the first thing that came to mind. It's little stuff, probably, that adds up.

Bruce specifically remembered the grace that he was shown by Mr. Paulson and

his bandmates when he made an error in the middle of their performance at the festival:

We had gone to Towson, and it was for, like, a jazz festival, and we had gone

there to play. We were in the middle of a performance and, you know, this song

that I had played many, many times before, on a part that I had never gotten

wrong, I mess up and, you know, put the band back a half a beat or so, and it just

kind of messed us up for like a measure or two. I was expecting dagger eyes from

Mr. Paulson, and I was expecting him to be like, "What did you do?!" But, you

know, we went on with our whole performance and even after the performance,

Mr. Paulson was just like, "Good job, good job. We'll talk about it." So, you

know, I really appreciated that from Mr. Paulson.

**Improvisation and Appreciation of Jazz**

When asked about what is most important to him for his students to know and be

able to do, Mr. Paulson answered:

For me, it's really about [the students] having an appreciation and an

understanding for jazz, in particular understanding the history of it, and

understanding who the major players are, and the improvisational aspect of jazz,

just being able to know and appreciate all of that.

Mr. Paulson placed a lot of emphasis on the improvisational aspects of jazz and

how it fits into the larger picture of the genre. "I have a goal that everyone improvises on

this event," he said to the band during rehearsal as they were discussing the annual

"Swing Night" fundraiser at the school. "We focus on improvising and reading a lot in

the ensemble," said Ben, when asked what he thought was most important to Mr. Paulson

for the group to know and be able to do.

Paul also recognized the importance Paulson places on improvisation in the group:

> He definitely explains things when we're going into improvisation. He'll explain the chords and so we have like the ii, V, I and he explains it and how it works. And then we'll sing the ii, V, I or we'll sing a 12-bar blues progression. And then he'll explain to us which keys or which scales we need for each, or he'll play things similar to what we're working on for us to get ideas.

Mickey really appreciated the study of improvisation he has found in the class:

> I learned so much about genres, and jazz as a whole, but, like, about improvisation, about different techniques ices, and less is more. And I didn't get that when I started, so I was trying to play every single note and now I'm picking out the ones that are important and I can know what's important to play.

Paulson also encouraged the students to be supportive of one another when they were practicing improvisation. As I observed the class rehearsing "Two Seconds to Midnight" before their performance at the Towson Jazz Festival, Paul and a guitarist named Evan both had extended, improvised solos in the music. As each of them finished their solos, the rest of the class, at least those that were not actively playing their instruments at the time, would applaud and show their support. It was clearly important that they all felt safe taking chances and improvising in front of one another. "I really am hoping that I can continue to work on improvisation and jazz as a whole," said Mickey, "after I obviously leave jazz band."

Improvisation was situated in the larger goal of appreciation and understanding of

the genre of jazz as a whole. "I like to do a lot of listening in jazz band class and just try to expose the students to something they haven't heard before," said Paulson. "The top two [most important] things for me would be playing experiences and listening experiences."

**Challenges**

"I liked playing upright bass and I knew that there are sometimes upright bass players in jazz band," said Kimberly. "Orchestra music didn't really challenge me enough, so I felt like, 'Why not learn a whole different style of bass?'"

According to the syllabus for the course, students were placed in this ensemble because they were committed, worked hard, and had a high level of passion and integrity for music making. The desire to be challenged was a big part of the desire to participate in the Bernstein Jazz Ensemble, and Mr. Paulson very specifically sought to push the ensemble musically, as well as in other ways. He was inspired to do this by his middle school band director when he was in seventh grade, and by hearing the eighth-grade students performing. Paulson said:

> I guess what made me love it was the fact that we were doing what felt like real music, you know, going beyond stuff in a method book and, especially going in as a seventh grader and hearing some of the eighth graders and how good they were. We were just doing, you know, really, really, for what it seemed at the time, hard music and doing it really well.

"I try as much as I can to incorporate some of the things that he used to do with me in my own teaching," Paulson said, "adapting it to today's realities." He continued:

I think they want to do it because the jazz band has always been seen as one of the elite ensembles, elite groups in the school, and they strive to be a part of that. There's a lot of motivation to be in the group because it's seen as such an elite group.

While usually the challenges students faced in the ensemble were musical, they were sometimes emotional. "When Mr. Chris Vadala passed, that was kind of a hard time for Mr. Paulson," remembered Paul:

You could feel a whole different drive and shift in him wanting us to do better. I think that was my junior year, and I think that was where we played things outside of our norm, because it was attributed to Mr. Vadala. And out of that situation, that good came out of it. And I think that's what Mr. Paulson wants to try to keep pushing for.

### Meaningfulness

The Bernstein Jazz Ensemble members found meaning in ways that were directed by repertoire choice and caring teaching practices. Mr. Paulson, like Mrs. Kollins, demonstrated caring and built learning communities through student-teacher relationships and by holding all students to the same high standards. In addition, his repertoire choices represented a wide variety of styles and composers, allowing students to derive meaning from their identification with and representation in the repertoire and in their exercising of choice in decisions made around repertoire. Figure 4 shows the ways students found meaning situated within compassionate care and repertoire choice, which are explained further in the remainder of this chapter.

## Bernstein HS Jazz Ensemble

CARING                                                    REPERTOIRE

Student-teacher
relationships

MEANING ——    Connection to/with
repertoire & student
choice

High standards for
all students
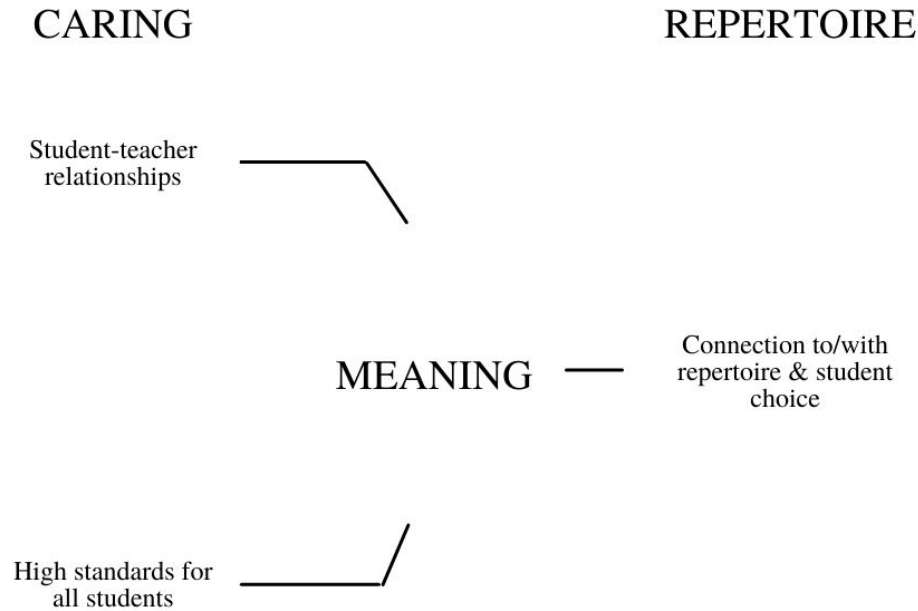
**Figure 4. Factors of meaningfulness within Bernstein HS Jazz Ensemble.**

## Caring

Mr. Paulson, through demonstrating compassionate caring and building learning communities (Hendricks, 2018, 2021, 2023), was able to create meaningful experiences for the students by developing strong, caring student-teacher relationships, fostering the building of learning communities, and holding all students to the same high standards of behavior and musicianship.

### *Student-Teacher Relationships*

Through compassionate caring, including culturally responsive caring, Mr. Paulson fostered strong student-teacher relationships. According to Gay (2018), culturally responsive caring involves "knowing culturally diverse students thoroughly personally and academically" (p. 62). Kimberly recalled:

He's very understanding, especially as a teacher, if you forget something. But I've also gone to him for family stuff, so that's nice. Definitely one of my favorite things is after class or before class, you sort of joke around with him a lot. He takes his teaching seriously, but he still has room to be friends, I guess.

Kimberly was in 12th grade, graduating shortly after our interview was conducted, and had Mr. Paulson as a teacher for three of her four years as a high school student. In that time, she came to rely on him as a mentor and a confidant.

Bruce, in 11th grade at the time of our interview, saw Paulson as someone that tried very hard to understand his students. He demonstrated, as Gay (2018) said, "treating everyone with equal *human* worth" (p. 62). Bruce explained:

He goes to a length to reach an understanding with his students. Of course, like every human being, there's a point where, you know, you get frustrated, or you get mad or perhaps you're just not having a good day. And, you know, one of the students is just going to push your buttons and it's not going to be a good day. And when that happens, Mr. Paulson says, "I apologize for acting this way, but I want you to understand why I was acting that way." I feel it reveals a lot about his character.

Mickey echoed the sentiment of his peers. "I really, really like having Mr. Paulson as a teacher," he said. "I've had him every single year, since freshmen year, and I'm going to have him again. I literally never want him to leave me," he said with a laugh. "He's just an incredibly understanding teacher and accommodating, and he knows his stuff, man. He knows his stuff." Here, Paulson was being an academic, social, and

personal confidante, advocate, resource and facilitator for his culturally diverse students (Gay, 2018, pp. 61–62).

Paulson was inspired to become a music educator by his middle school band director and credited the positive relationship he had with his students as a big factor in his own relationship building with his students:

He was one of those guys who, like, we knew about him beyond just being a band director. I remember being in saxophone class and of course he's coming around and listening to us individually and he sees my ligature. He's like, "Oh, nice Rovner you got there." He noticed things and would be supportive of those things. In rehearsal he was a hard ass, but one-on-one, he was very, very nice and approachable and friendly.

As a 12th-grade student that was in the ensemble for four years, Paul appreciated Mr. Paulson as a teacher and as a part of a support system. Paulson often went above and beyond what is expected and required of a teacher, demonstrating that he not only cared about the students in his ensemble, but cared for them (Hendricks, 2018, 2021, 2023). Our interview took place on the same morning that the AP Music Theory exam was happening. "Mr. Paulson is a great supporter of us," he said:

I think to be a great teacher you need to be a great person. A prime example: Mr. Paulson also teaches AP Music Theory and in about an hour and a half, I have the exam. So, on Sunday, he was out in his mask, and Mrs. Paulson was in the car, but he was delivering AP survival kits. And if you, as a teacher, want your students to do great, then those are the little things that go a long way.

### *High Standards*

The first time I entered the rehearsal space of the Bernstein Jazz Ensemble, I was immediately struck by how many awards and trophies adorned the walls. Standards and expectations were evident in the way in which students came into the room and prepared for rehearsal. There were clearly well-established routines and standards, and the students all understood and followed them. "The culturally informed version of care is tied to expecting excellence from all students and demanding accountability when students don't live up to expectations" (Lind & McKoy, 2016, p. 70). Paulson did this regularly.

"It's a lot of responsibility. Mr. Paulson, being the top ensemble, really expects us to be on top of our game," Paul told me. Similar thoughts were expressed by his classmates, and they found pride and meaning in trying to achieve those standards.

The Jazz Ensemble was comprised of those musicians interested in learning about, as Paulson said, "America's music," and generally included the school's best musicians. The syllabus detailed some specific expectations for all band members, including demonstrating mastery of jazz styles, literature, and improvisation. The Jazz Ensemble performed in as many festivals, concerts, and other public engagements as possible, in both big band and combo settings.

"I kind of feel like the ensemble ethic is working to be as good as, if not better than those who came before you and that reputation of the school and of the program," said Paulson. The effects of high expectations were exponential. He knew that students with high expectations increase performance in the same way that low expectations decrease performance, exponentially (Gay, 2018, p. 78).

"As a teacher, he sets pretty clear guidelines of what he expects for us and holds us to high standards," said Ben. "So, the first time we get a piece we go through and we look at it and say, 'Alright, this is where the D.S. is,' and he expects, the next time we do it, everyone to be familiar with it."

Demonstrating caring and building learning communities was an important part of the way the Jazz Ensemble functioned. Students were able to find meaning in their interactions with Mr. Paulson that were caring and in the high standards that he set for every student in the ensemble.

**Repertoire**

The students in this ensemble attached a significant amount of value and meaning to the repertoire that they performed. Mr. Paulson included a wide range of musical styles in his music selection for the ensemble, which included a diverse pool of composers and arrangers. Each student in the group that I spoke to was able to connect, in some way, with at least one of the pieces they were performing.

Paulson also involved the group in decisions about which selections they would perform at certain events and how they would play a piece — how many solos, when to play backgrounds, and other aspects of performance — on a given performance. The student-centered approach helped the students to connect with the repertoire on a deeper level. In this way, the students were able to have many meaningful experiences directly related to the choice of repertoire.

*Connection With Repertoire*

One of the ways Mr. Paulson helped students connect with the repertoire they performed was through the lens of culturally responsive pedagogy. "I think being culturally responsive is much easier in the jazz class than in a lot of my classes," said Mr. Paulson. "It's not just White guys who wrote it. I do think about, when I'm trying to choose music, who wrote the music or who even arranged the music." In a school that is a plurality African American population, Paulson is acutely aware of the need for students to be able to see themselves and others in the repertoire (Tycast & Lukkasson, 2017).

According to Gay (2018), exposing children to literature [music] that includes characters, settings, and events similar to their lived experiences produces positive academic, personal, and social results" (p. 167). Many of the students I interviewed, who come from a variety of backgrounds, felt they were able to, at least in part, see their own cultural background in the music that Mr. Paulson selected. Bruce, a drummer in the band with parents who immigrated from Brazil, found that connection to the Bossa Nova, though it was with a tune they were never able to perform due to the pandemic. Bruce recalled:

> We were going to play a Bossa Nova groove, the famous song *The Girl from Ipanema*, and I liked that song very much, especially because it comes from Brazil. Songs like that, you know, I felt like I had a representation of my culture.
>
> Paul's answer was more nuanced. He recognized, as an African American student, that jazz is rooted in his culture, but that often the music they perform is arranged by

White men:

> You know, the beginning of jazz was John Coltrane, Charlie Parker, Charles
>
> Mingus, like, it was just a whole bunch of African Americans. And now we play
>
> their songs, but they've been arranged by other people. And I just feel like it's not
>
> really the root of what jazz is. And that's not Mr. Paulson, it's just a thing as a
>
> whole.

Ben, Mickey, and Kimberly were all less aware of the repertoire choices as they related to their cultures. Ben identified himself as "Caucasian, but with Hispanic ethnicity," and when asked if he felt his cultural background was represented in the music they perform, answered, "I'd say so. There's some Latin kind of stuff that we do."

Mickey, when asked the same question, answered, "I don't really know a lot of the music of my cultural background, but I'm American and we play a lot of American stuff. So, I guess, you know, I mean we're not playing anything Russian."

