Daring to See: White Supremacy and Gatekeeping in Music Education

Brian A. Gellerstein

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.umb.edu/doctoral_dissertations

Part of the Education Commons, Music Education Commons, and the Race, Ethnicity and Post-Colonial Studies Commons
DARING TO SEE: WHITE SUPREMACY AND GATEKEEPING IN MUSIC EDUCATION

A Dissertation Presented

by

BRIAN A. GELLERSTEIN

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies,
University of Massachusetts Boston
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

May 2021

Urban Education, Leadership, and Policy Studies Program
DARING TO SEE: WHITE SUPREMACY AND GATEKEEPING IN MUSIC EDUCATION

A Dissertation Presented

by

BRIAN A. GELLERSTEIN

Approved as to style and content by:

________________________________________________
Abiola Farinde-Wu, Assistant Professor
Chairperson of Committee

Francine Menashy, Associate Professor
Member

Deborah Bradley, Boston University, D.M.A. External Supervisor
Boston University
Member

Francine Menashy, Program Director
Urban Education, Leadership, and Policy Studies
Program

Tara L. Parker, Chairperson
Department of Leadership in Education
ABSTRACT

DARING TO SEE: WHITE SUPREMACY AND GATEKEEPING IN MUSIC EDUCATION

May 2021

Brian A. Gellerstein, B.S., Adelphi University
M.A., Adelphi University
Ph.D., University of Massachusetts Boston

Directed by Professor Abiola Farinde-Wu

Music education in the U.S. maintains a legacy of cultural hegemony that has historically and systemically benefited the White students it was designed to serve, at the expense of Black and Brown students and teachers. As a subdiscipline concerned with cultural production and reproduction, the persistence of White supremacy within music education contributes to its indefatigability within the broader society.

This study is cast within a theoretical framework that connects critical race theory and critical pedagogy in order to address the ways in which music teachers make meaning of gatekeeping practices mediated within hidden structures of White supremacy. This inquiry utilizes a methodology grounded in critical discourse analysis (CDA) that employs a seven-stage dialectical-relational elucidatory approach (DREA). The purpose of this study is to expose and analyze how White supremacy permeates the professional world of music teachers through
professional discourse and gatekeeping apparatus. The findings reveal numerous mechanisms of White supremacy within music education discourse and through dialogue, these became visible to the teachers interviewed. Also discernable within interviews were relationships between music education, professional discourse, and gatekeeping that are connected through four interrelated periods within music teachers’ experiences: PreK–12 schooling, college/teacher preparation, certification, and career.

This study’s implications include the exposure and confrontation of White supremacy and gatekeeping practices and the ways they manifest within social and professional networks, both inside and outside of public-school education.

*Keywords:* White supremacy, gatekeeping, race, racism, music education, critical race theory (CRT), critical pedagogy, critical discourse analysis (CDA), ideology, pedagogy
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Throughout the writing of this dissertation, there have been many who have sustained me through my endeavors. While some have helped directly with research or writing, others have inspired and influenced me in other ways. I am beholden to all of you for the support, guidance, mentorship, love, forgiveness, and kindness that you have given me along the way.

I would like to express my deep gratitude to my dissertation committee. Dr. Farinde-Wu, I cannot begin to convey my appreciation for your guidance, expertise, and support throughout the entirety of this process. You have always believed in me, pushed me to locate myself in this work, and have helped guide my research and writing to a higher level. Thank you to Dr. Francine Menashy for your wise counsel and critical discussions which have strengthened both my spirit and this dissertation. Dr. Deborah Bradley, I am deeply grateful for your kindness and encouragement. Your generosity of time and expertise have helped me become a better scholar and writer.

Dr. Zeena Zakharia, thank you for being a wonderful mentor and advisor and for helping and encouraging me in the development of the methodology, which set the course for this research. I also wish to thank Dr. Wenfan Yan. In spite of not bringing me over to the quantitative side, your valuable insights and wisdom have meant a great deal to me. I would like to offer a special thank you to Dr. Linda Nathan for seeing my potential as a thought leader and encouraging me to seek my doctorate. Especially helpful during this time, was Karen Owens-Schwartz. Thank you, Karen for helping me recognize my potential, see my light, and steer my ship.

I am extremely grateful to the music educators who volunteered to participate in this study. You gave so much of yourselves and this research would not have been possible without
your generosity of spirit, time, and experiences. I would also like extend a sincere thank you to Ariel Carmichael and Jamal Fairbanks. Our pilot studies and deep dives enabled me to see connections between White supremacy and music education that I had not yet considered.

