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My Journey Toward a Culturally Relevant Music Pedagogy

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MY JOURNEY TOWARD A CULTURALLY RELEVANT MUSIC PEDAGOGY

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the teachers who work every day to make the world a more just place for their students.

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ABSTRACT

In this study I utilized critical autoethnography to examine my role as a White, male implementing Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP) in an early childhood music classrooms. Five research questions were posed: (a) In what ways does White supremacy appear in an elementary music school curriculum? (b) What curricular transformations occur when I, as a White teacher, seek to make my curriculum more relevant to students of Color? (c) What dispositional transformations occur when I, as a White teacher, seek to make my music curriculum more relevant to students of Color? (d) What happens when students of Color engage in a curriculum that deviates from a traditional Eurocentric-normalized elementary music class? and (e) What happens when White students engage in a curriculum that deviates from the traditional Eurocentric-normalized elementary music class? Findings from this study can contribute to the knowledge base regarding the role that culturally relevant music instruction plays in the education of elementary students of Color and White students.

Results and processes from this study were presented using three manuscripts that will be presented for publication. The first article conceptualizes ways that CRP can be used in what I describe as Culturally Relevant Music Pedagogy (CRMP). I chronicle my process of transforming an elementary music classroom into a more relevant space for all students, particularly minoritized students. CRMP was introduced as a syntheses of three components: (a) critical music pedagogy; (b) critical pedagogy; and (c) my own experiences with culturally relevant pedagogy in music classrooms. I explicated three

processes for engaging in culturally relevant music pedagogy beyond theory and into practice: (a) being intentional in music selection; (b) developing relationships with students; and (c) going beyond the school.

The second article is a practitioner article offering guidance to teachers who implement CRMP. A music unit based on the celebration of Kwanzaa was shared. Drawing from critical pedagogy and critical music education, I engaged students in developing meaningful connections and cultural and critical awareness. In the third, research-focused article, I shared insights from the five-month critical autoethnography which documented my implementation of culturally relevant pedagogy with predominantly African American first grade students. Four main themes were found: (a) unpreparedness as a teacher; (b) disconnection with the music curriculum; (c) guilt about feelings and actions regarding an equitable pedagogy; and (d) the need for internal growth in equity pedagogies and teaching diverse populations.

While this study was sometimes uncomfortable because I had to wrestle with my complicity in White supremacy, doing so was instrumental for my growth as a teacher and human being. In order to be a more effective, equity-centered teacher, I had to fully examine my own beliefs and practices. As I continue to engage in this work, I hope to be more effective a teacher and future teacher educator. My hope is that others can use this study as a template to engage in their own processes toward centering students, especially students of Color, in their teaching. A wonderful element in studying yourself is that one can engage with this work at any time and at any place.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

As a White, emerging scholar, I seek to deeply understand my teaching practices and equity pedagogies. I recognized that in order to better guide in-service and preservice teachers' engagement in equitable teaching practices which center Black and Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC) and de-center Whiteness, I needed to examine my own dispositions, pre-dispositions, attitudes, and beliefs more fully as I aimed to deeply integrate Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP) into my teaching. In the past, I have occasionally used components of CRP, but not in a sustained and intentional manner, because it was often easier for me to revert to what I already knew and felt most secure doing. I certainly have not documented CRP in my teaching until now. For this dissertation study, I used critical autoethnography to document my implementation of culturally relevant teaching in a first-grade music classroom. Theoretically, this scholarship was guided by Critical Race Theory and Critical Whiteness Studies.

Discussion of the Problem

In the present study, I problematize the pervasiveness and structural nature of racism (Bell, 1992) in schools *and* in teacher education programs. In both settings, White supremacy is fostered and upheld. Music classrooms are not immune from White supremacy and are often places where the culture of BIPOC students is absent or distorted in curricula, instruction, assessment, and policies (Lind & McKoy, 2016; Thompson, 2015). In this context, many White teachers are not equipped, or perhaps do not see the value in teaching music relevant to students of Color (Abril, 2009; McKoy,

2013). In some cases, musical influences and heritages of students who identify as BIPOC are co-opted, appropriated, or maligned by K–12 music teachers (Abril, 2009).

Music education programs remain heavily Eurocentric, thus leaving prospective teachers ill-prepared to teach in culturally relevant ways. As a beginning teacher, I did not feel prepared to teach African American students because my teacher preparation program demonstratively centered Eurocentric curricula and pedagogies. Even as a teacher with more than a decade of experience, I find myself searching for professional development and other resources that de-center Whiteness and place students of Color at the forefront of teaching and curriculum. In my study, I sought to identify challenges and successes that I encountered when striving to de-center Whiteness as a White, male music education teacher.

Research Purpose and Questions

My goal was to illuminate and seek insights about ways that White supremacy persists in elementary music classrooms. I aimed to see what happened to my disposition and curriculum when I tried to make my music instruction more relevant to students of Color. While I was interested in documenting my process, the key goal was to work toward helping students of Color see their culture, reflected in our music classroom. Students of Color need to know that their music is valid, worthy of study, and should be celebrated in school. I also aimed to guide White students toward developing cultural competence beyond their own musical repertoires by learning about BIPOC culture and music. Since conversations about what students already know is an important part of critical consciousness and open dialogue, it is imperative to gain insights as a classroom community. While I know that many, if not all, of my White students are familiar with

music written and performed by artists of Color, I was not sure that White students are familiar with historical, antecedent BIPOC music. I wanted White students to learn to value and appreciate cultures other than White people and to engage in cross-cultural discourse with BIPOC peers to develop relationship and increase cultural understanding. I wanted all students to recognize BIPOC music as a legitimate part of our music curriculum. Five research questions guided this study.

1. In what ways does White supremacy appear in an elementary music school curriculum?
2. What curricular transformations occur when I, as a White teacher, seek to make my music curriculum more relevant to students of Color?
3. What dispositional transformations occur when I, as a White teacher, seek to make my music curriculum more relevant to students of Color?
4. What happens when students of Color engage in a curriculum that deviates from the traditional Eurocentric-normalized elementary music class?
5. What happens when White students engage in a curriculum that deviates from the traditional Eurocentric-normalized elementary music class?

Significance of the Problem

Demographics of students enrolled in public education continue to shift in the United State from a White majority toward a BIPOC majority (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2022). For teachers and teacher educators, these trends signify that educators must effectively teach students from diverse ethnic, racial, and cultural backgrounds. Beyond demographic imperatives, it is important that regardless of racial differences between teachers and students, students are recognized for their

respective cultures. Most music teachers, as well as those in other disciplines, are White, middle class, English speaking, and female (Lind & McKoy, 2016; Lucas, 2007; NCES, 2022).

The field of music education largely operates under the assumptions of the Western European tradition with the acceptance of a monolithic repertoire, Eurocentric notions of artistic beauty, a focus on notational literacy, and Westernized view of the role of musicians and their place in a hierarchy (Johnson, 2004; Lind & McKoy, 2016). These areas of foci often lead to a lack of curriculum relevance for students of Color, whose cultural ways of being and values may not be upheld by Western European values, traditions, and standards. When curricula lack relevance, students of Color may reject or disengage in learning (Boutte, 2017). Findings from this study can contribute to the knowledge base regarding the role that culturally relevant music instruction plays in the education of elementary students of Color and White students.

Assumptions and Limitations of Study

Drawing from a Critical Race Theoretical perspective, I assume that White supremacy and racism are embedded in U.S. society and within school systems (Bell, 1992). For example, curriculum, assessments, and disciplinary practices are based on White norms (Milner et al., 2018). I acknowledge that culture matters when teaching all races and ethnicities. Because we live in a racialized society, I assume that some students' of Color life experiences, values, and customs may differ from my musical predispositions as a White man. Because of my own experiences of having attended schools with majority White populations, White students in my classes may have somewhat different epistemologies than me, as well as having generational differences.

For example, I have informally inferred that many of my students are unfamiliar with older instrumental music that I listen to and was taught when I was in elementary school. I am also unaware of the latest TikTok trends and music that they bring into the classroom. I presume that music curriculum and pedagogy are part of the school system and is thus not shielded from White supremacy. I understand that I both contribute to White supremacy and benefit from White privilege in my classroom. That is, as a White teacher, my culture is reflected in a traditional Western music curriculum. When I allow the status quo to remain intact, this continues and advances the Whiteness of a curriculum.

One limitation of this study was that at times I may have been unaware of my own biases and prejudices. This meant that I had to intentionally examine and confront ways that I may not be fully committed to emancipatory teaching practices which at times caused discomfort and other difficult emotions such as denial, frustration, and confusion. My goal was to fully engage with my feelings and thoughts honestly, which was difficult because it sometimes left me feeling inadequate regarding my ability to teach in culturally relevant ways. Later, I will discuss methods used to keep potential blind spots front and center.

Operational Definitions

Foundational to understanding this study is my interpretation of terms used. Key terms are defined below.

Equity: According to Boutte (2017), "Equity assumes that diversity among people exists; therefore, there is sometimes a need to do *different* things for groups that are marginalized, in order to give them a fair chance" (pp. 10–11). In other words, strategies

and policies need to be implemented so that all children can obtain equitable access, resources, and outcomes.

Culturally relevant pedagogy: A theoretical and instructional approach that focuses on multiple aspects of student achievement and supports students to uphold their cultural identities. Culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP) also calls for students to develop critical perspectives that challenge societal inequalities (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Three dimensions of CRP include: academic excellence, cultural competence, and critical consciousness (Ladson-Billings, 1994). Academic excellence refers to expecting students' intellectual growth and development and recognizing the academic capabilities of all students. Students develop cultural competence by affirming and appreciating their own culture while developing fluency in at least one other culture. Developing critical consciousness is the ability to engage in societal issues and recognize structural inequities (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

White supremacy: The belief that White people are superior to those of other races and thus White people should be the dominant group in power, to the exclusion and detriment of other racial groups. White supremacy can be understood as an attempt to universally legitimize White power structures through violent conquest and colonization (Trouillot, 1991). In this dissertation, I examine ways that White supremacy is upheld by the Eurocentric nature of the curriculum and method of teaching music.

Transformation: I use the term, transformation, to describe educators' change of consciousness; thus, moving from enjoying and maintaining White supremacy to intentionally, continuously, and actively striving toward justice and equity for all people

in respective educational and societal spaces. Transformation involves working to dismantle White supremacy in systems of inequity (Mezirow, 1991).

Transforming the Music Curriculum

An aspect of transforming the music curriculum in my classroom was to understand that I am not the only expert in the classroom. A component of CRT is the understanding that students bring funds of knowledge and cultural expertise that I may not have, and students' contributions to their own education should be recognized by me as their teacher (Lind & McKoy, 2016). Further, by framing my work in Critical Race Theory and Critical Whiteness Studies, I engage in emancipatory practices because in education, no single truth is universal or permanent (Gay, 2010).

In music education, the curriculum is often taught through a standardized Eurocentric repertoire of music based in traditional music of Europe and the United States. In a culturally relevant classroom, choices of music can be an entrée to a variety of different cultures. Musical selections should reflect the racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds of the students in the room, and the selections should also validate other cultures through instruction intended to address all students (Erwin et al., 2003).

I also reflected and changed teaching strategies using a new culturally relevant repertoire. As a 2007 graduate of a Predominately White Institution (PWI), I learned primarily Music Learning Theory (Gordon, 2013) methodology, with Kodaly and Orff teaching techniques sprinkled into my elementary methods classes. The nature of these techniques is designed for young children and emphasize audiation, solfege, movement, as well as listening and singing in many different meters and tonalities. Although other music teaching techniques exist, Music Learning Theory is the technique that I learned in

my pre-service teacher program. These techniques vary but are based in European and European American pedagogies. Instruction is largely teacher led, based in European and U.S. folk music, and the tunes are based in diatonic tonalities, meaning tones that are in a key without chromatic variation, common in Western music.

One transformation I made was to change the musical repertoire in my first-grade classrooms. Musical repertoire, meaning the actual songs and musical pieces used in the classroom, was helpful in addressing critical consciousness because teacher-selected music itself is used as the standards-based curriculum. That is, my students engaged in dialogue to better understand what music has, and has not, been deemed legitimate for school and how we might transform those notions. While I do not believe that a former professor or academic journal has explicitly posited that one particular type of music is illegitimate, there are certainly genres and styles of music that are largely absent from standard elementary music curricula.

Because of insights gained during my doctoral program, I had previously incorporated some cultural musical variety, but still found myself leaning on Eurocentric practices and selections far too often. As someone who grew up learning English nursey rhymes and American folk tunes, I always have these songs at the ready. By relying on traditional methods like Music Learning Theory, also known as the Gordon method, and that technique's publications, *Jump Right In!* (Gordon, 2000), *Music Play* (Gordon, 1998), and *Experimental Songs and Chants* (Gordon et al., 1993), I perpetuate the Whiteness of my curriculum. All tunes in these publications are written by White teachers and follow traditional Western tonalities and structures.

A Eurocentric expectation of music education in the United States is the preeminence of notation. In other words, White curriculum focuses on "reading what is on the page" versus learning to play by ear or improvisation. As a former high school band director, I believed that my role was to prepare students for future roles as members of ensembles where notational reading is paramount, because secondary school ensembles are also grounded in Eurocentric paradigms where each member must read directly from the music page. Playing by ear and improvisation are practices that I do not often engage, because it is historically not valued in a Eurocentric music room. Through engaging in a CRP approach, I learned to expect that my students are capable learners of reading by ear, improvisation, as well as reading traditional notation.

Another goal for my students was to enhance their recognition and appreciation of a variety of cultural selections, selections that are often ignored or erased from a Eurocentric-based music classroom. Since I teach predominantly African American, Latinx, and southeast Asian students, I engaged in music from those traditions, beginning with the music of Africa, specifically West African songs and chants. I began with the music of Africa because students need to understand the importance of, and the origins of musical styles and contributions that are African, since the vast of majority of my students are indeed African American. In subsequent chapters, I chronicle my journey into culturally relevant music teaching.

Subsequent Chapters

In Chapter Two of this dissertation I include the review of literature. I offer a brief synopsis of culturally relevant pedagogy, a its evolution over time, current use, and the positioning of culturally relevant pedagogy in music education. I discuss deficit-oriented

music education, the progress to multiculturalism in music education, and then how the three components of culturally relevant pedagogy (academic achievement, cultural competence, and critical consciousness) have been addressed in music education literature.[1]

Chapter Three includes the methodology of the study. I share my epistemology and positionality. Qualitative design is discussed broadly, and critical qualitative inquiry and critical autoethnography are explicated specifically. I elaborate on the method used in this study, critical autoethnography, where I examine my role has a White teacher engaging in culturally relevant pedagogy, as well as the context of the study. I re-cast the five research questions and conclude the chapter with a discussion of data collection, data analysis, trustworthiness, and fidelity. The next three chapters (four, five, and six) are manuscripts which will be submitted for publication—one conceptual, one practical (applied), and one research piece.

Chapter Four is a conceptual article in which I reflect on how and why culturally relevant pedagogy can and should be used in early childhood music classrooms. I chronicle how I began transforming my elementary music classroom into a more relevant space for all students, particularly minoritized students. I discuss the need for culturally relevant pedagogy in music classes, the difference between music learning using culturally relevant and traditional pedagogies, Implications of Culturally Relevant Music Pedagogy for students and teachers round out this chapter. I intend to submit this chapter to *Music Educators' Journal*.

[1] The term multiculturalism is somewhat outdated, but was used to indicate the inclusion of other cultural groups beyond Europeans.

Chapter Five is a practitioner article. I offer a practical guide for classroom music teachers to use critical music pedagogy in their own classrooms. Specifically, I highlight how my winter holiday music has changed from Eurocentric to critically and culturally relevant. In particular, I discuss how Kwanzaa is celebrated and how I teach my students about the holiday. I intend to submit this chapter to the *Journal of General Music Education* for publication.

Chapter Six is a research article. Using the method of critical autoethnography and drawing from Critical Race Theory and Critical Whiteness Studies, I examine my role as a White teacher who uses culturally relevant pedagogy in first-grade music classrooms. I consider how the curriculum transformed, how my students and I transformed, and how I personally dealt with managing a culturally relevant pedagogy versus Eurocentric paradigm. I intend to submit this chapter to the *Journal of Early Childhood Research* for publication.

The last chapter of this dissertation is Chapter Seven. I make closing remarks and offer a summary and discussion of overall findings. I also make recommendations for the way forward for teachers, music classrooms, and for myself.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, I provide an overview of the conceptual framework to highlight the pedagogical methods used in the study. Conceptually, I examine the historical background of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP) in general education, its use in music education, and themes and previous research that were applied in my study. I also describe the historical roots and contemporary use of CRP in this review.

I also share the theoretical framework to describe the theoretical underpinnings of my study which is guided by both Critical Race Theory and Critical Whiteness Studies. These frameworks helped me delineate ways that systemic racism affects the music education curriculum, and ways that Whiteness has played a role in my own evolution and efforts to develop into a culturally relevant educator.

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

Scholars have long sought strategies and techniques in teaching about diversity (Aronson & Laughter, 2016; Au & Jordan, 1981; Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011). One particular area of development has been culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP). CRP maintains that teachers should be non-judgmental and inclusive of all learners' cultures (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011). Culturally relevant pedagogy is a term coined by Gloria Ladson-Billings in 1994, and it places emphasis on the needs of students from various cultures, particularly African American students. Developed by Ladson-Billings, CRP is based on the three distinct components of (a) academic excellence, (b) cultural

competence, and (c) critical consciousness. Each of these three dimensions will be discussed.

Academic Excellence

CRP is a pedagogy that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically using student culture to transmit knowledge, skills, and attitudes (Ladson-Billings, 1994). It is pedagogy of opposition, similar to critical pedagogy, that is particularly committed to collective, not only individual, empowerment (Ladson-Billings, 1995). By opposing the status quo, students are encouraged to consider a society where all cultures are valued and celebrated. Culturally relevant pedagogues think in terms of long-term academic achievement (Aronson & Laughter, 2016). Clarifying that student achievement is not that same thing as performing well on standardized tests, Ladson-Billings (2006) noted that student learning is what students know and are actually able to do as a result of interactions with effective teachers.

Cultural Competence

Culturally relevant pedagogues focus on cultural competence, which helps students appreciate and honor their own culture while accessing the wider culture of their communities. An intention of cultural competency is the ability for students to improve their socioeconomic status while making informed decisions about what kind of life they would like to live (Ladson-Billings, 2006). Culturally relevant pedagogues realize that students must learn to navigate between home and school, and teachers must help students navigate an education system that oppresses them (Delpit, 2006; Ladson-Billings, 2006; Urrieta, 2005).

Critical Consciousness

Culturally relevant pedagogues seek to develop critical consciousness, which includes a teacher's responsibility to find ways for students to recognize, understand, and critique inequalities (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Teachers must understand sociopolitical issues of race, class, gender, and sexuality in themselves as well as the causes before incorporating these issues in their teaching.

Brief Evolution of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

While Ladson-Billings coined the concept of culturally relevant pedagogy, other scholarship which acknowledged the role of culture in learned existed earlier. Earlier works focused on the differences between culture and not specifically race. For example, Au and Jordan (1981) recognized that both formal learning and informal learning is important for academic success. Au and Jordan (1981) posited that learning that takes place in school, especially for minoritized students, is often irrelevant. They noted that bringing the relevance of the text to the child's own experience helps the child make sense of the world.

Macias (1987), in an examination of the Papago tribe's early childhood learning environment, proposed that when the home is different than the dominant culture, there are ways to introduce the dominant culture that do not negatively affect students' home culture. They explained that culturally competent teachers, regardless of background, can use students' home cultures to interpret behavior and structure schooling to be an effective facilitator of their learning. Earlier studies centering cultural differences were easier to detail because White middle-class teachers were immersed into classrooms with student populations that did not include any middle-class White students. Because of the

stark contrast between teacher and student ethnicities, researchers were able to clearly delineate detail cultural divergences (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011).

Irvine (1990) examined the racial component of culture specifically, recognizing that Black Americans have a distinct culture founded on identifiable norms, languages, behaviors, and attitudes from Africa. These cultural manifestations are different than the mostly majority White, middle-class, and female teacher workforce. Not only is African American culture different than European American culture, but it is also "incongruous and contradictory" (Irvine, 1990, p. 24). This is particularly salient in classrooms, when Black children may prefer to work in conversation and community, whereas White children may strive for individual success. While different racial groups may have aspects of cultures in common, focusing solely on culture negates the reality of race and racism in the United States (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011).

As noted, ideas circumscribing around culturally relevant pedagogy were germinating decades before Ladson-Billings's foundational work *The Dreamkeepers* was published in 1994. Teachers and researchers were discovering ways in which minoritized students were not performing as well as students of the dominant (White) group and sought solutions. Numerous articles and books have since been published delineating ways to implement CRP in K–12 settings.

Contemporary Use of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

Contemporary research continues to highlight the three components of CRP: academic excellence, cultural competence, and critical consciousness (Gurgel, 2013; Ladson-Billings, 2013, 2016). For teachers to expect academic excellence through a challenging curriculum, many teachers encourage students to collaborate and demonstrate

learning for one another (Stuart & Volk, 2002), provide clear expectations (Brown, 2003; Hollie, 2001), and closely monitor student learning (Gutierrez, 2000; Sheets, 1995). In addition to holding high academic expectations, culturally relevant teachers also hold high behavioral standards for students by creating nurturing and cooperative environments where students feel motivated to do their best (M. Morrison, 2010). Culturally relevant teachers invite students and families to share resources from their home communities, building bridges between home discourse and student learning (Hollie, 2001; Howard, 2001). This can be accomplished by bringing in artifacts from home to create cultural museums (Hyland, 2005) or creating projects that signify the importance of one's language, like African American Vernacular English (Lee, 1995).

Critically conscious teachers carry themes of social action as they engage their students in social justice work or prepare students to engage in social justice work (Arce, 2004; Hyland, 2005; Tate, 1995). Ensign (2003) describes how one teacher used a real-life math experience by demonstrating problems in context, offering how math could help solve a social justice problem. Students can also engage in social justice work by providing services to their community (Howard, 2001). Another example is Tate's (1995) study of one math teacher who aimed to get his African American secondary students involved in democracy. His students identified an issue as the number of liquor stores near their school. Students were able, through a critically conscious paradigm, to identify the negative impact of the liquor stores near the school and as a result two of the 13 liquor stores were closed down due to a higher increase of police citations.

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy Situated in Music Education

Throughout their existence, U.S. public schools have presented music education as White and Eurocentric (Volk, 1993). Here, I briefly trace the history of Western dominance from the origins of music education in the United States. After explicating certain biases in music education, research will be reviewed in this field, as well as new and relevant themes.

Deficit Models in Music Education

European immigration in the late 19th century led to an assimilation perspective for American politics and institutions (Volk, 1998). Music programs reinforced Western European standards by using curriculum such as the *National Music Course* (Mason & Veazie, 1891) and the *National School Library of Song* (Lewis, 1894) that were dominated by German songs. Musical traditions of students' home cultures that did not fit into these traditions were perceived as uncultured, less sophisticated, and deficient (Fleischaker, 2021).

Multicultural Music Education

Like other sociopolitical changes during the Civil Rights era, the 1960s ushered in a cultural change in music education. Conversations between music educators through North and South America took place that led to an expansion of curriculum and included a diversity of music (McCarthy, 2004). The Yale Seminar (1963), the Julliard Repertoire Project (1964), and the Tanglewood Symposium (1967) represented collective thought that music education should be more inclusive of cultural and ethnic music beyond the canon of Western European music (Mark & Gary, 2007). The Tanglewood Declaration called for a more inclusive repertoire and pedagogy, but its language remained in a deficit

mode stating that societal problems were found in inner cities and culturally deprived peoples (Choate, 1968), meaning music education remained in Eurocentric paradigms.

Kaplan (1966) urged music educators to grow their musical repertoire by recognizing the musical identities of immigrant children, believing that the majority could learn from the "minority" and that the "minority" would recognize their background for its own value and beauty. In Kaplan's work, minority was deemed as a person from location other than Europe. Fowler (1970) was also concerned with culturally aspects of music education and dedicated his work to the preparation of music teachers in urban environments. Small (1977), an outspoken critic of traditional music education, argued for formal as well as informal ways to teach music that would break the mold of traditional music teaching. These added components would enrich the standard curriculum by making it more multicultural but not transform it completely. Moving from multicultural to culturally relevant music education requires a shift from a content-centered approach to a student-centered approach (Walter, 2008).

Applying the Three Dimensions of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy in Music Education

In my teaching, I use Gloria Ladson-Billings's three CRP components: academic excellence, cultural competence, and critical consciousness. In the following sections, I highlight studies where these concepts have been used in music education.

Academic Excellence in Music Education

For many music teachers, the musical repertoire is often starting point for building a curriculum. Teachers who engage in culturally relevant pedagogy help connect musical content to their students' identities. The musical selections presented in a music

classroom reflects the values and ideologies of their creators (Abril, 2006). In states like South Carolina, with no standard music curriculum, the creator is likely to be the music teacher. By not engaging in music that is representative of students, student culture can be neglected and suppressed (Fitzpatrick, 2012). By focusing on a Eurocentric music curriculum, music students can be inundated with a sense that artistic beauty comes solely from Eurocentric music paradigms (Abril, 2009).

Culturally relevant pedagogy also examines the way students learn as part of cultural practices and norms (Shaw, 2012). Instructional skills that were cited in the literature included providing critical feedback (Spradley, 2013), connecting students' culture to classroom content (Doyle, 2014), and being creative with resources and instructional styles (Fitzpatrick, 2011).

Connecting students' culture to classroom instruction is also important for building academic excellence. A preponderance of Eurocentric content and instructional styles reinforces the concept of Western dominance and marginalizes musical experiences and cultural learning styles that students bring to the classroom (Kelly-McHale, 2013). Teachers should recognize students' desires when creating a classroom music curriculum (Butler et al., 2007). By connecting content to student culture, teachers can invite student engagement in the instructional process (Shaw, 2012). This cultural shift leads to valuing musical literacies for all students, including historically marginalized students (Bond, 2017).