Kimberly, when asked if she felt her own cultural background was represented in their music, simply said, "Yes." I asked her if she could elaborate, and she answered, "I just feel like, although jazz originated in America and was played by African Americans, there's still that bias towards White people in everything." Gay (2018) tells us that even minimal use of multicultural curricula has a positive influence on achievement and self-efficacy.

"You want to connect with kids where they are," Paulson told me. Cultural scaffolding (Gay, 2002) helps to bridge the gap between home and school, making learning more meaningful. Paulson explained:

So, if all you're doing is playing a bunch of music by a bunch of dead White guys, that doesn't connect with kids. It means a lot to them when they see you trying to find music that fits their background, their culture, their color, their people. And I've had those talks with kids directly about it and how I'm trying to do it. And I think they get that and I think they respect it. They respond to you better and it just makes the whole class culture better.

In choosing repertoire, Mr. Paulson gave the students some autonomy and allowed them to provide input into the music they would rehearse and perform. Bruce recalled that Paulson would give them some choices, and they could "all talk it over and choose" what music they would work on. In rehearsal, Mr. Paulson would also solicit input from the band members for specific performance elements. I watched as he talked through the blueprint of a piece in rehearsal, asking the students questions like, "Who wants to solo here?" and "How many times should we play the backgrounds at 45?" Including the students in this decision making, even, on a small level, help contribute to their sense of ownership of the group and to their connection and meaning found in the repertoire itself.

Mr. Paulson demonstrated caring and built learning communities as well as purposefully choosing repertoire that is as reflective of the cultural diversity in the ensemble as much as possible. He was able to create meaningful experiences for the students by caring *with* them and giving them choices in around the repertoire. While not all members of the ensemble were able to culturally identify with the repertoire, they were all able to find meaning around the music, and in their experiences interacting with

Mr. Paulson and each other, as well as in achieving the high standards that were set for each student.

Ultimately, within the jazz ensemble, Mr. Paulson was able to provide opportunities for the students to experience a wide variety of musical activities including performing, improvising, and basic arranging. These activities "bring people together in positive way-ethical ways and contribute to collective joy," helping them to find meaningful ways to explore jazz, together (Silverman, 2013, p. 36). The students found both subjective and intersubjective value in their experience in the jazz ensemble, contributing to the meaningfulness they experienced.

**CHAPTER SIX**

Oakmont Middle School was a middle school in Montgomery County, MD, the 14th largest school system in the United States. Students enrolled were in grades 6 through 8. In the 2019–2020 school year, the school had 646 students, with 19.5% being non-Hispanic White, 43.5% Hispanic and Latino American, 22% Black or African American, 9.8% Asian American, and 5.2% identifying as other ethnicities. 56.4% of the school population was enrolled in the Free and Reduced-price Meals System and 16.9% were enrolled as Emergent Multilingual Learners.

The professional staff identified as 78.9% non-Hispanic White, 8.8% Hispanic and Latino American, 5.3% Black or African American, 5.3% Asian American, and 1.7% identifying as other ethnicities. 21.1% of staff had been working as a teacher for fewer than five years, 33.3% from five to fifteen years, and 45.6% for more than 15 years.

**Music at Oakmont**

The music department was composed of band, orchestra, choir, and general music courses, split up and taught between two different teachers. The choral program was made up of three choirs, divided by grade level. The two general music courses taught included guitar, music technology, and music appreciation.

The band and orchestra programs were each made up of three levels: Beginning/Level 1, Level 2, and Level 3. Beginning/Level 1 was made up of students in grades 6–8 that have never played an instrument before. Level 2 included students from grades 7 and 8 and served as an intermediate ensemble. Level 3 consisted entirely of eighth grade students and served as the advanced ensemble in both band and orchestra,

though the Level 2 and Level 3 students were often combined into one class period for

the orchestra students. Data for this study were collected from observations of the Level 3

band class, one in person and one virtual, and an interview with Mrs. Hanson, the

instrumental music teacher. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, interviews with students

were not possible in this case.

**"Band Is Magic"**

It was around 8:50 a.m. on a Friday morning, and I was sitting in my home office

waiting to enter a Zoom meeting. It was the fall of 2020, and we were in the midst of the

global COVID-19 pandemic, so the final observation of the Oakmont Middle School

Concert Band was virtual rather than in person. After about two minutes, I saw that Mrs.

Hanson, the director, had let me into the Zoom meeting.

Mrs. Hanson was a woman in her late 40s. She had been teaching for a total of 23

years and was in her 18th year at Oakmont. She was a working bassoonist, playing

regularly in a chamber orchestra and performing as a freelance musician when able.

We chatted a little about the difficulties of teaching music virtually before she

began letting the students into the meeting as they piled up in the waiting room. Rather

than letting them in all at once, she let each student in individually, having brief

conversations with each one as they entered. When everyone was in, there were a total of

26 students attending the class.

Mrs. Hanson started the class by saying hello to the group collectively and asking

how everyone was doing. Most of the students, as it was not required by the school

system, had opted not to turn on their cameras. "Band is truly about us," said Hanson. "I miss seeing you. I see your names on a black screen, but I don't see you."

Mrs. Hanson sent a link out through the chat in Zoom for students to check in for attendance. "Band is magic," she said, and then began sharing her screen for the warmup. The school had purchased SmartMusic (now MakeMusic Cloud) subscriptions for all of the students in band and orchestra, and Hanson relied on it a lot, especially in the early days of the pandemic. The warmup consisted of a rhythmic exercise that the students were supposed to clap. This prompted Mrs. Hanson to give them instructions for recording an upcoming assignment in which they must be able to change the settings in SmartMusic from "melodic through microphone" to "percussive" to complete it. She showed them how to do this on her own screen. She then moved into announcements for the ensemble, letting students know that she had emailed the students who had an instrument waiting at the school to be picked up to use at home.

After announcements, Hanson gave the students time to work on their own to complete their SmartMusic assignment during most of the rest of the period. Before beginning, she said, "Go into the Zoom to answer this: do you need to have headphones to successfully submit your assignments?" The students began responding in the chat, many answering no. "I'm seeing a lot of 'no' answers. You definitely do need them."

Mrs. Hanson used a Google add-on called "Popsicle Sticks," which is a virtual version of using physical popsicle sticks for random calling in classes. "What are some ways we can practice this before we record and submit it?" she asked. "Some of you may be more comfortable just recording this right away than others, and that's ok. I want to

make sure I catch anyone who has maybe gone into a brief coma." At this, I saw the few students with cameras on smile and laugh.

The name "Mark" was chosen at random, and Hanson asked again, "Mark, what is another practice strategy you can do while you're practicing?"

"Slow down the tempo," Mark typed in the chat.

Before giving the students time to work on the assignment, Hanson announced that it was time for the "Friday Fun Video," a tradition that she began to break up the monotony of teaching and learning during the pandemic. They were usually music related, but not always, and sometimes the students sent her videos to be included in the lineup.

This video was a short recording from a passenger in a car as they pulled up to a stoplight. In the next lane over, there was a man with a motorcycle that is rigged with a full drum set, playing along to a blaring stereo playing "Beat It" by Michael Jackson. The comments in the chat showed that the students really enjoyed the video.

Hanson then told the students they had the remaining 20 minutes of class to work on and record their assignments, which were due at the end of the period. "You can log off the Zoom if you need to, but I'll stay on until 10 o'clock in case you need help," she said. As she was explaining, the chat became very active with students asking her for "another story."

"Remember that story she told about when she accidentally set the back yard on fire?" asked one to the group. Many responded that they remembered, but several had not heard the story and began demanding it. "I'll tell that next week. I want you all to get to

work."

Mrs. Hanson had been keeping a list of students that were not engaging with the class so far, and specifically asked those students if they needed help getting started. Most students started to sign out of the Zoom meeting, ostensibly to record and submit their SmartMusic assignments. At 10:00 a.m., Hanson said, "Goodbye to everyone that's still here. Have a great weekend. Do good!" and the class was over.

**Unconditional Positive Regard**

"Mike seemed to unequivocally, not respect, but there was an unconditional positive regard," Mrs. Hanson told me in our interview over Zoom. We were discussing her first experience playing in a musical ensemble as a high school student. "I dated my way into the band," she said. "I dated the drum major at Arnold High School, and he brought me to see Mike [Stevens] and says, 'My girlfriend, she wants to play bassoon.'"

She spoke highly and often about Mr. Stevens. "He had a constant, consistent, positive presence and it was a measured one," she said. "It was more sustainable than and over the top, exhaustible energy. And you just felt like you were capable, and it was expected of you, and that was really unique in my experience."

This idea of unconditional positive regard was at the core of Mrs. Hanson's teaching. She told me:

> I think it's the unconditional positive regard that I try really hard [to incorporate].
> Zach Taylor [co-teacher] and I, it was an interesting yin and yang for us last year,
> because he was like, "Whoa, I never thought of, like, teaching it this way." But I
> really want each kid to feel seen. And a lot of times it's like, "Group first, group

first, group first," but I really like to focus on kids.

This was quite evident in observing Hanson teach. Sitting in the first rehearsal that I observed, it was clear that she carried this idea of unconditional positive regard for her students. As the students were warming up, they begin practicing a chromatic scale together. When they finished, a student freely admitted to making a mistake. "I missed two notes in the middle," said the saxophonist.

"Thank you. You're awesome!" came the response from the podium.

Later, in the same rehearsal, Mrs. Hanson had all of the students hold up their "Sword of Knowledge," which was how she referred to a pencil. She made eye contact with one of the trombone players with his pencil held so high he was practically jumping out of his seat. "I am proud of you! I see you with your pencil." The student, evidently, was also proud of himself, and was grinning ear-to-ear.

Toward the end of the rehearsal, it was clear that one of the tuba players is getting frustrated that he couldn't play a passage. Making sure the student was looking at her, Mrs. Hanson said, "We don't do quitting. I'm not giving up on you." The students in the ensemble obviously believed her when she says it.

There was no fake enthusiasm or false compliments. If something didn't sound good, she would tell them that. In a passage in "Famous Canon" by Johann Pachelbel and arranged by Andrew Balent, one of the saxophones was playing far too loud in a mezzo forte passage. "Death metal later, honey," she said with a grin.

During the class, Hanson confiscated a bouncy ball that lights up from one of the students. "You can have this back at the end of class," she said, and the student handed it

over, reluctantly. At the end of rehearsal, the student came to the front of the room to get his ball back. "Repeat after me," she said. "I'm sorry."

"I'm sorry," repeated the student.

"It was a distraction."

"It was a distraction."

"Next time I will keep it put away."

"Next time I will keep it put away," he finished, and she returned the ball with a smile. He left the room, happy to have his toy back.

Mrs. Hanson also applied unconditional positive regard to students outside of her band program, and often brought them into the band with it. "This pair of kids, they wind up, finally, after begging me two years and I taught them summer school two years in a row, they wound up in my band," she said:

I placed them in the intermediate group. Too loud for sixth grade and I'm not sabotaging my eighth-grade group. So, I put them in there and they got cold feet and tried to quit. The team leader at the time was like, "No, you've been begging for two years. You're going to stick it out and give it a shot." And my usual deal is to stick it out through the winter concert. And if you still feel that way, I've got your back, but at least give it a good try. Fast forward: they never quit. They stayed. One of the kids had a little mini solo and the other kid, this is a whole other story, dressed in drag, like Madea, for our novelty piece [at Music in the Parks]. But they ended on a very high note.

She continued, "One of these gentlemen got himself in a lot of trouble in school.

We even had a teacher fired because of an interaction that they had. But, it was unconditional positive regard. It was never that relationship in my class."

At the end of this student's eighth grade year, Mrs. Hanson called him to her desk.

"Hey Marlon," she said. "Come here, I want to talk to you."

"Ok Miss Hanson, what's up?" he replied.

"I have a question for you. Remember, like you begged to be in this class, but then once you got in, after begging me, you tried to get out? Tell me why you tried to get out. What was that?"

"Well, my friend said it was going to be hard. And my parents said I couldn't do it, that I just wouldn't be able to do it."

"Well, was it hard?

"Yeah!"

"Well, could you do it?"

"Yeah!"

"And I was like, 'there!'" She finished the story with a big smile on her face, full of pride in the accomplishments of this one student who was only successful in her class because of her unconditional positive regard.

## Meaningfulness

Mrs. Hanson endeavored to create meaningful experiences for all of her students as participants in the Concert Band. Although not all meaning was generated out of culturally responsive teaching, much could be traced directly to it. Student-teacher relationships, students knowing and respecting one another's and their own cultural

heritages, and students feeling empowered in and by their education were all products of demonstrating caring and building learning communities in the ensemble. In addition, meaning found in repertoire selection, the use of symbolic curricula, and building bridges from home to school could be attributed to the inclusion of ethnic and cultural diversity content in the curriculum. Figure 5 illustrates how meaningful experiences emerged during coding within caring and curriculum, which are then explained further in the remainder of this chapter.

## Oakmont MS Concert Band

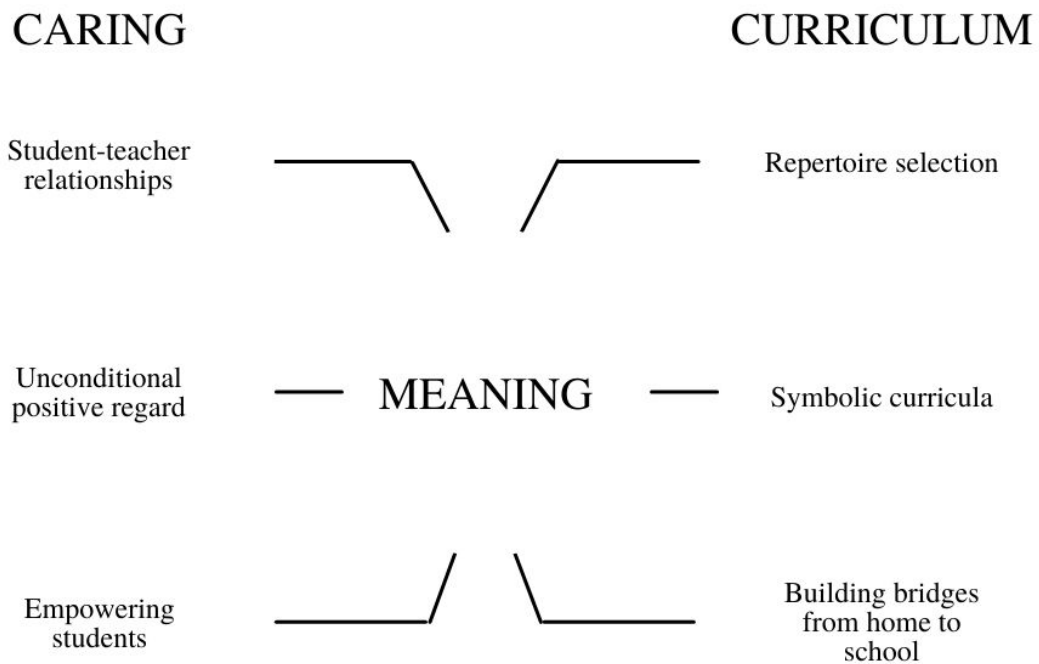| CARING | | CURRICULUM |
|---|---|---|
| Student-teacher relationships | | Repertoire selection |
| Unconditional positive regard | MEANING | Symbolic curricula |
| Empowering students | | Building bridges from home to school |

**Figure 5. Factors of meaningfulness within Oakmont MS Concert Band**

**Demonstrating Caring and Building Learning Communities**

By demonstrating caring, both culturally responsive and otherwise, and facilitating the building of and participating in learning communities, Mrs. Hanson created meaningful experiences for students, apparent in their relationships with her and each other, unconditional positive regard, and their empowerment to take an active role in their own education (Gay, 2002).