I am deeply indebted to my chosen doctoral cohort in music education. Jarritt Sheel and Laurel Forshaw, you have each been important thought partners and sympathetic ears to me. Our stimulating conversations and mutual support have helped ground me in our common goals to transform our profession. I also wish to thank Bethy Verano, Siobahn Mulligan, Carolyn Edwards, Sara Niño, and Nina Kunimoto, who have challenged my thinking, entertained my tangents, and showed me kindness through some truly trying years. Sara, you deserve special recognition, for you are a true comrade and collaborator. I am eternally grateful for your friendship.

Finally, and most importantly, I am in the deepest debt to my family who have anchored me through lightness and darkness. To my parents, thank you for believing in me, supporting me and not only setting me on my course, but paving it with values cemented in justice. I am forever grateful for my children, Josh and Lily. Kids, your kindness and love inspire me every day. Thank you for being so flexible and sacrificing time with daddy while I completed this. Lastly, but most importantly, I want to thank my wife, Andrea Gellerstein. You have read every word along the way and have been my loudest cheerleader. You have given me time, patience, forgiveness, and most importantly, love. You believed in me before I believed in myself and without you, this would not have been possible.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**ABSTRACT** ......................................................................................................................... iv

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS** ........................................................................................................ vi

**LIST OF TABLES** .................................................................................................................. xi

**LIST OF FIGURES** ................................................................................................................ xiii

## CHAPTER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. CUTTING THE STRINGS: ON THE NEED TO CONFRONT WHITE SUPREMACY IN MUSIC EDUCATION</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Statement of the Problem</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance of Study</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defining Key Terminology</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Supremacy, Race, and Racism</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gatekeeping</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gatekeeping for White Supremacy in Music Education</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose and Rationale</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Questions</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical Framework</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2. POWERING DOWN: A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE ON CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES IN SOCIAL JUSTICE IN MUSIC EDUCATION</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Review of the Literature</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scope of the Literature Review</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Justice in Music Education</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boundaries of Literature Review</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multicultural Music Education</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Music Education</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Framework for Literature Review</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Pedagogy</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Especially Critical: Bridging Critical Race Theory and Critical Pedagogy</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical Framework</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Pedagogy</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Race Theory</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joining Critical Pedagogy and Critical Race Theory</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. CLARIFYING NARRATIVES: A METHODOLOGY FOR ELUCIDATING DISCURSIVE RELATIONSHIPS IN MUSIC EDUCATION .......... 68
   Methodology Rationale ........................................ 69
   Research Questions ............................................. 73
   Data Collection .................................................. 74
   Text Analysis: Data Collection ................................ 74
   Interviews: Data Collection .................................... 78
   Participants ...................................................... 79
   Interview Design ................................................. 81
   Data Collection Summary ...................................... 86
   Data Management and Analysis ................................ 87
   Text Analysis: Data Management and Analysis ............. 88
   Interviews: Data Management and Analysis ................ 92
   Parallel Analysis: All Together Now ......................... 95
   Validity and Reliability ....................................... 97
   Conclusion ....................................................... 98

4. READING BETWEEN THE LINES: AN ANALYSIS OF WHITE SUPREMACY IN MUSIC EDUCATION CONFERENCE DISCOURSE ........................................ 99
   Data Collected .................................................. 100
   Validity and Reliability of Data ................................ 101
   Findings .......................................................... 101
   Themes ............................................................. 102
   Language ............................................................. 106
   Coded Language .................................................. 106
   Non-traditional Genre Related Language .................... 107
   Social Justice Related Language ............................... 108
   Presenters .......................................................... 110
   Discussion .......................................................... 111
   Conclusion .......................................................... 115

5. ENGAGING DIALOGUE: AN ANALYSIS OF TEACHER UNDERSTANDINGS OF WHITE SUPREMACY IN MUSIC EDUCATION CONFERENCE DISCOURSE .................................. 125
   Data Collected .................................................. 126
   Validity and Reliability of Data ................................ 127
   Findings .......................................................... 128
   Perspectives on White Supremacy in Music Education .... 129
   Perspectives on Conference Discourse ....................... 133
      Kim ................................................................. 134
      Renna .............................................................. 135
      Traci ................................................................. 136
      Carly ............................................................... 137
## APPENDIX

| A. RECRUITMENT FLYER | 226 |
| B. INFORMED CONSENT FORM | 227 |
| C. INTERVIEW PROTOCOL | 230 |
| D. TRANSCRIPTION CONVENTIONS | 233 |