Culturally relevant pedagogy examines the musical repertoire and also teaching methods that are important to preferred learning styles, performance styles, and interactions between teachers and students (Bond, 2014; Shaw, 2012). Instructional skills

in prior literature included providing critical feedback (Boon, 2014; Spradley, 2013), the connection of student culture to classroom content (Doyle, 2014; McKoy et al., 2017), and being creative with resources and instructional styles (Fitzpatrick, 2011).

Critical feedback included feedback with musical skills, leadership skills, and work skills. Recognition of multiple viewpoints, as well as the ability to openly share viewpoints creates and atmosphere of trust that builds strong student-teacher relationships (Bond, 2014). Fitzpatrick (2012) posits that all interactions, formal and informal, become important aspects of the curriculum. The connection of classroom content to student culture is another frequently cited theme for building academic achievement. Eurocentric dominated content and instructional styles reinforces Western idealization and marginalizes musical experiences and cultural learning styles that students bring to the classroom (Kelly-McHale, 2013). Students should be able to speak freely and have input on musical selections in order to promote student leadership and empower students for musical success (Butler et al., 2007). Connecting to students' culture can also include inviting culture bearers into the instructional process (Shaw, 2012).

Cultural Competence in Music Education

Cultural competence refers to an educator's ability "to function, communicate, and coexist effectively in settings with individuals who possess cultural knowledge and skills that differ from their own" (Lind & McKoy, 2016, p. 27). When students and teachers interact from different cultures, reflective teachers can learn about their own culture and how they fit within the classroom community (Lind & McKoy, 2023). A culturally competent teacher can connect their knowledge and skills to facilitate effective

learning across cultures (Raiber & Teachout, 2014). Developing cultural competence is a skill that develops over time (Bond, 2017).

School, home, church, and other social spheres influence the musical lives of students and making connections within environments helps to promote musical learning (Truncer, 2008). Culturally competent teachers know large swaths of information about their school community and surrounding neighborhood and use this information to influence their pedagogy to meet the needs of their students (Fitzpatrick, 2011). Abril (2009) described music teachers who were willing to navigate their curriculum through the perception of students from different cultural backgrounds than their own and then modify their pedagogy accordingly. Kindall-Smith et al. (2011) and Fitzpatrick (2012) also call for more attention to cultural competence by reflecting on the biases of the teacher to develop more positive attitudes about diversity.

While addressing one's own disposition toward cultural competence, music teachers should engage with students to understand them in a comprehensive way, both in and out of the classroom setting. Teachers should address and examine ways regarding how they know students and if students are being seen in their cultural context. When teachers to not understand their students as cultural beings, they run the risk of alienating students and propagating opposition (Bates, 2012). Successful teachers know about their teaching context, surrounding neighborhoods and communities, and uses this information to influence their pedagogy (Fitzpatrick, 2011).

A variety of musical selections stretches teachers to find repertoire that centers students' cultural identities. Abril (2013) warned music teachers to avoid music that reinforces negative stereotypes of students' culture. Most traditional school settings in the

United States roots music in Western, classical traditions, with an end result of producing a product, such as a concert of performance. Researchers have suggested that students are allowed to move beyond a product-based approach to a process-based approach of authentically making music representative of other cultures (Abril, 2006; Dekaney & Robinson, 2014; Legette, 2003; Mixon, 2009).

Realizing that teachers may educate students who are culturally, economically, or linguistically different from themselves, music teachers need to understand the cultural background of their students so that they can make relevant connections to the musical content and create an environment where diversity is respected (Dekaney & Robinson, 2014). Doyle (2014) noted that cultural conflict between the teacher and student can result in lower expectations and negative teacher attitudes toward students. Work must be done in teacher preparation programs and continued professional development sessions to work toward teaching diverse populations.

Critical Consciousness in Music Education

Critical conciseness is not as prevalent in music in the literature of music education, which is pervasive across academic disciplines. A caring attitude, also referred to as culturally responsive caring (Lind & McKoy, 2016), helps teachers and students to develop critical consciousness. Instead of viewing cultural differences as deficits, music educators demonstrating culturally responsive caring value diversity in the classroom and use it as a strength (Fleischaker, 2021). The transformative aspect of culturally relevant music education demonstrates music teachers' beliefs that they have the power to improve students' lives in personal and musical ways (Fitzpatrick, 2011). Through relationship building and being reflected in the classroom, students are more willing to

engage in classroom communities. When teachers make efforts to build relationships, students grew musically as well as reciprocated relationship-building in positive ways. Shaw (2014) found that using culturally responsive teaching methods provided moments for students to offer feedback that was beneficial to music curriculum and classroom intentions. Fostering relationships can create a classroom experience where authentic and transformative culturally relevant music education can occur.

Gaps in the Literature

Studies have been generated in various music settings that examine ideas related to culturally relevant music education such as multicultural sensitivity (Carlson, 2015; Howard, 2003), attitudes about diversity (Doyle, 2014), preparing music teachers for culturally sensitive teaching (Albertson, 2015), and culturally responsive teaching in concert-based contexts (Fitzpatrick, 2008). Few studies center culturally relevant pedagogy from the perspective of elementary music teachers. Robinson (2006) interviewed three White elementary music teachers and found that teachers can learn while teaching and grow in their understanding of culturally responsive teaching. With continued professional development and study, along with personal and group reflexivity, Robinson concluded that teachers White can become competent culturally responsive teachers.

Kelly-McHale (2013) provides a qualitative case study examining the ways an elementary general music teacher's curricular beliefs and practices influenced her second-grade class. Her findings indicated that even though the teachers attempted to be culturally responsive by translating songs into Spanish, her goal of notational literacy and reliance on Eurocentric teaching methods was unsuccessful in connecting the classroom

to the students' home lives. I have yet to find an autoethnography written about culturally relevant pedagogy in an elementary classroom.

Critical Race Theory

The origin of critical race theory (CRT) is found in legal scholarship, particularly critical legal studies (CLS) in law schools throughout the United States. Some of the earliest scholars who developed CRT include Derrick Bell, Kimberlé Crenshaw, Richard Delgado, Alan Freeman, Charles Lawrence III, and Mari Matsuda. The social origins of CRT as a scholarly movement began as a student boycott to have an alternative course at Harvard Law School. With Derrick Bell leaving Harvard due to the small amount of minority faculty members to become the dean at the University of Oregon Law School, then-students, including Crenshaw, organized courses themselves. This led to a small number of legal scholars investigating issues centered on race and law.

According to Matsuda et al. (1993) there are six unifying themes that encompass CRT: CRT recognizes that (a) racism is endemic to American life; (b) CRT expresses skepticism toward dominant legal claims of neutrality, objectivity, colorblindness and meritocracy; (c) CRT presumes that racism has contributed to all contemporary manifestations of group advantage and disadvantage; (d) CRT insists on recognition of the experiential knowledge of people of color; CRT is interdisciplinary; (e) CRT works toward eliminating racial oppression as part of the overall goal of ending all forms of oppression.

Crenshaw (2021) advises that CRT should be viewed as a verb, not a noun. CRT is an evolving and malleable *practice.* In other words, CRT is a theory but also a tool for analysis and framework to create socially equitable outcomes for people of Color.

Matsuda et al. (1993), describe CRT as "work that involves both action and reflection. It is informed by active struggle and in turn informs that struggle" (p. 3). As CRT in legal scholarship grew, academics and researchers in other disciplines, including education, began finding ways in which CRT concepts, methodologies, and methods could be employed in their own fields.

Whiteness as Property

In my study, I specifically draw on the CRT concept of Whiteness as Property. Cheryl Harris (1993) developed a foundational CRT concept surrounding property rights and ownership. Harris (1993) posits that racial identity and property are deeply interrelated concepts. Due to White enslavement and "ownership" of African peoples and the domination of Indigenous peoples and lands, Whiteness became the basis of racialized privilege. Even as legal segregation was overturned, the property of Whiteness continues to serve as a barrier to effective change as the system of racial stratification operates to protect majoritarian dominance (Harris, 1993).

Harris (1993) also defines property rights as the rights to disposition, right to use and enjoyment, and the right to reputation and status. The property of disposition refers to alienable and inalienable rights. The inalienability of Whiteness, as something that cannot be bought or sold, should be considered property because of its perceived value. Whiteness as property is the right to use and enjoy. Whiteness is something to be experienced and used as a resource, it is used to fulfill the will and exercise power. Because of the structural basis of race, Whiteness can be used to leverage power on societal, political, and institutional levels. Whiteness can also be property in terms of status and reputation. Being White holds reputational interest and is bound with identity

and personhood. According to Harris (1993) the ability to exclude is also a property value of Whiteness. Anti-miscegenation laws, laws that forced segregation, were enacted during the colonial United States. The infamous "one-drop rule" precludes anyone with a known BIPOC ancestor from enjoying the property of Whiteness and would be unable to enjoy the benefits conveyed from Whiteness. The one-drop rule was in legal effect until 1967 when *Loving v. Virginia,* a decision that legalized interracial marriage between a White man and a Black woman, found it to be unconstitutional. This led to the repeal of many anti-miscegenation laws in the United States.

In my own experience as a P–5 educator, and in my prior experiences as a high school band director, I recognize the concept of Whiteness as property manifest itself with my colleagues, the wider community, and myself. I often hear references to schools with predominately African American populations referred to as "Black schools" instead of simply "schools." A high school athletic director made a remark to me about a high school in Columbia, South Carolina that is now made up of predominately African American students. He said that it used to be a "nice, White, middle-class school, but now, well … you know …" (personal communication, August 2020). He meant that the school now has a minority White population and the "other" has overtaken a White space.

I work in a district that allows school choice to a certain degree. I know of many students and families that choose to drive upwards of 30 minutes to attend different schools in the district, attend private schools for high school, and even move to more suburban areas that are likely to be White, in order to not attend their zoned, primarily Black-populated school. Teacher attitudes often indicate displeasure with teaching Black

students, and I have heard many older teachers refer to enjoying working at our current school in the past, when the student population was majority White. There is a sense of losing property value and sense of what did, and still should, belong to a White population.

Critical Race Theory in Education

Among the first scholars to advance CRT in the field of education were Gloria Ladson-Billings and William Tate at the University of Wisconsin. In their foundational 1995 work "Toward a Critical Race Theory of Education" (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995), the two scholars sought a "critical race theoretical perspective in education analogous to that of critical race theory in legal scholarship" (p. 47) and asserted that race remains an untheorized topic of scholarly inquiry in education. Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) developed three propositions: (a) race continues to be significant in the United States; (b) U.S. society is based on property rights rather than human rights; and (c) the intersection of race and property creates an analytical tool for understanding inequity. All three propositions draw from and build on Crenshaw (1991) and Harris (1993).

Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) recognize that defining race can be problematic in a biological sense, thus both scholars draw on Woodson and DuBois' arguments for examining race as the central construct for understanding inequality, determining race to be a social construct. Throughout the article, Ladson-Billings and Tate recognize significant achievement gaps between White students and African American students. While also considering gender and socioeconomic class, there is still no account for the high rates of school dropouts, suspensions, and expulsions for African American and

Latino males (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). CRT offers an analytical lens to gain insight into some of these issues.

Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) drew heavily from Harris (1993) when explicating ideas and concepts of property rights. Some of these concepts are that racism is endemic to American life, a call for reinterpreting civil rights laws so that outcomes can reflect the laws' intent (outcomes did not, and do not always reflect the purpose of a law), and the need to challenge myths of color-blindness and meritocracy. Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) went further to examine ways in which capitalism and democracy are often conflated to be inseparable and noted the ways that only those with capital enjoy the franchise of capitalism. Because of institutional (i.e., government) laws and policies, most capital is disproportionately held by White Americans.

Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) also drew from Derrick Bell's notion that throughout U.S. history, the role of the government has been to protect individual's property rights. As Africans who were enslaved were considered by Whites to be property, there was little incentive for the government to protect their human rights. The negative effects of designating African descendent people as property have been far-reaching. According to Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995), wealthy and more affluent property owners, with higher taxes, often resent funding schools for poorer and students of Color. White people historically have left these areas, along with their higher tax base, leaving schools with less financial resources and a predominately African American base with less funding behind.

Pioneering a way forward for CRT in education, Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) offered a critique of then-contemporary issues framed by CRT, that are still salient in

2022. The scholars suggested that for African American students, and poor school conditions, lead to systemic racism (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). This racism is effectively sanctioned by the government. The article explains how the Supreme Court *Brown* decision led to more segregated schools and the loss of African American teachers and administrators–all government backed and sanctioned. The loss of schools with positive African American culture, in combination with deficit-oriented schools led by White teachers and administrators, was also a damaging outcome from *Brown* for students of Color. Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) also drew from Cheryl Harris' concept of *Whiteness as property* explicating how White people have the right to exclude BIPOC students from spaces. In this article, Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) specify how Whiteness can damage schooling experiences of Black students. Harm can stem from not recognizing BIPOC culture and ways of knowing as good and legitimate, denigrating linguistic aspects of BIPOC students, and generally viewing BIPOC culture as deficient.

Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) recognized limitations and further concerns about ways forward. Writing and researching during a period when terms like "multiculturalism" and "diversity" were in vogue, the scholars wrote that critical race theorists have doubts about incremental changes. There is little use for the multicultural practices of having an "ethnic food day" or listening to music from BIPOC artists. Multiculturalist ideals function similarly to civil rights laws that would ultimately be ineffective for African Americans and would benefit Whites, because while trivial aspects of multiculturalism might satiate calls for diversity, no real progress or change was made. Through a CRT lens, a new paradigm would need to be developed to place race squarely in the forefront of any discussion.

Ladson-Billings (1998) reflected that she and William Tate were cautious about writing the 1995 pioneering article on CRT in education. Since both professors were untenured and new to the University of Wisconsin, she felt unsure about how their scholarship would be received. CRT in education was certainly not the fractious topic in 1995 as it would come to be during the leadup to the 2020 presidential election and after, but it is curious to read how she was able to exhale after reading others work involving CRT in an educational journal (Ladson-Billings, 1998). She was unsure if CRT would fit in or be accepted into the field of education, and she was wary if CRT would be accepted by educational researchers. Ladson-Billings (1998) further examined relationships between CRT and education. "Critical race theory sees the official school curriculum as a culturally specific artifact designed to maintain a White supremacist master script" (Ladson-Billings, 1998, p. 18). In other words, stories and narratives of African Americans are silenced when they challenge the dominant narrative of White supremacy. I was born in South Carolina and attended its public schools from 1989–2002. I was never taught about the Stono Rebellion, Orangeburg Massacre, Septima Clark, and untold other SC African American historical facts and people. As I reflected on Ladson-Billings's (1998) remarks on sanitizing historical figures, I was taught that Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was a nice man who thought we should not judge each other by skin color. That was, in my recollection of the extent of his work.

Ladson-Billings (1998) addressed ways in which instruction can be seen through a CRT lens. Relating CRT with her notion of culturally relevant pedagogy, students of Color are often seen and taught as being deficient. In other words, African American students are often seen as needing remediation, are potentially dangerous, and are at-risk.

A deficit approach regards African American students as needing "fixing" (i.e., in need of assimilation) and ignores positive attributes and what students *do* know, that may or may not be held in esteem by schooling systems. By employing a CRT analysis, Ladson-Billings (1998) analyzed that standardized and non-standardized school assessments accurately measure what students do not know but do not measure what students actually do know. Racist curricula, instruction, and assessments lead to poor outcomes by traditional evaluation standards.

As found in Ladson-Billings's and Tate's (1995) earlier article, Ladson-Billings (1998) reinforced examining school funding through CRT. Ladson-Billings (1998) articulated that school funding is a pervasive example of systemic racism. Since schools are largely funded by property taxes, those with wealth tend to go to schools with more and better resources. Because, among other reasons, African Americans were often denied government-backed mortgages, home ownership and thus wealth have lagged behind White people as a whole. Since these policies stem from the U.S. government, the racist policies are structural and institutional. This all leads to a new generation in underfunded schools with less opportunity for students of Color to advance. The cycle of systemic oppression of African Americans continues currently.

Perhaps as a harbinger to come, Ladson-Billings (1998) offered a warning for the future. In our own time, CRT has been twisted to mean just about anything regarding equity work that can be construed negatively, but a common refrain is that CRT leads to White guilt in young children, support of Marxist ideologies, and the lack of American patriotism. Even in 1998, Ladson-Billings posited that some impediments may be placed into the fore of CRT: "like Lani Gunnier (vilified by the media for CRT scholarship), I

doubt it will go very far into the mainstream … CRT in education is likely to become a 'darling' of the radical left, but never penetrate classrooms" (p. 22). She goes further to say, "Ultimately, we may have to stand, symbolically, before the nation as Lani Gunnier and hear our ideas distorted and mispresented" (Ladson-Billings, 1998, p. 22). Because Ladson-Billings prophesized this almost 20 years before CRT erupted into our national consciousness, I think her words stand as a testament of just how salient CRT tenets are.

The evolution of CRT in education has been relatively swift. From the initial research of Ladson-Billings and William Tate investigating how CRT could find its footing in the field of education, to concepts of praxis, or putting a theory into practice, great strides have been made. The key characteristics and commitments have largely remained the same, especially holding true to the systemic, structural, and institutional nature of racism. The methods have multiplied. Recognizing and naming the fact that there are systemic inequities in education was, and in many places still is, revolutionary, but now CRT researchers are exploring spatial analysis and quantitative methods. For example, through spatial analysis, CRT researchers are able examine laws that lead to economic disparities in locations. The effects of redlining–property values, poverty rates, educational outcomes–can be tracked through cartography. Some CRT scholars use mixed methodologies to provide another level of analysis. For example, they may begin a study with a data base representing large numbers of participants and then draw a smaller sample from the larger group to do in depth qualitative analyses.

Critical Whiteness Studies

In this study, I use Critical Whiteness Studies (CWS) to make sense of my own feelings as a White teacher who teaches predominately African American students. In

this section, I offer a brief summary of CWS and the components of CWS that I use in my research. A limitation of focusing on Whiteness is that it centers the White person, not the students of Color in this dissertation. As this is an autoethnography, and I am White, I believe it is important to examine this facet of who I am to better understand my role as a teacher in power, my emotions, and the theme of guilt.

DuBois (1920) argued that White people will band together and subjugate people of Color to preserve economic privilege and a sense of racial superiority. DuBois posited that "Whiteness" did not exist until the 19th and 20th centuries. Race as a construct would have been mildly interesting to people in the Middle Ages, because race was not yet socially constructed. Until the oppression of people of Color by White men, the social construction of race did not exist. White people's perceived superiority led to tragic consequences for people of Color, but also led to warped psychological sense of self for White people, too. People of Color have been enslaved, lynched, and denied their humanity for centuries. White people have denied themselves their own humanity by inflicting cruel and inhumane treatment of peoples around the globe.

Like DuBois, James Baldwin wrote about the "lie of Whiteness" (Baldwin, 2010), and explained that White racial identity was dependent on the feeling of superiority toward other races and ethnicities. Whiteness, in itself, is meaningless. The only power it holds is in its contrived comparison to people of Color. According to Baldwin, the "Negro Problem" is not a problem with people of Color. The so-called "Negro Problem" is White people's need to denigrate others to achieve a sense of distorted racial superiority. White people, especially poor and working-class, will often turn against people of Color and even their own self-interests to maintain sense of White supremacy

(Baldwin, 2010). For instance, red states opposed the Affordable Care Act, proposed by President Obama that intended to provide healthcare for millions of Americans, including White Americans (Metzl, 2019).

Toni Morrison (1993) investigated the formulation of Whiteness in opposition to social constructs of Blackness. White identity is constructed in opposition to Black people. In other words, a White person has a perceived sense of superiority because they are *not* Black. Whiteness is often perceived as the norm in American society, so the refusal to acknowledge the construction of Whiteness, or racism more broadly, only seeks to reinforce its dominance. Morrison argues that Whiteness, and the refusal to acknowledge it, has helped create a national identity where racism is normalized.

As a White man, I entered graduate school believing that there was nothing about my biological self that was particularly interesting or unique. I had normalized and standardized whiteness. I believed that I was a "normal" male citizen of the United States and that allowed me to otherize people of Color around me. As someone who (theoretically) strives for equity and racial justice, it is painful to acknowledge that I absolutely contribute to racism in ways that I did not understand before embarking on this study and am still learning. That I consistently attempted to "fix" my students of Color, that I denigrated African American Vernacular English as insufficient, or considered music by artists of Color not worthy of school, contributed to racism in order to uphold Whiteness. Considering the work of the scholars in previous paragraphs, my sense racial superiority would not exist without the foil of people of Color to compare myself to.

CWS scholars recognize how White people perform their roles as White people and then suffuse organizations and the public sphere with values common to the White

middle class (Haviland, 2008). Whiteness is powerful, and Whiteness employs various techniques to maintain power (Haviland, 2008). For example, Whiteness can maintain power through joking, affirming sameness, socializing, and sharing personal information, and through mutual student and teacher affection. For instance, a White teacher may feel a sense of affection for a student that reminds them of their own child or family. Whiteness is a system of advantage in politics and culture (Roediger, 2002), and is often maintained by the denial of its existence (Banning, 1999). Whiteness is upheld through the discourse of colorblindness (Frankenberg, 1993), eluding critique (Gomez et al., 2004) and a refusal to engage in self-reflection and interrogation into the White individual's complicity in Whiteness.

I hated analyzing myself as a White person. Frankly, I did not believe there was much to analyze sense the majority of the United States is currently populated by White people. Throughout my life media was focused on White people and it seemed to lack unique qualities that were prevalent in other ethnic groups. In my career as a certified educator, I have not taught many White students; I was often the only White person in the classroom. What I have noticed over the years though, is that I often blamed my lack of success as a teacher on the fact that I was working with African American students. My expectations were usually low, so when my bands performed well, I was able to congratulate myself on "doing more with less" than my colleagues at other schools who taught White students. When my bands did not perform as well as I had hoped, I could use my African Americans as a scapegoat. This attitude centers Whiteness as the standard for all that is "good" and reifies Whiteness to the detriment of people of Color.

White complicity is the intentional or unintentional benefitting from group privileges of racism that simultaneously marginalize people of color. In other words, all White people can be complicit in racism by virtue of benefitting from these privileges even though an individual cannot renounce them through individual action alone (Applebaum, 2011). In the present study, I examined ways in which I maintain White supremacy intentionally or unintentionally in my pedagogy and curriculum.

Matias et al. (2014) employ the use of Critical Whiteness Studies (CWS) to augment critical race theory (CRT) in "deconstructing the dimensions of White imaginations" (p. 289). Like Matias, I incorporated CWS in my work because it focuses on problematizing the normality of the power of Whiteness–arguing that in doing so Whites deflect, ignore, or dismiss their role, racialization, and privilege in race dynamics (Matias et al., 2014). CWS provides a framework to examine why White people believe they are not part of race when they actively invest in White racial production (Thandeka, 2007). Since I did not actively examine my Whiteness before beginning my dissertation, I unknowingly invested in Whiteness to the disservice of my students of Color.

Matias et al. (2014) posited four main areas in which the White imagination operates: (a) emotional disinvestment; (b) lack of critical understanding of race; (c) resurgence of White guilt; and (d) recycling of hegemonic Whiteness. In this study, I provide an explication of my own sense of White guilt found in the chapter three and chapter six. White racial identity scholar Helms (1990) argues that to acknowledge the overwhelming presence of Whiteness, one must take the journey himself or herself. In this autoethnography, I began this journey, which will last a lifetime.

Conclusion

In this chapter I shared three conceptual and theoretical bases: (a) culturally relevant pedagogy, (b) Critical Race Theory, and (c) Critical Whiteness Studies. The foundation of my music instruction was based on the three guiding components of culturally relevant pedagogy: (a) academic excellence, (b) cultural competence, and (c) critical consciousness. I used Critical Race Theory to examine structural issues of music education, including my teacher education program and Eurocentricity of the curriculum. I used Critical Whiteness Studies to examine my own feelings, dispositions, and attitudes.

Drawing from Harris (1993), the curriculum in my music room was entrenched in a White, Eurocentric normality. My position as a White person, a so-called expert in the room, allowed me to perpetuate a curriculum from a White, dominant orientation. This went totally unquestioned, and I was allowed to exert my Whiteness over others due to the structural power dynamics of the school. It is my responsibility to seek equitable teaching strategies, but my own training in a predominately White institution (PWI) music education program did not provide me the preparation to teach diverse populations, entrenching that institution in structural Whiteness as well.

DiAngelo (2011) defined White fragility as a state in which small amounts of racial stress produces a range of negative feelings. In this study, racial stress led to feelings of being uncomfortable and feelings of guilt. Even in conducting this study, I noticed that I sometimes like to blame my pre-service teacher education program when I feel guilty instead of taking ownership of my own teaching practices (Matias, 2016). Realizing that I have not, and currently do not, always teach in equitable ways is difficult

to accept. However, the first step in correcting my disposition and teaching practices is to admit the truth and face my own emotions directly.

As the body of literature in equity continues to grow within the discipline of music education, there are still large gaps to be filled centering race, equity, and early childhood music education. In particular, the extant academic literature has not addressed implementing equity pedagogies from the perspective of a 30-something White male teacher. Much of what exists is from the perspective of women, researchers who are not full-time teachers, or teacher-researchers who are early in their career. My work situates myself as an experienced teacher attempting to implement culturally relevant pedagogy halfway through my career.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY AND FINDINGS

In this chapter, I explicate the methodology used to address the five research questions in this study by detailing the rationale for the research design (critical autoethnography), and the processes by which I collected and analyzed the data. This study examined my experiences implementing culturally relevant pedagogy as a White male music teacher in a predominately African American elementary school. The following sections include my epistemology and positionality; the qualitative design of this study; a description of critical qualitative inquiry and critical autoethnography; data collection methods and data analysis; a fidelity and trustworthiness statement; and concluding remarks.

Epistemology and Positionality

I believe that each person has multiple identities, and each identity informs and constructs an individual's reality. Every human has a unique perspective based on their race, class, socioeconomic background or status, religion, ability or disability, family history, childhood experiences, and other factors. While two people may have very similar experiences, each person's reality is their own. I believe that there are multiple realities and no *absolute* truths regarding people's social identities. That is, truth is relative to a particular frame of reference (i.e., culture, period in time, positionality). This assertion about truth coincides with many assumptions of qualitative methodologies.