*Student-Teacher Relationships*

Learning communities, according to Gay (2002) mimic "cultural environments where the welfare of the group takes precedence over the individual and where individuals are taught to pool their resources to solve problems…When the group succeeds or falters, so do its individual members" (p. 110). Mrs. Hanson described how she created a learning community in her ensemble:

I do a lot of peer-assisted instruction out of necessity, because there's such a profound amount of differentiation that I have to do to have these well-to-do, hooked up kids who are living their best life, and then I have this kid who's homeless and, you know, he could easily be discarded as not having anything to bring to the table. But I can pair them up as I've gotten to know kids better, and the kid who's helping feels just as much reward as the kid who's being helped. I've had countless people ask me, "How did you do this? How is your percussion section like this, where they're all just hopping around helping each other?" Because they know that how any one member of their group does is a reflection on who they are at their core.

This is what Noddings (2013) and Gay (2018) refer to as caring *for* students, though Hendricks (2023) may call it caring *with* one another. Caring for students is "action oriented" (Gay, 2002, p. 110) and requires deliberate planning action to improve the intellectual potential of all students. Through this sense of community and the idea that the success of the individual is tied to the success of the group and others, we approach an understanding of a kind of meaningfulness (Silverman, 2013, p. 24).

During our interview, Mrs. Hanson told me:

When the girls [her daughters] were young, I got frustrated with some of my colleagues at school, because they were like, "Oh, you teach band and orchestra, so you have it easy." And I just felt resentful about that because, you know, I had some pretty big numbers. It's not really easy. I really love reading and they were looking for summer school teachers, so I decided to throw my hat in the ring to teach summer school. Can I teach challenging kids who don't want to learn. By the end of the first week, we had established a pretty good sense of ourselves, and I named us the "Brown Class." We had a great time, and I found some incentive that had value with them. I saw a kid who is a security guard over at Nordstrom Rack. And this young man said, "Ms. Hanson? It's Martin. You taught me in summer school that year." Like, you remember me? Summer school? We were together for a month! And that is that unconditional positive regard at work.

Mrs. Hanson said the importance of developing these types of relationships with students comes from her relationship with her high school band director, Mr. Stevens. She recalled an experience with him at a band festival, between pieces:

He walked over, you know, when you're waiting for the judges to flag you, so

you can go into your second adjudicated pieces. He had this nervous energy, just

walked over, and just kind of put his hand on my shoulder and then walked back

[to the podium] and then I was like, "Oh, he likes me. He really likes me. I guess

I'm doing ok."

"The kids see themselves in the program and not as a bystander. They feel like

they're an integral part of the group that they're in and they're not expendable," she said,

later in the interview.

Hanson accepted, "unequivocally," the responsibility to facilitate the realization

of each student's potential (Gay, 2002, p. 110). Her constant words of affirmation and the

daily, unique interactions she had with each student contributed to the strong student-

teacher relationships she was able to build. The students trusted her implicitly because, as

she put it, "We don't do quitting. I'm not giving up on you."

### *Caring As Unconditional Positive Regard*

As students entered her classroom, Mrs. Hanson had a unique greeting for each

one, based on their preferences. For some, it was a conversation about how their morning

went or what they had for lunch. For others, a fist bump. And for others still, a nod and a,

"It's great to see you." Culturally responsive pedagogy "teaches students to know and

praise their own and one another's cultural heritages" (Gay, 2018, p. 37).

"I just knew that people listened to me and valued me and valued what I did on

my instrument, as a group," recalled Hanson when I asked whether she felt her own

culture was valued and respected in her high school band. "I'm an adopted Mexican

American, and I was adopted by an Anglo-Saxon family, which was different. But I did feel valued."

Hanson strove to help her students feel the same sense of belonging and of being valued that she felt in her own school band experience. "I get to know the kids," she said:

> So, it's not an awkward conversation to kind of go, "You're Muslim, right?" Or, "You practice the Sikh faith, right?" We kinda cover it, even just with icebreakers and stuff, in our first couple of weeks of doing team building activities."

Hanson went beyond showing her diverse students that she liked them. She actively sought out information about their cultural backgrounds, to establish what Gay (2018) described as "an ethical, emotional, and academic partnership with ethnically diverse students," a partnership "anchored in respect, honor, integrity, resource sharing, and a deep belief in the possibility of transcendence" (p. 69). This belief created a safe space for students to share more about themselves without the fear of being judged or ridiculed by anyone in the room, whether its Mrs. Hanson or another student. She said:

> With our jazz band, we'd normally go to a nursing home [around the holidays] and do outreach concerts and stuff like that. And, inevitably, there are a couple of kids who I just go ahead and poll them at the beginning. "Hey, no judgement, but just where can we go with programming of our literature? I'm not going to program anything that's going to offend you, or that you have any reservations about." And everybody just fills out a sheet and I determine, am I going to stick with "Frosty" and "Winter Wonderland", or can we throw in a couple of other [Christmas] charts in addition?

Mrs. Hanson used unconditional positive regard to develop trust and a sense of belonging in her ensembles. Students felt safe in her classroom and worked hard to make sure the group was successful. Their collective success and regard for one another was meaningful to them, not *regardless* of their backgrounds or who they are, but *because* of their different backgrounds.

### Empowering Students

"Well, I don't say there's no 'I' in team, because the 'I's' are very important, but they do understand we have each other's back," said Mrs. Hanson. Students in her class were empowered to take chances and found meaning in that. She was "aware of the risks involved in learning and the need for students to have successes along the way to mastery" (Gay, 2018, p. 40) "What comes to mind is resilience," she said.

> I feel really proud. We might not be, like, consistently a straight superior band, but I have kids that have real trauma and real experiences and challenges to their self-concept. And we share a lot about not being defined by our experiences, but our responses to them, and I've had some pretty amazing success stories with kids, not giving up and trying to find a different way in.

> The Oakmont Middle School Instrumental Music Handbook describes the necessity of having a clear understanding of how each individual functions within the group. In her attempt to help all students feel valued and understand how they function effectively in the group, Mrs. Hanson also engaged the students in class so that they know they can be called on at any time. When I observed the class in person in the fall of 2019, she used notecards with student names and called on them at random. In a virtual

setting, she used the Google add-on to call on students randomly. "Kids are feeling valued and a real part of the solution," she said. There was no such thing as a "wrong answer," and the supportive culture created through unconditional positive regard made the students more willing to take chances without fear of embarrassment or ridicule.

Demonstrating compassionate caring and creating learning communities helped the students at Oakmont Middle School to find meaning in their band experience through building relationships, unconditional positive regard, and empowering students to be stewards of their own learning. Each student felt like they, individually, were an important part of the whole and created meaning through the subjective and intersubjective value they placed on these experiences.

**Curriculum**

Gay (2002) identified three types of curricula: formal, symbolic, and societal. Formal curricula refer to textbooks and standards issued by national, state, and professional organizations. For instrumental music classrooms, this would include method books, sheet music, and theory textbooks, as well as choices of music for listening in class. While these types of curriculum documents have improved over time, they are still insufficient given the power and influence they have on student learning (Gay, 2002). Symbolic curricula include:

> images, symbols, icons, mottoes, awards, celebrations, and other artifacts that are used to teach students knowledge, skills, morals, and values. The most common forms of symbolic curricula are bulletin board decorations, images of heroes and heroines, trade books, and publicly displayed statements of social etiquette, rules

and regulations, ethical principles, and tokens of achievement (Gay, 2002, p.

108).

Societal curricula refer to the "knowledge, ideas, and impressions about ethnic groups

that are portrayed in mass media" (Gay, 2002, p. 109). This includes television, print

media, and films. Teachers need to understand the power and influence that mass media

has over popular culture and determine what formal curricula can do to counteract these

influences (Gay, 2002).

The students in the Oakmont Middle School Concert Band found meaning in the

curriculum used by Mrs. Hanson in their classroom in three ways. First, they found

meaning and can relate to the repertoire selections made by the teacher. Second, they

were able to see and experience a variety of cultural and ethnic backgrounds in the

symbolic curricula (Gay, 2002) used in the class. Third, they found meaning in the

variety of instructional strategies employed by the teacher, designed to build bridges from

home to school (Gay, 2018, p. 52).

### *Repertoire Selection*

Hanson used repertoire selection to build relationships with students. "I'm trying

to pick music that reflects all of you," she said:

> If we have these five pieces for the program, I need you to be able to see yourself
>
> in at least one of them. And if you don't feel that, I hope you weigh in. I'm not
>
> going to play "Dreidel" and call it, you know, covering Israeli culture.
>
> She said, "'You need to be able to see yourself in at least one. And if you don't

feel that, I hope you weigh in.'" This is a conversation that Hanson has with her classes

each year on several occasions. "The kids see themselves in the program and not as a bystander," Hanson said. "They feel like they're an integral part of the group that they're in ant they're not expendable."

"I remember having the hardest time because I could not [find diverse music]. I was striking out. Dead end. Dead end. Dead end. So now I look way in advance, as soon as I've kind of got a sense." Gay (2018) says, "even curricula with minimum cultural content improve student achievement" (p. 183), so explicitly trying to find music by diverse composers and that is reflective of the students in the ensemble still has an effect in validating students, even if not always successful.

Hanson also saw a lot of value in programming popular music for her band. She fully recognized that many band directors look down on it. However, she saw it as a useful way to "bridge the cultural gap" between home and school (Lind & McKoy, 2016, p. 95).

"There's this element, that some band director friends and I kind of go back and forth about, and that's the value of pop music," Hanson said. "That's a big one." She was absolutely not afraid to use pop music to pull students from diverse cultural backgrounds into the band. She said:

> I think, you know, while there may be this kid who has low self-efficacy [beliefs for band playing], but they're kind of intrigued and motivated by this piece, and it actually has some of the same skills that we're going to need anyway, why not use it?

### *Symbolic Curricula*

"I remember when I started at Oakmont," said Mrs. Hanson:

I just remember pulling, it was wrapped in that brown craft paper and I had to

blow the dust off, and I remember telling the kids it was just a bunch of, "old,

dead, White guys." There are some things that you can kind of get away with

saying as you really understand your kids. Like, they're not the only people who

write music for us. And I was like, "So yeah. These are never going up on my

wall."

According to Gay (2002), symbolic curricula are the objects and artifacts that are present

in the classroom as teaching tools but are not part of formal curriculum. These include

bulletin boards, posters displaying people and rules, and tokens of student achievement.

Instead of having walls full of "old, dead, White guys," Hanson had a wide range of

materials on her walls, including inspirational quotes, pictures of mostly jazz musicians,

and the classroom rehearsal procedures, including "Take Charge of Your Learning,"

"Respect All People and Equipment," and "Be a Team Player." Students learned, as Gay

(2002) says, to "value what is present, and devalue what is absent" (p. 108) as they sat in

the room each day and see the items on the walls.

### *Building Bridges from Home to School*

Hanson's ability to build bridges from home to school directly increased

meaningfulness for the students in the class (Gay, 2018). In my first observation, as they

rehearsed *Famous Canon*, I heard Mrs. Hanson say to a student, "Have you come up with

lyrics? I can't wait to hear your lyrics." I asked about that in our interview which, due to

the pandemic, occurred almost a year later. "I think he just liked to come up with lyrics to all of our pieces," she said, "so I asked if he had done it yet for that piece."

Prior to this exchange during class, students were working on "Gravity Falls," the theme song to a popular cartoon by the same name that all of the students really enjoyed and that Hanson had transcribed for them to work on. They had only been working on it for a few days at this point, and some of them were frustrated they could not play it at the correct tempo yet. "Never faster than fantastic," Hanson responded. She then began working with them and pushing the tempo faster, offering guidance for them to do this on their own. "My favorite pedagogy is the 'backdoor technique,'" she told me, "where the kids don't even know they're learning. They think they're having fun, but in actuality they're learning. I'm really trying hard to toss the salad with a lot of vegetables."

Through meaningful experiences around relationships and learning communities, understanding and celebrating cultural differences, empowering students through culturally responsive teaching, as well as selecting repertoire that students can relate to and that they can see themselves in, carefully choosing symbolic curricula for the classroom, and helping students to build bridges from home to school, Mrs. Hanson was constantly creating meaningful experiences for her students. They were empowered to take an active role in the running of the ensemble and regard each other with unconditional positive regard, allowing them to find meaning situated in culturally responsive teaching and compassionate care. In working toward a common goal of music making together, the students found meaning in an activity with objective value that also

holds subjective and intersubjective value (Silverman, 2013) for the students and Mrs.

Hanson.

**CHAPTER SEVEN**

Cross-case synthesis examines data from within-case analysis of two or more cases and identifies any themes that may be present. It allows for findings that are "more robust than having only a single case" (Yin, 2009, p. 156). Analyzing meaningful experiences and their possible relationships to caring from a wider angle may help to inform implementation of compassionate caring practices in other ensembles. Examining the experiences that students found meaningful across the three cases showed that the caring relationships formed between teachers and students, as well as among students, were foundational to the meaningfulness that the students experienced in each ensemble. In many cases, this caring was culturally responsive in nature, where the teacher refused to accept anything less than high-level achievement from the culturally diverse students in the class. Additionally, the selection of repertoire, as well as the experiences students had in performing and studying it, played a large role in creating meaningful experiences in each group.

In chapters four, five, and six I presented within-case analysis of three different middle and high school instrumental music ensembles, including diagrams indicating what students found meaningful in their participation in Figures 6–8. In examining each of the three within-case diagrams themes of relationship building, repertoire selection, and the importance of high standards became apparent. However, re-examining the cases side-by-side revealed other important themes. In this chapter I will present these larger themes, examine how they operate within each case, and connect them to existing literature. These figures have been provided again below.