| REFERENCES | 234 |
# LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. DREA Stages</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. DREA Stages for Data Collection</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Summary Table of Research Questions, Methods, and Data Collection</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. DREA Stages for Data Management and Analysis</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. DREA Stage Three Substages of Text Analysis</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Published Themes/Strands Represented in Conferences</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Key Terms in Conference Session Titles and Descriptions</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. DREA Stage 5 Substages of Interview Analysis</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Interview Analysis Themes, Subcategories, and Codes</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Sample Categorical Coding Matrix for Stage 5 Data Analysis</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Sample Categorical Coding Matrix for Stage 6 Parallel Data Analysis</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. MMEA 2019 and 2020 Conference Strands</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. NAfME 2018 Conference Strands</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. NAfME 2018 Amplify Session Descriptions</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. NAfME 2019 Conference Strands</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. NAfME 2019 Amplify Session Descriptions</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Coded Language Genre Related Language Used in Music Education Conference Sessions</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Non-traditional Genre Related Language Used in Music Education Conference Sessions</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table

20. Presenter Roles at Music Education Conference Sessions ............................................. 111

21. Interview Participants, Race, Experience, Region ......................................................... 129
## LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Concept Map of Gatekeeping as a Means of Maintaining White Supremacy in Music Education</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Concept Map of White Supremacy and the Four Zones of Gatekeeping in Music Education</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Concept Map of Influence of White Supremacy in Music Education</td>
<td>221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Concept Map of Relationship between White Supremacy and Gatekeeping</td>
<td>223</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 1

CUTTING THE STRINGS: ON THE NEED TO CONFRONT WHITE SUPREMACY IN MUSIC EDUCATION

This has everything to do, of course, with the nature of the dream and with the fact that we Americans, of whatever color, do not dare examine it and are far from having made it a reality. There are too many things we do not wish to know about ourselves.

—James Baldwin, The Fire Next Time

Growing up at the intersection of Jewish and American, I always felt like an outsider in a country that continued to spout its diversity as symbolic of the mythic “melting pot” narrative that defined its national identity. Even in Brooklyn, where in the 1980s and 1990s, one of every four residents were Jewish (Berger, 2003), I was situated within a broader culture that normalized White Christian values, culture, and traditions. This arrangement of alleged cultural norms was strikingly present in my public-school music classes, including repertoire, concerts, and most memorably in Christmas holiday programming. The message I received was that to be normal was to be Christian, and to be Jewish was to be Other.

Like many others, my early Jewish identity formed around a defiant opposition to anti-Semitism which manifested in the mantra “Never again,” in response to the torture and genocide carried out against Jews during the Holocaust. If school was the principal location where I encountered a Christian–masquerading as American–assimilative message, it was within the
constant recitations of the religion’s songs in music classes where I felt most aware of its influence. Through the forced learning of Christian standards, instilled through the twin serpents of normalization and ostracization dutifully twined around the caduceus of the American ideal, I first became aware of the existential paradox of living within a technically secular and realistically Christian society. It was there that I first recognized the fantasy of equality in the United States.

My experiences in schools, felt most profoundly in music classes, was sadly not unique. Schools have historically served as primary locations for the indoctrination of outsiders into the American way-of-life (Roediger, 2006), and it is through this inculcation that systems of institutionalized racism have been maintained (Anyon, 1981; Benedict, 2015; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Giroux, 1997, 2011; Grande, 2004; Lind & McKoy, 2016; Woodson, 1933/2008). Further, Lind and McKoy (2016) noted that schools serve to formalize cultural transmission through both curricular content and teacher practices and maintain and reflect “a cultural hegemony that negatively impacts many learners of color” (p. 19). The scope of White supremacy’s all-encompassing grasp upon the ideologies, practices, and curricula within education, and specifically music education, is deep-rooted (Bradley, 2006, 2007, 2015; Gustafson, 2009; Hess, 2015, 2017a) and to acknowledge and examine this, as James Baldwin (1963/1993) elucidated in the epigraph, could lead to things that a largely White workforce of music educators (Abril, 2009; DeLorenzo, 2012; Koza, 2003; Lind & McKoy, 2016; Zubrzycki, 2017) may not want to know, thus waking us from the dream that may have only been intended for some.

When I began my career as a music educator, I felt a responsibility to uphold the traditions of the profession, be they ideological, curricular, or instructional. Perhaps ironically,
my own student experiences within music classrooms only influenced my desire to be the sort of music teacher that I never had as a child. In spite of these experiences, I fell in line and functioned as I believed necessary to be a successful music teacher. It took a lengthy internal journey to begin to come to terms with the dichotomy between my values and my actions. These personal examinations made it increasingly clear that Whiteness in music education was impacting non-White students far more dramatically than it had affected me as a child.