I am a 39-year-old cis male. I have lived exclusively in the southeastern United States, between the upstate region of South Carolina and the suburbs of Atlanta, Georgia.

I have lived in Columbia, South Carolina since the fall of 2002. I was raised within a conservative Christian denomination that valued education only as a means to earn a living. Learning for learning's sake was not necessarily encouraged or discouraged, but making good grades was important because grades were the key to admission in into college and, thus, a decent paying job. As a child I loved reading, but my parents and brothers were more interested in sports, mainly baseball, so I often felt alone in my family.

I feel like I had a very different view of the world and my place in it than the rest of my family, and I feel like I had those feelings very early in life. As I grew older, I remember my mom making statements like "our family doesn't think that way" or "you weren't raised like that," which again, forced me to confront thoughts of my family living in a different world than me, despite sharing the same house. A great example of this is when I started drinking alcohol in college and it distressed my parents, because they are absolute teetotalers. Once I began drinking, I developed substance abuse issues with alcohol, and I have been involved in a 12-step program for several years. What is true for me, and is common among those in recovery, is the sense of not quite fitting in or feeling as if one does not belong in one's own skin–this often does not make sense to people looking in from the outside. Our society often places blame on alcoholics and drug addicts with moral failings or inability to regulate their self-control. My familial experiences have informed my teaching because I understand that every student comes to school with a story (like me), and I want to honor those stories. While we have classroom expectations, like saying kind words to each other, I also consider that students and families may interpret kindness in ways that are different than me. All this is to say that

having felt as an outsider for most of my life helps me empathize with people who are minoritized in some way. This is not to say that I understand the experiences of students of Color or equate then with my own, but that it is one of the reasons I am drawn to culturally relevant teaching. Culturally relevant pedagogy includes honoring students' stories and life experiences.

I studied music education in my undergraduate program and completed a master's in music education in 2012. I performed with majority White students and musicians, and my first few band staff jobs (not as a full-time certified teacher) were at predominately White high schools. I spent three years at a suburban high school that served largely affluent or at least middle-class students. This band program had resources that I would later dream about in less resourced schools; a certificate of deposit at a local bank that never went below $100,000; students in the top wind ensemble who were required to take private lessons; and upwards of $15,000 each year spent on marching band show designs and hired staff.

My university band director at the time once told me to remember "there are no bad bands, just bad band directors." I took the comment to heart and still wrestle with what he meant. Did he mean that all bands could achieve high levels of achievement set forth by South Carolina Band Directors Association standards or Bands of America? Or might he have meant that each band can do well according to what the band itself is capable of? I believe that he was acknowledging the role of the teacher and how it is up to the band director to produce a quality band. As a young student, and later as a novice teacher, I was not prepared for the vast inequities from school to school, or district to district.

This professional revelation has to do with my ontological perspective, because I signed my first teaching contract at a predominately Black high school in Columbia, South Carolina. Retrospectively, I realize that I was not prepared at all to meet the needs of African American students or teach pedagogical frameworks that would benefit my students. Like the students at my previous schools, these students were in band; however, it felt like everything was different than at the predominantly White settings. It was a different reality. Instead of being somewhere where money could be spent freely, I was at a place where students could not pay their band fees. Instead of being able to pay $15,000 for a show, I had to make do with roughly $1,000. In an activity where general effect had become a larger portion of the evaluation rubric, there was no way we could compete using the same evaluation score sheet.[2] It is a small indication of how different realities could be. In one reality, there was a belief that if you worked hard enough, good things would come your way. The other reality was that no matter what I did, my efforts as a teacher were hampered before I even began. For example, when I taught high school band, our concert bands consistently earned excellent and superior ratings at our state Concert Festival. The evaluation rubric used by judges consisted of music standards– intonation, balance, blend, phrasing, and dynamic contrast. But, in the marching band world, general effect included expensive items like props, use of multiple color guard equipment, different uniforms for each year that were made for just one show, electronics, and expensive custom-made arrangements.

[2] General effect is determined by show design and how well the design impacts or engages the audience. This is largely subjective to the opinion of judges.

All it takes is for one or two things beyond one's control (e.g., race, sexual preference, gender identity, addiction, or economic caste) for someone to have a completely different reality even within the same geographic location. When I began teaching as a White, middle-class man, I realized that my life experiences and the life experiences of my students were very different, even though we lived in the same city and state. As I read and became more interested in how teachers can contribute to racism in schools, I practiced reflexivity in my own teaching and school experiences.

One of my very earliest school experiences that I can remember is that of a young Black classmate. I was in the first grade, and I remember our teacher's face very close to his, loudly making him say the number four. "FOOOOURRRRRRR." I remember him pronouncing the word as "foe." I did not understand the concept of African American Vernacular Language then (I did not until very recently as a matter of fact), but I must have realized that there was something not right about the way he spoke, and about the other people who spoke the way he did. I knew that he was in some kind trouble. I cannot speak for him, but I would surmise we had decidedly different experiences that year and likely for years to come.

I believe knowledge is constructed with others, develops within, and comes from lived experience. I personally know about different lived realities because I have had internal struggle and conflict myself. I know the friction between how I feel I am, or I just *am*, and how society, religion, my own family say that I should be. The two different "truths" do not align and that has caused me tension. I know the concept of societal truths versus personal truths has caused immeasurable tension and pain for others across time and space as well.

I intellectually believed that BIPOC were discriminated against and treated unfairly through my own K–12 education. Early on in my schooling I heard stories about Rosa Parks, I saw footage of civil rights protestors being attacked by dogs, and learned history about slavery in the United States, but it all seemed so long ago. As young person, I truly held beliefs that adhered to the notions of colorblindness and meritocracy. My kindergarten through second grade teachers were Black women. I had a strong bond with them, and they were in charge of a great deal of my life, so I thought things were just fine. My parents, teachers, and coaches engrained in me from an early age that all you needed was hard work and determination. It was not until I had daily experiences working for years at a predominately Black high school where BIPOC students' experiences were different from my own and that of White students I previously taught as a band instructor.

I position myself as a teacher who recognizes racial inequities between individual students and educational systems. My goal as a teacher and a researcher is to dismantle the status quo that reifies Whiteness and seeks to uphold majoritarian dominance. I believe that all students deserve to have teachers who understand their needs and have to desire to serve diverse populations so they can learn and thrive. As I grow and mature as a person who teaches and researches through the lens of equity, I understand that I too have a good deal to learn. The epistemological and positional deliberations that I have outlined led me to the current study and research questions.

Dissertation Study

Utilizing a qualitative approach, I detail the components used to complete this study. I begin with research design; discuss critical qualitative inquiry and critical autoethnography; and then describe the context and participants.

Qualitative Research Design

I drew from my knowledge of qualitative research, and in particular, critical ethnography. Qualitative research is pragmatic, interpretive, and grounded in lived experiences of people (Prasad, 2017). Qualitative research typically takes place in lived, natural environments; respects ethical human boundaries; focuses on context of time, place, and situations; remains sensitive to social identities; is fundamentally interpretive by the researcher; seeks to uncover deep and holistic understandings about why and how things happen (Glesne, 2011). I considered all of these attributes as I conducted my study with first grade music students.

Qualitative research rejects the positivist paradigm that social facts have an objective reality, and those variables can be identified and measured (Glesne, 2011). Unlike positivistic designs, my study was intentionally subjective, including my experiences, interactions, and observations of my students and myself. While there are many methods in qualitative research (e.g., observations, interviews, focus groups, surveys with open ended questions, and secondary research), I chose to study myself as a White male teacher in context of an early childhood music class populated by mostly students of Color. I viewed my role as a co-participant, participating in the co-creation of knowledge, and understood that the students were complete with their own ontology, epistemology, biases, and lived experiences. Students of color are always the priority, and

their learning comes first. However, in order to best meet their needs, I do need to better understand my teaching practices, attitude, and where I am missing in the mark as a culturally relevant teacher (Ladson-Billings, 1994).

My overall aim was not to find generalizable cause and effect relationships or to predict future behaviors. In order to engage in this culturally relevant teaching, I utilized a critical qualitative inquiry to understand possible transformations of my students, my curriculum, and myself.

Critical Qualitative Inquiry

Critical theoretical approaches in qualitative research moves toward describing "what could be" (Thomas, 1993). Having been greatly influenced by the Frankfurt School, members sought to explain the appeal of Nazism and Fascism in Europe (Prasad, 2017). Frankfurt School participants believed that political systems of the 1930s (i.e., capitalism and Nazism) were insufficient systems of social organization. Instead, change should come from criticism of current conditions and analysis of changes that could lead to social emancipation (Kompridis, 2006). Critical theory research critiques historical and structural conditions of oppression and seeks to transform those conditions. Usher (1996) describes "critical" "the detecting and unmasking of beliefs and practices that limit human freedom, justice, and democracy" (p. 22). The role of the critical researcher is to reveal and critique distorting ideologies and the associated structures, mechanisms, and processes that keep them in place (Prasad, 2017). In my study, I examined the role of the music curriculum and how it upholds Eurocentric notions of what is acceptable and legitimate in early childhood classrooms, as well as my own personal struggle with dismantling Eurocentric dominance.

Ideology-critique (Prasad, 2017) is emblematic of the critical theory tradition. It is the incessant and systematic critique of ideological forces in every aspect of social life (Dews, 1986; Held, 1980). Ideology, within the critical theory tradition, refers to all systematically distorted accounts of reality that both conceal and legitimate social inequalities and injustices. In my teacher preparation program, I was taught that music rooted in Europe, or the United States, was the only music that should be taught in elementary classrooms, particularly Western orchestral music, or folk tunes. These ideologies leave out BIPOC culture, artists, as well as contemporary music of all genres.

Working in a critical tradition means disrupting the status quo to effect social change (Prasad, 2017). As I implemented culturally relevant pedagogy in my music classroom, I sought to disrupt the Eurocentric status quo by centering BIPOC genres, artists, and music history. Critical theory brings a critical edge and an ethical tone to its analysis and stresses an importance of dialogue between researcher and participants. An understanding of groups and individuals in their natural settings is also paramount. It was important that I developed positive, trusting relationships with students. I spent time each day having conversations and interactions that helped facilitate our connections over the course of a school year. Since I teach a large number of students (approximately 700), it was very important that I worked to learn each child's name, as well as something about the student. I made it a point to address each child by name as they walked into the room at the beginning of each class. It is simple, but student's smiles and eyes light up when they realized that I know who they are. Sometimes I hear "you know my name!" and I have noticed that students are much more responsive to me when they feel known.

Critical Autoethnography

Critical autoethnography (CAE) is a form of qualitative research. It should be ethnographic (description of people and their culture, customs, habits) in its methods, cultural in the interpretation, and autobiographical in its content; reflexive discourse in any of one of these categories would fall short of autoethnography (Chang, 2008). Using this methodology, I engaged in cultural analysis through personal reflexivity to examine my interpersonal and cultural experiences of identity and transformation from the inside out (Boylorn & Orbe, 2014; Hughes & Pennington, 2017). CAE is a scholarly examination of self that positions the researcher, and in this study, the researcher is me as a site of cultural inquiry within a cultural context (Reed-Danahay, 1997). I created a thick description, (see Chapter Six of this dissertation for more details) and critiqued my personal experience against extant research, bringing to light aspects of cultural life (Ellis, 2011).

Context and Participants

This study took place in a large school district, Central School District 7 in the southeastern United States.[3] The district population was 28, 544 students with the majority of students identifying as African American at 61.6%; Asian students are represented at 2.7%; Hispanic students, 12.5%; White students, 17.1%; and "other ethnicities" comprised 6.1%. I worked with first grade students in a Title I school, Honey Creek Elementary, which had a STEMS magnet within the building.[4] The population was

[3] Central School District 7 is a pseudonym.

[4] Honey Creek Elementary is a pseudonym.

704 students. The largest majority of students in the school was African American at 72.6%; 3.1% Asian; 8.1% Hispanic; 9.2% White; and 7% “other ethnicity.”

Central School District 7 allows some level of school choice. I personally know of many students and families that choose to drive upwards of 30 minutes to attend different schools in the district, attend private schools for high school, and even move to more suburban areas that are likely to be White, to not attend their zoned, primarily Black populated school. Teacher attitudes can often indicate displeasure with teaching Black students, and I have heard many veteran teachers, teachers who have taught for more than five years, refer to enjoying working at our current school in the past, when the student population was majority White. There is a sense of losing property value and sense of what did, and still should, belong to a White population. After the 2021–2022 school year, seven White teachers left the school. All seven teachers went on to teach other places and did not leave the profession. Of White teachers who left, all but one teacher went to schools where the student population was predominately White, or a neighboring county with a school district that has a majority White population. My district votes overwhelmingly Democratic political candidates, the neighboring districts that have a majority White population, vote reliably Republican.

My school district places a premium on equity, equity of opportunity and equity of access to programs, services, and resources. The district’s official statement from the website acknowledges that

> Equity is not synonymous with equality. Equality means every student receives the same opportunities and supports, while equity means every student receives

> the opportunities and supports that he/she needs to maximize his/her gifts and talents and pursue pathways to purpose. (Central School District 7 website, 2022)

The statement goes further to explicate that inequities lead to outcomes that do not accurately reflect students' abilities and potential, and inequities limit future success and prevent individuals from leading and excelling in their chosen pathway. Initiatives taken up by the district include culturally relevant pedagogy, restorative justice, and Black male recruitment.

Due to these initiatives, school board meetings have grown increasingly contentious. A school board member was arrested for threatening another board member, members of the public have been escorted out of the district office for making inappropriate comments to the superintendent's wife, and the school board itself was investigated by the state governor's office. Ultimately, the superintendent resigned, some school board members lost reelection or decided not to run again, and a new superintendent was hired. Employee surveys indicated that teacher and staff morale was very low.

Description of Honey Creek Elementary

My school is located, geographically, in the center of the school district. The district office is less than a mile way. It is a large district that serves 28, 544 students. Thirty-two schools stretch across the district–from the edges of a mid-sized city, through the suburbs, and then into more rural areas in the county. Most elementary school enrollment is in the range of 500–800 students. The school district is located, geographically, in the center of the state. South Carolina is deemed politically conservative, with Republican candidates in the majority. The state has been "red" in

presidential elections since 1980. We have two Republican senators, and all but one of our seven congressional representatives are Republicans. All this to say, the progressive nature of my particular district is often criticized by members of the public that I surmise have right-leaning political ideologies.

Within this very red state, my particular county votes heavily Democratic. When I began working in this district, we had a superintendent that advocated for equity and students of Color. He began initiatives to center CRP, including a partnership with professors at a nearby university to educate teachers on this mode of teaching. There was also a program to recruit Black males to the teaching profession through teacher education programs from around the state, as well as a program to promote and retain male teachers of Color. These programs led to discontent from some conservative members of the public but lauded by many others. I watched most school board meetings online since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, mostly because I was interested in whether or not school would return in-person. What I also saw were burgeoning attacks from conservative parents who spoke during the public participation sessions, as well as growing dysfunction from the school board members themselves. Heated arguments were a fixture of every board meeting from 2020 to 2023. Discussions that originally centered on school district matters like COVID-19 protocols, employee contracts, and construction updates morphed into secret meetings held by phone, board members walking out of meetings to delay votes, and then nasty personal attacks witnessed by the public.

Most of the criticism against equity came from White residents in the school district. In the meetings, equity was described as “not fair” because students of Color, as

well as staff, were seen to be getting an unfair advantage over White people. I have yet to hear a counterargument for the need for more men in the teaching profession. However, when Black men are specifically being recruited and promoted, I heard public outcry. School board members began verbal attacks and threats on one another. One African American board member was arrested for these threats and was still able to retain her seat. A White member of the public was removed by police from a board meeting for harassing the superintendent's wife. Ultimately, the governor's office began an investigation into board activities and found that only 14% of the board's meetings consisted of activities related to student achievement. Efforts toward more equitable schooling practices were derailed by the ongoing tensions within the school board and district-level administration. The superintendent ultimately "resigned."

These issues are not unique to my school district. Efforts toward recognizing epistemologies outside of heteronormative, White standards are attacked and undercut from the highest reaches of state government The state superintendent of education has openly degraded public education in favor of private schools, advocating for the allocation of taxpayer money to go toward private and often parochial schools. She has also severed her ties with the state's association of librarians for their opposition to banning books. In many districts around the state, books are being removed from schools, pending examination, simply because any one person can file a complaint that the books make them feel uncomfortable. As I engaged in this study, I was aware of the environment, but was determined to teach culturally relevant music pedagogy despite the district's politics. Many colleagues who I speak with about these political discussions are

tired of having them. These teachers simply want to teach their students effectively and believe that the 'political nonsense' is a distraction from the work they are called to do.

Description of My Classroom

The school where I teach has approximately 700 students. My music classroom is located in the center of the building. Most grade levels are housed in pods that are located directly off of two main hallways that run the length of the school. On one side of the building are the pre-kindergarten, second grade, and third grade pods. The other side of the building includes the fourth grade and fifth grade pods. A newer edition to the building, built in 2000, includes the kindergarten and first grade classrooms. There are no windows in my classroom, except for the slender rectangular windows that are located on both classroom doors, both on either side of the Clear Touch board that remains stationary in the center of the room. If one were to look out the windows, there is a hallway. Through one window is a view into the third-grade pod, and through the other window a door into the school Behavior Interventionist's office can be seen. When the hallway is quiet, I can hear her walkie-talkie asking her to report to various classrooms.

The classrooms walls are white cinder block. In addition to the Clear Touch board are two marker boards. On one marker board is my class schedule for the day. I teach kindergarten through fifth grade every day and each class period lasts 50 minutes. The days can be long, because I am often physically exhausted from teaching six different groups each day. As I engage in music and movement with my students, as well as constantly monitor and assess students, a lot of energy is expended with little to no breaks between classes. We technically have a five-minute transition time between classes, but teachers are often late picking up their students, and when that happens the next class is

ready to start their music time, leaving no time to rest or even prepare the room for the next grade level. Using CRP did make the time pass quicker because I usually had less discipline issues.

There is blue carpet in the room that is relatively new. It was placed in the room in 2020. I have two bulletin boards—one covered with blue cloth and the other is green. I chose these colors because I felt they were calming. The blue bulletin board has different music symbols, music terminology, and multiracial paper stock figures playing a variety of instruments: guitar, marimba, maracas, conga, and clarinet (see Figures 3.1 and 3.2). Even though the walls are white, and the carpet is a pleasant shade of blue, the room feels dismal to me. I dislike being under fluorescent lighting all day with no natural sunlight.

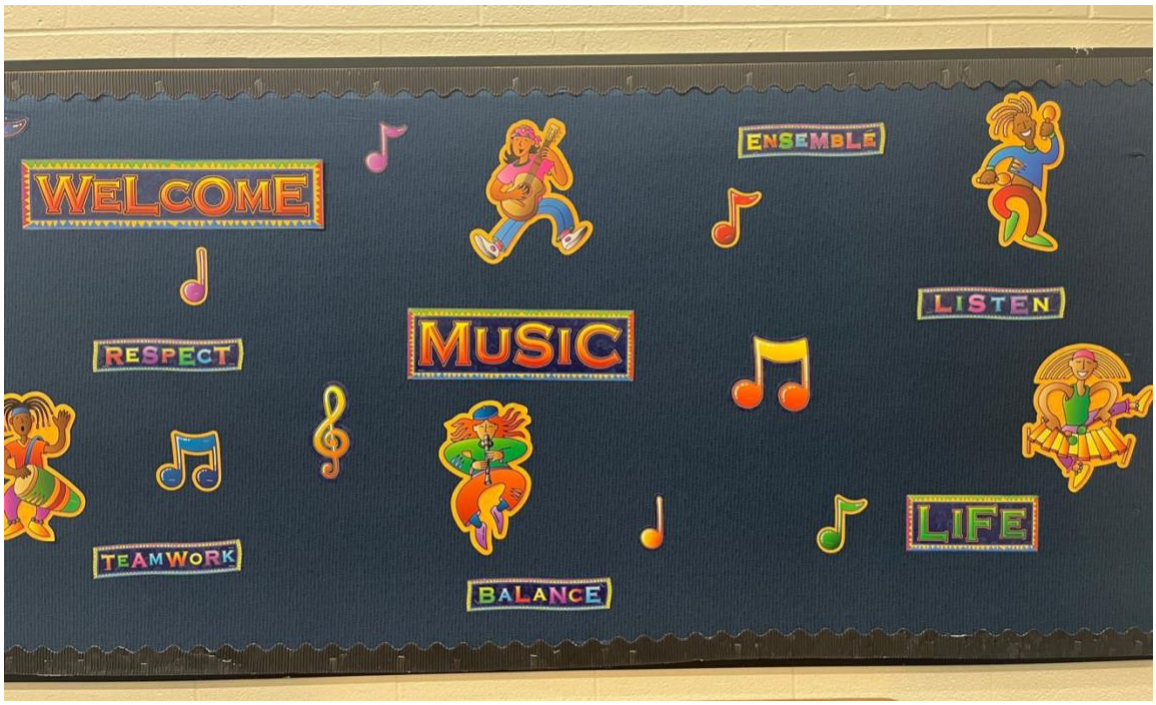

Figure 3.1 Blue Bulletin Board

Figure 3.2 Green Bulletin Board

I have an electric Yamaha piano that I use to play vocal warm-ups each day, and I sometimes use it to play tunes, though I am not a pianist, and my skills are limited. I play the piano for these exercises because it is easy for students to hear what they should sing. Many students like to watch my fingers as I play. There are many percussion instruments, such as hand drums, bongos, and djembes, along the right-side wall (Figure 3.3). Along the same wall are two bookcases full of hardback music textbooks that are rarely, if ever, used. The books remain in the room simply because I have not asked them to be removed. Maybe I will someday, but I have gotten used to them being a fixture of the room. I definitely need more artwork that reflects the population of my students. The textbooks contain compact discs (CDs), but I no longer have CD player. Xylophones and metallophones are located along the back wall of the music classroom (Figure 3.4).

Figure 3.3 Side Percussion Shelf

Figure 3.4 Xylophones and Metallophones

Typical Instructional Routines

As seen in Figure 3.5, I have no desks or chairs in the room. This provides a large, open space for students to move to music. When students come into the classroom, they are given a spot and asked to "crisscross" (meaning they sit on their bottoms with their legs crossed over one another) for the first few minutes. I explain what we are going to learn for the day, make any necessary announcements, and then we stand to go through our vocal explorations and warm-ups. Warm-ups include going up by half-steps in legato patterns (long), staccato patterns (short), and whatever other patterns I decide to play that day. We "throw darts" with our voices to extend our vocal ranges higher and lower than we normally use in our daily speaking voices. Our school related arts schedule is on a weekly, not daily, rotation so I see the same group of students Monday–Friday and then I will not see them again for five weeks. While not seeing a group of students is a long time, I like this schedule better because I can go deeper into a lesson seeing the same students for five straight days.

A typical class for me involved beginning with vocal exercises and explorations to increase range of motion in the voice. This is something I did before engaging in this study and continued doing throughout the study as well. I then usually asked students to repeat tonal patterns after me, in a tonal mode that is different each day. After the patterns, we sang a song in that mode. Then we did at least two activities in different meters, so that the students are exposed to at least two different tonalities and two different meters in each class. We might move to movement activities, or perhaps work on a song using ukuleles or mallet instruments. There were five first grade classes that I taught. Each class size ranged from 17–22 students (see Table 3.1).

Figure 3.5 Open Room

Table 3.1 First-Grade Class Populations and Demographics

Class	African American	Asian	Hispanic	White	Other ethnicity
Class 1	15	1	2	2	0
Class 2	16	0	1	2	1
Class 3	14	0	0	3	1
Class 4	17	1	0	1	0
Class 5	18	0	1	3	0

A benefit I have in engaging in culturally relevant teaching as a school music teacher is that I see the same students as they progress from one grade level to the next. Now that I am in my fourth year at the same school, I have known the current fifth graders since they were in the second grade. It has been a privilege of my life to know my students deeply over the years and watch them grow into themselves as young people. What keeps me coming back to education year after year is not the content of elementary

music, but the students. I am in a school with approximately 700 students, and I am known for knowing each of them by name. Over the course of the past four years, I have also grown to know a bit about each one.

I feel that knowing students deeply is a crucial part in being able to teach in culturally relevant ways. Developing relationships of trust and mutual respect all for me to *see* my students, to care about them, and to love them for who they are. An enormous part of who they are is their culture that I must learn about and respect as well. Another area where CRP helped develop my teaching, and me, is that it helped me to become more vulnerable with my students. When I relinquished full control of my content and pedagogy, and began focusing more and more on my students themselves, I realized that I was not the sole expert in the room. My students had a tremendous amount of material to teach me. I learned about new music that they liked and why. I learned about their lives and the role music plays in daily rituals and celebrations. As I opened to them, they opened back to me as well. For example, since I can see into the third-grade pod from my classroom, one day I noticed Nehemiah, a third grader, who seemed to be having trouble with a substitute teacher. I took him around the hall away from his classmates and asked him what was going on. As he began telling me about some issues he was having at home recently, he started to cry. These types of incidents with students, which hardly ever happened to me, are becoming more and more frequent. I believe that CRP has helped facilitate this relational transformation, because I am now seeing my students with eyes to see and ears to hear.

I found that I was enjoying teaching much more than I had in the past. I also sense that students enjoyed learning from me more, too. Discipline issues were much rarer than

when I taught in Eurocentric methods. I found that students were asking to talk to me outside of my music classroom, and some teachers were bringing me kids who were having a bad day to talk.

Data Collection Methods

It is important to understand the ethnographic context of this study within the context of critical qualitative research. As the person with and in power in this study, I had to dismantle my own power, and the status quo of being the expert in the room, to make positive transformations. Any teacher can continue teaching material with little thought to their students. In fact, adhering to a "master script" (Swartz, 1992) does indeed uphold a White, Eurocentric narrative that does nothing to liberate students of Color from White supremacy in school systems. From our state department of education to my immediate supervisor, no one ever questioned my former teaching that was complicit in White supremacy. My students did not respond very well to my former teaching techniques, and those in power seemed to be fine with it. Now that I, and my students, know better I cannot go back to my old ways; though I am still finding my rhythm with culturally relevant music pedagogy.