## Robert Wells HS Symphonic Orchestra

REPERTOIRE                                         CARING

Level of difficulty                                Work ethic and
                                                   high standards

Enjoyment of        —  MEANING  —   Student ownership
repertoire

Connection with                                    Relationship
repertoire (beyond                                 building
notes & rhythms)
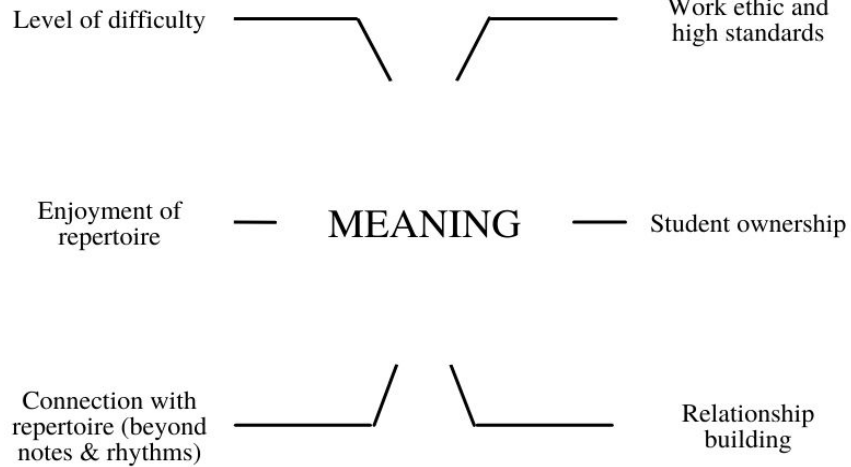
**Figure 6. Wells HS Symphonic Orchestra meaningfulness as presented in Chapter 4**

## Bernstein HS Jazz Ensemble

CARING                                             REPERTOIRE

Student-teacher
relationships

                            MEANING  —   Connection to/with
                                         repertoire & student
                                         choice

High standards for
all students
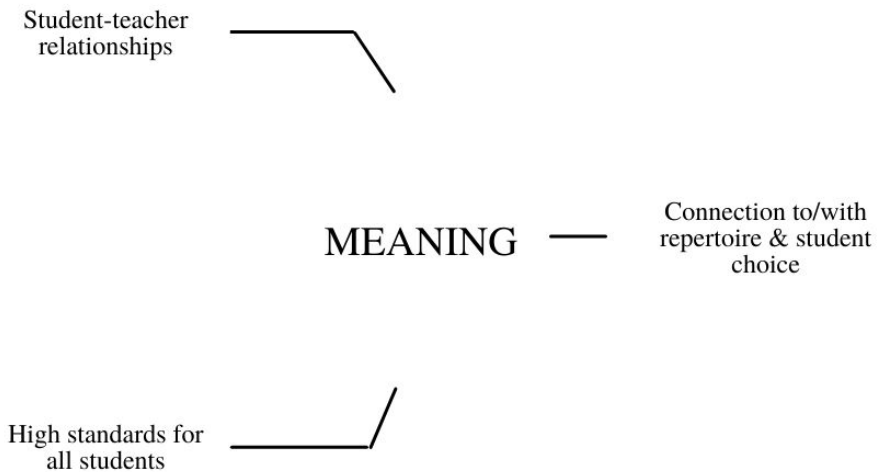
**Figure 7. Bernstein HS Jazz Ensemble meaningfulness as presented in Chapter 5**

## Oakmont MS Concert Band

CARING                                                    CURRICULUM

Student-teacher
relationships                                                    Repertoire selection

Unconditional
positive regard          —— MEANING ——          Symbolic curricula

Empowering
students                                                    Building bridges
                                                    from home to
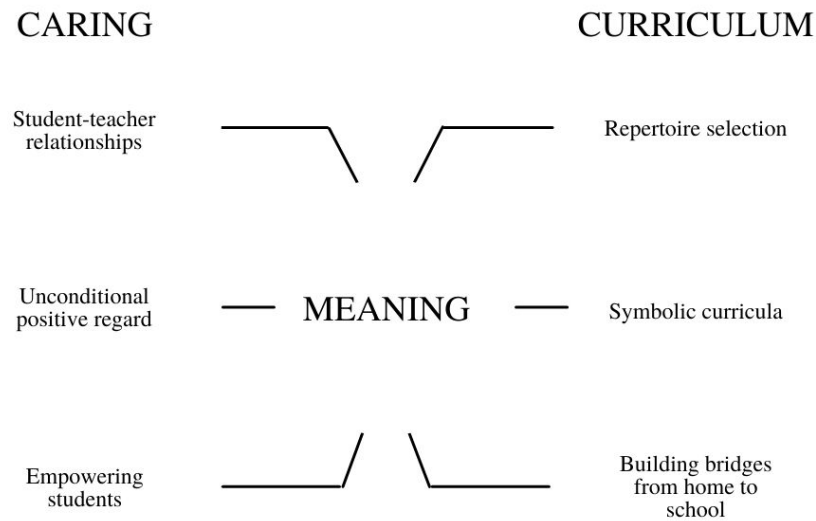                                                    school

**Figure 8. Oakmont MS Concert Band meaningfulness as presented in Chapter 6**

In this study, students found meaning through teachers who demonstrated caring and built learning communities, and teachers who spent a lot of time and energy in choosing repertoire and curriculum through which the students could connect with each other and with a deeper meaning. Although these themes were present in each individual case, the ways in which students found meaning through them were shaped differently by context, including the people in each ensemble and the ways in which each ensemble and director operated. Some aspects of these themes could also be linked to culturally responsive teaching practices, and those are discussed as they appear.

### Demonstrating Caring and Building Learning Communities

Demonstrating caring seems as though it is something that most teachers do. Almost all teachers, when asked, would say that they care about their students. However, simply caring about students is not sufficient for generating meaningfulness. Noddings

(2013) distinguished between caring *about* and caring *for*, in which caring about someone "expresses some concern but does not guarantee a response to one who needs care," and caring for is a relational act in which direct attention and response are present (p. iii). Additionally, Hendricks (2023) and Hendricks et al. (2021) discussed the concept of caring *with*, in which everyone cares for each other and for a shared goal – in this case, music making.

Students in the current study found meaning through the compassionate caring of their teacher and building learning communities together. They placed high value on the relationships they have with their teachers and with each other, through the high standards and expectations that their teachers set for them, and for their ownership in their programs and the empowerment that brings them. The ways in which these elements present themselves are distinct to each case, though there are some similarities across the cases.

**Relationships**

Noddings (2013) established the relational nature of caring, in which the "one-caring" and the "cared-for" both contribute, though quite differently, to the relation. Gay (2018) further suggested that "interpersonal relations have a tremendous impact on the quality of teaching and learning. Students perform much better in environments where they feel comfortable and valued" (p. 269). The importance of teachers developing positive relationships with students in these cases cannot be overstated. Each student interviewed was able to recall some point in which they had positive interactions with their teachers that created meaningful experiences for them.

The teachers in this study cultivated strong relationships with their students by actively caring for them. Students in each ensemble placed a high degree of meaning on relationships, both with their teachers and with each other. Each student who spoke with me had close relationships with the teacher, their peers, and often both. The way in which these relationships were fostered and developed were slightly different in each ensemble.

In the Symphonic Orchestra, the students all felt a strong bond with Mrs. Kollins. "She wants to connect with er students on a more personal level," said Sally. Grace described her as a "fun and energetic woman that…gets her point across," and Bethany said she was "very kind and understanding." Mrs. Kollins fostered strong and caring relationships with students in the ensemble through her enthusiasm and her strength, which was inspirational to many of the female students in the ensemble. Her ability to be strong, yet kind, demonstrated her care for her students and strengthened their relationships.

Kollins had a rocky relationship with her high school orchestra director in her last year in high school. "He was someone that I really trusted and inspired me," she said. "I made some snide, stupid teenager comment, and he lit into me…for what added up to be like two hours." She continued, "At that point, the relationship changed…I spent the whole rest of that senior year being like, 'When it's my turn, I'm not going to do it this way.'" Since then, Kollins has strived to positively connect with all her students, in ways large and small.

At Bernstein High School, Mr. Paulson also tried, as he said, "to connect with kids where they are," and the students felt and appreciated that effort. "He goes to a

length to reach an understanding with his students," said Bruce. Kimberly has "gone to

him for family stuff," in the past. Mickey said, "I literally never want him to leave me.

He's just and incredibly understanding teacher." Paul appreciated Paulson's willingness

to care for his students during the pandemic by taking them an "AP Exam Survival Kit"

at home, just before the exam. "If you, as a teacher, want you students to do great, then

those are the little things that go a long way."

Paulson was inspired to care for his students by his middle school band director.

"He was very friendly, very welcoming…He noticed things and would be supportive," he

said. While Paulson grew up in a community that was "majority White," he recognized

and celebrated the cultural and ethnic diversity of his current students. "We're a plurality

African American school at Bernstein," he said. "When I started at my last school, it was

majority White, and by the time I left it was plurality Hispanic. As the makeup of the

school shifted…I had to find new ways to connect with kids."

Paulson used these individual connections to foster a community of learners

within the Jazz Ensemble, in which the members find meaning. Kimberly reported that

the band "felt like a family," and that "we pick each other up and I like those moments."

Bruce recalled that he can "really feel the support from everybody" when they were

rehearsing and performing together. Ben talked about "the feeling of getting to work with

a lot of your friends and produce such a high-quality product" as being meaningful to

him. Mickey remembered, "being ridiculously proud of the whole ensemble, because I

thought we sounded amazing at our first concert."

Mrs. Hanson deliberately and methodically cared *for* her students and strove to create an environment in which they were all caring *with* each other. She spoke with me at length about "unconditional positive regard" that was inspired by her high school band director, who she described as having a "constant, consistent, positive presence." Teaching in person, she greeted every student at the door in a unique way, and constantly and genuinely regarded students in a positive manner, thanking them for admitting missed notes or rhythms and even disciplining a student who had a toy out in class in a positive way. The entire atmosphere of her classroom was designed to make sure students know, as she said, "We don't do quitting. I'm not giving up on you."

Hanson used "unconditional positive regard" to foster learning communities in her ensembles. She included a lot of "peer-assisted instruction" due to the wide range of skill levels she has in her groups:

> I have these well-to-do, real hooked up kids who are living their best life, and then I have this other kid who's homeless…I can pair them up…and the kid who's helping feels just as much reward as the kid who's being helped. And it's this shared accomplishment and real teamwork, real problem solving.

In a virtual setting, Mrs. Hanson was still actively trying to establish relationships with her students to help them succeed in a situation where so many students were falling behind. She continued having individual interactions with the students as they entered the Zoom meeting and sharing funny videos and entertaining stories from her own life. She was also reaching out to individual students to make sure they were on task and helping each other, even virtually.

Hanson described her percussion section as "hopping around helping each other, because they know that how any one member of their group does is a reflection on who they are at their core." This correlates directly to Gay's (2002) definition of a learning community, in which "all members are responsible for helping each other perform and ensuring that everyone contributes to the collective task" (p. 110).

The relationship building and development of learning communities in each ensemble contributed directly to meaningfulness experienced by the students. The classes allowed students to cultivate skills and build relationships through their shared enthusiasm for making music, which contributed to the meaningfulness of their time in the ensemble (Silverman, 2013).

**High Expectations**

According to Gay (2002), "teachers have to care so much about their students and their achievement that they accept nothing less than high-level success from them and work diligently to accomplish it" (p. 109). Lind & McKoy (2016) elaborated that "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" (p. 68). Gay (2018) elaborated further, saying, "as teachers' expectations and caring for higher achievers increase, so does student performance, while the performance of low achievers becomes even worse when teachers have low expectations and are uncaring" (p. 78). The teachers in the current study had consistently high expectations for all of their students regardless of ability level or background, and meeting these expectations often provided meaning to students.

At Oakmont Middle School, Mrs. Hanson allowed beginners into her ensembles at the start of any academic year in which they are in middle school and held them to the same standards as any of her students. At the end of a challenging year for a young new tuba player, she had a conversation with him about his year. "Was it hard?" she asked.

"Yeah," the student said.

"Well, *could* you do it?"

After a pause, the student, proudly and confidently said, "Yeah!"

Hanson traced this back to her high school band director. "You just felt like you were capable, and it was expected of you," she told me. He applied this same standard to Hanson as a student, even though she had just begun playing bassoon and participating in band in high school.

In the Symphonic Orchestra at Robert Wells High School, Mrs. Kollins used repertoire to establish high expectations. "Mrs. Kollins holds us to such a high standard," reported Sally. "I feel like I'm really pushing myself…I feel like I'm doing something creative and productive with my time to create something that's so beautiful and knowing I'm working and putting a lot of effort towards." The perceived quality and difficulty of the repertoire helped the students feel a sense of accomplishment after a successful performance.

Both Sally and Grace used the phrase, "'Good enough' isn't good enough" in describing Kollins's high expectations of the ensemble and of individuals. "The concert, I would say is the best memory that I have," said Grace, "because it's something we all did together…it's something that we finally pushed for a did successfully." The only

exception was Bethany, who did not feel as though the expectations from Kollins were as high in a virtual setting as they had been in person.

Mrs. Kollins made high expectations and a strong work ethic a key part of her teaching, using scaffolding to help students meet those expectations. "My class is like a practice session," she said. "There's a lot of metronome work…a lot of repetition, a lot of tediousness, [and] attention to detail." She summed up her high expectations, saying, "Your ensemble gets to be really, really good when 100% of your kids can play 98% of the music." Her rehearsal techniques helped to show the students what was important and how it contributed to their success as performers.

The Bernstein Jazz Ensemble had high standards built into the course description, saying it "generally includes the school's best musicians" (Paulson & Ebert, 2019, p. 4). Bruce told me, "Mr. Paulson, being the top ensemble, really expects us to be on top of our game." Ben said, "He sets pretty clear guidelines of what he expects for us and holds us to high standards." In rehearsals, Paulson was never willing to let students play at a level lower than their best and would often restart pieces for the smallest musical issues.

"I feel like the ensemble [work] ethic is working to be as good, if not better than, those who came before you," Paulson told me. While most of the students in the Jazz Ensemble already hold themselves to a high standard, Paulson strives to continue to push each of them to achieve at higher levels. If, as Lind & McKoy (2016) said, "effective teachers design instruction so that students are actively involved in work that is demanding and meaningful" (p. 69), Paulson was providing meaningful experiences to his students through his setting and maintaining of high expectations for each of them.

A combination of high performance standards and unconditional positive regard help students feel safe to attempt new things and have meaningful experiences (Hendricks, 2018, p. 39). This pairing of benevolence and perfectionism helps students to learn to care for and with each other in the ensemble setting, leading to subjective and intersubjective value being placed on their experiences within the ensemble. Meeting the high standards has value to the students when they know they have the proper support from the teacher and from each other, which in turn allows them to create meaningful experiences together (Silverman, 2013).