As a student, teacher, and administrator in public schools, I maneuvered through a variety of obstacles that operated to keep those worthy of maintaining its traditions in and rogue influences out. The most common barriers I faced concerned a seemingly systemic disapproval for my unwillingness to teach Christian music and celebrate racist and antisemitic composers. Notwithstanding my ethno-racial identity, my positionality as a White, cisgender, male provided institutional access which allowed me to navigate through and around the ideologies, practices, and curricula that have maintained White, Christian hegemony in music education. Expectations within a profession that center upon around a singular understanding of quality function as gatekeeping mechanisms that are well entrenched and require no awareness of their existence to successfully function.

In order to expose the ways that White supremacy and gatekeeping manifest within educational systems, educators who seek change will need to examine what it is about their profession that enables those who are arguably aware of the inequities inherent in the field to act as gatekeepers for the profession and maintain, protect, and advocate for the very system responsible for the injustices. Leonardo (2004) argued that White supremacy is “a process that benefits every White individual” (p. 144) and therefore is the responsibility of every White individual to combat its hold. This is an onus that transcends individual beliefs and community
commitments. This is an obligation to expose and expel the ideologies and systems that have perpetuated cycles of Othering and harm for centuries at the expense of countless peoples. It is from this responsibility, in the spirit of bound together liberation, projected from a core belief that “Never again” applies to all humankind, that I examine the role that White supremacy plays in music education in the United States.

**Statement of the Problem**

The legacy of PreK–12 public-school music education in the U.S. is one of cultural hegemony that has historically and systemically benefited the White students it was designed to serve. This dichotomy between White beneficiaries and non-White Others in music education is particularly visible in grades 9 through 12. High schools are often where students have the greatest degree of choice in course selection, and thus can serve as one effective marker of student interest in the subject. When considering the impact of music education on Black students in the U.S., Elpus and Abril (2011) revealed gross inequities. Their research indicated that “race and ethnicity were found to be significantly associated with high school music participation” (p. 141) and suggested that, when choice is a factor, it is primarily White students who self-select the classes and, more specifically, it is Black students who are absent (Abril, 2009; Elpus & Abril, 2011). Of those Black students who did enroll in public-school music programs, Gustafson (2009) noted a 99% attrition rate. When seeking explanation for why Black students withdraw from U.S. public-school music programs, systemic racial bias is often overlooked but should not be understated (Abril & Kelly-McHale, 2015; DeLorenzo, 2012; Elpus, 2014; Elpus & Abril, 2011). The absence of Black students in U.S. music classes represents an unequivocal failure of the field to teach all students and has contributed to what DeLorenzo (2012) expressed as the rendering of a Black child’s identity as invisible.
Bonilla-Silva (2017) described color-blind racism as the obscured practice of using the perspective of the dominant cultural identity as a means of maintaining control over discourse. In schools, color-blindness can serve to mask formalized regenerative curricula based upon White Western European cultural traditions and norms (Abril & Kelly-McHale, 2015; McCarthy, 2015) as race-neutral. Bonilla-Silva (2017) argued that as racism became socially unacceptable, this brand of artistic hierarchy served as a guilt-free means for asserting one’s cultural dominance without being overtly racist. In its surface impartiality and assumed superiority, color-blind racism is ubiquitous with the modern era and has allowed the status quo within music education to go unchallenged for far too long (Bradley, 2015). As a result, Whiteness has continued to be the centered construct from which music education persists (Bradley, 2006, 2007, 2015, 2017; Gustafson, 2009; Hess, 2019; Koza, 2008).

I contend that this distressing racial disparity has been maintained through a music education system that has socialized generations of teachers and students to denigrate the cultural values and norms of, who Wynter (2003) categorized, “the irrational/subrational Human Other” (p. 266) in favor of those of White Western European colonizers whose traditions of music and music education have served as both intentional and de facto apparatus for subordinating those deemed as inferior within the trappings of an oppressive system.

**Significance of the Study**

Within the field of music education, there has been some U.S.-based research concerning music teacher identity (Ballantyne et al., 2012; Frierson-Campbell, 2004; Natale-Abramo, 2014; Pellegrino, 2009; Wagoner, 2015), and White supremacy (Bradley, 2006, 2007, 2012, 2015, Hess 2015, 2017a; Hess & Talbot, 2019; Hyland, 2005). Yet, missing are studies that explore the
connections between practitioner identity, White supremacy, and gatekeeping in music education.