I followed Altheide's (1996) work to qualitative document analysis. A qualitative document analysis follows reflexive movement between concept development, data collection, data coding, analysis and interpretation. Using this approach, I emphasized the importance of emergent themes. I read each document, the SC General Music Standards K–8, my lesson plans, field notes, and ethnographic journal many times. I made comparisons across documents, examined new and established themes, and wrote summaries about findings.

Primary data sources were: (a) ethnographic field notes, (b) reflexive journal, (c) lesson plans, (d) SC General Music K–8 Standards, and (e) curriculum resources (QuaverED, 2003). For student engagement, I noticed student participation, interaction, and behavior. My school district did not grant permission for interviews, pictures, or recordings of individual children or classes as whole.

Ethnographic Field Notes

I created sticky notes or memos to document my actions, impressions, emotions, ideas, and student comments concerning emerging themes, reoccurring themes, topics, and patterns (Chang, 2008). I used a pen or pencil and strategically placed various sets of sticky notes around the classroom. Some sticky notes were accessible on my desk, and I also placed a stack in at the back of the room where I keep instruments and another stack near bookshelves. I rewrote field notes after the conclusion of classes, since first grade is typically the last class period of the day. A description of each data source follows.

These notes are important because they contextualize my experiences by sharing emotions and decision-making are often ignored in most research (Kincheloe, 2008). I aimed to identify occurrences, patterns, or events (Chang, 2008) that would provide comprehension into what I gained from my experience has a first-grade music teacher. I composed memos and then journal entries regarding my emotions and ideas, and to make sense of my relationship with others and to interpret meaning in the data. For instance, on one note I wrote (3/30/2023), “I am glad the kids are into this music, it is actually a song I like too. I remember it from an Adam Sandler movie.” That note was written about an excerpt I played from the Sugar Hill Gang’s song “Rapper’s Delight” (1980). Even if African American students were unfamiliar with the song, the I could tell by the

immediate dancing and smiling that the genre spoke to the students. For the African American students who did not know the song or for White students, the CRP component of cultural competence was addressed by providing music knowledge in a culture other than their own. Using Sims-Bishop's (1990) concept of windows and mirrors, African American students were able to see their culture reflected in the classroom (mirrors), even if they were unfamiliar with a particular song, mirroring their own culture. At the same time, White students were provided with a window into another culture, giving them a cultural insight into a culture that was not their own.

These data consisted of recorded events during one semester (January–May 2023). For triangulation, I employed methods of (a) comparing, contrasting, and offering critically reflexive critiques of personal experience against existing research; and (b) making notes about student interactions. The existing research I used was relevant literature to my topic, namely literature centering culturally relevant pedagogy, critical race theory, and critical whiteness studies. In Table 3.2, I provide an example of a field note and how I triangulated my note with references in CRP, CRT, and CWS.

Table 3.2 Referenced Field Note

Field note	CRP reference	CRT reference	CWS reference
"I feel guilty that I deprived years and years of former students from listening and teaching about hip hop music in my class" (Field note; 3/20/23)	Teachers should look for ways to develop a closer relationship between students' home culture and the school (Ladson-Billings, 1995).	Systems of oppression, marginalization, racism, and inequity and present and ingrained in the fabric of systems of education (Milner, 2013).	White people often react with guilt when they begin to realize they have perpetuated inequality (Howard, 1999).

In Table 3.2, I describe the feeling of guilt because I realized the disservice that I had done to hundreds, if not thousands, of former students by ignoring and erasing

African American culture from music classrooms. I my feeling of guilt with CRP, CRT, and CWS to analyze the implication from a structural/systemic view (CRT), the vantage point that address my Whiteness, how/why I feel guilt (CWS), and ways that I can learn to teach more equitably (CRP). Using CRT, I understood that I could centralize a Eurocentric music curriculum and pedagogy because that is what is generally expected in schools.

As time passed between actual classroom events and my recording journal entries, there were times when I might have forgotten exact details or lost the context of a memory that was part of the data (Chang, 2008). At times when I was unable to recall exact memories, I coded as much data as possible and documented the experience in my journal.

Since I collected data mainly about myself, collection was feasible. I was in the position to take notes contemporaneous notes most of the time, or very shortly after a thought or interaction. I kept sticky notes in various places around my classroom so that I could my jot these thoughts. This occurred most often when students worked with a partner or in small groups. I also kept yellow legal pads to write longer notes in between classes, during my lunch time, or after school. As I am the primary participant, I did not place any other participants in an at-risk situation.

Reflexivity Journal

It was important for me to keep a reflexivity journal so that I could document my interpretation of my experience as a researcher and music teacher. My experiences as both a teacher and White male informed my own cultural positionality and bias, and to leave myself out as a participant would negate the purpose of this study. My journal was

a spiral bound notebook that I kept at my home. I sometimes took the notebook to school as well in case I decided to write after a class ended. I coded drafts by hand into various notebooks. For example, I wrote on March 13th, 2023, “I am glad the kids are enjoying this music. I wish I knew more about it or grew up with it myself. I feel like I am ready to move on.” I coded this sentence as disengagement.

South Carolina General Music Standards K–8

The South Carolina Department of Education publishes standards for General Music, beginning in kindergarten and ending in the eighth grade. The standards include what to teach, but not how to teach them. Pedagogy and implementation of standards is the responsibility of the music teacher. I address standards in my lesson plans. As the standards are heavily notation-based, albeit with some improvisation and aural skills included, I find them to replicate the Eurocentric ways to music-making that I myself learned when I was a K–8 student.

Curriculum Resources

My school district offers a single curriculum resource, an online platform called QuaverEd, or simply Quaver. Quaver is hosted by a White, British male named Graham. The Quaver software is not mandatory to use. In fact, many of my colleagues do not use it at all and I use it sparingly. Quaver attempts to utilize some Eurocentric methods such as Gordon and Kodaly, but neither in great detail. The program also has units on music history but covers only Western classical music beginning with the Baroque period and ending with Impressionism. Music outside of Europe and the United States is not addressed in a holistic way. For instance, Quaver includes one West African folk tune called Abebe.

Lesson Plans

I wrote lesson plans covering six units. The lesson plans addressed components of CRP: (a) academic excellence, (b) cultural competence, (c) critical consciousness. In making the lessons culturally relevant, I drew from music that reflected the culture of my students. Lesson plans are in the appendix.

Data Analyses

The data were analyzed by searching for connections between my data (ethnographic notes, reflexivity journal), information unveiled in my data, and academic literature (Chang, 2008). The five research questions posed can be seen on Table 3.3. Data sources and analyses are also summarized on this table.

Table 3.3 Summary of Research Questions, Data Sources, and Analyses

Research questions	Data sources	Data analyses
In what ways does White supremacy appear in an elementary music school curriculum?	South Carolina General Music K–8 Standards, SC and Richland Two curriculum resources. Lesson plans.	Document analyses of district and state music standards and curriculum resources. Reflexive journal coding.
What curricular transformations occur when I, as a White teacher, seek to make my music curriculum more relevant to students of Color?	Reflexive journal. Lesson plans.	Initial coding of journal and sticky notes .
What dispositional transformations occur when I, as a White teacher, seek to make my music curriculum more relevant to students of Color?	Reflexive journal Sticky notes	Initial coding of journal and notes. Sticky notes.
What happens when students of Color engage in a curriculum that deviates from the traditional Eurocentric-normalized elementary music class?	Reflexive journal. Sticky notes.	Initial coding of journal and notes.
What happens when White students engage in a curriculum that deviates from the traditional Eurocentric-normalized music class?	Reflexive journal. Sticky notes.	Initial coding of journal and sticky notes.

I used initial coding to chunk data into manageable parts in order to create themes. Initial coding is an open-ended approach to coding data that breaks down qualitative data into discrete parts, comparing them for similarities and differences (Saldana, 2009).

Coding

All data were coded using a six-step process (Lichtman, 2013).

Step 1: Initial Coding

When I used initial coding, I explored each journal entry to seek answers to questions like "How do I make sense of this event?" I then labeled words or sentences with codes to then categorize further in the data analysis process. During initial coding, 24 codes were identified from the list. In Table 3.4, I provide each code and its definition.

Step 2: Revisited Initial Coding

In step 2, I revisited, analyzed, deleted, or refined my codes. Some codes were similar or related, so I merged, color-coded and renamed the codes. When I made the decision to modify a code, I made a note in my journal of why a code was changed or deleted. I used a color key to classify codes that I believed were similar to streamline the coding process in three colors: green, blue, and yellow. Green represents aspects that describe me as the teacher. Blue represents aspects that describe the students. Yellow represents instructional approaches (Table 3.5 and 3.6).

Table 3.4 Code Definitions

Code	Definition
Newness	Teaching new lessons was a step outside of my comfort zone
Uncertainty	As I was teaching new topics, I did not always have a grasp on how well my lesson would be received
Engagement	Student participation and interaction
Disengagement	My own feelings of disinterest and disconnection
Fear	Worry about a lesson being unmeaningful or not working out the way I hoped
Apprehension	Disconcertment that the lesson would not go as planned
Wonder	Feeling of surprise
Discussion	Conversational aspects of what the lesson was about and how the students felt
Community	Classroom of students and teacher
Excitement	Thrill from students
Surprise	Aspects that were unexpected
Effort	Efforts toward some kind of success
Resources	Materials provided for our classroom learning
Weary	Tired
Uncomfortable	Stepping outside of what I already knew about a music education in a Eurocentric paradigm
Participation	Degree of student interaction
Lack of confidence	My own feelings of inadequacy
Unprepared	Not being trained in CRP through a music education paradigm
Student discipline	Perceived student misbehavior
Teacher responsibility	Accountability to my students' needs
Self-interest	Looking out for my own well-being
Easy route	Teaching in my usual, Eurocentric paradigm
Intentionality	Deliberate planning and teaching through CRP
Challenge	A summons toward more equitable practices

Table 3.5 Color Key for Revised Coding

Type of code	Meaning
Teacher codes	Aspects that describe the teacher
Student codes	Aspects that describe students
Curriculum codes	Instructional approaches

Table 3.6 Sample of Revisited Initial Coding

Step 1: Initial Coding
Uncertainty
Newness
Disengagement
Fear
Apprehension
Wonder
Surprise
Effort
Weary
Uncomfortable
Lack of confidence
Unprepared
Student discipline
Self-interest
Easy route
Intentionality
Challenge
Engagement
Discussion
Community
Excitement Participation
Resources
Teacher responsibility

Step 3: Developed an Initial List of Categories

I reviewed the list of codes to begin organizing them into categories, finding a total of 24 codes. I reviewed each code looking for major topics that emerged from them. To address my research questions, I classified codes that led me to answering my research questions regarding my experiences implementing culturally relevant pedagogy with my students. As a result, I identified teacher codes, student codes, and curriculum codes.

Step 4: Modified Initial List of Categories Based on Additional Reading

Having reviewed initial lists of categories, I evaluated each category for relevance.

Step 5: Revisited Categories and Subcategories

I revisited my categories to ensure they were appropriately arranged and organized coherently.

Step 6: Moved From Categories to Concepts

After completing the six-step process of coding (Lichtman, 2013), I explored emotion coding (Saldana, 2009) to support detailing the concepts that will be constructed in step six (concept development). This form of coding was essential in transforming my data into an accessible format for readers. Since I examined data as a whole instead of small parts, I combined details of data to begin constructing a larger idea (Chang, 2008). For this study, the larger idea was that critical self-reflection was essential in making sense of my implementing culturally relevant pedagogy in an early childhood music class.

Emotion

Emotions can be understood as social performances that coincide with one's personal and social identities that fit within a social hierarchy (Matias & Mackey, 2015). In this paradigm, emotions are a site of social control, and until educators develop pedagogies that incorporate emotions as part of critical inquiry, our resistance to emotions will never fully develop (Boler, 1999). Matias and Zembylas (2014) sought to delve deeper into why White teachers continued to express pity to people of Color while still demonstrating guilt, anger, and defensiveness–common emotions expressed in

Whiteness. Given the nature of Whiteness, and its need for self-superiority, White people are not often equipped to deal with these emotions. They are not emotionally secure, because Whiteness itself is built on a foundation of sand. Matias's and Zembylas's (2014) conception buttresses my understanding of my own emotions, as I chronicle my themes of unpreparedness, disconnection, guilt, and need for growth.

Themes

I sought to find emerging themes, recurring emotions, and patterns as I examined the data. This required me to revisit my past in order to gain an understanding of how my identity as a person and teacher may have influenced culturally relevant pedagogy in my classroom (Chang, 2008). I identified four emerging themes: (a) unpreparedness; (b) disconnection; (c) guilt; (d) need for growth. In Table 3.7, I provide examples of quotes, codes, and themes from the data.

Table 3.7 Quotes, Codes, and Themes from Data

Quote	Code(s)	Theme
"I wish we learned about this in undergrad… all we talked about was mechanics like clarinet fingerings, never students as actual human beings" (Reflexive journal; 3/7/23)	Newness Unprepared Fear Apprehension Resources Lack of confidence	Unpreparedness
"I wish I resonated with this music. I don't know it. I don't listen to this on my own" (Reflexive journal; 3/20/23)	Challenge Self-Interest Weary	Disconnection
"the kids really love this… I wish I did… There have been lots of kids who did not learn about this over the years" (Reflexive journal; 4/6/23)	Uncomfortable Engagement Excitement Community Participation	Guilt
"I need to learn more… this is just the start of 'real' equity teaching/work… where do I go from here" (Reflexive journal; 5/2/23)	Teacher responsibility Effort Surprise Wonder	Need for growth

Unpreparedness

As I reviewed my teacher preparation course transcripts and reflected on my undergraduate experience, I was not trained in teaching diverse populations. My preparation focused on what I considered to be the mechanics of music-making: intonation, balance, blend, rhythmic accuracy, and other aspects of Eurocentric musicality. What was noticeably missing from my pre-service training was the concept of student-centered teaching and teaching of diverse populations. By disregarding any notion of diversity and student preferences, pedagogy and curriculum normalized a pattern of Eurocentric dominance, and fostered normative Whiteness (Reddy, 1998).

As I constructed my lesson plans for this study, I had to research elementary music literature on my own and had few support systems from those that were knowledgeable about constructing culturally relevant music lessons. Although I earned two degrees in music education and over a decade of music teaching experience, constructing a curriculum and pedagogy that explicitly centered CRP was new. I had implemented components of CRP in previous lessons, but I never brought CRP to the fore of my teaching. In many ways, I was learning along with my students, and this was a new and sometimes uncomfortable experience. Teaching grounded in CRP was also sometimes exhausting. I had years of developed habits and a canon of music that I knew well. Uprooting what was familiar took a lot of time and effort to implement effectively.

Disconnection

I felt a disconnection with the music curriculum because most of the music and cultural aspects of the music I was unfamiliar with; I had no relational experience with what I was teaching. As I was teaching about the music of Africa and Southeast Asia, I

felt a sense of disconnection and unrelatability. I sometimes felt like I was teaching other people's music (because I was), and that the music of these cultures were living in a silo that would be discussed for a week and then perhaps never again if I did not continue learning more repertoire.

This feeling of disconnection unmoored me. What shook me most was the feeling I had when students were clearly engaged with the music more than they had ever been, but the genre did not speak to me, nor did I have a background in listening to it or teaching it. The first unit was about the music of Africa. Students were able to chant, sing, and develop their own ostinatos individually and in small groups. At some points, as students were noticeably engaged in the lessons–drumming, swaying with the music, jumping in excitement—I reflected on what was it about this particular styles that resonated so much with them. Was it that the music sounded cool? It does. But I believe there was another layer that resonated with these students–the performers looked like them, providing a thread of commonality.

I was no longer in the role of supreme music guru. Drawing from Harris (1993), the curriculum in my music room was entrenched in a White, Eurocentric normality. My position as a White person, the so-called expert in the room, allowed me to perpetuate a curriculum from a White, dominant orientation for my entire career. This is perhaps this is what teaching and learning was really supposed to be about, and I had spent years up to this point doing it wrong. I wondered if my students would be better served by a teacher of Color who enjoyed these styles of music as much as the students did.

Guilt

As I was sometimes disconnected from what I was teaching for the semester, I sensed my students might feel this way most of the time since I taught primarily from a Eurocentric paradigm. I realized that over the course of my career, my position as a White, male teacher fostered my students potential alienation from music learning. Likewise, when I recognized my own sense of disconnection from my teaching, but also noticing the increase in my students' engagement, I felt that I had been depriving them of the joy of music-making. I felt a sense of guilt that my position as a White teacher was facilitating their own potential sense of disconnection and that I was responsible for that as their teacher.

My egocentric aspect of Whiteness was threatened by not being centered in the curriculum I was participating in with my students. It was also a blow to my ego, that of a well-educated liberal, to know that I was participating in White complicity (Applebaum, 2011) and that did not feel good. I began to feel guilty because I recognized how Whiteness had served me by keeping me comfortable in the classroom but had done a great disservice to my students. White fragility, as described by DiAngelo (2018) delineates the strategies White people use to subvert conversations about race and racism leads to a form of fragility tied to the concept of White guilt. White guilt is motivated by the recognition of White privilege and the acknowledgement of racist attitudes or behaviors (Iyer et al., 2003). This was certainly a concept for me to grapple with over the course of this study.

Need for Growth

I am aware that I need to continually educate myself in new and different ways to teach while centering CRP. Having completed this study, I learned a great deal. One concept that I learned was that I still have a lot to learn. Unlearning Whiteness, making continuous and daily choices to not comply with White supremacy may very well be a lifelong endeavor. I am fortunate that I live in a community that is diverse and that has opportunities for continued growth and education. As great as conferences, workshops, and seminars are, for me, my attendance at these functions is not enough. I must continue to journal and reflect about my teaching practices and must listen seriously to my students. As a White male who is nearing middle age, it is easy for me to show up and teach what I already know. But I have learned that in doing so, I am perpetuating White supremacy. In my complicity, I am hurting my students and our wider community. I felt guilt for how I taught over the course of my career. It is time to do something different and grow.

Fidelity

Because this autoethnography is subjective in nature, validity and reliability as historically conceived do not serve as effective measures for this work (Sparks, 2002). I sought verisimilitude in that this study was realistic, truthful, insightful, and believable (Ellis, 2004; Sparks, 2002). I accomplished this by using a "thick description" (Geertz, 1973, p. 10) of my interpretations as an autoethnographer. I worked to capture as many quotes as possible, in a way that accurately depicted student intent. Many six- and seven-year-old children were very eloquent, but sometimes I needed to ask clarifying questions to gauge students' true intent when making a statement or asking a question. For instance,

a student remarked “I like the song because it had a beat.” I assume the student liked the beat of the song, but because every song in our classroom has a steady beat, I asked what about this beat did she like in particular and how is this beat different than other songs we sang. I also tried to capture situations, lessons, and my own feelings as accurately as possible, even when such feelings are unfavorable to me. A thick description describes social interactions that are placed in context so that outsiders will better understand what is taking place. By recording subjective meanings and explanations, the data can be of greater value to others wishing to understand a particular interaction.

My classroom is generally a calm space. After having the same students for four years, practices and procedures are well-known and followed by students. When I implemented CRP for this study, my I heard more enthusiasm in their voices. I heard more “ooohhs” and “yessss!!!” with anticipatory and excited voices. More hands shot up in the air to ask questions or make comments. I saw more smiles. Students excitedly asked if we could hear Sugar Hill Gang again, or if they could try out their own break dance moves that they had talked to their parents about the night before. Contextually, my classroom was more alive when our classroom community engaged in this new material. This was true for all students, both BIPOC and White.

Conclusion

I began this chapter with a positionality statement about myself and what led me to engage in equity work as a teacher and doctoral student. What I did not realize before engaging in this study, is how I did not, and would not, give of myself so freely to promote equity in my own classroom. One reason that I majored in music education at 18 years of age was because I really liked music. I enjoyed playing in my school band

ensembles and I liked the Eurocentric music that we performed. Now that I had my own classroom and was deemed the expert, through degrees and certification, I could extend the curriculum (musical repertoire) however I pleased. It was difficult to give up control of my own preferences to those of my students. I was truly shocked at this self-revelation. I did not realize how much of my teaching and daily interactions with my students were serving my own desires instead of their needs. But, as the teacher in the room, and the only music teacher in the school, I had the power to indulge only me, if I so wished. Now, that I began serving my students, I felt a disconnection with the music I was teaching, or co-learning, or simply just learning myself. I was giving contradictory messages to both myself and to my students about what I believed—that all students and all cultures should be celebrated and uplifted in music classrooms.

Part of the difficulty in teaching these lessons, I felt, was not being prepared in any of the genres or topics beforehand. A lot of time was spent cultivating lessons, instead of rehashing what I have already taught for many years. Most of the musical content, I had to learn and research from scratch. I learned about *why* I was engaging in a culturally relevant pedagogy through my doctoral program, but I still felt unprepared from the vantage point of music education. I certainly did not learn about this in my undergraduate teacher education program, and I wish that I had. I also think about how many of my music teacher colleagues likely have no experience with CRP from either their pre-service education programs or continuing education programs.

As my students were engaged and showing more enthusiasm for our music lessons, I felt a tremendous amount of guilt. I realized that I had been fulfilling my own musical desires in the classroom with little thought of my students. I also reflected on

how many past students' needs I neglected by focusing on a Eurocentric music paradigm. There was a sense of guilt that I still missed the old music even though my students seemed to be having a lot of fun with the CRP influenced lessons. I wondered about why I was teaching if my number one priority was not the students who came to me every day.

By acknowledging my shortcomings and guilt, I realized that I still need to grow as a person and as a teacher. This study was just the beginning in my quest for a culturally relevant music curriculum and pedagogy. My teaching must focus on those I serve, not simply my own preferences for classroom music, and that starts with my own character as a person. I will continue to find new ways to serve all students in equitable ways, keeping them at the fore of my planning and teaching.

CHAPTER FOUR: MANUSCRIPT 1, CONCEPTUALIZING CULTURALLY RELEVANT MUSIC PEDAGOGY IN ELEMENTARY CLASSROOMS[5]

Abstract

Drawing from Ladson-Billings's (1994) scholarship, a conceptualization of Culturally Relevant Music Pedagogy (CRMP) is presented. I chronicle my process of transforming an elementary music classroom into a more relevant space for all students, particularly minoritized students. The concept of Culturally Relevant Music Pedagogy (CRMP*)* is introduced as a syntheses of three components: (a) critical music pedagogy (Abrahams, 2005); (b) critical pedagogy (Freire, 1970); and (c) my own experiences with culturally relevant pedagogy in music classrooms. I explicate three processes for engaging in culturally relevant music pedagogy beyond theory and into practice: (a) being intentional in music selection; (b) developing relationships with students; (c) going beyond the school.

Keywords: culturally relevant pedagogy; music education; equity; elementary school

Introduction

Why aren't there any Black kids in these videos?

—First grade student at Honey Creek Elementary School[6]

[5] Steele, A. To be submitted to *Music Educators Journal*.

[6] Honey Creek Elementary School is a pseudonym.

My school district recently adopted an online music curriculum for general music instead of traditional, hardbound textbooks. Throughout various lessons there are short vignettes with a White, British, male host and child actors doing various activities as instructed by the host. As my class and I began occasionally viewing some of the videos, I realized that very few of the videos reflected the race of students in my predominantly African American classroom. I did not need to wonder if my students picked up on the absence of children of Color in the new "text," because they let me know!

In this paper, I delineate a rationale for utilizing culturally relevant pedagogy in elementary music classrooms. I provide a historical context for why a culturally relevant pedagogy is needed, a rationale for new music pedagogies, an overview of culturally relevant pedagogy, and recommendations for implementation of CRMP in elementary music classrooms.

Historical Context

In the 1933 foundational book, *The Miseducation of the Negro*, Carter Woodson explains that racism is deeply embedded in schools in ways that miseducates Black and White students into believing that Black students are inferior to White students. Woodson (1933) asserts that education is a tool used to maintain White supremacy. "The same educational process which inspires and stimulates the oppressor with the thought that he is everything … depresses and crushes the spark of genius in the Negro" (Woodson, 1933, p. 13). During Woodson's era spanning to contemporary times, Greek, Hebrew, and Latin have been/are taught to be admired, while any mention of Black people, if mentioned at all, are taught to be problematic or to be seen with disdain (Woodson,

1933). Indeed, the U.S. education system has a long history of maintaining a racial hierarchy that favors White people.

Curriculum is one component in the teaching and learning process as students and teachers co-construct knowledge. Curriculum not only shapes pedagogy, or how curriculum is taught, but it also dictates pace and structure in the construction of knowledge and skills (Hubert et al., 2006). Swartz (1992) refers to curriculum that is grounded in Eurocentric and White supremacist ideologies as a master script. The master script presumes that the only form of legitimate knowledge comes from White, upper-class, male voices. The assumption is that this is the "standard" knowledge that students need to be taught" (Swartz, 1992, p. 341). Swartz (1992) notes that master scripts exist in all disciplines, which means that music is no exception. Eurocentric appropriation has led to claims of superiority throughout disciplines and has denigrated African contributions to learning (Swartz, 1992). The master script continues to find its way into my classroom due to my own Whiteness, my pre-service teacher education program, as well as the materials that are provided to me by my school district. In implementing a culturally relevant program, I seek to disrupt this on-going master script which elevates Whiteness and subjugates the music of people of Color.

The Need for New Music Pedagogy

Culturally relevant or responsive teaching centers the ethnicity, race, national origin, and native languages of students in classrooms (Bond, 2017). In order to engage students in a more significant manner, culture should influence the pedagogy of teachers (Gay, 2000). Culture is active, learned, socially constructed, and impacted by sociopolitical factors (Nieto, 1999). As student demographics in public school shift from

a majority White to majority Black and Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC) population, teacher identities do not, and soon overwhelmingly will not, match the identities of their students (National Center for Education Statistics, 2023). The majority of music teachers are White, middle class, and female, who speak English only (Dekaney & Robinson, 2014). To better serve all students, it is increasingly necessary to teach in deep, meaningful, and relevant ways to all students, especially students who have been ignored or erased in traditional curricula. White students need to gain cultural competence to engage in a world with diverse populations in order that their cultural competence can begin to dismantle racism. In doing so, all students can thrive in respectful manner and learn from each other in a way that the respects the dignity of every human being.