**Empowerment and Student Choice**

The teachers in the current study all empowered their students "by legitimizing their 'voice' and visibility" (Gay, 2010, p. 55). The ways in which they did so were myriad, but most involved students in decision making in a variety of ways. Empowering students to lead and mentor one another, as well as to be agents of their own learning, is another way in which teachers in this study demonstrated caring for and with their students (Hendricks, 2018). This ownership and agency in their musical experience helped the students to find increased meaning in their experiences in the ensembles.

Paulson involved the students of the Jazz Ensemble in decision making when it came to their education in several ways. During rehearsals, Paulson solicited feedback from students about repertoire choices. The students sight-read two pieces and were asked to choose, as a group, which they wanted to perform, resulting in their choice to ultimately perform both. "He gives you, you know, 'You can choose from this," said Bruce. "We can all talk it over and choose what song."

Paulson also solicited input from students in other ways during rehearsal. During my second observation, he asked for feedback about a new set up (thumbs up, thumbs down), how to maintain tempo as a group when playing at a lower dynamic, and how to identify and fix potential balance issues as a group (too much or too little cowbell). The students placed more meaning in the ensemble's performance because they were empowered to make choices about how the ensemble operates.

At Robert Wells High School, Mrs. Kollins empowered students to a lesser degree with student choice. She did solicit student voice regarding an upcoming playing assessment during my first visit when the students had to choose between an easier assessment the next day or a more difficult one due on the following Monday. The students chose and were able to practice for the assessment in class.

During my second observation at Wells, the ensemble was participating in a Socratic seminar, which was entirely student-led. The only "rules" were that each student had to speak at least twice, back up their claims with evidence, use appropriate musical terminology, and be additive rather than repetitive. Students were empowered to "engage with ideas in new ways" (Lind & McKoy, 2016, p. 19). Kollins also asked for feedback at the end of the lesson to improve it in the future, further involving the students in decisions about their educations.

The students at Oakmont Middle School are empowered specifically with "personal confidence, courage, and the will to act" (Gay, 2010, p. 40). Students are encouraged to take risks and own up to mistakes when they make them, without any judgement from the other students in the ensemble. Mrs. Hanson's response when a

student made a mistake in rehearsal was to say, "Thank you, you're awesome!" rather than to admonish the student.

Mrs. Hanson was not observed to involve students in decision making during my observations. However, she did continually involve students of diverse backgrounds in some decisions about repertoire, specifically as it related to Christmas and holiday music. "I just go ahead and poll them at the beginning," she said, "Where can we go with the programming of our literature? I'm not going to program anything that's going to offend you or that you have any reservations about." This empowered students by involving them in decisions and fostering self-efficacy. No student felt left out or "othered" because of their religious beliefs.

In each case, members were in a caring environment and robust learning communities. This expressed itself across-cases through relationships that were fostered, all students being held to high expectations, and the empowerment of students to take ownership of their own education within the ensemble. The meaningful experiences reported by students were due to the objective value of the activities in which they were participating in combination with the subjective and intersubjective value the students placed on their experiences (Silverman, 2013).

**Curriculum and Repertoire**

Curriculum and repertoire offer a powerful avenue to allow students to experience meaningfulness, particularly within instrumental music. Students are able to connect to curricula and repertoire by seeing themselves, culturally, within them and through subjective and/or intersubjective enjoyment of them. Students who are able to connect

their culture or community to the music studied in class will have experiences that are more meaningful than if they were unable to do so (Lind & McKoy, 2016). Mrs. Hanson at Oakmont Middle School, in particular, worked hard to make sure that students could see themselves, and others, in the repertoire choices she made.

Mrs. Hanson made specific, calculated choices about curriculum in an attempt to be culturally responsive. In addition, Gay (2002) identified three kinds of curricula present in the classroom: formal, symbolic, and societal. The formal and symbolic curricula at Bernstein High School and Oakmont Middle School were culturally diverse and many students attributed meaningful experiences to their interactions with them.

Gay (2010) says "more evidence is needed to document the effects of multicultural content on student achievement in all subjects taught in schools, at all grade levels, and for all ethnic groups" (p. 173) According to Lind & McKoy (2016):

> There is a self-perpetuating model of music education that maintains a traditional approach to secondary music education…For example, method books that are commonly available often connect directly to traditional Western instruments and are based on symphonic band, concert choir, and string orchestra models of instruction" (p. 95).

Students in the current study sometimes found meaning in the inclusion of culturally relevant curricula in their ensembles. The meaning attached to active inclusion of ethnic and diversity content was present in all three ensembles, with higher levels of meaning attached to the music in the Jazz Ensemble and the Concert Band than the Symphonic Orchestra.

Mr. Paulson had an easy time finding music that is ethnically diverse for the Jazz Ensemble. "Being culturally responsive is much easier in the jazz class than in a lot of my classes," he said. "The history is younger." Jazz has also been predominantly written by Black composers, especially in its earlier history. The students at Bernstein High School placed varying degrees of meaningfulness on the music they played in the ensemble. Bruce, whose parents are Brazilian immigrants, was the most enthusiastic. "We were going to play a Bossa Nova groove, the famous song 'Girl from Ipanema,' and I liked that song very much, especially because it comes from Brazil."

Ben, who identified himself as "White, with Hispanic ethnicity," recognized the connection to his cultural heritage, but did not seem to assign a particularly high level of meaning to playing the music. When I asked him if he felt his culture was represented in the music the ensemble plays, he responded, "I'd say so. There's some Latin kind of stuff that we do." He loves playing Broadway music, which he connects to his White heritage, and does attribute some meaningful experiences to playing that music. On a visit to the Towson Jazz Festival, Ben told me their clinician, "asked the vocal soloist and I to do a spontaneous piano/vocal duet. And it just worked out really well."

In our interview, Paul identified himself as African American. Paul saw the ensemble performing music that was originally written by Black composers but arranged by White arrangers. "I just feel like that's not really the root of what jazz is…It's just a thing as a whole, I guess," he said. Kimberly also recognized a "bias towards White people" in terms of arrangers being published. As White students, Kimberly and Mickey both recognized how easily accessible music from their own cultures is. "I don't really

know a lot of the music of my cultural background," said Mickey, "but I'm American and we play a lot of American stuff."

"I do a lot of listening in jazz band class," said Paulson. "I try to expose the kids to something they haven't heard before." This often included composers of a variety of cultural and ethnic backgrounds within the jazz tradition. Bruce told me about hearing some of their favorite jazz artists for the first time in class. "My favorite artists at the moment would be artists like The Weeknd, Maynard Ferguson, and Michael Jackson. I heard Maynard Ferguson when Mr. Paulson played 'Theme from Sesame Street' for us and I just loved it," he said.

Mrs. Hanson used popular music to "challenge the dominant paradigm connected to…music education" (Lind & McKoy, 2016, pp. 95–96). "Some band director friends and I kind of go back and forth about the value of pop music," she said. If the piece helped to solidify fundamentals or engage a student that might not otherwise be engaged, it was worth it to her.

On my first visit, I observed the group at Oakmont playing the theme song from "Gravity Falls," a popular cartoon among the students. Mrs. Hanson had transcribed the music for them to learn and they were totally engaged for the entirety of the piece. This is a way to "bridge the cultural gap" from what students know and listen to at home and pieces like "Famous Canon" that the group plays (Lind & McKoy, 2016).

Additionally, the members of the Oakmont Middle School Concert Band were able to find meaning in the symbolic curricula used in the classroom. Mrs. Hanson was "critically conscious of the power of the symbolic curriculum as an instrument of

teaching," and her walls and bulletin boards "represent a wide variety of age, gender, time, place, social class, and positional diversity within and across ethnic groups" (Gay, 2002, p. 108). The walls of her classroom were adorned with posters depicting male and female musicians with a variety of racial and ethnic backgrounds.

Mrs. Hanson consciously chose the objects that fill the wall space and bulletin boards in her class and was quite aware that students "value what is present, and devalue that which is absent" (Gay, 2002, p. 108). She recalled finding some old posters when she first began teaching at Oakmont. They were a series of posters of the major composers in the Western European "classical" tradition. "I remember telling the kids that it was a bunch of 'old, dead, White guys," she said. "These were never going up on my wall." Instead, Hanson has filled the walls with inspirational posters and artwork, pictures of some jazz musicians, and rehearsal procedures, which include "Take Charge of Your Learning," "Respect All People and Equipment," and "Be a Team Player."

Some students in the Symphonic Orchestra at Wells told me they felt like their own cultures are represented in the repertoire they perform, but not all of them felt that way. Sally, who identified herself as having Spanish, Columbian, and Philippine ethnicity, was most closely able to see her own background in the music the ensemble played in the past. "We've played some music that has Spanish flair, and I'm part Spanish," she said. "We played this piece called 'Fantasia Espanola'…and I just felt like I could really relate to that…I could think about my family." She also recalled, "We've done some world pieces too. I feel like we do a lot of Latin and Spanish music sometimes." It should be noted that while the piece Sally mentioned, "Fantasia

Espanola," does have its inspiration in Spanish flamenco and tango music, it is composed

by Soon Hee Newbold, a Korean American composer.

Grace identified herself as the daughter of a Columbian mother and Spanish

father. She recognized that in the past, the orchestra had performed some music with

Latin influences, but they had not continued that into the current school year so far. "I

would say on my dad's side, because he's European, it's a bit more seen [in the

repertoire] …but not really because Spanish has that flamenco vibe to it," she said.

Bethany joined the Symphonic Orchestra during the pandemic, and had not

experienced performing much music at all, let alone any pieces that are reflective of her

Asian American heritage. "This year we've been using SmartMusic," she said, "so it's

mostly only 'Classical.'" Mrs. Kollins tried to choose music that is representative of a

wide variety of cultural and ethnic backgrounds, but admitted it was sometimes difficult

to find music by composers of color for orchestra. "The first thing that I started trying to

do was be on the lookout for music that represented different cultures," she told me.

"There's a lot of Spanish music, although it's not necessarily written by Spanish

composers." As a result, she often used music by Women composers to expose students

to pieces written by "someone other than a White man."

The repertoire selection at Wells High School, though not reflective of the variety

of their cultural and ethnic backgrounds, was still meaningful to the students in the

orchestra. Most of the students found meaningfulness in the deeper connection they were

able to make with the music and their performance because of the way in which Mrs.

Kollins approached instruction. By offering opportunities for students to connect with the

repertoire through Socratic seminars about past performances and discussions about a composer's intent, Kollins was able to help the students find meaning as they assigned subjective and intersubjective value (Silverman, 2013) to the repertoire.

In this cross-case synthesis I examined common elements of compassionate, caring teaching that allowed students opportunities to find meaning across cases and investigated the variety of ways that students had meaningful experiences within that framework. Although students across cases experienced meaning that can be tied to caring, the specific ways in which they experienced it varied from ensemble to ensemble. Culturally responsive pedagogy was one of many ways in which the teachers provided experiences that held intersubjective value for the students.

Students across all cases felt cared about, for, and with, contributing to their sense of belonging in their ensembles. This compassionate caring allowed for meaningful connections to be created between members of the ensembles. Ultimately, by providing worthwhile experiences to students and helping them to connect subjective and intersubjective value to those experiences, teachers were able to offer meaningfulness to students (Silverman, 2013, 2020) through their participation in these ensembles.

# CHAPTER EIGHT

In this study I explored what students in one middle school and three high school instrumental music ensembles found to be meaningful in participating in the ensembles and how those experiences may be linked to culturally responsive teaching practices. Using a multiple case study design, I conducted the research in one middle school ensemble and two high school ensembles in a large school system in Maryland with one ensemble from each school constituting an individual case. Participants were members of the ensembles and their ensemble teachers. Over an 11-month period from October 2019 to September 2020, I observed in-person rehearsals and one virtual rehearsal, recorded field notes, collected artifacts such as syllabi and concert programs, and conducted interviews with participants.

I assembled data within each case. Interviews were transcribed into written format and coded using NVivo software. I then analyzed the data using both descriptive and in vivo coding, followed by pattern coding as a second coding cycle method (Saldaña, 2016, p. 74). I used "thick description" (Esterberg, 2002, p. 50) to tell detailed stories about each case, including the people, places, and unique attributes of each ensemble, and then discussed the themes of meaning and culturally responsive teaching situated in each site.

Research questions for this study focused on what students perceived as meaningful and the extent to which those experiences may be related to culturally responsive teaching. Three questions guided this investigation:

1. In what ways do students find the experiences in an instrumental ensemble to be meaningful?

2.  In what ways do teachers who practice caring about, for, and with their students facilitate meaningful experiences for students?

3.  In what ways do teachers who are invested in using culturally responsive teaching strategies foster experiences that students find meaningful?

These questions provided the basis for inquiry and guided the data collection and analysis in this study.

**Implications for Meaning in Repertoire**

In this study, the students involved found meaning in the repertoire that they studied in the ensemble. In each case, it was because they were able to find a deeper connection to the music than simply playing the notes and rhythms on the page. This occurred in several ways: through teachers encouraging ownership and including students in the decision making around repertoire, as at Bernstein High School; helping students to understand the music at a deeper level, as at Wells High School; and by purposefully choosing music that was reflective of the diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds of the students in the ensemble, guided by culturally responsive pedagogy, as at Oakmont Middle School.

Tycast and Lukkasson (2017) suggest should "see themselves and see beyond themselves in music curriculum" (p. 1). Students find meaning when they can see their own cultural and ethnic backgrounds in curriculum as well as others' backgrounds. Therefore, repertoire selection through a lens of culturally responsive teaching is a critically important aspect of meaningfulness in instrumental music ensembles.

In choosing repertoire, instrumental music teachers have much to consider,

including the technical limitations of their ensemble, the expectations of students,

administrators, and the community, and the availability and cost of purchasing the music.

Additionally, the data collected in this study suggest that the choice of repertoire goes far

beyond these societal and pedagogical concerns. To create meaningful experiences

around the repertoire, students need to be able to connect to the music in a deeper way

than simply playing the correct notes and rhythms. Moreover, *all* students should be able

to connect meaningfully to at least *some* of the chosen repertoire. While this can be

accomplished in myriad ways, choosing repertoire through a lens of culturally responsive

pedagogy is one way in which those connections can be made.

**Implications for Choosing Repertoire Using Culturally Responsive Pedagogy**

For students from non-White backgrounds, being able to see their own culture in

the composers and performers of a piece of music, even in small ways, was meaningful to

them. Gay (2010) said:

> Even curricula with minimum cultural content improve student achievement,
>
> according to a variety of indicators, across ethnic groups, grade levels, and subject
>
> or skill areas. The multiple achievement effects include higher scores on
>
> standardized tests, higher grade point averages, improved student self-concepts
>
> and self-confidence, and greater varieties and levels of student engagement with
>
> subject matter (p. 173).