In addition to the dearth of research that considers music teachers, White supremacy, and gatekeeping, there has also been a lack of literature about in-service music teachers on subjects that might intersect with and bring awareness to the topic. Silveira and Diaz’s (2014) content analysis of research journals in music education from the years 1997 to 2011 revealed that only 26% of published articles were targeted towards practicing music teachers and 2% of articles covered subjects relating non-Western cultures or diversity. Stambaugh and Dyson (2016) conducted a comparative content analysis of *Music Educators Journal* and *Philosophy of Music Education Review*, from 1993 to 2012, which juxtaposed content targeted towards practitioners and academics. In their analysis of *Music Educator’s Journal*, a quarterly publication of the National Association for Music Education (SAGE Journals, 2019), the most frequently covered topic was curriculum (defined as articles which addressed national standards, curriculum development, assessment, planning, competitions, and criticism of curriculum), which amounted to 21.15% of all published pieces during the studied time frame. By contrast, 1.71% of articles covered topics relating to issues of social justice (defined as writings which addressed injustice) in music education.

Though the available research covering content analyses in music education is limited, what it does elucidate is that the major portion of teacher directed literature is related to curriculum and few are even remotely connected to aspects of White supremacy or race. Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) maintained that a focus upon curriculum and its reconstructions are limited due to the liberal ideologies upon which they are based. It is this tension between what
dominates music education research and what is needed to affect radical change that is at the core of this inquiry.

Content based efforts that are premised upon what is perceived as multiculturalism (a movement geared towards the representation of diverse backgrounds in education), popular music, or otherwise, are ill-equipped to challenge such deep-seated hegemony. As Ladson-Billings (1998) maintained in “Just What is Critical Race Theory and What’s It Doing in a Nice Field Like Education?”, official school curricula have historically served “as a culturally specific artifact designed to maintain a White supremacist master script” (p. 18). It is this dominant narrative, Ladson-Billings noted, that has continued to silence and negate Black student voices. Music education has the potential to positively impact far more students than is currently possible within its current, and historical, hegemonic systems (Abril, 2009; Dixson, 2012; Elpus & Abril, 2011; Gustafson, 2009), yet, the field is embedded within a broader system of public-school education that is mired in a historic and systemic oppression so engrained in U.S. education that most of us cannot recognize the injustices (Ladson-Billings, 1998).

In recent years, a growing prevalence of what is often believed to be culturally relevant content in music classes has taken the form of the insertion of popular or modern music in the music curricula (Abril, 2006, 2013; Green, 2002, 2009). Bradley (2006) acknowledged the growing prevalence of popular music in music education and suggested that it serves no role in subverting systemic racism but instead enables topics that confront these systems to remain beyond the boundaries of accepted discourse. Sadly, the cultural interests and notions of popular music that are frequently centered in such content have often been bound to a similar notion of best that traditional methods expound. More to the point, the brand of popular music instruction
that has permeated music education pedagogy and the instruments associated with it continue to correlate with that which is popular with White youth (Hess, 2018b).

The inclusion of popular and multicultural musics in classrooms has served only a cursory role in addressing the profession’s singular Eurocentric scope and has effectively played a part in convincing music educators that they have disentangled the deeply rooted hegemony that pervades their vocation. Mere content re-envisioning of this sort has not, and cannot, address the forms of implicit and explicit biases that continue to marginalize students in music classes, as it addresses the symptoms of White supremacy, rather than its source. As Michelle Alexander (2012) asserted, racism is highly adaptable and will conform around whatever obstacles we place before it. Thus, there is an urgency to understand how White supremacy permeates the field of music education in order to undermine its source and disengage its grasp upon the field.

Cathy Benedict (2015) urged music teachers to embrace a “pedagogy of recognition” premised upon human interactions. From this perspective, Benedict challenged music educators to be deeply reflective about what they do in their encounters with students in an effort to “consider that social justice or socially just actions can neither be the reproduction of an existing discourse nor preparation for future goal-oriented behaviors” (p. 259). This recognition of all students through a process that rejects cultural reproduction presents a position counter to those of the simplistic, unreflective, and nonreflexive nature of the prevalent discourses (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995) that have permeated music classrooms in recent decades (Bradley, 2006; Gaztambide-Fernández, 2011; Gaztambide-Fernández & Rose, 2015).