The racial homogeneity of music teachers contributes to enduring Eurocentric perspectives, paradigms, curricula, pedagogies, and tenor of music education in the United States (Bond, 2017; Kindall-Smith, 2010; Lind & McKoy, 2016). For instance, a composer and orchestral conductor assumes a place of higher regard than an ensemble musician; a concert master carries more weight than a second violinist. Not all cultures place such importance on many of these Eurocentric concepts, nor is artistic beauty qualified in the same way.

Culturally relevant pedagogy is a term coined by Gloria Ladson-Billings in her 1994 book *The Dreamkeepers* and it places emphasis on the needs of students from various cultures. Ladson-Billings (1994) defined culturally relevant pedagogy as expectations of academic excellence, cultural competency, and critical consciousness. That is, teachers should demonstrate high expectations for student achievement using challenging academic curricula. Students should develop cultural competence, or a living

relationship between home-community and school culture (Ladson-Billings, 1994). Teachers must also help students realize and critique current social inequities.

Transitioning From Eurocentric to Culturally Relevant Music Pedagogy

Academic literature surrounding the need for culturally relevant practices provides the foundation for how to incorporate culturally relevant pedagogy into an early childhood music classroom (Abrahams, 2005). Culturally responsive teaching helps move the attention from what we teach to the children and the social contexts in where music leaning occurs (Abril, 2013).

I highlight areas where music teachers can transition their teaching from Eurocentric models of teaching to models where students and students' cultures can be centered. Three components of Culturally Relevant Music Pedagogy (CRMP) are shared: (a) Abrahams's (2005) research of critical music pedagogy; (b) Paulo Freire's (1970) Critical Pedagogy; and (c) my own experiences with culturally relevant pedagogy. In Table 4.1, I describe a component of Critically Relevant Music and how that component might appear in Eurocentric pedagogy (where critical consciousness is typically absent in Eurocentric approaches), and how the component may appear in a Culturally Relevant Pedagogy. The last column outlines potential outcomes.

Culturally Relevant Music Pedagogy

Here, I explicate three processes for engaging in culturally relevant music pedagogy (Abrahams, 2005) beyond theory and into practice: (a) being intentional in music selection; (b) developing relationships with students; (c) going beyond the school. Each of these components are necessary to develop a culturally relevant music pedagogy. These three processes are tools to address and enact the foundational components of

culturally relevant pedagogy: (a) academic excellence; (b) cultural competence; (c) critical consciousness.

Table 4.1 Comparison of CRMP & Eurocentrism Praxis, and Potential Benefits of CRMP

Culturally relevant music components	Eurocentric pedagogy	Culturally relevant music pedagogy	Benefits of CRMP
Music Selection	Teacher-centered, based in White European or U.S. folk music	Student-centered; multicultural	Develops students' cultural competence. Shifts from deficit-centered lens which positions BIPOC music as inferior and not worthy of inclusion.
Development of relationships	Teacher is only expert; banked knowledge. Student input is not sought.	Student knowledge and experience is valued and centered. Students and teachers are co-learners and ongoing dialogue is included.	Students are valued, all cultures are deemed important, students become critically aware cultural values. There is less disconnect between home and school, student, and teacher. Respect and trust are able to grow in this environment.
Extensions Beyond School	School music is largely independent of students' cultures. Focused on musical elements based in Eurocentric repertoire.	Bridges gap between culturally important music and elements central to music education.	Students are able to engage in music-making across the boundaries of home and school.

Teachers are Intentional in Their Music Selection

In early childhood music classrooms, the music (repertoire) is the center of the curriculum. Many districts have grade level music standards, but the teacher has free rein over music selection. Drawing from Culturally Responsive Pedagogical tenets, teachers should incorporate materials, resources, and information from many different cultures (Gay, 2010). When planning, teachers should focus, and learn, about their students' backgrounds, knowledge, experience, and skills (Abril, 2013). All this can be done while still focusing on technical aspects of music education like musical elements, concepts,

and thematic units. Music selection should be done carefully, as not to trivialize or stereotype a particular culture.

In making thoughtful choices about what music to teach, students can develop cultural competence in performing songs from their own culture as well as cultures that are not their own. By developing relationships with students, teachers can choose repertoire that reflects students' cultures as well as developing competence in at least one other culture. The purpose of the music teacher is to assist students to make connections between their musical cultures and those beyond their experiences, and helping all students deepen their musical skills and understanding (Abril, 2013). Students will not make these types of connections by learning only traditional Eurocentric repertoire, which are often folk songs based in the United Kingdom or the United States, most always in the Standard English language. Nor will students develop a deeper knowledge when singing or learning songs of other cultures with no understanding of the meaning or history of the culture that is different from their own. Critical consciousness can only take place when background knowledge can be shared or explicated. For instance, it is not enough to sing songs about Kwanzaa without delving deeply into what Kwanzaa celebrates and why. Too often, critical consciousness intentionally or unintentionally goes unaddressed when there are ample opportunities to do so.

I chose to develop a unit about Kwanzaa because I understand it to be an important holiday within the African American community. Since the vast majority of my students are African American, it is important for our classroom community to engage in music learning that is both celebratory and insightful to aspects of a culture that perhaps not every student is already familiar with; many students did not celebrate

Kwanzaa or had only heard the term Kwanzaa. Some students, both Black and White, were able to make connections to other holidays like Hannukah, noting the use of candles for each day.

Students enjoyed learning about the Kwanzaa colors: red for the struggle; green for the future; black for community. Students certainly enjoyed singing songs that used percussion instruments like the djembe. As we have a few djembes in the classroom, they enjoyed playing them too. I noticed a good deal of excitement when several students shared names with two Kwanzaa principles, Nia and Imani. I heard shouts of "Hey, that's my name!" Nia is the principle of purpose and Imani is the principle of faith. Celebrating Kwanzaa in our classroom allowed the facilitation of both Black and White students celebrating a holiday that is rooted in the African American community. Too often, our school holidays are Eurocentric or white-washed. This experience flipped the narrative.

Culturally Relevant Music Teachers Develop Relationships With Students

It is important that teachers know their students as human beings and as members of a cultural community. Teachers can develop relationships with students and create community in the classroom by providing opportunity for students' to share their own stories and experiences. Students can share what kind of music they enjoy listening to at home or what kind of music they enjoy listening to with families or loved ones. Students can draw images of their personal musical worlds (Lum & Campbell, 2009). These types of opportunities give students opportunities to apply musical knowledge and develop their musical identities (Abril, 2013).

As seeing students as part of a musical community with their own experiences and perspectives, students can be viewed as having inherent value and skill, reducing the

likelihood of being viewed through a deficit-lens by the teacher and their peers (Banks, 2006). Teachers who view a student's culture as impoverished or lacking, may develop lower expectations which can thwart student learning and achievement (Villegas & Lucas, 2007). Academic achievement, being a component of CRP, can be developed through personal relationship and community belonging. This approach is different than a traditional approach which centers the teacher as an all-knowing expert who teaches from the front of the room, focusing attention on the music itself and not the students.

Providing time for collaboration, discussion, questioning, and analyzing can lead to a deepened understanding of music and context (Abril, 2010). Teachers should make sure that students' cultural experiences are included in the context of music if the music pertains to one's own culture. Students may have personal insights to share with their peers and can work to strengthening their own identities. In community, teachers and students construct knowledge together. As noted earlier, in a winter choral performance, our ensemble realized that we had students who shared names with two of the principles of Kwanzaa, Nia and Imani. As a class, we were able to discuss their names in the context of Kwanzaa, how the girls' parents came to give them their names, and how the principles impact all of our lives. The personalization of the lesson helped students feel affirmed and facilitated a connection among the class as a community. Before embarking on this mode of teaching and learning, students knew some information about each other like favorite colors, foods, television shows, and movies. Doors were opened for students to know each other on a deeper level, beyond particular student preferences. Family connections were discussed, such as parent and sibling names, students spoke of circumstances surrounding their births and what it was like when they "were babies."

Culturally Relevant Music Teachers Go Beyond the School

Detachment between school music and home music have been documented (Campbell, 2010). Campbell describes the instance of a child who spoke of rap in the classroom of being very different than real rap, describing school rap as "kinda rap" (Campbell, 2010, p. 176). Music in school mostly focuses on musical elements decided by the teacher, instead of emotions, feelings, and stories of home music (Kelly-McHale, 2011). In other words, school music is often performative, forced, and artificial. Since music is embedded in cultures (not isolated from them), as in the case of hip hop culture, other aspects should be studied as well. Music-learning utilizing traditional music from the school does not need to be dismissed entirely. Home music, or culturally informed music, can work in tandem with school music. For instance, a first-grade teacher can teach the element of a minor tonality by placing it in context of a student's culture. The minor tonality is traditionally associated with feeling sad in Western music, but this would be anathema to a Jewish student who has been to a traditional wedding or bar mitzvah. This student may know of many songs in minor already. There are countless popular tunes on the radio or streamed online every day that students hear and enjoy. It is important for teachers to ask questions, engage in conversation, and most importantly to listen to students. The teacher is not the sole expert in the room. Not only does this example open the door to musical connection but provides the classroom community with other cultural considerations as well.

In my classroom, I listen for what the kids are singing on their own, or more often, to each other. The past few years have inundated my room with TikTok songs, raps, and sayings. As a nearly middle-aged man, I can either choose to be annoyed by

some of them, or I can engage, bridging the gap between home and school. I often teach rhythmic patterns by engaging students in body percussion songs or sometimes by playing patterns with rhythm sticks. I wrote out some duple rhythms to the latest Burger King jingle that had taken over the classroom in early 2023. Students loved it. They sang along, played along, and begged to play it each day shout-screaming "marinara mozzarella look at this royale crispy fella." I encountered the same dynamism for the "one, two, buckle my shoe … it's so fire" TikTok. It is not important that I like or dislike this music. What is important is that my students are making relevant connections between what they are listening to and playing in their home lives with what is going on in our school classroom.

Conclusion

Music teachers who aim to be more culturally proficient can begin by choosing music that reflects their students' lives as well as other cultures not of their own. As music educators usually have great freedom in selecting repertoire, this should be an easy first step in becoming more culturally responsive. By developing relationships with students, and the classroom community, teachers can offer safe spaces for students to share and make connections with their classmates. Students will be able to make points of references and make connections in order to develop as culturally competent members of their school community. Understanding the context and meaning of songs can also lead to the development of critical consciousness by thinking critically about texts, addressing social issues past and present in the context of music. Teachers will also better know their students, enabling them to view their students as capable learners, casting aside deficit-centered viewpoints.

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CHAPTER FIVE: MANUSCRIPT 2, DEVELOPING CULTURALLY RELEVANT MUSIC PEDAGOGY USING KWANZAA PRINCIPLES[7]

Abstract

In this article I examine the ways in which Eurocentric paradigms are centered in early childhood music classrooms. Drawing from critical pedagogy and critical music pedagogy, I offer a guide to how I attempted to dismantle the White majoritarian status quo through a classroom celebration of Kwanzaa. In celebrating Kwanzaa, students participated in a holiday that centered Black and Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC). I chronicle how critical consciousness developed in early childhood students, how our classroom community grew to view music as a source of power and change, and how my teaching transformed.

Introduction

I am not sure how many more times I can teach or listen to generic holiday songs like "Winter Wonderland," because I am not sure exactly what students learn through these songs. Though students sing along, I wonder if they really *enjoy* these songs. I don't. Typically, I teach these songs because there are a limited number of "fan favorites" that many music teachers, including me, feel compelled to sing at holiday performances. Lately, as I have become more acclimated toward culturally relevant teaching and seeking to be more intentional in my instructional choices, I ponder what holidays songs

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children listen to at home, if any. I understand that families delight in seeing their children on stage during the annual holiday performances, but I am thinking that there must be something more to teach, to learn, and to embrace—that students will find more engaging.

Before I embarked on my own journey of culturally relevant teaching, I was happy with finding holiday songs that primarily interested me and could keep my attention for the weeks leading up to a winter concert. I am sorry to admit, but what interested students was not high on my list of concerns—much less what students might glean from lyrical content. Music was all too often, simply sounds. As long as the lyrics were not overtly offensive, I thought everything was just fine. However, as I began teaching at a school that had a nearly 100% African American population, I noticed that students did not mind telling me that my musical selections were not sufficient. Simply put, students hated my choices!

I began attending equity roundtable discussions relating to African American students led by Dr. Gloria Boutte at the University of South Carolina. I initially began attending these discussions because I realized that I was totally ineffective with my students. Discipline was out of control, and I realized, painfully, that it was my fault. The physical education teacher down the hall from me at the time was a White male and he had minimal issues. Students loved him. Whereas I could hardly get my class started over the students talking, I could hear a pin drop anytime my colleague open his mouth, whether it be in his gym class or at lunch duty. Students in my classes were clearly not interested in music in the way that I was teaching it, and that distressed me. Thankfully,

my doctoral coursework helped me address my inadequacies in teaching African American students.

My Background

I am a White male teacher and I have taught music in both elementary and secondary schools for 16 years. I began my work as a staff member teaching marching bands at predominately White, affluent high schools. When I was hired to teach full-time after graduating from my predominately White pre-service teaching program, I entered spaces that primarily served students of Color. Unfortunately, my music education program did not prepare me to teach diverse student populations and so I used the typical Eurocentric curriculum and approaches to teaching. By focusing on what I thought was simply "music," I was perpetuating Western European music, composers, and style of teaching that focuses heavily on notation and music theory. This approach left out music that reflected students of Color. In adhering to a Eurocentric paradigm, White students were not exposed to music that could have fostered their cultural competence, hindering all populations of students. Additionally, I was not addressing critical aspects of music teaching and learning.

In the elementary school where I currently teach, White students make up only eight percent of the school population, but other than the token "multicultural" songs like "Feliz Navidad," a catchy song that simply repeats "I want to wish you a Merry Christmas" in Spanish, our classroom resources are overwhelmingly designed with White students in mind. The artwork, characters in interactive videos, and repertoire like sea shanties (folk songs) dominate our district-adopted materials.

In my experience, most all students enjoy music, but not all students enjoy music class. In general music, teachers tend to stick with traditional European folk tunes to teach elements of music. The typical curricula, supplied by school districts via state approved texts and resources, often focus on Eurocentric music methodologies (Regelski, 2004), like how to read lines and spaces on the treble clef. These types of methodologies are hardly engaging to students in school. Many students in my classes, as I suspect is the case with students across the nation, are more interested in contemporary musical artists such as Beyonce or Da Baby than learning lines and spaces on a staff. In terms of musical repertoire, most elementary students in my classes are not connected with anyone who has worked on a railroad *all the live long day*.[8] There is nothing inherently wrong with these kinds of songs, but they cannot be the only songs for teaching music.

In a standard Eurocentric-dominated classroom, BIPOC music, experiences, and ways of knowing often go unrecognized or dismissed as not legitimate for an elementary music room. Students enter every classroom with knowledge from the outside world and that knowledge needs to be honored and valued. In most music classrooms, students' of Color voices and cultural systems are ignored or erased. Although music education remains on the margins of traditional school curricula (Abrahams, 2007), this does not mean that music educators do not have tremendous opportunities to teach in critical, transformational ways. In this article, I discuss how critical music pedagogy can look in elementary classrooms and share ways that I incorporate critical pedagogy in my first-grade music class. Examples of music that I use to transform my classroom from

[8] *I've Been Working on the Railroad* is a commonly taught American folk song first published by Princeton University in 1894.

Eurocentric-dominated content and pedagogies toward curriculum and instruction that are more culturally relevant are presented. Transformations for both the students and for me are highlighted. At the forefront, I admit that I am early in this journey, but believe that my efforts can be instructive to other elementary music educators who wish to make their classes more culturally responsive and less Eurocentric.

I share some of my experiences with celebrating Kwanzaa, a holiday that celebrates African American culture each year from December 26–January 1st. Created by activist Dr. Maulana Karenga, Kwanzaa was first celebrated in 1966. A goal of Kwanzaa is to give Black people an opportunity to celebrate Black culture rather than imitate the practices of the White mainstream culture (Karenga, 1997). Drawing from Karenga's reasoning, I wanted my students to have the opportunity for this kind of celebration, and learning, at our school. This means that teaching strictly traditional, Eurocentric music does nothing to liberate or emancipate students, or myself. Liberatory or emancipatory education goes beyond the simple transfer of knowledge (Freire, 1970). Students and teachers question the status quo and work together to promote equity in school and in society. In celebrating Kwanzaa, my class and I were able to reimagine what holiday celebrations in our school looked like, by celebrating Black culture instead of simply reifying Eurocentric celebrations in songs like "Frosty the Snowman" sung by Jimmy Durante. In a music classroom, emancipatory music learning ensures that students' cultures are represented in the musical repertoire. It also challenges what music is being performed as well as who is doing the performing. Meaning, The Temptations, Jackson 5, and Mariah Carey need to be heard in addition to Jimmy Durante, Burl Ives,

and Bing Crosby. Emancipatory music classroom includes space for interrogating why a particular song has a centered place in the classroom at all.

It is important that African American students engage in learning that celebrates their culture. It is important that my White students also celebrate Kwanzaa to develop their cultural competence and critical consciousness.

Critical Music Education

In 1992, scholars Terry Gates and Thomas Regelski met to create the MayDay Group to discuss ways that critical theory might be an appropriate framework to inform music education (Abrahams, 2007) and to facilitate a model of teachers and students as co-leaners who from one another and constructing knowledge together.[9] The teacher is not the font of all knowledge in this framework. After deliberating, the group presented seven action ideals for including criticality in music education. In Table 5.1, I give an action ideal presented by the MayDay Group and offer a way the ideal could be addressed in the music classroom.

These seven principles can be used to inform teaching planning and praxis year-round. By praxis, I mean taking theoretical knowledge and putting it into actual practice in the classroom. Indeed, I strive to include these principles in my daily approach although I am work in progress. For example, while engaging in the Kwanzaa unit with my students, I engaged with my students in critical reflection as we considered how singing Kwanzaa music in addition to our Eurocentric holiday music could change our

[9] The MayDay Group functions as an international think tank of music educators that aims to identify, critique, and change taken-for-granted patterns of professional activity, polemical approaches to method and philosophy, and educational politics and public pressures that threaten effective practice and critical communication in music education.

classroom. In doing so, I believe our classroom community realized that African American culture should be valued and honored. Students remarked, “This song is cool” or “I memorized the rap section last night.” At least a few students always screamed “yesssss!” when it was time to sing some of their favorite Kwanzaa songs. I considered social and cultural contexts as to why the Kwanzaa music was important and attempted to influence cultural change in our classroom by honoring African American cultural traditions. Kwanzaa was created to provide an explicit celebration of Black culture, something that is absent from most schools and locations where a dominant, White majoritarian narrative is held. Before embarking on this work, African American culture was certainly not present in my classroom, despite my classroom population being comprised of mostly African American students. Neglecting, or erasure, of African American epistemologies has perpetuated the marginalization of African Americans in society and schools. In our classroom, however, African American culture and the seven principles of Kwanzaa were brought to the fore of our learning in this unit.

This was exciting for me too. As I was learning about Kwanzaa along with most of my students, I felt stirred that we were making music that was both engaging and stimulating for them. There was also some nervousness on my part. For most of my career I considered myself to be the lone expert in the room. Here, I was embarking on something new along with students. What if they asked me a question that I did not know the answer to? What if I misspoke and relayed wrong information? I also considered that maybe I would not do Kwanzaa justice and I could inadvertently turn students away from wanting to celebrate the holiday. These were all questions that I needed to grapple with personally as I changed my own teaching methods. In order to make the change, I looked

toward critical pedagogy to help me understand why dismantling the classroom power structure—namely, dismantling myself as the person with the power—was important.

Table 5.1 MayDay Action Ideal and Ways to Address it in Music Classrooms

MayDay Group action ideal	Ways to address MayDay Ideals in music classrooms
1. Critically reflective music-making is basic to music education.	Move beyond nonsensical songs and strictly Eurocentric folk tunes to music which represents other cultures (e.g., African American spirituals; Hip Hop; Rhythm and Blues; Jazz).
2. Consideration of music's social and cultural contexts is integral to good theory and practice.	Discuss pertinent themes behind the music and why a particular piece of music is important in cultural contexts.
3. Music teachers can influence cultural change.	Decide to teach that music of all cultures is important and legitimate for music education.
4. Schools, colleges, and other musical institutions affect musical culture but need critical evaluation.	Be on guard for tokenism, White-saviorism, and other ways that music can be subversive toward viewing a culture through a positive lens.
5. Research and study of music teaching and learning need an interdisciplinary approach.	Collaborate with colleagues in the school to develop programs highlighting cultural celebrations.
6. The knowledge base of music educators should be both refined and broad.	It is not enough to be knowledgeable about the mechanics of music (i.e. intonation, balance, blend). Music educators need to be knowledgeable about students as people and their backgrounds.
7. Curriculum considerations are basic and should be guided by a critical, philosophical approach.	A critical approach needs to be at the fore of every unit or lesson taught. Messages are received by every music selection chosen or not chosen.

Note. Adapted from "Action for Change in Music Education: The MayDay Group Agenda," by J. Gates, 1999, in M. McCarthy (Ed.), *Music Education as Praxis: Reflecting on Music-Making as Human Action*, 23–24, University of Maryland.

Critical Pedagogy

For critical pedagogy, the goal of teaching and learning is to affect a change in a way that both the students and the teachers perceive the world (Freire, 1970). In my classroom, this means recognizing that the classroom can be transformed from a place of upholding the status quo of White dominance, particularly since my classroom is

populated by mostly Black students, into a space that is relevant, engaging, and meaningful to all students.

A metaphor that I continue to think about in terms of my teaching is that of mirrors and windows (Sims-Bishop, 1990). When I consider mirrors, I think about music programming and curriculum that will allow reflect the identities of my students and help to strengthen and enhance those identities. When I consider windows, I reflect on how music can facilitate cultural competence in a culture different than their own. Since the majority of my students are African American, their culture is now at the fore of my teaching. The addition of African American music serves as mirrors for African American students and windows for White and other students of color.

As the classroom teacher, I have come to realize that change must begin with me. I began by acknowledging the traditional hierarchy of the classroom and that I have power over in my classroom space and curriculum choices. As a White male teacher, I did not always understand the power dynamics that were present in my classroom. I could, and often did, rely heavily on Eurocentric music. Not until I was in graduate school did I realize the harm I was doing to my students, both Black and White alike. I wanted to grow as a teacher, and as a human, so I changed the way I taught to better serve my students. Examples of critical pedagogical changes I made in my classroom can be seen in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2 Critical Pedagogical Changes in My Classroom

Conventional songs	Commentary	Critical-oriented song	Commentary
"Jingle Bell Rock"	Lyrical content does nothing to enhance deeper cultural understandings	"Ujima"	Song describes the Kwanzaa principle of collective work and responsibility.
"Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree"	Beyond a dance tune, students do not learn about the holiday or ways to impact community	"Do They Know It's Christmas"	Written in response to a famine in Ethiopia, the song highlights perspective and gratitude.
"Jingle Bells"	Describes a sleigh ride.	"Give Love on Christmas Day," Jackson 5	Describes giving love to all. From the "man on the street to the couple upstairs". Instead of simply commercial gifts to loved ones, the song suggests giving love to those who are marginalized.

Being vulnerable has been a key motto of my journey to becoming a culturally relevant music pedagogue. I made and continue to make mistakes along the way. For example, after a comment made to me by my doctoral advisor (who is African American) and further reflecting on "Do They Know It's Christmas," I realized that it sends a dangerously missionary message. The song reifies stereotypes about starving children in Africa, and the children's only hope is that White people will save them. I learned that just because songs have something to do with Africa, African Americans, or Black culture, that does not mean that they are appropriate in our classroom. This means that teachers need to engage in dialogue with students about music selections and also understand that they are informants who can teach us. Embarrassingly, I did not consult with students as to what holiday music they enjoyed or listened to at home. My frame of mind, again, was that of White male expert. My doctoral advisor shared that songs like "Silent Night" by the Temptations and Yolanda Adams' rendition of "The Little Drummer Boy" are favorites in many Black homes.

At this point, I want to emphasize that teaching in culturally relevant ways takes a lot of effort and requires critical consciousness every day. Next, I detail how Kwanzaa was celebrated in my first-grade music classroom.

Kwanzaa in My First Grade Classroom

Since the student population at my school is mostly African American students, I have embraced Kwanzaa, an African American holiday that celebrates African principles and African American culture. According to Karenga (1997), the term Kwanzaa derives from the Swahili phrase meaning "first fruits." Each of the seven days of Kwanzaa is dedicated to one principle: (a) Umoja (unity); (b) Kujichagulia (self-determination); (c) Ujima (collective work and responsibility); (d) Ujamaa (cooperative economics); (e) Nia (purpose); (f) Kuumba (creativity); and (g) Imani (faith).

Many students were not familiar with Kwanzaa, or if they had heard the term, they did not necessarily know much of the history of the celebration. While not all of my African American students celebrate Kwanzaa in their homes, the overarching concept of Black culture resonated with them positively.

As a White male, I strived to be careful that I did not appropriate the holiday for myself. I respect the holiday and I engaged in celebrations with my school and classroom community. I am not as an expert on Kwanzaa, but a co-learner and co-celebrant. Video resources were available online, and we watched a few as a class. Our school library had two books about Kwanzaa that we read, *My Family Celebrates Kwanzaa* (Bullard, 2018) and *Seven Spools of Thread: A Kwanzaa Story* (Medearis, 2000). In the future, I would bring guest experts or family members of students who are knowledgeable about Kwanzaa to speak to the class. As my community rebounded from the COVID-19

pandemic, outside guests were not allowed in the building. It would also be great to attend a community celebration of Kwanzaa to learn more about the holiday. I also want to note that curriculum transformations do not occur with one particular celebration or unit a year. Kwanzaa is just one example of disrupting the status quo.

Our school choir, as many school choirs across the United States, is required by the school administration, to perform in a yearly Winter Concert. While the expectations are to sing holiday music, I have some leeway in the musical selections. With a critical pedagogy in mind, I have begun to incorporate Kwanzaa tunes and I spent time discussing the celebration with students, as well as providing time for them to share what they knew about the holiday and allowed time for students to ask questions. Mostly, students were eager to dance and sing to the Kwanzaa tunes.