Repertoire selection is the most discussed way in which music teachers can begin to

make their teaching culturally responsive. According to Lind & McKoy (2016), "being

culturally responsive means that teachers work to make informed curricular and

programmatic choices that connect to what they know about their students" (p. 95). Bond (2017) said, "if repertoires are limited to Eurocentric traditions, students can become indifferent to school music, as it may not contain the same musical complexity or process-orientation as home music constructions" (p. 160). In each ensemble in this study, the repertoire was a significant factor in the meaningfulness that students attributed to their participation in the group. By providing repertoire that all students could connect to the music they listen to at home or in their communities, teachers can create additional opportunities for students to find meaning in their experience.

Each of the teachers in this study made attempts to choose music that "represent a wide variety of age, gender, time, place, social class, and positional diversity within and across ethnic groups" (Gay, 2002, pp. 108–109) by attempting to find music that is written by composers that challenge the status quo (Lind & McKoy, 2016). However, they often did not know where to find such repertoire. Tycast and Lukkasson (2017) said, "finding music by underrepresented composers of color can be challenging, but there are many and they want to share their music with you" (p. 2), and they developed a list of 12 composer names to use as a starting point and have added to that list since 2017.

Gay (2018) suggested that curricula with even a minimum of cultural content could impact student achievement. Given this, it seems imperative that all music teachers strive to include music by composers from underrepresented groups, including composers of color, Women composers, and composers who are members of the LGBTQ+ community in their curricula. Teachers can use it as an opportunity to help validate the experiences of all students in the ensemble, which will engage them in a more

meaningful way.

Allowing students who are often marginalized to see themselves, even in small ways, in the music and curriculum used in instrumental music classes may increase participation by students in those groups and perpetuate meaningful experiences for them for their entire lives. Additionally, teachers should not settle for a minimum amount of inclusion of material created by historically underrepresented sources, as this results in tokenism or diversity for the sake of diversity (Campbell, 2018). Rather, instrumental music teachers should seek out as much repertoire as possible that will allow all students to see themselves and others in their curricula.

**Implications Beyond Repertoire Using Culturally Responsive Pedagogy**

"We have noticed that when we talk about culturally responsive pedagogy," say Lind & McKoy (2016), "people's first reaction tends to center around music choices. While we do see a value in expanding the types of music used for instruction, including world music or focusing on pop and hip hop is not necessarily the answer" (p. 96). Many students in this study found meaning in experiences related to curricula, but not directly related to the repertoire. This could be through the various artists and groups that Mr. Paulson exposed the students of the jazz ensemble to in numerous listening activities or the many posters and signs around the room at Oakmont Middle School sharing inspirational quotes and diverse musical figures.

Having access to a "variety of different performing ensembles" (Lind & McKoy, 2016) can allow a larger number of students within a school to construct meaning through their improved access to ensembles. Ensembles that are more culturally representative of

the community the school serves are another way to generate meaningful experiences through myriad curricula. According to Bond (2017), "elective participation in music in urban areas increased in programs in which the teacher created courses that aligned with local student interest, offered nontraditional ensembles, and integrated multicultural repertoire" (p. 170). This can include world music drumming, jam bands, marching bands in the HBCU tradition, songwriting courses, hip-hop curricula, or mariachi bands.

The National Association for Music Education (2014) released standards for ensemble classes that center around four skills: creating, performing, responding, and connecting. Because each skill is centered around curriculum, the standards present opportunities for teachers of instrumental music ensembles to create meaningful experiences beyond the repertoire. This can be done through composition assignments, performance of repertoire chosen by students, and by listening to a wide variety of ethnically and culturally diverse music as regular practice. The cultural experiences that students bring into the instrumental music classroom are often widely varied, particularly in culturally and racially diverse schools. Drawing upon the experiences of all students, especially those from historically marginalized communities, can enrich the meaning that each student can derive from their instrumental music making.

**Implications for Caring**

Compassionate care (Hendricks, 2018, 2021, 2023; Hendricks et al., 2021) emerged in this study as the foremost way in which teachers were able to foster meaningfulness within the ensemble. The cultivating of caring relationships was something that the teachers in this study did both consciously and subconsciously and in

a variety of ways. Noddings (2013), Hendricks (2018, 2023), and Hendricks et al. (2021) discussed caring for students as a relational action, not simply feelings of concern implied by caring about another person. Cultural caring, specifically within the concept of culturally responsive teaching, is also "connected to actions" and deals with "nurturing both academic success and psychological well-being" (Lind & McKoy, 2016, p. 65).

Music teachers of all kinds, and specifically ensemble directors, are in a unique position because we often teach students for several years instead of one or in many other subjects. As a result, the caring that music teachers do or do not engage in is critical to helping students continue to have meaningful experiences in their ensembles. Given the amount of time they often have with students, it is important for teachers to focus on caring for all of their students in a comprehensive way, including using cultural caring to create positive and empathetic classroom cultures and learning communities. Through caring for, about, and with students, teachers can ensure that both they and their students will have meaningful experiences together (Hendricks, 2018; Silverman, 2013).

**Caring About Versus Caring For**

Noddings (2013) established an ethic of care in which caring is a relational action rather than a feeling one has toward another. True caring requires one to do the caring and one to receive it. Caring is an active process rather than just a way in which one feels.

Cultural caring is related in that it is also active and not passive. "Feelings are important," says Gay (2018), "but culturally responsive caring as an essential part of the educational process is much more…While *caring about* conveys feelings of concern for one's state of being, *caring for* is active engagement in doing something to positively

affect it" (p. 58). Caring is a "major pillar" of culturally responsive teaching, "manifested in the form of teacher attitudes, expectations, and behaviors about students' human value, intellectual capability, and performance responsibilities" (Gay, 2018, p. 59).

In this study, the teachers all demonstrated varying levels of both caring about and caring for students. It is important to note that both types of caring are not a dichotomy. It is possible for teachers to generally care about students and take no real action around it. It may also be possible for teachers to care for students without caring about them, leading to a lack of authentic connection (Hendricks, 2018, 2023). For true and authentic connection to exist, caring for and caring about are correlated and interconnected (Gay, 2018). Additionally, the teachers in this study were all able to create environments in which students cared *with* each other and about shared goals, allowing them to have meaningful experiences in pursuit of those goals (Hendricks, 2023; Hendricks et al., 2021; Silverman, 2013).

The ways in which teachers in this study cared for their students varied from case to case. Mr. Paulson cared *about* the students in the Jazz Ensemble by wanting them to be successful players and he cared *for* them by giving them the tools and scaffolding that they needed to meet the high performance standards. Mrs. Kollins cared *about* her Symphonic Orchestra students by wanting to know about them and for them to feel seen and she cared *for* them by actively seeking out interactions with them each day and making sure they each heard their name at least once each class. Mrs. Hanson cared *about* the Concert Band students by wanting to know how they were motivated and wanting to get to know each student at a deep level and she cared *for* them by having

courageous conversations with them about ethnicity, culture, and religion without

judgement so that they felt comfortable with her.

Caring for students is much more involved than caring about them. Most teachers

care about their students on at least some level. They likely would not have become

teachers if they didn't. However, turning those feelings into action can be far more

difficult and involves taking risks that many educators may not be comfortable taking.

However, if educators want students to find meaning in their participation in ensembles,

it is imperative that students are cared for and that they *know* they are cared for.

**Culturally Caring Learning Communities**

According to Wenger (1998), "Communities of practice are an integral part of our

daily lives. They are so informal and so pervasive that they rarely come into explicit

focus, but for the same reasons they are also quite familiar" (p. 8). Gay (2002) discusses

the important of building community among diverse learners, in which the needs of

individuals are not neglected, but "addressed with the context of group functioning" (p.

110). In culturally caring learning communities, everyone is "in it together" and succeeds

or falters together.

Lind & McKoy (2016) correlate this type of learning community directly to

ensemble membership:

> Working collaboratively to create beautiful music is the cornerstone of many
>
> education programs. Students in choir, band or orchestra programs work
>
> collaboratively, under the leadership of the director, to improve musical
>
> performance while learning about music and music making…Building a learning

community among diverse learners means understanding how to design communal learning environments that benefit a variety of learning styles and that enable learners to see themselves as having knowledge that can contribute to the process (p. 71).

In this study, each of the participating teachers fostered communities of learning to varying degrees and in varying ways. While Mr. Paulson involved the jazz ensemble members directly in decisions about repertoire choice and performance practices, Mrs. Kollins collected student input around methods of assessment. Mrs. Hanson was very adept at fostering a sense of shared success and faltering. The students knew that they all rise or fall together and also that Hanson would not let them fall too far.

The meaning that students found through building learning communities is documented in this study. Through caring about and for students, the teachers demonstrate to them how they should interact with each other. The learning communities built in these ensembles go beyond social interactions and friendships and help students create their own meaningful experiences from their participation in their own learning.

## Limitations of the Study

There are two limitations to this study. First, a small group of students in some of the cases, a result of limited participation at one school due to timing around concerts and at another because of the COVID-19 pandemic, limited the rich, thick description I was able to write about those cases. However, the fact that there were several common themes across cases increases the reliability of the study.

Second, due to policies in the school district in which the study took place, I was

not able to use purposeful sampling to involve students in the study. Specifically, I believe that the data would have been more relevant if I were able to only enroll students who reported having meaningful experiences in the ensembles. I was also not permitted to discuss sexuality and gender identity with the students due to district policy, though I feel it plays an important role in cultural identity. However, the random sampling did provide a good overall sampling of students from various ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

<div align="center">**Recommendations for Future Research**</div>

Results from this study suggest that there is a correlation between experiences that students find meaningful and caring, as well as culturally responsive teaching. Additionally, the results indicate that there may be more opportunity to create meaningful experiences for students if teachers were to embrace more of the tenets of culturally responsive pedagogy. Therefore, I recommend the following future research.

**Similar Studies in Other Settings**

This study was conducted in a very diverse, large school system in Maryland. While the diversity of the students in the schools in this study is expansive, a logical next step would be to conduct similar studies in other areas of the country and with other populations of students. Potential settings could be more rural settings, more urban settings, or in community performing ensembles such as youth orchestras or church bands. Morelli (2022) developed a framework for understanding care, or the lack of care, in community music. Finding the ways in which an ethic of care impacts members of community music groups would be a valuable addition to the existing research.

Additionally, while one teacher in the study identified as Hispanic, there were no other underrepresented populations represented by teachers in this study. According to Thomas (2020) there is an overwhelming amount of research showing the need for more teachers of color. Consciously including a more diverse group of teachers and examining the ways in which they care for, about, and with their students may yield interesting results.

Finally, conducting a similar study with specific attention to compassionate care and students in the LGBTQ+ community could provide more valuable insight into how caring and meaning are or are not related within that culture. Abrums and Leppa (2013) define culturally competent care as care that is "sensitive to issues related to culture, race, gender, and sexual orientation" (p. 270), making gender and sexual orientation integral parts of culture, and Aronson and Laughter (2018) made explicit the need for culturally responsive teaching to expand to include gender, gender identity, and sexuality. Using an ethic of care as a framework, Hornbeck and Duncheon (2022) found that students enrolled in early college high schools in Texas were seen as safe and accepting spaces for many queer youths. However, this study did not discuss meaningful experiences for these students in the context of caring.

**Integration of this Study into a Longitudinal Study**

Because my observations in this study were completed in less than one calendar year, further investigation of caring and culturally responsive teaching, and their relationship to meaningfulness would be of benefit over several years. Perhaps a study that follows students over the span of their full time in high school may allow for a more

complete picture of the relationship between culturally responsive teaching and meaningfulness. By following students and teachers over a longer period of time, it would generate more data and provide more insights into the myriad ways teachers can create meaningful experiences for their students.

**Transferability to Other Instrumental Music Settings**

Future research may be useful in other instrumental music settings outside of public secondary schools, such as private or charter schools and community music groups. Although many of the ways in which the teachers in this study helped students to find meaning in their experiences may be applied to these other settings, there may be some that are experienced more or less deeply, or all together differently, dependent upon the context. Moreover, there may be other ways that teachers and conductors may be able to provide meaningful experiences to students enrolled in their groups that public school teachers, like those in this study, do not employ.

Silverman (2020) suggested that meaningfulness and the development of musical identity should be put at the forefront of music-making in both formal and informal school and community music programs. Further research is needed as to how those ideas may relate to caring or culturally responsive teaching in groups outside of formal school ensembles. I asked for instrumental music ensembles for this study because it is the discipline with which I, as the researcher, am most comfortable and proficient. However, future investigations are warranted to ascertain if and how these findings relate to meaningful experiences in a choral music ensemble or a general music class, such as a guitar or music theory course.

I found that compassionate caring and culturally responsive teaching were important factors in meaningfulness in instrumental music. Major and Parker (2023) found that students reported having meaningful experiences in a choral setting, but did not explore the way in which that meaning was fostered. Gurgel (2023) also explored engagement as it related to culturally relevant (responsive) pedagogy and found that relationships were "foundational to deep engagement" (p. 1). By applying Silverman's (2013) Tripartite View of Meaningfulness to choral settings, it may reveal the myriad ways that choral educators help to create meaningful experiences through caring and culturally responsive teaching. In doing so, contributions could be made to the existing body of research the supports the significance of music education for all students, bringing more understanding of student perspectives of what makes for meaningful experiences in choral music ensembles.

**Conclusion**

This multiple case study attempted to situate experiences which students perceive as meaningful within the frameworks of compassionate care and culturally responsive pedagogy. Each teacher in the study came from a slightly different cultural background, though all three were raised by White parents in predominantly White areas. For each of them, the meaningful experiences they had in their own musical upbringing impacted the ways in which they provided meaningful experiences to their students. As diversity in this, and other, school system increases, culturally responsive teaching is one method in which teachers can help facilitate experience that have meaning to students from diverse backgrounds. Culturally responsive pedagogy is multifaceted and complex, though just

because it is complex does not mean it is not achievable (Lind & McKoy, 2016).

Ultimately, this study concluded that the most important way in which teachers can provide meaningful experiences is through compassionate care, of which culturally responsive care is one facet. Through caring about, for, and with students, teachers have the ability to help them connect more deeply with the repertoire and with one another, helping them assign subjective and intersubjective value to their experiences in the pursuit of what has become, by Wolf's (2010) definition, the objectively valuable act of music making. Students and teachers participating in this study reported meaningfulness in shared experiences in which they were cared for, about, and with each other and their teachers and, together, attaching intersubjective value to these experiences. In fulfilling objective, subjective, and intersubjective value, musicing together connects us to our world in a positive way, providing a vital avenue for the pursuit of meaningfulness in music, as well as in life.