Freire (1970/2005) used the term “praxis” to describe the reflexivity between theory and action in transformational contexts regarding social justice. A teacher’s praxis is dependent upon their role in the engagement and provocation of students in their own praxes. For praxis to be
revolutionary, Freire professed, it must exist in opposition to anyone and anything that act to negate it. In applying Benedict’s (2015) challenge, teachers and researchers must go beyond the limits of music-making, ensemble choices, instructional content, and repertoire. Such considerations, although important, constitute the low-hanging-fruit of music education, which limit teachers to looking through a window at issues of White supremacy. This perspective of detachment from what exists as the result of the constructions and actions of others allows a disconnection that prevents looking into a mirror at one’s own ideologies and actions that support the past and present of music education, without considering student cultural identities. King (1991) coined the term “dysconsciousness” to describe an “uncritical habit of mind” (p. 135) that is used to justify inequities through the acceptance of some societal order. In defiance of this dysconsciousness music educators must deeply reflect upon their values, honor their encounters with all students, and recognize an exigency to re-center the music of those who have been placed at the margins.

**Defining Key Terminology**

This inquiry concerns elusive, emotionally evocative, and often misconceived expressions. In an effort to add clarity, as well as to provide a solid foundation from which to make sense of this inquiry, this section establishes the understandings of a few key terms that inform the whole of this thesis. Specifically, as this study is concerned with White supremacy, race, racism, and gatekeeping, the operational definitions of these terms must be made clear.

This study focuses upon White supremacy and the ways in which it presents itself and is perceived by a specific social grouping. As White supremacy can often manifest in a Black and White dialectic, there are moments within this exploration when racism and White supremacy will seem interchangeable. Although there is undoubtedly overlap between the two terms, this
section serves to distinguish their utilizations, as well as clearly define what is meant by gatekeeping within music education.

**White Supremacy, Race, and Racism**

This inquiry utilizes Mills’s (1997) recognition of White supremacy as a global structure of oppression that has been, and continues to be, used as a basis for White people to subjugate non-White peoples. By acknowledging White supremacy as “the unnamed political system that has made the modern world what it is today” (p. 1), Mills stood in opposition to common apolitical characterizations of White supremacy, which focus upon individual actions or beliefs linked to explicit bigotry. He argued that locating a widely accepted definition of White supremacy is arduous due to its “not accidental” (p. 1) omission from texts and curricula. Mills asserted that the deliberate exclusion of the true systemic and institutional nature of White supremacy can be attributed to the White historical arbiters, “who take their racial privilege so much for granted that they do not even see it as political, as a form of domination” (p. 1, emphasis in original). Drawing upon Mills’ reasoning, this investigation recognizes White supremacy as a political, social, and/or economic system that structurally privileges, collectively and individually, White peoples, as well as White Eurocentric linguistics, cultural values, norms, and traditions in efforts to maintain hegemonic control.

Race is a social construct (Kendi, 2019) that has historically served to create and maintain hierarchal power. Sociologist Eduardo Bonilla-Silva (2001) utilized what he called “the racialized social system approach” which understands race as a framework “in which economic, political, social, and ideological levels are partially structured by the placement of actors in racial categories or races” (p. 37). From this reasoning, Bonilla-Silva, like Mills’s (1997) description of White supremacy, directed the discourse on racism towards the structures that uphold racial
categories, but he does not steer it away from individualized actions. He further argued that although races are indisputably social categorizations, they become socially and materially real as marginalized groups become conscious of and experience the categorization (Bonilla-Silva, 2015). It is in acknowledging this materiality of race, Bonilla-Silva affirmed, that popular discourse on racism most often falls short.

Whereas White supremacy is premised upon the assumption that the White race is biologically superior to all others (Roediger, 2006) and that White cultural norms are the standards upon which all other groups should be measured, racism concerns the generation and regeneration of systemic benefits for a dominant racial grouping at the expense of those who are subordinated (Bonilla-Silva, 2015). To illustrate this difference, although White-presenting Jews may feel racialized, they cannot experience racism, but are undeniably vulnerable to White supremacy (Stein, 2019).

**Gatekeeping**

This inquiry applies Hamann and Beljean’s (2019) research on gatekeeping practices in cultural fields, which they define as arenas in which cultural goods are produced. Although their study does not directly concern teacher experiences with gatekeeping practices in public PreK–12 education, this inquiry posits that music education exists within the boundaries of a cultural field. Having established earlier in this chapter that schools are a source of cultural regeneration (Anyon, 1981; Benedict, 2015; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Giroux, 1997, 2011; Grande, 2004; Lind & McKoy, 2016; Woodson, 1933/2008), its subset of music education which deals exclusively with cultural (re)production is a relevant analog to the subjects of Hamann and Beljean’s (2019) study. Hamann and Beljean defined gatekeepers as “actors who control access to desirable goods and positions in a field, and who thereby have an important impact on careers
in cultural fields” (p. 2). By extension, gatekeeping can then be understood as the actions that parties undertake to manipulate access within a field.