Class communities discussed each of the seven principles and how they might be addressed in our classroom. We discussed that all students have worked together in groups (Ujima), identified as part of the school community (Umoja), and show creativity in music, art, and other subject areas (Kuumba). Students quickly realized that their own names, or the names of a friend, were shared with a Kwanzaa principle. In one class alone, we had both a Nia and an Imani. For these students who might not see their names, or other traditional African names in school settings, this was an impactful moment. Hearing their names in context of Kwanzaa was a surprise for most.

Teaching the song "Ujima" (2008), composed by Stanley Spottswood, an African American composer, educator, and minister, students explicitly learned about the principles of collective work and responsibility. In addition to discussing the lyrical content, the song demands students place the lyrical content into action musically. The

form of the song utilizes call and response by a soloist and group chorus, and then full chorus. Call and response are a feature of African American communication (Harold, 1976). There is a rap solo (with optional emphatic support from the chorus) in the C section. The ensemble is working collectively to produce a coherent piece of music, with a solo containing support from the peer group. What is also important is the musical style. The accompaniment includes syncopated rhythms, African djembes, and other instruments that invoke African ethos.

Drawing from Schmidt (2002), learning in the contextual situation of Kwanzaa, the class, and me as the teacher, were able to view music not simply as performative, but a source of power and a channel to connect music to the world. And in the case of my particular music room, the world outside of the school. Students commented that they "loved" the song and I always heard a resounding "Yes!" when it was time to rehearse it. As I am sure many music teachers can relate, I noticed a clear change in posture, and bodily enthusiasm when it was time to perform "Ujima," instead of the typical slouching or reclining on the open floor. There were significantly more smiling faces. For me, it was noticeable from the opening eight bar introduction that the students reacted differently than they had to the usual holiday standards we had already performed. The rhythm and instrumentation had the students moving to the music without any prompting from me. The cultural connection was there before any lyrical content was heard or sung. In hindsight, as a White teacher, it would have been even better if I had shown my students a recording of African American singers performing the song.

The music, both instrumental and lyrical, offered an opening to my students' own culture and society that is different from typical school culture and traditional holiday

tunes. The lyrical content went beyond walking through snow, meetings with snowmen, and rocking around a Christmas tree. All those things are fine, but the only culture being represented is a Eurocentric one. I would venture to say that most students, throughout most of the school day, are provided with a Eurocentric cultural worldview. I know they have been in my class before I began to make critical changes. Not only are Black students not represented, it is harmful for White students too, because they are solely reflected in these songs, giving them a mirror but are not provided a window into another cultural group. Since African American students are not provided mirrors in a Eurocentric paradigm, the ubiquity of these standards provides a distorted window into White culture for most of their school experiences. Conversely, during this unit, we talked about what could better our community—both our school community and home community, which do often overlap. Students offered ideas about keeping spaces clean for our school environment, offering support when someone is sad or sick, and making sure everyone participates in birthday celebrations. Meaning, if someone brings birthday treats to school, or a has party off campus, everyone should be included. While these are may seem like small concerns for early childhood students, the groundwork for collective responsibility is being laid now. This does not mean "Winter Wonderland," and other European-oriented song have no place in the music curriculum, but intentional space must be made for a critical pedagogical approach.

I emphasize that critical pedagogy should be expanded throughout the year. Kwanzaa is one opportunity to disrupt a Eurocentric holiday season, but of course there are ample occasions to teach critically throughout the year. In fact, it is important to teach through the lens of critical pedagogy on daily basis by providing windows into other

cultures and mirrors to reflect student cultures that are in the room. One of benefit of teaching music is the ability to highlight what African American musicians have contributed to our global culture—Jazz, Blues, Gospel, R&B, Hip Hop. My classroom will not stop with critical engagements of Kwanzaa and will explore historical music of Africa, spirituals, gospel music, R&B, and Motown, and Hip Hop. There are myriad contexts, social issues, and ways for students, and me, to grow critically.

Conclusion

By engaging in a critical pedagogy, students, teachers, and classrooms have the capability of being transformed from upholding the status quo of Eurocentric dominance to engaging in practices that transform the school space into equitable learning environments. Music teachers can consider the identity of their students and how teaching would look when students are placed at the center of music teaching. I have noticed more enthusiasm and reflection from my students, and I have learned a great deal about my students and myself as well. I believe my classroom has transformed from a place of typical music learning into a space of meaningful connection–with musical content as well as in community.

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CHAPTER SIX: MANUSCRIPT 3, I *THOUGHT* I WAS DOING RIGHT: STRIVING TO USE CULTURALLY RELEVANT TEACHING[10]

Abstract

Insights are shared from a five-month critical autoethnography examining a White music educator's implementation of culturally relevant pedagogy with predominantly African American first grade students. Four main themes were found: (a) unpreparedness as a teacher; (b) disconnection with the music curriculum; (c) guilt about feelings and actions regarding an equitable pedagogy; and (d) the need for internal growth in equity pedagogies and teaching diverse populations.

Keywords: culturally relevant pedagogy; autoethnography; critical race theory; critical Whiteness studies; early childhood; music education

> An individual has not started living until he can rise above the narrow confines of his individualistic concerns to the broader concerns of all humanity.
>
> —Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

My hope is that this article will provide insight to other teachers like me who have not been adequately prepared to effectively teach African American students (Boutte, 2022; King, 2015; Milner, 2010). The goal of this study was to examine myself as a White teacher trying to implement culturally relevant pedagogy. Since most pre-service

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teacher education programs focus solely on music-making with little regard for cultural and ethnic backgrounds of students, learning to teach in culturally relevant ways can be a challenge. Yet, music teachers have numerous opportunities to generate lessons around culture and celebrate cultural aspects of music in their curricula. As a beginning teacher, I did not feel prepared to teach African American students because my teacher preparation program demonstratively centered Eurocentric curriculum and pedagogy. With over a decade of experience (also known as teaching the same thing for 10 years), I found myself searching for professional development and other resources that de-centered Whiteness and placed students of Color at the fore of teaching and curriculum.

As a self-styled "progressive" who actively sought ways to implement pedagogical teaching practices in my classroom, I thought that because my heart was in the right place, my students were benefiting from my teaching. One of the many realizations that I had while conducting this study was that even the best-intentioned White teacher must seriously struggle with a lifetime of Whiteness. Interrupting the status quo of curriculum, giving up absolute control of the classroom, and learning that students in fact do not prefer everything that I like was quite jarring.

Using critical autoethnography, I identified challenges and successes encountered when striving to de-center Whiteness. I provide an overview of conceptual and theoretical frameworks—Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP), Critical Race Theory (CRT), and Critical Whiteness Studies (CWS). I briefly consider prior studies, the methodology, findings, and a discussion. I explain my motivation for focusing on Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP), what happened during my five-month attempts at using CRP with first graders, and changes among my students and myself.

Conceptual Framework: Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

Scholars have long sought strategies and techniques for teaching about diversity (Aronson & Laughter, 2016; Au & Jordan, 1981; Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011). One particular area of development that I find compelling is culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP). Culturally relevant pedagogy, coined by Gloria Ladson-Billings (1992), places emphasis on meeting the academic and cultural needs of students. In my classroom, I sought to teach in a way that channeled Ladson-Billings's three components of CRP: (a) academic excellence, (b) cultural competence, and (c) critical consciousness.

Academic Excellence

In terms of academic excellence, CRP is a pedagogy that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically using student culture to facilitate learning, skills, and attitudes (Ladson-Billings, 1994). Culturally relevant pedagogues think in terms of long-term academic achievement (Aronson & Laughter, 2016). Clarifying that student achievement is not that same thing as performing well on standardized tests (Ladson-Billings, 2006).

A variety of musical selections stretches teachers to find repertoire that centers students' cultural identities. Abril (2013) warned music teachers to avoid music that reinforces oversimplified stereotypes of students' culture. However, from a critical perspective such music could be used sites of critique. In my classroom, I was careful not to rely solely on music like the "Macarena" when delving into Latin music, instead focusing on influential figures like Carlos Santana. Most traditional school settings in the United States roots music in Western, classical traditions, with an end result of producing a product, such as a concert of performance. Scholars suggest moving beyond a product-

based to a process-based approach of authentically making music representative of other cultures (Abril, 2006; Dekaney & Robinson, 2014; Legette, 2003; Mixon, 2009). For example, my students learned about the genre of music associated with a particular culture; possible meaning(s) of songs, including students' interpretations; and information about artists and composers. I readily admit that in the past, I was certainly guilty to teaching solely the mechanics of the music, neglecting any important information about the music itself.

Cultural Competence

Culturally relevant pedagogues focus on cultural competence, which helps students appreciate and honor their own culture(s) while accessing the wider culture(s) of others. Cultural competence refers to an educator's ability communicate and interact with people from a different culture than their own (Lind & McKoy, 2016). When students and teachers interact from different cultures, reflective teachers can learn about their own culture and how they fit within the classroom community (Lind & McKoy, 2023). Culturally competent teachers connect their knowledge and skills to facilitate effective learning across cultures (Raiber & Teachout, 2014). Developing students' cultural competence is a skill that develops over time (Bond, 2017).

Culturally competent teachers seek to learn information about their school community and surrounding neighborhoods and use this information to influence their pedagogy to meet students' needs (Fitzpatrick, 2011). Abril (2009) described music teachers who were willing to navigate their curriculum through the perception of students from different cultural backgrounds than their own and then modify their pedagogy accordingly.

Realizing that teachers may educate students who are culturally, economically, or linguistically different from themselves, music teachers need to understand the cultural background of their students so that they can make relevant connections to the musical content and create an environment where diversity is respected (Dekaney & Robinson, 2014). Doyle (2014) noted that cultural conflict between the teacher and student can result in lower expectations and negative teacher attitudes toward students.

Critical Consciousness

Culturally relevant pedagogues seek to develop critical consciousness, which includes finding ways for students to recognize, understand, and critique inequalities (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Teachers must understand sociopolitical issues of race, class, gender, and sexuality in themselves as well as the causes before incorporating these issues in their teaching. Culturally relevant pedagogues realize that students must learn to navigate between home and school, and teachers must help students navigate an education system that oppresses them (Delpit, 2006; Ladson-Billings, 2006; Urrieta, 2005).

Critical consciousness is not as prevalent music education literature. A caring attitude, also referred to as culturally responsive caring (Lind & McKoy, 2016), helps teachers and students to develop critical consciousness. Instead of viewing cultural differences as deficits, music educators demonstrate culturally responsive caring by valuing diversity in the classroom and use it as a strength (Fleischaker, 2021). In order to be transformative, culturally relevant music educators must understand that they have the power to facilitate students' development of critical consciousness as it applies to music. In my journey, I probed myself on ways to translate CRP into CRMP. In Table 6.1, I

highlight ways academic excellence, cultural competence, and critical consciousness can be translated for Culturally Relevant Music Pedagogy.

Table 6.1 Translating Culturally Relevant Pedagogy for Culturally Relevant Music Pedagogy

Academic excellence	
Culturally Relevant Pedagogy	Culturally Relevant Music Pedagogy
All students are capable of learning.	All students can make music and can learn music concepts.
Students should be challenged with academic material.	Musical repertoires should engage and challenge young musicians.
High expectations should be held of all students.	Student musicians of all ethnicities should be held to high standards.
Cultural competence	
Students are knowledgeable about their own cultures.	Students are well versed in music of their own cultures.
Students should be fluent in at least one culture other than their own.	Students should be familiar with music and musical traditions of at least one culture other than their own.
Students' cultures are upheld in high esteem.	Musical traditions of students are valued and used as a bridge to cultural and academic learning.
Critical consciousness	
Students should examine inequalities in school and society.	Student musicians critique musical inequities in school and society.
Students learn strategies for addressing inequities.	Student musicians learn strategies for disrupting inequities.

Two complementary theoretical frameworks helped me understand the dynamics and interplays in music classrooms: (a) Whiteness as Property (Harris, 1993) and (b) Critical Whiteness Studies. A brief overview of each and their relevance to my thought processes follow.

Theoretical Framework: Whiteness as Property

Harris (1993) also defines property rights as the rights to disposition, right to use and enjoyment, and the right to reputation and status. The inalienability of Whiteness, as something that cannot be bought or sold, should be considered property because of its

perceived value. Whiteness as property is the right to use and enjoyment because Whiteness is something to be experienced and used as a resource; it is used to fulfill the will and exercise power. Because of the structural basis of race, Whiteness can be used to leverage power on societal, political, and institutional levels. Whiteness can also be property in terms of status and reputation. Being White holds reputational interest and is bound with identity and personhood. I use Whiteness as Property to understand how Whiteness is upheld in schools, classrooms, pre-service preparation programs, and Eurocentric music curricula.

Theoretical Framework: Critical Whiteness Studies

Critical Whiteness Studies (CWS) helped me to make sense of my own feelings as a White teacher that teaches predominately African American students. CWS recognizes how White people perform their roles as White people and then go on to suffuse organizations and the public sphere with values common to the White middle class (Haviland, 2008). According to Haviland (2008), Whiteness is powerful, and Whiteness employs various techniques to maintain power. Whiteness is a system of advantage in politics and culture (Roediger, 2002), and is often maintained by the denial of its existence (Banning, 1999). Whiteness is upheld through the discourse of color-blindness (Frankenberg, 1993), eluding critique (Gomez et al., 2004) and a refusal to engage in self-reflection and interrogation into the White individual's complicity in Whiteness.

White complicity is the intentional or unintentional benefitting from group privileges of racism that simultaneously marginalize people of color. In other words, all White people can be complicit in racism, by virtue of benefitting from these privileges

even though an individual cannot renounce them through individual action alone (Applebaum, 2011). I examined ways in which I maintain White supremacy intentionally or unintentionally through my engaging in culturally relevant pedagogical discourses.

Methodology and Design

Critical Autoethnography

Critical Autoethnography (CAE) was used to engage in a cultural analysis through personal reflexivity and to examine my interpersonal and cultural experiences of identity and transformation from the inside out (Boylorn & Orbe, 2014; Hughes & Pennington, 2017). Using this methodology, I positioned myself as a site of cultural inquiry within a cultural context (Reed-Danahay, 1997). I critiqued my personal experience against extant research, bringing to light aspects of cultural life (Ellis, 2011).

Context and Participants

Honey Creek Elementary School is a Title I school with a population of 704 students.[11] A STEMS magnet program is within the school. The largest majority of students are African American at 73%, with 3% Asian, 8% Hispanic, 9% White, and 7% "other ethnicity." I worked five first grade classes with class sizes ranging from 17–22 students.

Classroom Description

This study took place in a school located in Central School District 7.[12] A typical class for me involves beginning with vocal exercises and explorations. I usually ask students to repeat tonal patterns after me, in a tonal mode that is different than the day

[11] Honey Creek Elementary School is a pseudonym.

[12] Central School District 7 is a pseudonym.

before. After the patterns, we sing a song in that mode. Then we do at least two activities in different meters, so that the students are exposed to at least two different tonalities and two different meters in each class. We might move to movement activities, or perhaps work on a song using ukuleles or mallet instruments.

One resource that I have in my classroom, is the music textbooks *Spotlight on Music* (Leonard, 2008). Since this text is not its current edition, as my school district has not updated the class set in over 10 years, I never use them. The newest resource that was adopted is an online music platform that contains songs, interactive games, and videos called QuaverEd (2003). In the videos, the host is a White, middle-aged British male. Also contained in the videos are many child actors, very few of whom are BIPOC. The songs included in the program are mostly Eurocentric nursey rhymes, common children's songs, or newer songs found within the Eurocentric paradigm of children's music. In other words, there are few, if any, songs based in hip hop, Latino/a, Asian, or other contexts of music making.

As a White male, the provided curriculum is geared toward me, and many of the songs are already familiar to me. Further, the songs are easy to teach, especially in this current political environment because the songs are nonsensical. I do not believe I will receive any pushback from parents about green and speckled frogs, peas porridge hot, or about how a dinosaur ate my lunch. The ability to lazily sit with these songs, even though my students are not reflected in them or particularly like them very much, speaks to how Whiteness has a hold on my provided curriculum. The music that my students hear in class is rarely reflective of what they hear at home.

Drawing from Harris's (1993) notion of Whiteness as property, teacher education programs, and classroom music teachers in return, feel ownership over the content that is taught in early childhood classrooms. In addition to feeling a sense of ownership over the music itself, teachers have a right to exclude students from participating in music that is not relevant to them; music that does not provide real-life contexts for their lives. Music written or performed by BIPOC individuals or groups can be completely ignored, and it is possible that in an early childhood context, these practices will ever be challenged by an administrator or parent.

Research Questions

This study was guided by five research questions.

1. In what ways does White supremacy appear in an elementary music school curriculum?
2. What curricular transformations occur when I, as a White teacher, seek to make my music curriculum more relevant to students of Color?
3. What dispositional transformations occur when I, as a White teacher, seek to make my music curriculum more relevant to students of Color?
4. What happens when students of Color engage in a curriculum that deviates from the traditional Eurocentric-normalized elementary music class?
5. What happens when White students engage in a curriculum that deviates from the traditional Eurocentric-normalized elementary music class?

Data Sources

Primary data sources were: (a) ethnographic field notes, (b) reflexive journal, (c) lesson plans, (d) SC General Music K–8 Standards, and (e) curriculum resources (QuaverEd, 2003).

Ethnographic Field Notes

I created sticky notes or memos to document my actions, impressions, emotions, ideas, and student comments concerning emerging themes, reoccurring themes, topics, and patterns (Chang, 2008). These notes are important because they contextualize my experiences by sharing emotions and decision-making are often ignored in most research (Kincheloe, 2008). I aimed to identify occurrences, patterns, or events (Chang, 2008) that would provide comprehension into what I gained from my experience has a first-grade music teacher. I composed memos and then journal entries regarding my emotions and ideas, and to make sense of my relationship with others and to interpret meaning in the data. For instance, on one note I wrote (3/30/2023), “I am glad the kids are into this music, it is actually a song I like too. I remember it from an Adam Sandler movie.” That note was written about an excerpt I played from the Sugar Hill Gang’s song “Rapper’s Delight” (1980). Even if African American students were unfamiliar with the song, the I could tell by the immediate dancing and smiling that the genre spoke to the students. Cultural competence was facilitated by providing a mirror to African American students, reflecting the students and African American culture. White students were given a window into African American culture that was celebrated and enjoyed in the lesson (Sims-Bishop, 1990).

These data consisted of recorded events during one semester (January–May 2023). For triangulation, I employed methods of (a) comparing, contrasting, and offering critically reflexive critiques of personal experience against existing research; and (b) making notes about student interactions. I cross-referenced these data with relevant literature that centered culturally relevant pedagogy, critical race theory (Whiteness as property), and critical whiteness studies.

In Table 6.2, I provide an example of a field note I took after a class. I then make sense of my thought by referencing it with CRP, CRT, and CWS.

Table 6.2 Sample Field Note and References

Field note	CRP reference	CRT reference	CWS reference
"I feel guilty that I deprived years and years of former students from listening and teaching about hip hop music in my class."	Teachers should look for ways to develop a closer relationship between students' home culture and the school (Ladson-Billings, 1995).	Systems of oppression, marginalization, racism, and inequity and present and ingrained in the fabric of systems of education (Milner, 2013).	White people often react with guilt when they begin to realize they have perpetuated inequality (Howard, 1999).

In the field note from Table 6.2, I describe the feeling of guilt because I did a disservice to hundreds, if not thousands, of former students by ignoring and erasing African American culture from music classrooms. I referenced that feeling with each note to analyze structural/systemic implications with (CRT), the vantage point that addressed my Whiteness and how/why I feel guilt (CWS), and ways that I could learn to teach more equitably (CRP). Using CRT, I understood that I could centralize a Eurocentric music curriculum and pedagogy because that is what is expected in schools and maintains the status quo. This meant that I would likely not receive resistance from school boards, administration, or even parents. In fact, not one parent has ever complained about the

types of music I taught when I adhered to traditional, Eurocentric music and teaching. My pre-service program taught me to center whiteness and to continue this ideology in schools. CWS helped me understand that as a White person who did not, and does not, always do what is best for all students, but has good intentions, I experienced guilt as I continued to be complicit in perpetuating Whiteness at the expense of students of Color. CRP helped me to understand that I can break the cycle of inequity by centering students and their cultures, not myself or my culture, in curriculum and pedagogy. In engaging in a more equitable teaching method, I expect that I could meet resistance from school boards, administration, and parents. In adhering to required standards, appropriate music–lyrical content free from curse words and physical violence, and solid rationale as to why or what I am teaching, I feel prepared to have those conversations. A good practice is to have proactive conversations with administrators and collaborate with others in the community with more insight in a given area than I do.

Since time passed between actual classroom events and my recording journal entries, there were times when I might have forgotten exact details or lost the context of a memory that was part of the data (Chang, 2008). At times when I was unable to recall exact memories, I coded as much data as possible and documented the experience in my journal. I was in the position to take notes contemporaneous notes most of the time, or very shortly after a thought or interaction. I kept sticky notes in various places around my classroom so that I could my jot thoughts. This occurred most often when students worked with a partner or in small groups. I also kept yellow legal pads to write longer notes in between classes, during my lunch time, or after school. As I am the primary participant, I did not place any other participants in an at-risk situation.

Reflexivity Journal

It was important for me to keep a reflexivity journal so that I could document my interpretation of my experience as a researcher and music teacher. My experiences as both a teacher and White male informed my own cultural positionality and bias and to leave myself out as a participant would negate the purpose of this study. My journal were spiral bound notebooks that I kept with me at home and at school. I coded drafts by hand into the notebooks. For example, I wrote on March 13th, 2023: "I am glad the kids are enjoying this music. I wish I knew more about it or grew up with it myself. I feel like I am ready to move on."

South Carolina General Music Standards K–8

The South Carolina Department of Education publishes standards for General Music, beginning in kindergarten and ending in the eighth grade. The standards include what to teach, but not how to teach them. Pedagogy and implementation of standards is the responsibility of the music teacher. I address standards in my lesson plans. As the standards are heavily notation-based, albeit with some improvisation and aural skills included, I find them to replicate the Eurocentric ways to music-making that I myself learned when I was a K–8 student.

Curriculum Resources

My school district offers a single curriculum resource, an online platform called Quaver. Quaver is hosted by a White, British male named Graham. The Quaver software is not mandatory to use. In fact, many of my colleagues do not use it at all and I use it sparingly. Quaver attempts to utilize some Eurocentric methods such as Gordon and Kodaly, but neither in great detail. The program also has units on music history but

covers only Western ‘classical’ music beginning with the Baroque period and ending with Impressionism. Music outside of Europe and the United States is not addressed in a holistic way. For instance, Quaver includes one West African folk tune called Abebe. I was able to also use online resources through PBS, The Smithsonian, and university websites to influence my lesson plans and show occasional short videos to students.

Lesson Plans

I wrote lesson plans covering six units. The lesson plans addressed components of CRP: (a) academic excellence, (b) cultural competence, (c) critical consciousness. In making the lessons culturally relevant, I drew music that reflected the culture of my students. Sample lesson plans are in Appendix A. In Table 6.3, I list each research question and then provide the data source used to help answer the question, as well as a data analysis.

Each research question utilized a data sources. In answering the question regarding the curriculum, data sources were more plentiful because I could use South Carolina General Music K–8 standards, district resources, and my lesson plans. Each of the following questions came from my thoughts, feelings, and observations through my use of sticky notes and reflexive journaling. When I analyzed the sources, I analyzed the curriculum resources and standards. For questions that I answered through notes or journaling, I coded my entries as noted in the data analysis section below.

Table 6.3 Summary of Research Questions, Data Sources, and Analyses

Research questions	Data sources	Data analyses
In what ways does White supremacy appear in an elementary music school curriculum?	South Carolina General Music K–8 Standards, SC and Richland Two curriculum resources. Lesson plans.	Document analyses of district and state music standards and curriculum resources. Reflexive journal coding.
What curricular transformations occur when I, as a White teacher, seek to make my music curriculum more relevant to students of Color?	Reflexive journal. Lesson plans.	Initial coding of journal and sticky notes .
What dispositional transformations occur when I, as a White teacher, seek to make my music curriculum more relevant to students of Color?	Reflexive journal Sticky notes	Initial coding of journal and notes. Sticky notes.
What happens when students of Color engage in a curriculum that deviates from the traditional Eurocentric-normalized elementary music class?	Reflexive journal. Sticky notes.	Initial coding of journal and notes.
What happens when White students engage in a curriculum that deviates from the traditional Eurocentric-normalized music class?	Reflexive journal. Sticky notes.	Initial coding of journal and sticky notes.

Data Analysis

The data sources were analyzed by reflecting, interrogating, and detailing my interpretations of the data. I used: (a) coding; and (b) themes to analyze, interpret and make sense of the data to then create descriptions and findings of this study.

Themes

I sought to find emerging themes, recurring emotions, and patterns as I investigated the data. These investigations required that I visit my past in order to gain an understanding of how my identity as a person and teacher may have influenced culturally relevant pedagogy in my classroom (Chang, 2008). I identified four themes: (a) unpreparedness; (b) disconnection; (c) guilt; and (d) need for growth.