**APPENDIX A**

SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS - STUDENTS

1. Tell me a little bit about yourself and your musical history.

    a. How old are you?

    b. What grade are you in?

    c. What is your cultural background?

    d. What instrument do you play in this ensemble?

    e. Do you play any other instruments?

    f. Do you participate in any other musical activities outside of this ensemble?

    g. Do you take private lessons? If so, on what instrument(s) and for how long?

    h. What kinds of music do you listen to in your free time? What are some songs or artists you absolutely love?

    i. When did you first start participating in school music?

    j. Tell me about the first ensemble you were in that you really loved being a part of. What made you love it?

2. Tell me about your experience in this ensemble.

    a. Why did you decide to participate in this ensemble this year?

    b. What is it like to be a student in this ensemble?

    c. What do you like about being in this ensemble?

    d. What do you dislike about being in this ensemble?

e.   What kind of music do you play in this ensemble?  How do you feel about it?

f.   What is your favorite kind of music to play?  Why?

g.   Do you feel that music from your own cultural background is represented in the music you play in this ensemble?  Can you give some examples of how it is or is not?

3.   Tell me about the other students in this ensemble.

a.   Do you have any friends in the ensemble?

b.   Are there any people you don't get along with in the ensemble?

c.   Do you think it is important that the people in the ensemble are close to each other?  Why or why not?

4.   Tell me about your conductor ensemble director.

a.   What are they like as a person?

b.   What are they like as a teacher?

c.   What methods do they use to teach?

d.   What is it like to be in their class?

5.   Tell me more about this ensemble.

a.   Is there an ensemble ethic communicated?  How?

b.   What do you think is most important to your director?  How do you know?

c.   What do you think is most important to the other players in the ensemble?  How do you know?

d.   What is most important to you in the ensemble?  Why?

6. Tell me about what being in the ensemble feels like.

    a. What are your best memories of being in the ensemble so far?

    b. Do you remember any experiences that changed you or how you see things?

    c. Do you remember any experiences that were particularly emotional?

    d. Do you feel that your culture is valued and represented in the ensemble?

7. Tell me about what you find valuable in this ensemble.

    a. If I told you that this ensemble was going to be cut, how would you react? Why?

    b. Have you ever been in an ensemble that was not very meaningful to you? If so, how does that ensemble compare to this one?

    c. What, if anything, does being in this ensemble bring into your life that would not be there without it?

    d. What one thing about being in this ensemble would you never want to give up?

    e. Do you feel that your cultural background is represented and respected in this ensemble? How or how not?

8. Is there anything else you'd like to tell me about yourself or your experience in this ensemble?

## APPENDIX B

### SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS - ENSEMBLE DIRECTORS

1.  Tell me a little bit about yourself and your musical history.

    a.  How old are you?

    b.  What grade(s) do you teach?

    c.  How long have you been teaching in total?  How long at this school?

    d.  What is your cultural background?

    e.  What instrument(s) do you play?

    f.  Do you play in any ensembles outside of school?  If so, what are they?

    g.  What kinds of music do you listen to in your free time?  What are some songs or artists you absolutely love?

    h.  What are your earliest musical memories?

    i.  When did you first start participating in school music?

2.  Tell me about the first ensemble you were in that you really loved being a part of.

    a.  What made you love it?

    b.  What was the director like as a person?

    c.  What were they like as a teacher?

    d.  What methods did they use to teach?

    e.  What was it like to be in their ensemble?

    f.  What are your best memories of being in the ensemble?

    g.  Do you remember any experiences that were particularly emotional?

    h.  Do you feel that your culture was valued and represented in the ensemble?

  i.   Describe some experiences in that ensemble that meant the most to you.

3.   Tell me more about this ensemble and what is important to you.

  a.   Do you communicate an ensemble ethic?  How?

  b.   What is most important to you?  Why?

  c.   What do you think is most important to the students in the ensemble?
       How do you know?

  d.   What strategies of culturally responsive pedagogy to you actively
       implement in the ensemble?  Are there any strategies you use that are
       culturally responsive but that you use for a different reason?

  e.   What do you think is most meaningful about participation in this
       ensemble?  Is this related at all to culturally responsive teaching?

  f.   What do you think your students would find most meaningful about being
       in this ensemble?  Is this related at all to culturally responsive teaching?

4.   Tell me about your goals as a music director.

  a.   What is it that you want to teach others?

  b.   What experiences do you hope to give your students?

  c.   What do you want your ensemble(s) to be like?

  d.   How do/did you plan to create the ensemble you envision?

  e.   How do you choose repertoire and for what purpose?  How important is it
       to you that the cultural background of your students is represented in the
       repertoire you choose?

f.    Why is culturally responsive teaching important to you as an ensemble director?  What are the benefits in brings?  Are there any negative outcomes to using culturally responsive teaching strategies in an instrumental ensemble?

5.    Is there anything else you'd like to tell me about yourself or your experience in directing this ensemble?

## APPENDIX C

OBSERVATION PROTOCOL

| DESCRIPTIVE NOTES | REFLECTIVE NOTES |
|---|---|
| 1. WHO<br>Who are the participants (e.g. class size, demographics)?<br>What are the relevant characteristics of those being observed? | |
| 2. WHAT<br>What is taking place?  What are the participants doing and saying to one another?<br>What is the content of the participants' interactions?  Do the content reflect foundations of culturally responsive teaching?  What beliefs do the conversations demonstrate?  Who talks and listens? | |
| 3. WHERE<br>Where does the observation take place? What is the physical setting?<br>How does the physicality of the setting effect the learning process? | |
| 4. WHEN<br>How often do the participants meet and for how long?<br>How is classroom instructional time distributed? | |
| 5. WHY<br>Why do participants operate as they do?<br>What traditions and values surface among the participants? | |
| 6. HOW<br>How is content explained within the context of the setting?<br>How does interaction reflect the principles of culturally responsive teaching? | |

# APPENDIX D

## INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

Boston University Charles River Campus Institutional Review Board

25 Buick Street
Room 157
Boston, Massachusetts 02215
T 617-358-6115
www.bu.edu/irb

**BOSTON UNIVERSITY**

## Notification of IRB Approval:  Expedited Review

June 20, 2019

Charles Doherty, BS
Boston University College of Fine Arts
855 Commonwealth Ave
Boston, MA 02215

| | |
|---|---|
| **Protocol Title:** | Examining Culturally Responsive Teaching and Meaningfulness: A Case Study of Three Instrumental Performing Ensembles |
| **Protocol #:** | 5176E |
| **Funding Agency:** | Unfunded |
| **IRB Review Type:** | Expedited 6, 7 |

Dear Mr. Doherty:

On June 20, 2019, the IRB reviewed and approved the above-referenced protocol via expedited procedures in accordance with 45 CFR 46.110.   Approval for this study is effective from June 20, 2019 to June 19, 2020.

In accordance with 45 CFR 46.404 and 46 CFR 46.408, the IRB determined that the research did not involve greater than minimal risk, that assent would be obtained from the child, and that the permission of one parent is sufficient.  Assent will be obtained by sign assent form.

This approval includes the following:

1. Approval to enroll a total 18 participants
2. Teacher Consent Form
3. Parent Consent Form
4. Assent Form
5. Teacher Email
6. Sample Interview Questions

On **June 19, 2020**, you must submit an Annual Update.  Please submit the Annual Update Application, which is located on our website (http://www.bu.edu/irb/), eight weeks prior to the expiration of your study.

As the Principal Investigator, you are responsible for ensuring that studies are conducted in accordance with federal regulations, state laws, and institutional policies.

Please note:
- No subjects may be involved in study procedures prior to the IRB approval date or after the expiration date.
- All unanticipated problems or serious adverse events must be reported to the IRB immediately.
- All protocol modifications must be approved by the IRB prior to implementation unless they are necessary to eliminate immediate hazard to subjects.
- All protocol deviations must be reported to the IRB.
- All recruitment materials and methods must be approved by the IRB prior to use.

If you have any questions, please contact Shayne Deal at 617-358-6116.

Sincerely,

Shayne C. Deal, CIP
Senior IRB Analyst
Charles River Campus IRB

cc:  Dr. Paula Grissom-Broughton

# BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abrahams, F., & Abrahams, D. (2010). The impact of reciprocal teaching on the development of musical understanding in high school student members of performing ensembles: An action research. *Visions of Research in Music Education, 15*. http://www-usr.rider.edu/~vrme/v15n1/visions/Impact%20of%20Reciprocal%20Teaching%20on%20Musical%20Understanding.%20Abrahams%20and%20Abrahams.pdf

Abrahams, F., & Abrahams, D. (2017). Choral pedagogy and the construction of meaning. In F. Abrahams & P. D. Head (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Choral Pedagogy* (pp. 205–218). Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199373369.001.0001

Abrahams, F., & John, R. (2017). *Becoming musical*. GIA Publications.

Abrums, M. E., & Leppa, C. (2013). Beyond cultural competence: Teaching about race, gender, class, and sexual orientation. *Journal of Nursing Education, 40*(6), 270–275. https://doi.org/10.3928/0148-4834-20010901-07

Alperson, P. (1991). What should one expect from a philosophy of music education? *Journal of Aesthetic Education, 12*, 1–12. https://doi.org/10.2307/3333004

Apple, M. (2000). *Official knowledge*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203814383

Aronson, B., & Laughter, J. (2018). The theory and practice of culturally relevant education: Expanding the conversation to include gender and sexuality equity. *Gender and Education*, *32*(2), 262–279. https://doi.org/10.1080/09540253.2018.1496231

Banks, J. (2004). Multicultural education: Historical development, dimensions, and practice. In J. Banks (Ed.), *Handbook of research on multicultural education* (2nd ed., pp. 3–29). Jossey-Bass.

Baratz, S. S., & Baratz, J. C. (1970). Early childhood intervention: The social science base of institutional racism. *Harvard Educational Review, 40*, 29–50. https://doi.org/10.17763/haer.40.1.m243170whqq36766.

Bishop, M. & Vass, G. (2021). Talking about culturally responsive approaches to education: Teacher professional learning, Indigenous learners, and the politics of schooling. *The Australian Journal of Indigenous Education, 50*, 340–347. https://doi.org/10.1017/jie.2020.30

Bloom, B. S., Davis, A., & Hess, R. (1965). *Compensatory education for cultural deprivation*. Holt, Rinehart & Winston. https://doi.org/10.1177/002248716501600424

Bond, V. L. (2017). Culturally responsive education in music education: A literature review. *Contributions to Music Education*, *42*, 153–180. https://www.jstor.org/stable/26367441

Bourdieu, P. (1984). *Distinction: A social critique of the judgement of taste*. Routledge.

Bourdieu, P. (1977). *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (R. Nice, Trans.). Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511812507

Bowman, W. D. (2002) Educating musically. In R. Colwell & C. Richardson (Eds.), *The new handbook of research on music teaching and learning* (pp. 63–84). Oxford University Press.

Bowman, W. D. (2005a). The limits and grounds of musical praxialism. In D. J. Elliott (Ed.), *Praxial music education: Reflections and dialogues* (pp. 219–248). Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195385076.001.0001

Bowman, W. D. (2005b). Why musical performance? Views praxial to performative. In D. J. Elliott (Ed.), *Praxial music education: Reflections and dialogues*. Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195385076.001.0001

Bowman, W. D. (2007). Who is the "we"? Rethinking professionalism in music education. *Action, Criticism & Theory for Music Education, 6*(4), 109–131.

Bowman, W. D. (2009). No one true way: Music education without redemptive truth. In T. Regelski & T. Gages (Eds.), *Music education for changing times: Guiding visions for practice* (Vol. 7, pp. 3–15). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-90-481-2700-9

Bresler, L., & Stake, R. E. (2006). Qualitative research methodology in music education. In R. Colwell (Ed.), *MENC handbook of research methodologies* (pp. 270–311). Oxford University Press.

Broudy, H. (1950). The neglect of aesthetics as an educational resource. *Journal of Progressive Education, 28*(1), 37–40.

Brown, A. D., Colville, I., & Pye, A. (2015). Making sense of sensemaking. *Organization Studies, 36*(2), 265–277. https://doi.org/10/1177/0170840614559259

Butler, A., Lind, V., & McKoy, C. (2007). Equity and access in music education: Conceptualizing culture as barriers to and supports for music learning. *Music Education Research, 9*, 241–253. https://doi.org/10.1080/14613800701384375

Campbell, J. S. (2018). *Music, education, and diversity: Bridging cultures and communities*. Teachers College Press.

Cape, J. (2012). *Perceptions of meaningfulness among high school instrumental musicians.* (Publication No. 3505872) [Doctoral dissertation, Arizona State University]. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global. https://hdl.handle.net/2286/R.I.14975

Cape, J. (2013). Student perceptions of the meaningfulness of high school guitar. *Visions of Research in Music Education, 23*. http://www-usr.rider.edu/~vrme/v23n1/visions/Cape_Meaningfulness_of_High_School_Guitar.pdf.

Cazden, C., & Leggett, E. (1981). Culturally responsive education: Recommendations for achieving Lau remedies II. In H. Trueba, G. Guthrie, & K. Au (Eds.), *Culture and the bilingual classroom: Studies in classroom ethnography* (pp. 69–86). Newbury. https://doi.org/10.1177/003368828301400216

Crabtree, B. F., & Miller, W. L. (1992). *Doing qualitative research.* Sage Publications.

Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches*. SAGE Publications. https://doi.org/10.1177/1524839915580941

Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches.* SAGE Publications.

Delpit, L. D. (1992). Education in a multicultural society: Our future's greatest challenge. *The Journal of Negro Education, 61*(3), 237–249. https://doi.org/10.2307/2295245

Delpit, L. D. (2006). *Other people's children: Cultural conflict in the classroom* (2nd ed. ed.). Norton.

Dey, I. (1993). Reducing fragmentation in qualitative research. In U. Keele (Ed.), *Computer-aided qualitative data analysis* (pp. 69–79). Sage.

Eisner, E. W. (1998). *The enlightened eye: Qualitative inquiry and the enhancement of educational practice*. Prentice Hall.

Elliott, D. (1990). Music as culture: Toward a multicultural concept of arts education. *The Journal of Aesthetic Education, 24*(1), 147–166. https://doi.org/10.2307/3332862

Elliott, D. (1995). *Music matters: A new philosophy of music education*. Oxford University Press.

Elliott, D. (2005). *Praxial music education: Reflections and dialogues*. Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195385076.001.0001

Elliott, D. (2012). Music education philosophy. In G. McPherson & G. Welch (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of music education* (Vol. 1, pp. 63–86). Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199730810.001.0001

Elliott, D. & Silverman, M. (2015). *Music matters: A philosophy of music education* (2nd ed.)*.* Oxford University Press.