In their discussion on gatekeeping practices, Hamann and Beljean (2019) maintained that social networks exert influence upon actors within cultural fields. Such influence within social systems can be explained to some degree through the notion of homophily (McPherson et al., 2001), which is the concept wherein individuals seek associations with those whom they perceive as similar to themselves. From this understanding, homophily “limits people’s social worlds in a way that has powerful implications for the information they receive, the attitudes they form, and the interactions they experience” (p. 415). McPherson et al. found homophily in race and ethnicity to be prevalent in a wide array of social spheres, affirming that it significantly limited interactions in marriages, school friendships, and work relationships.

In considering the manners in which gatekeeping and White supremacy interact in music education, social network influence and homophily in race and ethnicity are further compounded by what Wilkins and Ouchi (1983) identified as clan control. Clan control refers to the manners in which cultural norms and values regulate behavior. Although Wilkins and Ouchi’s framework was designed as part of an organizational control system, its focus upon the ways in which actors in large organizations are socialized to maintain institutional expectations provides an additional lens for understanding music teacher identity. From this perspective, clan control can be understood to affect the perceived identity and role of music teachers through the systemic and institutional expectations that have become so engrained in their professional identities that the thought of challenging the status quo either never occurs or represents a threat to their identity.

Drawing from Hamann and Beljean (2019) and informed by McPherson et al. (2001), and Wilkins and Ouchi’s (1983) notion of clan control, this study understands gatekeeping as the
systemic framework that persists throughout the field of music education as a means of filtering out those whose attributes, such as values, skills, race, and culture, do not contribute to the conservation of the system.

**Gatekeeping for White Supremacy in Music Education**

This study focuses on understanding how White supremacy operates within music education. In particular, this inquiry focuses upon three specific modalities in which White supremacy functions: assimilation of minoritized people into the dominant culture, the appropriation of what is deemed useful from the marginalized culture, and the erasure of what, or who, is seen as too different for the first two methods. These forms represent White supremacy’s most pernicious stratagems, owing to the manner in which they seek, grasp, and hold on to all in its path, and are characterized in this inquiry as tentacles. This study recognizes gatekeeping for White supremacy as the veiled modes in which ideologies, curricula, and teaching practices stand in for assimilation, appropriation, and erasure (see Figure 1).
Purpose and Rationale

In order to address the gross inequities that exist within music education, the purpose of this inquiry is to expose and interrogate the structures of White supremacy that operate as gatekeeping mechanisms through the means of the ideologies, content constructions, and practices of music education in the United States. More specifically, this investigation explores the ways in which music teachers understand hidden structures of White supremacy in music education discourse.

From its inception, music education in the United States has been used to appropriate, control, and indoctrinate student masses into the moral mindset of the White American torch
bearers of Western European hegemony (Bradley, 2006; Gould 2012). As a result, generations of non-White students have been the victims of both explicit and implicit means of subjugation and marginalization, through a coalescence of explicit music curricula and hidden curricula (Apple, 1993; Jackson, 1968/1990). Bernstein (as cited in Giroux & Penna, 1979) stressed that what students learn from official curricula is eclipsed by that which is learned from the ideologies represented implicitly throughout curricula, pedagogy, and evaluation. This is to say that the continuation of this cycle is tied to a lack of perception of what lies beneath explicit curricula and the manners in which this undercurrent continues to fuel the fires of Eurocentrism. Ladson-Billings (1998) linked this unconsciousness to the dangers that pervade public education, recognizing an urgency that will not accept “that terrible calculus of the inability to ‘save every black life’: an awful arithmetic, a violence of abstraction” (Sharpe, 2016, p. 100) that is absent in the myopic liberal notions of incremental progress that pervade educational discourse. As a result of the systemic failure to appropriately name and address the urgency of such ideological whitewashing and a public sentiment that exhibits indifference to its Black collateral effect, U.S. music education continues to erase Black bodies from its classrooms (Gustafson, 2009).

Music teachers who recognize the singular cultural scope within their field face systemic challenges to any oppositional stances they enact against the institution. Such barriers exist as a result of the hierarchal organizational structure that U.S. school districts overwhelmingly employ, which is derived from 18th century Enlightenment thinking and is premised upon an explicit need for human efficiency and productivity (Hatch & Cunliffe, 2013). This European structural framework represents a seemingly impenetrable hurdle for well-intentioned educators under constant pressure to reconcile national, state, district, and school expectations with their curricula, resulting in explicit curricular constructions that manifest in the implicit foci for
meeting the expectations of those with institutional power (Lagemann, 2000). Stated differently, the very nature of music education functions within a complex of co-occurring constructions that represent both organizational and ideological positions, are inherently full of friction, and are deeply rooted within the Eurocentric hierarchal frameworks of institutional power in public schools. In circumstances where teachers identify culturally centered Whiteness in music education, the organizational foundation upon which PreK–12 public education rests virtually precludes any efforts towards affecting institutional change.