Table 6.4 Theme, Description, and Example

Theme	Description	Example
Unpreparedness	As I reviewed my teacher preparation course transcripts and reflected on my undergraduate experience, I recognized that was not prepared to teach diverse populations. As I constructed my lesson plans for this study, I had to research elementary music literature on my own and had few support systems from people who were knowledgeable about constructing culturally relevant music lessons.	Although I have two degrees in music education and over a decade of music teaching experience, constructing a curriculum and pedagogy that explicitly centered CRP was new. I had implemented components of CRP in previous lessons, but I never brought CRP to the fore of my teaching. In many ways, I was learning along with my students, and this was a new and sometimes uncomfortable experience. (Reflexive journal; 3/7/23)
Disconnection	I felt a disconnection with the music curriculum because most of the music and cultural aspects of the music I was unfamiliar with. I had no relational experience with what I was teaching.	As I was teaching about the music of Africa and Southeast Asia, I felt a sense of disconnection and unrelatability. I sometimes felt like I was teaching other people's music and that the music of these cultures living in a silo that would be discussed for a week and then perhaps never again. (Reflexive journal; 3/20/23)
Guilt	A sense that as I was sometimes disconnected from what I was teaching for a semester, my students might feel this way most of the time since I taught from a Eurocentric paradigm. I realized that over the course of my career, my position as a teacher and a White man, was fostering my students' potential alienation from music learning.	When I recognized my own sense of disconnection from my teaching, but also noticing the increase in my students' engagement, I felt that I was depriving them of the joy of music-making. I felt a sense of guilt that my position as a White teacher was facilitating their own potential sense of disconnection and that I was responsible for that as their teacher. (Reflexive journal; 4/6/23)
Need for growth	Awareness of the need to continually educate myself in new and different ways to teach while centering CRP.	I reflected that every aspect of music teaching can be taught in CRP modes. For instance, learning musical symbols and signs, when put into practical use, can address the components of CRP. (Reflexive journal; 5/2/23)

Unpreparedness

As I reviewed my teacher preparation course transcripts and reflected on my undergraduate experience, I was not trained in teaching diverse populations. My preparation focused on what I considered to be the mechanics of music-making: intonation, balance, blend, rhythmic accuracy, and other aspects of Eurocentric

musicality. What was noticeably missing from my pre-service training was the concept of student-centered teaching and teaching of diverse populations. By disregarding any notion of diversity and student preferences, pedagogy and curriculum normalized a pattern of Eurocentric dominance, and fostered normative Whiteness (Reddy, 1998).

As I constructed my lesson plans for this study, I had to research elementary music literature on my own and had few support systems from those that were knowledgeable about constructing culturally relevant music lessons. Although I earned two degrees in music education and over a decade of music teaching experience, constructing a curriculum and pedagogy that explicitly centered CRP was new. I had implemented components of CRP in previous lessons, but I never brought CRP to the fore of my teaching. In many ways, I was learning along with my students, and this was a new and sometimes uncomfortable experience. Teaching grounded in CRP was also sometimes exhausting. I had years of developed habits and a canon of music that I knew well. Uprooting what was familiar took a lot of time and effort to implement effectively.

Disconnection

I felt a disconnection with the music curriculum because most of the music and cultural aspects of the music I was unfamiliar with; I had no relational experience with what I was teaching. As I was teaching about the music of Africa and Southeast Asia, I felt a sense of disconnection and unrelatability. I sometimes felt like I was teaching other people's music (because I was), and that the music of these cultures were living in a silo that would be discussed for a week and then perhaps never again if I did not continue learning more repertoire.

This feeling of disconnection unmoored me. What shook me most was the feeling I had when students were clearly engaged with the music more than they had ever been, but the genre did not speak to me, nor did I have a background in listening to it or teaching it. The first unit was about the music of Africa. Students were able to chant, sing, and develop their own ostinatos individually and in small groups. At some points, as students were noticeably engaged in the lessons–drumming, swaying with the music, jumping in excitement—I reflected on what was it about this particular styles that resonated so much with them. Was it that the music sounded cool? It does. But I believe there was another layer that resonated with these students–the performers looked like them, providing a thread of commonality.

I was no longer in the role of supreme music guru. Drawing from Harris (1993), the curriculum in my music room was entrenched in a White, Eurocentric normality. My position as a White person, the so-called expert in the room, allowed me to perpetuate a curriculum from a White, dominant orientation for my entire career. This is perhaps this is what teaching and learning was really supposed to be about, and I had spent years up to this point doing it wrong. I wondered if my students would be better served by a teacher of Color who enjoyed these styles of music as much as the students did.

Guilt

As I was sometimes disconnected from what I was teaching for the semester, I sensed my students might feel this way most of the time since I taught primarily from a Eurocentric paradigm. I realized that over the course of my career, my position as a White, male teacher fostered my students potential alienation from music learning. Likewise, when I recognized my own sense of disconnection from my teaching, but also

noticing the increase in my students' engagement, I felt that I had been depriving them of the joy of music-making. I felt a sense of guilt that my position as a White teacher was facilitating their own potential sense of disconnection and that I was responsible for that as their teacher.

My egocentric aspect of Whiteness was threatened by not being centered in the curriculum I was participating in with my students. It was also a blow to my ego, that of a well-educated liberal, to know that I was participating in White complicity (Applebaum, 2011) and that did not feel good. I began to feel guilty because I recognized how Whiteness had served me by keeping me comfortable in the classroom but had done a great disservice to my students. White fragility, as described by DiAngelo (2018) delineates the strategies White people use to subvert conversations about race and racism leads to a form of fragility tied to the concept of White guilt. White guilt is motivated by the recognition of White privilege and the acknowledgement of racist attitudes or behaviors (Iyer et al., 2003). This was certainly a concept for me to grapple with over the course of this study.

Need for Growth

I am aware that I need to continually educate myself in new and different ways to teach while centering CRP. Having completed this study, I learned a great deal. One lesson is that I still have a lot to learn. Unlearning Whiteness, making continuous and daily choices to not comply with White supremacy may very well be a lifelong endeavor. I am fortunate that I live in a community that is diverse and that has opportunities for continued growth and education. As great as conferences, workshops, and seminars are, for me, my attendance at these functions is not enough. I must continue to journal and

reflect about my teaching practices and must listen seriously to my students. As a White male who is nearing middle age, it is easy for me to show up and teach what I already know. But I have learned that in doing so, I am perpetuating White supremacy. In my complicity, I am hurting my students and our wider community. I felt guilty for how I taught over the course of my career. It is time to do something different and grow.

As I close this section, I reflect on one example of my growth. In a doctoral class a guest professor spoke about how Black boys play in school. The professor explained that Black boys often engage in horseplay, and in horseplaying in school, they are punished for being themselves. As an aside, I am one of three boys myself. My younger brothers are twins and are four years younger than me. I made a comment that I thought it was not unusual for boys of all races to engage in horseplay. My insensitivity to the plight of Black boys' play, and subsequent punishment by teachers and administrators, led to a rebuke of my statement by a Black male in the class. My White fragility did not allow for me to see the undue and over punishment of Black boys, which led to my own hurt feelings, centering me in the conversation as the hurt White person. This led to the deflection of the original point about the disproportionate harmful punishment of Black boys. Months later when I reflected on this interaction, I recognized that my selfishness and navel gazing had not allowed me to be empathic to the experiences of young Black boys. I now think about what the imposition of my White gaze means for the Black boys whom I teach. I am a work in progress but am consciously trying to not center myself but my students of Color.

Findings: White Supremacy in Elementary Music Curriculum

Curricular Transformations

I found that I was largely unprepared to completely revamp an entire music curriculum on my own in order to make it culturally relevant for my students. As I noted, I did not receive any culturally relevant music training in my pre-service teacher education program. These topics were not addressed in my graduate music program either. In fact, as a doctoral student I explicitly studied culturally relevant modes of learning, but the arts were noticeably absent in the curricular studies. I should have extrapolated from CRP tenets and found my own resources before engaging in this study, but I realize now that I was not really connecting theory to my own practice.

Thankfully, prior research and texts were available for me to consult and learn from, including websites run by universities, The Smithsonian Museum, and PBS. The first shift, and for me the most challenging shift, was replacing a Eurocentric-notation based curriculum with a curriculum that emphasized aural skills, community or student-based learning, and improvisation (Lind & McKoy, 2016). That is not to say that traditional or Eurocentric curriculums do not address aural skills, student-based learning, or improvisation entirely—they do. The focus, however, is often on reading notes and rhythms as presented by the teacher. And of course, every teacher is different, regardless of pre-service background or preferred musicianship. I was a tuba player in my undergraduate training, so my ensemble experiences were limited to orchestral and standard wind ensemble concert music. I had to work very hard to move away from what was comfortable and from what I already knew. This took a tremendous amount of time

and conscious effort. And I still do not think it was quite enough. As I allude to later, overcoming a lifetime of Whiteness will in fact take a lifetime.

As I began teaching lessons for this study, I noticed that our classroom did not include many references to music from other cultures. In the back of the room is a piano, one leg held upright by an old wooden doorstop. It has not been played in years and undoubtedly needs tuning. Also in the back of the room are xylophones and metallophones, some on tables and bass bars underneath. There are bookshelves with old music textbooks on the right side of the room, and there is a cabinet that holds compact discs that go with the textbooks, but we do not have a device that plays CDs. There is a bulletin board with green material that includes many musical notation symbols. The students like to recall which ones they know and what sounds they make. For instance, two eighth notes are counted as "du-de" and they like to count the rhythms they see. This is an example of Eurocentric notation-based learning that I engaged in heavily before this study.

The second shift I made was including music from other cultures, and continents beyond Europe and North America. For the purposes of this study, I created six units of lesson plans (see Appendix A). Each week centered on a different genre, culture, style, or issue within music. The units were chosen because they represented each ethnicity and culture represented in our classroom. We began with the musical culture representative of our African American students beginning with the music of Africa, we then shifted to Latino/a music and culture and ended with music and culture of Asia. Under the framework of culturally relevant pedagogy, each unit focused on the three components of academic excellence, cultural competency, and critical consciousness.

The first unit was about the music of Africa. As the majority of my students are African American, and some later units dealt specifically with music of African Americans, it was important for my students to understand the historical origins of African music (Boutte, 2022) and how that music has influenced the music of today. Students learned that many of the instruments they see and hear, and play in our music classroom, have their first iterations in Africa. Students were able to chant, sing, and develop their own ostinatos individually and in small groups. At some points, as students were noticeably engaged in the lessons—djembe drumming, swaying with the music, and jumping in excitement. I reflected on what was it about this particular styles that resonated so much with them. Was it that the music sounded cool? It does. But I believe there was another layer that resonated with these students because the performers looked like them, providing a thread of commonality.

The second unit extended the first and students learned about spirituals, blues, and jazz. There were many opportunities to discuss the lyrics of spirituals and address critical consciousness in ways that first-graders could understand, especially in songs like "Follow the Drinking Gourd."[13] I was able to build on lessons from what they had previously learned in their social studies class about Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad. Students were able to work on scatting, a type of verbal improvisation in jazz music, and students were able to learn and perform a jazz bass line.

The third unit was about Motown and Protest music. Students learned about the music of the 1960s Civil Rights movement. Students learned the song "We Shall

[13] "The drinking gourd" is a nickname for the Big Dipper; a stellar constellation that helped guide people who were enslaved north in their escape to freedom.

Overcome" and learned the name Mahalia Jackson. We also learned about Michael Jackson and the rest of the Jackson 5 and discussed the contributions that African American musicians provided to the world. In the fourth unit we learned about hip hop; the culture of hip hop, the antecedents that led to early hip hop, how hip hop has extended to today, and I learned what students already knew about hip hop and what they were listening to at home. I was either marginally aware of or entirely unaware of many current hip hop artists. As a class, we were also able to create some of our own hip hop beats using DJ equipment that was provided to our school through grant money.

My school also has a small Latino/a and Asian population. In week five, we explored music rooted in Latin cultures, singing and chanting music extracted from Latin folk tunes. In particular, we focused on rhythms and instruments used in Puerto Rican and Mexican music and concluded our week with Carlos Santana's song "Oye Como Va." We discussed how Santana's version is different than an earlier version by Tito Puente, which includes differences in instrumentation, style, and tempo. We concluded unit five by researching how individual Latin American artists have contributed to Latin American music.

In unit six we discussed Asian music. We learned about different Asian tonalities, including the pentatonic scale, which is based on five pitches instead of the Western diatonic scale of seven pitches. We learned about different instruments that have their origin in Asia, as well as Asian folk tunes like "Sakura" and how the lyrics influences the melody. We isolated China in particular to discuss how music can lead to social change.

Providing time to focus on the cultures represented by our classroom population allowed for each student to be provided a mirror into each culture. Latino/a and Asian

students in particular have rarely heard the music of their culture in my classroom because I did not do good job in providing music from these cultures for our students to learn. It is important to note that I guard myself against tokenism. In my teaching, I intentionally center cultural groups deeply, rather in just one unit or lesson. In the next section, I delve deeper into what occurred with each group of students and myself.

What Happened With Students of Color

What I noticed early on in this experience is that my students were learning about their own culture as well as the culture others. Students learned Spanish words, could compare and contrast musical styles between Carlos Santana and Tito Puente, and were making music through acoustic classroom instruments and through our DJ boards—making music in their own culture and the culture of another BIPOC group. Before I embarked on this intentional deep dive into culturally relevant pedagogy, it would not be unusual for me to find students daydreaming, not on task, or talking to each other about something that did not pertain to our class. Students were physically present in class, but there was no spirit. This unequivocally changed during the course of the six-week units.

Students were far more engaged. In the first unit, I had students dancing enthusiastically to different rhythms and beats, unprompted by me. Students were showing verve in responding to the music. I rarely, if ever, experienced that kind of enthusiasm in the context of my typically planned lessons. I noticed that students were making connections about instruments that were used in our classroom with their own lives. When I brought out some percussive instruments, students commented that they used tambourines in their church. That led to discussions about their community, other ways that they recognize instruments between home and school, and the origins of the

instruments. The connection of home and school went further with the music itself, especially when discussing music of jazz, Motown, and hip hop. Although many students were familiar with elements of these genres, now students were making music themselves through the use of the DJ equipment as well as scatting without the use of technology.

Shamefully, students of Latin and Asian descent did not often see themselves represented in my classroom. One Spanish-speaking student, who arrived from Spain in January 2023, helped translate "Cielito Lindos." No one had ever asked her to share her expertise in Spanish in my room. She had spent hours with the ESOL teacher trying to learn English since she arrived at our school. This girl was able to finally demonstrate her skills to the class, providing her classmates an opportunity to see what she knew, something different from them perhaps only recognizing that she *didn't* understand English.

One aspect of these lessons that surprised me was the students' willingness to engage in dialogue. My preconceived notion was that when students came to music, or any other related arts class (art, physical education, media center) they were there to have play and maybe learn something while they were there. In the past, most of my lessons centered around making-music with little to no talking from me beyond immediate instruction. Students were very engaged and shared what they already knew about the Underground Railroad, were excited to tell me the hip hop lyrics they created and were supportive of their Spanish-speaking classmate. I heard about Harriet Tubman and how she "followed the Big Dipper." That was a great opportunity for us to learn the spiritual, "Follow the Drinking Gourd." Students had opportunities to create lyrics and in our jazz unit, we learned how to scat. Later, students created their own raps. Many of the lyrics

that students created were about each other. One student rapped, “I like King. He’s so cool. He’s coolest in the wide whole school.”

What Happened With the White Students

The number of White students in first grade was small—11 across the grade level. However, I noticed that these students also seemed to enjoy the units. The White students were just as engaged and enthusiastic as the students of Color. Not a single student mentioned or recognized that there were no Eurocentric songs, White musicians, or traditional classical music. In fact, I believe that a culturally relevant approach might have been a bit of fresh air for them, too. After one lesson, a White student commented asking “Is it really already time to go?” which indicated that the lesson was enjoyable. I perceived that because the class was engaged, the White students were engaged as well. Students learned history of BIPOC music, and students were able to sing songs and understand stories behind the songs like “The Drinking Gourd,” for instance. Students learned the lineage from the music of Africa all the way to modern day rap, including artists that many enjoyed like Lil Nas X. Connections were made between instruments known and played in our classroom, the xylophone, and its antecedent in African idiophones. Students learned the impact BIPOC music has had on all music.

My Dispositional Transformation

In examining themes that pertained directly to me, I identified: (a) lack of preparation to teach in a culturally relevant mode; (b) feelings of disconnection; (c) feelings of guilt; and (d) a need for growth. In order to make sense of these feelings, I draw from the framework of Critical Whiteness Studies. Reflecting on my teacher preparation program at a Predominantly White Institution, it was focused on what I

would consider to be the bare bones of music-making: clarinet fingerings, basic intonation, conducting patterns. What I now know and realize, is that all education is political (Freire, 1970). By not considering race and culture, the pre-service teacher education I received helped to reinforce the status quo of Whiteness, meaning White people, culture, and viewpoints are the dominant, normalized epistemology of our society.

When I began developing a curriculum that diverted from the Eurocentric model, I was excited to branch out to look for new materials. As I learned new songs, refreshed my knowledge of different tonalities, styles, and genres, I was really looking forward to engaging with my students. This is difficult to admit, but while I was happy that my students were excited and engaged in the lesson, but it occurred to me that none of this new material reflected me at all. Once I began teaching in ways that did not reflect my Whiteness, I felt disconnected. I felt no connection or ownership over the music. Then I began to wonder if I had ever been an effective teacher and if I had actually been hindering my students in the past instead of helping them to grow as musicians.

Frankenberg (1993) explained that all races live racially structured lives, and that Whiteness has a set of linked dimensions that includes racial advantage, egocentrism, and oblivion to Whiteness as a race. What I realized in this study is that my Whiteness had completely swallowed my previous curriculum. I was hardly addressing any component of CRP in the past, even though I thought I was, partly because my Whiteness was infiltrating the curriculum without me being completely aware. It was not until my White equilibrium was disrupted for an extended period of time did I feel unsettled. My egocentric aspect of Whiteness was threatened by not being centered in the curriculum I

was participating in with my students. It was also a blow to my ego, that of a well-educated liberal, to know that I was participating in White complicity (Applebaum, 2011).

Through documenting this process through journaling and contemporary notes, as well as being aware of my feelings during lessons themselves, I felt a sense of guilt. As I began to realize how much more engaged my students were, how much more we seemed to be learning as a community and recognizing my own sense of detachment from the curriculum, I began to feel guilty because I recognized how Whiteness had served me by keeping me comfortable in the classroom but had done a great disservice to my students. White fragility, as described by DiAngelo (2018) delineates the strategies White people use to subvert conversations about race and racism leads to a form of fragility tied to the concept of White guilt. White guilt is motivated by the recognition of White privilege and the acknowledgement of racist attitudes or behaviors (Iyer et al., 2003). As my Whiteness went unexamined, I felt great before I took on this study. I never had to confront how my Whiteness affected everything and everyone in my classroom, even the White students. I could show up and happily do my work using the songs I knew and loved and feel good about doing it. I did not understand how my Whiteness was hurting those in my classroom. Everyone in my classroom. Depriving students of a quality education is the exact opposite of why I wanted to be a teacher. And these were students I really loved teaching. That induced guilt for me. Guilt in and of itself is not bad if it leads to change. I realize that I cannot get stuck by overfocusing on guilt. Commitment to change, personal change, is a non-negotiable if I am to continue teaching or striving to be a decent human being.

Discussion

One of the larger lessons I gleaned from this study is that there is a tremendous difference between agreeing intellectually to culturally relevant pedagogy and assenting to the components, believing that one engaging in a culturally relevant pedagogy, versus *actually* doing culturally relevant pedagogy. I believe before this study I was engaging in token multiculturalism (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). I would sing a song from another culture and then touch on the cultural aspect, if at all. I certainly grounded my teaching in the Eurocentric praxis of notation.

As a doctoral candidate, I am purporting to be an expert on issues surrounding race and education. Having completed this study, I learned a great deal. One concept that I learned was that I still have a lot to learn. Unlearning Whiteness, making continuous and daily choices to not comply with White supremacy may very well be a lifelong endeavor. I am fortunate that I live in a community that is diverse and that has opportunities for continued growth and education. As great as conferences, workshops, and seminars are, for me, my attendance at these functions is not enough. I must continue to journal and reflect about my teaching practices and must listen seriously to my students. As a White male who is nearing middle age, it is easy for me to show up and teach what I already know. But I have learned that in doing so, I am perpetuating White supremacy. I am hurting my students and our wider community. This has been a difficult experience, but also a very joyous one because my students are happier and are learning more than they ever have with me as their teacher. That alone makes this work worth doing.

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CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION

Conducting the research for this dissertation has been one of the more illuminating events of my life. After completing all the coursework for my degree, I felt that I was in a fine place to begin teaching with a mind toward equity and teaching others to do so as well. In many ways, I am prepared to do both. I have learned a great deal indeed from my courses, professors, and fellow students. What I have learned through completing this dissertation, however, is that in order for me the work toward implementing equitable practices, I needed to further examine my own attitudes, dispositions, and motives. I now understand more fully that this will be a life-long endeavor. At 39 years of age, Whiteness is more ingrained in me than I ever imagined it was before I began this study.

In this chapter, I summarize the three manuscripts presented in Chapters Four, Five, and Six. I recap insights that may contribute to the educational knowledge base on culturally relevant teaching in elementary music classes and offer future recommendations and implications.

Conceptualizing Culturally Relevant Music Pedagogy in Elementary Classrooms

In Chapter Four, I highlighted the ways in which Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP) can be used in elementary music classrooms. Guided primarily by the scholarship of Gloria Ladson-Billings, I examined ways that music educators can focus on (a) academic excellence, (b) cultural competence, and (c) critical consciousness. Unlike typical music classes which focus on the mechanics of music making, leaving out the

cultural and ethnic attributes of the students being taught, I explained how culturally relevant music teachers should connect to students' life experiences and home lives; thus, bridging the gap between home and school.

Culturally Relevant Music Pedagogy (CRMP) is a pedagogy that can transform the music classroom into a more relevant space for all students, particularly minoritized students. Three ways to engage in CRMP are: (a) being intentional in music selection; (b) developing relationships with students; and (c) going beyond the school—that is, there should be a connection between school music and home music. Music selections should be student-centered and multicultural, facilitating a shift away from deficit-oriented conceptions of BIPOC music and culture. Relationships should be developed where student knowledge and experience are valued, bridging the gap between home and school. Extending the music classroom beyond the school allows for music-making outside of the music classroom, providing opportunities at home and in the community.

I focused primarily on African American students because they represent the majority of the students that I teach. Future research could be specific to the location of the study and/or student population. A guiding question for me, and I believe for anyone who teaches minoritized students, is "How can music education be used to break down a Eurocentric status quo in our field?" For the current study, I wondered, "How can music be used to teach for transformation in educators' respective places and spaces?" While I believe that my study has helped to answer some of these questions for me in my respective context, research may look different in depending geographical areas and/or student population(s).

In the southern U.S. where I live, the political climate is often hostile toward equitable practices. The spirit of CRP, and the ethos of equity, is often questioned and criticized in my school district at politically charged school board meetings. I have watched nearly every school board meeting since 2020. School board members themselves, as well as members of the public have spoken about their disdain for equity, because equity does not allow for 'equal' treatment of all students. There seems to be ignorance about, or refusal acknowledgement of, the historic and current nature of racism in schools and society. Racism that leads to unlevel playing fields for students of Color, thus the need for equity measures. As I write this, the state superintendent of education has severed ties with the state's school librarian association because of librarians' resistance to banning books. I will continue to teach in culturally relevant ways, because I believe that all students learn more effectively through this pedagogy, and I believe that students who are culturally competent, have high academic achievement, and are critically conscious can help dismantle racism and live in a more just world. Doing so will take courage, collaboration with others, and intentionality.

Developing Culturally Relevant Music Pedagogy Using Kwanzaa Principles

In this chapter I provided a guide for how I incorporated the principles of Kwanzaa into my music classroom. As a person that did not grow up celebrating this holiday, I had to rely on research, extant children's songs, and colleagues that did celebrate the holiday. I spent time learning about the seven principles of Kwanzaa and how students could make connections for themselves. I chose Kwanzaa because it is a holiday that highlights the African American community and because it is at least somewhat familiar in our common American culture. Many White students had heard the

term Kwanzaa, even if they did not understand what it was about; many first grade African American students did not fully understand Kwanzaa either.

In focusing on Kwanzaa, I learned that my African American students felt a connection to music that is not always present in my classroom. Some of the students in my classroom shared a name with a Kwanzaa principle. Nia for instance, is a common student name in my school and it is also the principle meaning "collective purpose." Students made connections across cultures, noticing how the lighting of candles in Kwanzaa was similar to lighting candles for Hanukkah. White students in our class participated in our classroom celebration of Kwanzaa, learned about another culture, and allowed them to step outside of their Whiteness, if only for a few class periods.

Engaging in a celebration rooted in African American culture created a shared bond between students, facilitating relationship building that did not always happen with more generic winter-themed holiday songs. White students also developed a cultural competence that would has not been developed in the prior winter songs. Using the seven action ideals developed by the MayDay Group can help any teacher achieve the same classroom goals that my Kwanzaa unit did for my class.

I hope that the practitioner article could inspire others to teach about something that is relevant to their own student population. I chose a holiday, but any topic that reflects one's own student population would suffice. What I did not do in this study, but I will do in the future, is ask students and families what they would like to learn and perform. If I taught an Indigenous students, I might center on a lesson surrounding their cultural music. To facilitate cultural competence and critical consciousness, I might still

create a lesson centering Indigenous peoples, even if they are not my primary student population.

I *Thought* I Was Doing Right: Striving to Use Culturally Relevant Teaching

I used the method of critical autoethnography to examine my role, and power, as a White male who teaches music to a primarily African American student population. My overarching questions centered on what transformations occur in my lessons; what transformations occur in my African American students; what transformations occur with my White students; what transformations occur within me. As I noted in the opening paragraph of this conclusion, I felt very comfortable with saying and feeling that equity was at the fore of my teaching practices. In truth, equity was important, but not quite as central to my classroom as I would have liked to believe.

As I conducted this study, I kept a reflexivity journal where I later coded my entries to develop themes. I found that students, both BIPOC (Black and Indigenous People of Color) and White, were generally enthusiastic to the change in curriculum. Where I formerly relied on Eurocentric folk tunes, I now intentionally chose music from different traditionally BIPOC genres and music by BIPOC artists. I, however, was not as enthusiastic. After deep reflection and analysis, I surmised that I felt a disconnection between myself and the music. The music I was now teaching did not reflect my culture, nor did I have a background listening or performing this music.

Realizing that my students seemed to be more engaged, but I was less engaged, this made me feel a degree of guilt. I had to reckon with what I had been teaching, why I was teaching, and for whom was I teaching. I felt that perhaps I had chosen to teach music because I enjoyed music myself, and that I had been forcing that music on others

whether they liked it or not. I also felt guilty because I had deprived years of former students from experiencing music that was relevant to them. I cannot go back in time, nor can I reteach those former students in ways that they very likely would have found more meaningful.