Elliott, D. & Silverman, M. (2017). Identities and musics: reclaiming personhood. In R. MacDonald, D. J. Hargreaves, & D. Miell (Eds.), *Handbook of musical identities* (pp. 27–45). Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093.acprof:oso/9780199679485.001.0001

Erickson, F. D. (1987). Transformation and school success: The politics and culture of educational achievement. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly, 18*, 335–356. https://www.jstor.org/stable/3216661

Erickson, F. D., & Mohatt, G. (1982). Cultural organization and participation structures in two classrooms of Indian students. In G. G Spindler (Ed.), *Doing the ethnography of schooling* (pp. 131–174). Holt, Rinehart & Winston.

Esterberg, K. G. (2002). *Qualitative methods in social research*. McGraw-Hill.

FCPS. (2018). About FCPS and fast facts. https://www.fcps.org/about/fast-facts/

Feay-Shaw, S. (2000). Multicultural perspectives on research in music education. *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education,* (145), 15–26. https://www.jstor.org/stable/40319019

Foley, D. E. (1997). Deficit thinking models based on culture The anthropological protest. In R. R. Valencia (Ed.), *The evolution of deficit thinking: Educational thought and practice* (pp. 113–131). Routledge-Falmer.

Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (M. B. Ramos, Trans.). Continuum International Publishing Group.

Freire, P. (1980). *Education for critical consciousness*. Continuum International Publishing Group.

Gall, M. D., Gall, J. P., & Borg, W. R. (2007). *Educational research: An introduction (8th ed.).* Pearson.

Gay, G. (2000). *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research, and practice (1st. ed.).* Teachers College Press.

Gay, G. (2002). Preparing for culturally responsive teaching. *Journal of Teacher Education, 53*(2), 106–116. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487102053002003

Gay, G. (2010). *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research, and practice (2nd ed.).* Teachers College Press.

Gay, G. (2018). *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research, and practice (3ʳᵈ ed.).* Teachers College Press. https://a.co/d/4LYLoOn

Gilligan, C. (1982). *In a different voice: Psychological theory and women's development.* Harvard University Press.

Gilligan, C. (1988). *Mapping the moral domain: A contribution of women's thinking to psychological theory and education.* Harvard University Press.

Glesne, C. (2011). *Becoming qualitative researchers: An introduction (4th ed.).* Pearson.

Gurgel, R. E. (2023). Culturally relevant pedagogy and disengagement in the choral classroom: What can we learn from the students? *International Journal of Research in Choral Singing, 11,* 1–22. https://acda.org/archives/5473

Hammond, Z. (2014). *Culturally responsive teaching and the brain: Promoting authentic engagement and rigor among culturally and linguistically diverse students.* Corwin.

Held, V. (2006). *The ethics of care: Personal, political, and global.* Oxford University Press. https://a.co/4BSd0Ms

Hendricks, K. S. (2018). *Compassionate music teaching: A framework for motivation and engagement in the 21st century.* Rowman & Littlefield. https://a.co/brhQ6yc

Hendricks, K. S. (2021). Authentic connection in music education: A chiastic essay. In K. S. Hendricks & J. Boyce-Tillman (Eds.), *Authentic connection: Music, spirituality, and wellbeing* (pp. 237–253). Peter Lang. https://a.co/eiu4Jlh

Hendricks, K. S. (2023). A call for care and compassion in music education. In K. S. Hendricks (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of care in music education* (pp. 5–21). Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780197611654.013.52

Hendricks, K. S., Einarson, K. M., Mitchell, N., Guerriero, E. M., & D'Ercole, P. (2021). Caring for, about, and with: Exploring musical meaningfulness among Suzuki students and parents. *Frontiers in Education, 6,* Article 648776. https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2021.648776

Hollins, E. R., King, J. E., & Hayman, W. C. (1994). *Teaching diverse populations: Formulating a knowledge base.* State University of New York Press.

hooks, b. (2003). *Teaching community: A pedagogy of hope.* Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203957769

Hornbeck, D. & Duncheon, J. C. (2022). "From an ethic of care to queer resistance": Texas administrator and teacher perspectives on supporting LGBTQ students in secondary schools. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*. https://doi.org/10/1080/09518398.2022/2127021

Jabbar, A. & Mirza, Mohammed (2017). Identification of cultural heuristics for the creation of consistent and fair pedagogy for ethnically diverse students. In F. Pirbhai-Illich, S. Pete, & F. Martin (Eds.), *Culturally responsive pedagogy: Working towards decolonization, indigeneity, and interculturalism* (pp. 28–51). Palgrave MacMillan. https://a.co/87I2tON

Jagers, R. J., Rivas-Drake, D., & Williams, B. (2019). Transformative social and emotional learning (SEL): Toward SEL in service of educational equity and excellence. *Educational Psychologist, 54*(3), 162–184. https://doi.org/10.1080/00461520.2019.1623032

Jellison, J. A. (2000). How can all students continue to be involved in meaningful music participation? In C. K. Madsen (Ed.), *Vision 2020: The Housewright Symposium on the future of music education*. MENC - The National Association for Music Education.

King, J. (2004). Culture-centered knowledge: Black studies, curriculum transformation, and social action. In J. Banks (Ed.), *Handbook of research on multicultural education* (pp. 349–380). Jossey-Bass.

King, J. E., Hollins, E. R., & Hayman, W. C. (1997). *Preparing teachers for cultural diversity*. Teachers College Press. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487101052002002

Kruse, A. J. (2020). "He didn't know what he was doin'": Student perspectives of a White teacher's Hip-Hop class. *International Journal of Music Education, 38*(4), 495–512. https://doi.org/10.1177/0255761420924316

Ladson-Billings, G. (1995a). But that's just good teaching! The case for culturally relevant pedagogy. *Theory into Practice, 34*(3), 159–165. https://www.jstor.org/stable/1476635

Ladson-Billings, G. (1995b). Toward a theory of culturally relevant pedagogy. *American Educational Research Journal, 32*(3), 465–491. https://doi.org/10.2307/1163320

Ladson-Billings, G. (2009). *The dreamkeepers: Successful teachers of African American children*. Jossey-Bass.

Ladson-Billings, G. (2021). *Critical race theory in education: A scholar's journey.* Teachers College Press.

Ladson-Billings, G., & Tate, W. (2006). *Education research in the public interest: Social justice, action, and policy*. Teachers College Press.

Leonard, J., & Guha, S. (2002). Creating cultural relevance in teaching and learning mathematics. *Teaching Children Mathematics, 9*(2), 114–118. https://www.jstor.org/stable/41197989

Lind, V., & McKoy, C. (2016). *Culturally responsive teaching in music education: From understanding to application*. Routledge.

Lundquist, B. (2002). Music, culture, curriculum, and instruction. In R. Colwell & C. Richardson (Eds.), *The new handbook of research on music teaching and learning* (pp. 626–647). Oxford University Press.

Major, M. L., & Parker, E. C. (2023). Disrupting the choral class system: A journey of one high school choral program. *International Journal of Research in Choral Singing, 11*, 43–61. https://acda.org/archives/5768

Maslow, A. H. (1971). Peak experiences in education and art. *Theory into Practice, 10*(3), 149–153. https://doi.org/10.1080/00405847109542321

Mazama, A., & Lundy, G. (2013). African American homeschooling and the question of curricular cultural relevance. *The Journal of Negro Education, 82*(2), 123–138. https://doi.org/10.7709/jnegroeducation.82.2.0123

McCormick, C. B. & Scherer, D. G. (2018). *Child and adolescent development for educators (2nd ed.)*. The Guilford Press. https://a.co/d/dt8ms9z

MCPS. (2021). Annual report to the community. https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/annualreport/2021/#

Morelli, J. (2022). (Un)caring: A framework for understanding care in community music(k)ing. *International Journal of Community Music, 15*(3), 323–340. https://doi.org/10.1386/ijcm_00066_1

National Association for Music Education (2014). *2014 music standards (ensemble)*. https://nafme.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/2014-Music-Standards-Ensemble-Strand.pdf

Nielsen Music. (2019). *2019 mid-year U.S. report*. https://www.nielsen.com/insights/2019/u-s-music-mid-year-report-2019/

Noddings, N. (1984). *Caring: A feminine approach to ethics and moral education (1st ed.)*. University of California Press. https://a.co/d/4hAXJLZ

Noddings, N. (2003). *Caring: A feminine approach to ethics and moral education (2nd ed.).* University of California Press. https://a.co/0uJVKSJ

Noddings, N. (2013). *Caring: A relational approach to ethics and moral education* (2nd ed.). University of California Press. https://a.co/bmh7prH

O'Neill, S. A. (2017). Young people's musical lives: Learning ecologies, identities, and connectedness. In R. MacDonald, D. J. Hargreaves, & D. Miell (Eds.), *Handbook of musical identities* (pp. 79–104). Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093.acprof:oso/9780199679485.001.0001

Orcher, L. (2005). *Conducting research: Social and behavioral science methods*. Pyrczak. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315266626

Pai, Y. (1990). *Cultural foundations of education*. Merrill/Macmillan.

Palmer, E. S., Vodicka, J., Huynh, T., D'Alexander, C., & Crawford, L. (2022). Grounded framework for culturally relevant and responsive music teaching. *Update: Applications of Research in Music Education, 41*(1), 24–33. https://doi.org/10.1177/87551233211055815

Palmer, P. J. (2007). *The courage to teach: Exploring the inner landscape of a teacher's life*. John Wiley & Sons.

Paris, D. (2012). Culturally sustaining pedagogy: A needed change in stance, terminology, and practice. *Educational Researcher, 41*(3), 93–97. http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.bu.edu/stable/41477769.

Pirbhai-Illich, F., Pete, S., & Martin, F. (2017). Culturally responsive pedagogies: Decolonization, indigeneity and interculturalism. In F. Pirbhai-Illich, S. Pete, & F. Martin (Eds.), *Culturally responsive pedagogy: Working towards decolonization, indigeneity, and interculturalism* (pp. 2–26). Palgrave MacMillan. https://a.co/87I2tON

Ramirez, M., & Castandea, A. (1974). *Cultural democracy, bi-cognitive development, and education*. Academic Press.

Rawls, J. D., & Robinson, J. (2019). *Youth culture power: A #HipHopEd guide to building teacher-student relationships and increasing student engagement.* Peter Lang.

Regelski, T. (1997). Prolegomenon to a praxial philosophy of music. *Canadian Music Educator, 38*(3), 43.

Regelski, T. (2005). Curriculum: Implications of aesthetic versus praxial philosophies. In D. J. Elliott (Ed.), *Praxial music education: Reflections and dialogues* (pp. 219–248). Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195385076.001.0001

Reimer, B. (1970). *A philosophy of music education*. Prentice-Hall.

Ryan, W. (1971). *Blaming the victim*. Vintage.

Saldaña, J. (2016). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*. SAGE Publishing.

Shade, B. (1982). Afro-American cognitive style: A variable in school success? *Review of Educational Research, 52*, 219–244. https://doi.org/10.2307/1170312

Shaw, J. (2012). The skin that we sing: Culturally responsive choral music education. *Music Educators Journal, 98*(4), 75–81. https://doi.org/10.1177/0027432112443561

Shaw, J. (2016). "The music I was meant to sing": Adolescent choral students' perceptions of culturally responsive pedagogy. *Journal of Research in Music Education, 64*(1), 45–70. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022429415627989

Shor, I. (1992). *Empowering education: Critical teaching for social change*. University of Chicago Press.

Silverman, M. (2012). Virtue ethics, care ethics, and the good life of teaching. *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education, 11*(2), 96–122. http://act.maydaygroup.org/articles/Silverman11_2.pdf

Silverman, M. (2013). A conception of "meaningfulness" in/for life and music education. *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education, 12*(2): 20–40. http://act.maydaygroup.org/articles/Silverman12_2.pdf

Silverman, M. (2020). Sense-making, meaningfulness, and instrumental music education. *Frontiers in Psychology, 11*, Article 837. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.00837

Silverman, M. & Elliott, D. (2017). The gifts of artistic citizenship. In F. Abrahams & R. John (Eds.), *Becoming musical* (pp. 249–261). GIA Publications.

Smith, G. P. (1998). *Common sense about common knowledge: The knowledge bases for diversity*. American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education.

Thomas, A. B. (2020). "Please hire more teachers of color": Challenging the "good enough." In teacher diversity efforts. *Equity & Excellence in Education, 53*(1–2), 216–228. https://doi.org/10/1080/10665684.2020.1749187

Towson University. (2021). *Jazz festival.*
https://www.towson.edu/cofac/departments/music/events/jazzfestival/

Tycast, N. & Lukkasson, B. (2017). *Windows and mirror: Talking about race in band*
[Paper presentation]. MMEA Conference, St. Paul, MN.

U. S. Chamber of Commerce. (2018). *U. S. Census Bureau QuickFacts*. Retrieved
August 17, 2019, from
https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/frederickcountymaryland,montgomeryc
ountymaryland,MD/PST045218

Vodicka, J. D. (2022). Critical and culturally sustaining music pedagogy. *Visions of
Research in Music Education, 40*.
https://opencommons.uconn.edu/vrme/vol40/iss1/11

Volk, T. (1994). Folk musics and increasing diversity in American music education:
1900–1916. *Journal of Research in Music Education, 42*(4), 285–305.
http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.bu.edu/stable/3345737.

Volk, T. (1998). *Music, education, and multiculturalism: Foundations and principles.*
Oxford University Press.

Walter, J. S. (2018). Global perspectives: Making the shift from multiculturalism to
culturally responsive teaching. *General Music Today, 31*(2), 24–28.
https://doi.org/10.1177/1048371317720262

Wastvedt, S. (2017, February 18). *Why this high school band is buying music from
composers of color this year.* [Radio broadcast]. NPR.
https://www.npr.org/sections/ed/2017/02/18/509133975/why-this-high-school-band-
is-only-buying-music-from-composers-of-color

Webb, J., Wilson, B., Corbett, D., & Mordecai, R. (1993). Understanding caring in
context: Negotiating borders and barriers. *The Urban Review, 25*(1), 25–45.
https://doi.org/10.1007/BF01108044

Weller, T. (2021, August 12). *The impact of Covid-19 on junior high and middle school
band programs*. https://travisjweller.com/2021/08/12/the-impact-of-covid-19-on-
junior-high-and-middle-school-band-programs/

Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning, and identity*.
Cambridge University Press.
https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1017/CBO9780511803932

Wolf, S. (2010). *Meaning in life and why it matters*. Princeton University Press.
https://a.co/1EMsK6W

Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case study research: Design and methods*. SAGE.

# CURRICULUM VITAE