I cannot reshape my own pre-service teaching program. I entered my program as a college freshman in 2002, now over 20 years ago. Thankfully times have changed, and more programs are focusing on equity and teaching diverse populations, but I was taught from a very standard Eurocentric model that ignored students of Color. Part of what led me to my doctoral program is that I realized there was a chasm between me, what and how I was teaching, and my students. My good intentions, or the desire to teach with equity at the center, is not enough. I must continue the work to transform my teaching. After completing this study, I believe this will be a lifetime of work.

For the five years that I had been at my current school, I thought everything was just fine since I taught most of the students each year as a music teacher. Not until I intentionally implemented CRP, and struggled, did I realize that I was not teaching in a culturally relevant way. I was engaging in frequent token lessons that highlighted musical artists of Color, but I did not extend my instruction beyond the addition of a song or musical piece or address CRP tenets and dimensions.

My (ongoing) transformation occurred when I began engaging in serious reflexive work undertaken during the course of this dissertation. Intellectually, the components of CRP, and background readings about historical racial inequities (Woodson, 1933) made sense. When I began a daily reflexive practice, and I began journaling about student engagement did my teaching and my disposition begin to change. This process was often

difficult because of the guilt I felt. I was reminded by academic literature (DiAngelo, 2018) and Dr. Boutte, my doctoral advisor, that guilt re-centers me and not my students. Once I began to get over myself, and re-focus on my students did positive transformation occur, because I could see that my students were learning and thriving in our classroom.

The good news for anyone interested in doing similar work is that everyone can study themselves. I found that by employing autoethnography I was able to better understand my relationship with myself as a White man and how that relationship interplays with others, notably my students of Color. A great deal of honesty and vulnerability is required. This was often difficult for me. I did not always want to see or deal with the "bad" parts of myself, nor did I want those character defects to be on a page where others could read about it for years to come. But by doing so, I grew. I can better see my own blind spots, see where others could benefit, and I can grow as a teacher and human.

Implications for Teacher Educators

This study has important implications for teacher educators like me and others. The big take away is that transformative culturally relevant teaching absolutely requires teacher reflexivity about the curriculum and themselves. This is particularly important for White teachers. Findings from this study corroborates other scholars' insistence that Whiteness in schools should not go unexamined, lest it operates as a detriment of students of Color and White students (Swartz, 1992).

A caveat that teacher educators should share with White preservice and inservice teachers is to be thoughtful when drawing from frameworks which are intended to center minoritized people. For example, engaging in CRT as a White man can be dangerous. I

learned that I must constantly ask myself if I am appropriating the work of scholars of Color as my own, and/or if I am co-opting CRT as my own work. As I need consistent reflexive work to analyze my complicity in White supremacy, it is important that my identity does not adversely affect the work of CRT. There are tools of CRT that I cannot use as a White scholar. I cannot engage in counternarrative storytelling, because my positionality is from the perspective of the majoritarian narrative. I need to understand when to "stay in my lane." That is, while I can use CRT strategically to examine racial inequities from my own privileged perspective, I cannot use CRT to "understand" the perspectives of people of Color (Bergerson, 2003).

A final implication has to do with using critical race praxis in classrooms and understanding how to develop deep relationships with students, families, and community members. Yamamoto (1997) suggested that CRT scholars engage in praxis; thus, extending theoretical concepts into lived practice. For this study, it was important that I built and developed positive relationships with my students, so that I could better "see" my students as humans. In music-making, it is not uncommon to view students as pawns that sing or play instruments in order to produce a cohesive musical piece. By engaging in a critical race praxis, I worked to understand and see students for who they were—their needs, desires, and identities as people of Color. It was also important to understand my own identity as a White male teacher and the unbalanced power structure that occurs in our classroom. To engage in a deeper critical race praxis, I should have worked to develop relationships with students' families, sought expertise from my colleagues of Color, as well as sought knowledge from the wider community. This was mistake on my part as I did not fully value these perspectives, because they were outside of the school.

To engage in a deeper CRT praxis, I should have worked to develop relationships with students' families, sought expertise from my colleagues of Color, as well as sought knowledge from the wider community (Stovall, 2013). As I continue to learn, I continue to grow, and this journey both excites and frightens me, but I am up for the challenge on behalf of humanity, including myself of course.

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APPENDIX A: LESSON PLANS

Table A.1 Music of Africa Lesson Plan

Music of Africa		
Day	Grade level standards	Heading needed
Monday	AS 8: I can examine music from a variety of stylistic and historical periods and cultures. Cultural competence: understand traditional and historical music of Africa and how it effects current trends Use of Google Slides	Music Pathway Engage: Pose question: Why is African music important? What contributions can we recognize in current music that is from Africa? Direct Instruction: African instruments; African oral traditions Guided Practice/Small Group: Identify modern instruments with African roots IP: Closure: Review
Tuesday	AS 8: I can examine music from a variety of stylistic and historical periods and cultures. Cultural competence: understand traditional and historical music of Africa and how it affects current trends Critical consciousness: Students will read, sing, and chant music extracted from Ghanian folk tunes. Review lyrics and discuss important issues from Ghana. https://folkways.si.edu/west-african-song-chants-childrens-ghana/music/tools-for-teaching/smithsonian	Music Pathway Engage: West African Songs and Chants Direct Instruction: Chant, sing, and clap rhythmic ostinatos Guided Practice/Small Group: Sing with partner IP: Practice on own Closure: Review
Wednesday	AS 4: I can play instruments alone and with others. AS 8: I can examine music from a variety of stylistic and historical periods and cultures. Cultural competence: understand traditional and historical music of Africa and how it effects current trends Critical consciousness: Students will read, sing, and chant music extracted from Ghanian folk tunes. Review lyrics and discuss important issues from Ghana. https://folkways.si.edu/west-african-song-chants-childrens-ghana/music/tools-for-teaching/smithsonian	Music Pathway Engage: West African Songs and Chants Direct Instruction: Chant, sing, and clap rhythmic ostinatos; add percussion instruments Guided Practice/Small Group: Sing with partner IP: Practice on own Closure: Review

Table A.1, Continued

Day	Grade level standards	Heading needed
Thursday	AS 4: I can play instruments alone and with others. AS 8: I can examine music from a variety of stylistic and historical periods and cultures. AS 1: I can arrange and compose music Cultural competence: Students will learn music and discuss culture of Zimbabwe Critical consciousness: History of Rhodesia/Zimbabwe. Understanding music as an index of social change. Basic knowledge of language, geography, values, and musical culture of Zimbabwe Academic excellence: acknowledge that students are capable of composing and creating. https://folkways.si.edu/mbiras-marimbas-zimbabwean-general-classroom/music/tools-for-teaching/smithsonian	Music Pathway Engage: Pose question: Can we create music together? Direct Instruction: Intro to Mbira; listen to Shona Hand Clapping game; work in small groups Guided Practice/Small Group: Sing with partner IP: Closure: Review
Friday	AS 4: I can play instruments alone and with others. AS 8: I can examine music from a variety of stylistic and historical periods and cultures. AS 1: I can arrange and compose music Cultural competence: Students will learn music and discuss culture of Zimbabwe Critical consciousness: History of Rhodesia/Zimbabwe. Understanding music as an index of social change. Basic knowledge of language, geography, values, and musical culture of Zimbabwe Academic excellence: acknowledge that students are capable of composing and creating. https://folkways.si.edu/mbiras-marimbas-zimbabwean-general-classroom/music/tools-for-teaching/smithsonian	Music Pathway Engage: Pose question: Can we create music together? Direct Instruction: Intro to Mbira; listen to Shona Hand Clapping game; work in small groups Guided Practice/Small Group: Sing with partner IP: Closure: Review

Table A.2 Spirituals, Blues, and Jazz Lesson Plan

Spirituals, Blues, and Jazz		
Day	Grade level standards	Heading needed
Monday	AS 8: I can examine music from a variety of stylistic and historical periods and cultures. AS 3: I can sing alone and with others. Cultural competence: understand traditional and historical music of enslaved peoples Critical consciousness: in what context were spirituals performed, passed down? What messages do spirituals convey? Use of Google Slides	Music Pathway Engage: Pose question: Why are the spirituals important? What contributions from historical African music are used in spirituals? Direct Instruction: Spirituals; African oral/lyrical traditions; "Wading in the Water"; "Follow the Drinking Gourd" Guided Practice/Small Group: Identify lyrical content IP: Closure: Review
Tuesday	AS 8: I can examine music from a variety of stylistic and historical periods and cultures. Cultural competence: understand traditional and historical music of Africa and how it effects current trends Critical consciousness: Students will read, sing, and chant music extracted from Ghanian folk tunes. Review lyrics and discuss important issues from Ghana. https://folkways.si.edu/west-african-song-chants-childrens-ghana/music/tools-for-teaching/smithsonian	Music Pathway Engage: West African Songs and Chants Direct Instruction: Chant, sing, and clap rhythmic ostinatos Guided Practice/Small Group: Sing with partner IP: Practice on own Closure: Review
Wednesday	AS 4: I can play instruments alone and with others. AS 8: I can examine music from a variety of stylistic and historical periods and cultures. AS 2: I can improvise music Cultural competence: background of blues music and musicians Critical consciousness: Students learn about the context of blues music and why it is important. How the blues is foundational to jazz and how it has evolved into contemporary music. https://www.pbs.org/theblues/classroom/lessons.html	Music Pathway Engage: What are the blues? Direct Instruction: What are the blues?; What are the meanings of the blues? Guided Practice/Small Group: Sing with partner IP: Practice on own Closure: Review
Thursday	AS 4: I can play instruments alone and with others. AS 8: I can examine music from a variety of stylistic and historical periods and cultures. AS 2: I can improvise music AS 9: I can relate music to other arts, disciplines, other subjects, and career paths. Cultural competence: background of blues music and musicians Critical consciousness: Students learn about the context of blues music and why it is important. How the blues is foundational to jazz and how it has evolved into contemporary music. https://www.pbs.org/theblues/classroom/lessons.html	Music Pathway Engage: Pose question: Can we create music together? Direct Instruction: Robert Johnson; listen to St. Louis Blues; work in small groups to create own blues song using template and chord chart Guided Practice/Small Group: Sing with partner IP: Closure: Review

Table A.2, Continued

Day	Grade level standards	Heading needed
Friday	AS 4: I can play instruments alone and with others. AS 8: I can examine music from a variety of stylistic and historical periods and cultures. Cultural competence: Students will learn music and discuss culture of jazz Critical consciousness: What makes jazz different? Issues surrounding Harlem Renaissance and Black intellectuals- Google Slides Academic excellence: acknowledge that students are capable of composing and creating. Jazz improvisation will be discussed, as well as differentiating between traditional notated music and African and African American influences of improv. Students will improvise using scat, as well as improvising on ukuleles using a chord progression track. By improvising on two chords, students will achieve academic excellence. As a skill, some students will progress beyond two chords, but everyone will achieve excellence. https://folkways.si.edu/mbiras-marimbas-zimbabwean-general-classroom/music/tools-for-teaching/smithsonian	Music Pathway Engage: Read aloud "Charlie Parker Plays Bebop" Direct Instruction: Intro to jazz; scat exercises; work in small groups to scat Guided Practice/Small Group: Sing with partner IP: Closure: Review

Table A.3 Protest and Motown Lesson Plan

Protest and Motown		
Day	Grade level standards	Heading needed
Monday	AS 8: I can examine music from a variety of stylistic and historical periods and cultures. AS 3: I can sing alone and with others. Cultural competence: understand cultural aspects of 1960s and civil rights era Critical consciousness: in what context were protest songs performed, created? What messages do protest songs convey? Use of Google Slides	Music Pathway Engage: Pose question: Why are protests important? What was going on in the civil rights era? How did music play a role? Direct Instruction: Protest; "We Shall Overcome" read aloud; song "We Shall Overcome" Guided Practice/Small Group: Identify lyrical content IP: Closure: Review
Tuesday	AS 8: I can examine music from a variety of stylistic and historical periods and cultures. AS 3: I can sing alone and with others. Cultural competence: understand cultural aspects of 1960s and civil rights era Critical consciousness: in what context were protest songs performed, created? What messages do protest songs convey? Use of Google Slides	Music Pathway Engage: Mahlia Jackson, Bob Dylan, Civil Rights Direct Instruction: Identify ha Guided Practice/Small Group: Sing with partner IP: Practice on own Closure: Review
Wednesday	AS 4: I can play instruments alone and with others. AS 8: I can examine music from a variety of stylistic and historical periods and cultures. AS 2: I can improvise music Cultural competence: background of Motown culture Critical consciousness: Students learn about the context of Motown and why it is important. How the has blues, jazz, and other forms contributed to the Motown sound? Know (knowledge): The model that defined production at Motown Records, and how it was influenced by factory assembly lines; the cultural and economic conditions in Detroit, Michigan, and surrounding areas in the 1960s; the contributions of Motown to the popular music of the 1960s Be able to (skills): Interpret a range of media, including songs, images, and text to develop and demonstrate an understanding of a period of time.	Music Pathway Engage: What is Motown? Direct Instruction: Jackson 5; Diana Ross and The Supremes Guided Practice/Small Group: Sing with partner IP: Practice on own Closure: Review
Thursday	AS 4: I can play instruments alone and with others. AS 8: I can examine music from a variety of stylistic and historical periods and cultures. AS 9: I can relate music to other arts, disciplines, other subjects, and career paths. Cultural competence: background of Motown music and musicians Critical consciousness: Students learn about the context of Motown music and why it is important. How the blues is foundational to jazz and how it has evolved into contemporary music.	Music Pathway Engage: Pose question: Can we create music together? Direct Instruction: Barry Gordy; Smoky Robinson; The Temptations Guided Practice/Small Group: Sing with partner. Rhythmic practice IP: Closure: Review

Table A.4 Hip Hop Lesson Plan

Hip Hop		
Day	Grade level standards	Heading needed
Tuesday	AS 8: I can examine music from a variety of stylistic and historical periods and cultures. AS 3: I can sing alone and with others. Cultural competence: understand cultural aspects of Hip Hop Critical consciousness: in what context was hip hop songs performed, created? What societal issues were going on at the time? What issues remain? What has been identified and worked toward solutions? Use of Google Slides	Music Pathway Engage: Pose question: Why is hip hop important? What was going on in the late 1970s and early 1980s? How did music play a role? Direct Instruction: Sugar Hill Gang "Rappers Delight"; Break Dancing Guided Practice/Small Group: Identify lyrical content IP: Closure: Review
Wednesday	AS 8: I can examine music from a variety of stylistic and historical periods and cultures. AS 3: I can sing alone and with others. Cultural competence: understand cultural aspects of 1970s–1980s. Urban contextual issues Critical consciousness: in what context were hip hop songs performed, created? What messages do protest songs convey? Use of Google Slides	Music Pathway Engage: Develop connections between scat and rap Direct Instruction: Develop class rap Guided Practice/Small Group: rapping in small groups IP: Practice on own Closure: Review
Thursday	AS 4: I can play instruments alone and with others. AS 8: I can examine music from a variety of stylistic and historical periods and cultures. AS 2: I can improvise music Cultural competence: background of Motown culture Critical consciousness: Students learn about the context of Motown and why it is important. How the has blues, jazz, and other forms contributed to the Motown sound? Know (knowledge): The model that defined production at Motown Records, and how it was influenced by factory assembly lines; the cultural and economic conditions in Detroit, Michigan, and surrounding areas in the 1960s; the contributions of Motown to the popular music of the 1960s Be able to (skills): Interpret a range of media, including songs, images, and text to develop and demonstrate an understanding of a period of time.	Music Pathway Engage: What is Hip Hop? Direct Instruction: Read aloud "Hip Hop Speaks to Kids"; current hip hops artists/trends Guided Practice/Small Group: Sing with partner IP: Practice on own Closure: Review
Friday	AS 4: I can play instruments alone and with others. AS 8: I can examine music from a variety of stylistic and historical periods and cultures. AS 2: I can improvise music Cultural competence: background of Motown culture Critical consciousness: Divergent paths. 1990s gangsta rap and and concious hip hop Use DJ Boards	

Table A.5 Latin Lesson Plan

Latin		
Day	Grade level standards	Heading needed
Monday	AS 8: I can examine music from a variety of stylistic and historical periods and cultures. Cultural competence: understand traditional and historical music of Latin America and how it effects current trends Use of Google Slides	Music Pathway Engage: Pose question: Why is Latin music important? What contributions can we recognize in current music that is from Latin America? Direct Instruction: Latin instruments; Latin oral traditions Guided Practice/Small Group: Identify modern instruments with Latin roots IP: Closure: Review
Tuesday	AS 8: I can examine music from a variety of stylistic and historical periods and cultures. Cultural competence: understand traditional and historical music of Latin America and Spanish & Indigenous people and how it effects current trends Critical consciousness: Students will read, sing, and chant music extracted from Latin folk tunes. Review lyrics and discuss important issues from Latin America. In recent years, the population of immigrants from Latin American countries has increased in the United States. This influx of Spanish speaking immigrants along with the rise in the number of native-born Hispanic Americans is transforming the U.S. education system. The importance of improving ESOL education, as well as incorporating Hispanic culture in the educational process has increased. With its rich history, unique rhythms, and stylistic variety, Latin music is an effective tool for the teaching of many school subjects. The popularity of Latin music artists such as Shakira, Pitbull, Jennifer Lopez and Daddy Yankee attests to the interest and necessity of incorporating Latin music in schools. This lesson focuses on Latin folk and pop music, with an emphasis on the rhythms and instruments used in Puerto Rican and Mexican music. Integral Latin American musicians, such as Tito Puente and Carlos Santana, will be examined. The lesson is divided into 3 sections explored over a period of 5 class periods. The first section introduces the music of Latin America, locating Latin American countries on the map. Students will learn about the culture of Puerto Rico and Mexico, specifically examining the mambo and mariachi musical form. http://voices.pitt.edu/lessonplans/LatinAmericanMusic.htm	Music Pathway Engage: Latin American Songs and Chants Direct Instruction: Chant, sing, and clap rhythmic ostinatos Guided Practice/Small Group: Sing with partner IP: Practice on own Closure: Review

Table A.5, Continued

Day	Grade level standards	Heading needed
Wednesday	AS 8: I can examine music from a variety of stylistic and historical periods and cultures. Cultural competence: understand traditional and historical music of Latin America and Spanish & Indigenous people and how it effects current trends Critical consciousness: Students will read, sing, and chant music extracted from Latin folk tunes. Review lyrics and discuss important issues from Latin America. In recent years, the population of immigrants from Latin American countries has increased in the United States. This influx of Spanish speaking immigrants along with the rise in the number of native-born Hispanic Americans is transforming the U.S. education system. The importance of improving ESOL education, as well as incorporating Hispanic culture in the educational process has increased. With its rich history, unique rhythms, and stylistic variety, Latin music is an effective tool for the teaching of many school subjects. The popularity of Latin music artists such as Shakira, Pitbull, Jennifer Lopez and Daddy Yankee attests to the interest and necessity of incorporating Latin music in schools. This lesson focuses on Latin folk and pop music, with an emphasis on the rhythms and instruments used in Puerto Rican and Mexican music. Integral Latin American musicians, such as Tito Puente and Carlos Santana, will be examined. The lesson is divided into 3 sections explored over a period of 5 class periods. The first section introduces the music of Latin America, locating Latin American countries on the map. Students will learn about the culture of Puerto Rico and Mexico, specifically examining the mambo and mariachi musical form.	Music Pathway Engage: Latin American Songs and Chants Direct Instruction: Chant, sing, and clap rhythmic ostinatos; add percussion instruments Guided Practice/Small Group: Sing with partner IP: Practice on own Closure: Review

Table A.5, Continued

Day	Grade level standards	Heading needed
Thursday	AS 4: I can play instruments alone and with others. AS 8: I can examine music from a variety of stylistic and historical periods and cultures. AS 1: I can arrange and compose music Cultural competence: Students will learn music and discuss culture of Latin America Critical consciousness: History of Latin America. Understanding music as an index of social change. Basic knowledge of language, geography, values, and musical culture of Latin America Academic excellence: acknowledge that students are capable of composing and creating.	Music Pathway Engage: Pose question: Can we create music together? Direct Instruction: Guided Practice/Small Group: Sing with partner IP: Closure: Review Song Comparison Activity: A) Play Carlos Santana's version of "Oye Como Va" http://youtu.be/BM3-Sb14eT8. Ask the students to consider the following discussion questions as they listen: 1. How is this version different from Tito Puente's? 2. What is the most important instrument in this version as compared to Tito Puente's version? 3. How would you describe the style of the music? B) Place students into groups of 4 and compare and contrast Tito Puente and Santana's performance of the same song using the VAT Song Comparison Graphic Organizer. Have a group representative share one similarity and one difference. "Oye Como Va" performance activity Part 3: A) Review the vocal part. B) Percussion instruments: select groups of students to play the guiro, cowbell, drums, and maracas. Practice the percussion parts of the song along with the singing. C) Divide the students into 3 groups, (vocal, xylophones, and percussion instruments). Perform together, rotating until each group has had the opportunity to play/sing each part. Latin American Artist Project: Divide the students into groups of 4. The students are to choose a Latin American artist whom they enjoy and research how the artist has contributed to Latin American music. Provide some examples of artists that they may choose from. They are to research their selected artist in the computer lab.

Table A.5, Continued

Day	Grade level standards	Heading needed
Friday	AS 4: I can play instruments alone and with others. AS 8: I can examine music from a variety of stylistic and historical periods and cultures. AS 1: I can arrange and compose music Cultural competence: Students will learn music and discuss culture of Latin America Critical consciousness: History of Latin America. Understanding music as an index of social change. Basic knowledge of language, geography, values, and musical culture of Latin America Academic excellence: acknowledge that students are capable of composing and creating.	Music Pathway Introduction to traditional Mexican culture and music: A) Locate Mexico on the world map and show a brief PowerPoint presentation that highlights Mexican culture and music. B) Play "Cielito lindo", a popular example of Mariachi music. Show images of mariachi bands. In particular, display the traje de charro, (Mexican cowboy style suit), and the guitarron, (Mexican bass guitar). C) Distribute small whiteboards and markers to the students. Answer discussion questions with their shoulder partner, writing key words on a small whiteboard. Share out and answer questions as a class: 1) What do you think the song is about? 2) How does mariachi music make you feel? 3) Where would you expect to hear this type of music? 4) What does their style of dress tell you about Mexican culture? 5) What instruments do you hear in the song? D) Learn lyrics and melody of the refrain in "Cielito lindo". Play the song again, as students sway to feel the ¾ meter of the song. Sing the refrain as it occurs in the song. Group Project: work with their group in writing down 5 interesting facts that they learned about their Latin American artist after their research. Also decide on a school appropriate song that the artist performs to share with the class during their presentation.

Table A.6 Music of Asia Lesson Plan

Music of Asia		
Day	Grade level standards	Heading needed
Monday	AS 8: I can examine music from a variety of stylistic and historical periods and cultures. Cultural competence: understand traditional and historical music of Asia. Use of Google Slides	Music Pathway Engage: Pose question: Why is Asian music important? What contributions can we recognize in current music that is from Asia? Any at all? Direct Instruction: Asian instruments; Asian tonalities that are different than Western music we normally hear. Guided Practice/Small Group: Identify modern instruments with Asian roots; explore Asian tonalities, pentatonic scale IP: Closure: Review
Tuesday	AS 8: I can examine music from a variety of stylistic and historical periods and cultures. Cultural competence: understand traditional and historical music of Asia and how it effects current trends Critical consciousness: Students will read, sing, and chant music extracted from East Asian folk tunes. Review lyrics and discuss important issues from East Asia. Define the central themes of East Asian music. Identify traits of East Asian music aurally. Discuss the components of East Asian music, and their impact on the overall musical aesthetic. https://study.com/academy/lesson/east-asian-music-lesson-plan.html	Music Pathway Engage: East Asian Songs and Chants Direct Instruction: Chant, sing, and clap rhythmic ostinatos Guided Practice/Small Group: Sing with partner IP: Practice on own Closure: Review
Wednesday	AS 4: I can play instruments alone and with others. AS 8: I can examine music from a variety of stylistic and historical periods and cultures. Cultural competence: understand traditional and historical music of Asia and how it effects current trends Critical consciousness: Students will read, sing, and chant music extracted from Asian folk tunes. Review lyrics and discuss important issues from Asia. https://folkways.si.edu/west-african-song-chants-childrens-ghana/music/tools-for-teaching/smithsonian	Music Pathway Engage: Asian Songs and Chants Direct Instruction: Chant, sing, and clap rhythmic ostinatos; add percussion instruments Guided Practice/Small Group: Sing with partner IP: Practice on own Closure: Review

Table A.6, Continued

Day	Grade level standards	Heading needed
Thursday	AS 4: I can play instruments alone and with others. AS 8: I can examine music from a variety of stylistic and historical periods and cultures. AS 1: I can arrange and compose music Cultural competence: Students will learn music and discuss culture of China Critical consciousness: History of China. Understanding music as an index of social change. Basic knowledge of language, geography, values, and musical culture of China. Academic excellence: acknowledge that students are capable of composing and creating. https://www.kennedy-center.org/education/resources-for-educators/classroom-resources/lessons-and-activities/lessons/3-5/chinese-instruments/	Music Pathway Engage: Pose question: Can we create music together? Direct Instruction: Students will: identify the musical instrument families; classify Chinese instruments; research and gather information on Chinese instruments; create a Chinese instrument using recycled materials; create a story to reflect on the musical experience; participate in a classroom musical performance.
Friday	AS 4: I can play instruments alone and with others. AS 8: I can examine music from a variety of stylistic and historical periods and cultures. AS 1: I can arrange and compose music Cultural competence: Students will learn music and discuss culture of China Critical consciousness: History of China. Understanding music as an index of social change. Basic knowledge of language, geography, values, and musical culture of China. Academic excellence: acknowledge that students are capable of composing and creating. https://www.kennedy-center.org/education/resources-for-educators/classroom-resources/lessons-and-activities/lessons/3-5/chinese-instruments/	Music Pathway Engage: Pose question: Can we create music together? Direct Instruction: Students will: identify the musical instrument families; classify Chinese instruments; research and gather information on Chinese instruments; create a Chinese instrument using recycled materials; create a story to reflect on the musical experience; participate in a classroom musical performance.