The assertion that the modern organizational paradigm fundamentally constrains confrontations to inequity is corroborated by critical race scholars Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995), who warn that there can be “no radical change in the current order” (p. 62) due to the inability, or disinterest, in addressing the hidden curricula that is implicitly embedded alongside explicit curricular agendas. Hidden curricula, first identified by Philip W. Jackson (1968/1990) and expanded upon by Michael Apple (1993), describes the secondary effect of education that results from the unstated social norms and assumptions that are understood as institutional expectations. It is through these implicit norms that regenerative social practices are obscured.

The lack of interest or action concerning hidden curricula described by Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995), can further be understood through what Vaugeois (2013) described as “terminal naivety.” Hess (2017a) described this same term as an apathy towards, and nescience of, hidden curricula that suppresses explicit language around issues of structural and systemic racism. Bradley (2015) suggested that schools legitimize hidden curricula and serve to make inequality seem legitimate. When considered through these lenses, hidden curricula and their inherent elusiveness perpetuate and preserve the very norms that maintain the system itself.
Due to the foundational role hidden curricula plays within education, teachers who seek to disrupt its influence are often powerless to effect broad systemic change. DeLorenzo (2012) suggested that no single music teacher, regardless of good intentions, has the power to remedy the barriers that face minoritized children in the U.S., as the system itself is centered upon Eurocentrism and needs to be challenged directly and structurally. For such wide-ranging change to occur, educators and researchers must act together to acknowledge the toxic reality forced upon students through the very structures they bolster. They must talk fearlessly and boldly about race, racism, and the institutional history of White supremacy in music education with the intention of disrupting Eurocentric narratives that subsume the art and culture of Others into its wake. They must confront the positioning of Eurocentric aesthetics as superior to all else and challenge assumptions of best music, best technique, best genres, best methods, best instruments, best anything, and best everything so that it may become possible to understand and acknowledge all students, their experiences, their art, and their culture as equal to their own.

Systemic change within music education requires a predominantly White teaching force (Abril, 2009; DeLorenzo, 2012; Koza, 2003; Lind & McKoy, 2016; Zubrzycki, 2017) to recognize that their profession is built upon an oppressive foundation. It is imperative that the whole of music education experience this destabilizing retrospection and supplant repressive discourse. Music teachers who recognize that they can no longer continue the practices they deem problematic (Regelski, 2005) might use critical pedagogy as a lens from which to sever ties from the unrelenting hold of a Eurocentric music education. Incremental reformative efforts that address discrete injustices serve singular needs and are enmeshed within the apathetic liberal ethos of which Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) forewarned. Michelle Alexander (2012), in *The New Jim Crow*, confirmed the notion that racism adapts to existing systems by developing and
modifying its form accordingly. Consequently, Alexander argued, the dominance of White supremacy relies far more on indifference than on explicit racial animus. Thus, any process short of dismantling the racist structures of music education amounts to a focus upon symptoms, which will inevitably resurrect in new forms, rather than addressing the source—White supremacy—and ultimately serves to negate the urgency of the inequities, injustices, and infringements entangled amongst the roots of music education in U.S. public schools.

**Research Questions**

This study focuses on how music educators make sense of White supremacy and gatekeeping within their professional worlds and discourse. The central research question guiding this study is: To what extent do music teachers make meaning of gatekeeping practices that mediate hidden structures of White supremacy?

In order to wholly address the principal question of the research, the following sub-questions were designed to further support the investigation towards a broader understanding of music teacher perceptions of gatekeeping practices and White supremacy:

- What are the priorities and prevailing ideologies of music education discourse?
- How do music teachers experience and understand the norms and practices expressed through the discourse in their field?

**Background**

The history of music education in U.S. public schools is structured upon an ethic of maintaining the Eurocentric hegemony upon which it was founded. Coining Eurocentrism, Amin (1989) suggested that “this illusory construct is fabricated upon a distorted perception of the Other that presupposed oppositions between the Europeans and other non-European peoples” (p. 171). Amin believed the Eurocentric construct to be maintained through a binary of “best” and
“Other” deployed via school texts and popular sentiment in order to legitimize European culture and history as singularly worthy for appropriation. In other words, Eurocentrism assumes an inevitable assimilation of all other cultures into that of the Western European standard. It is through such a complex of cultural dominion that music education has historically and systemically marginalized generations of non-White, particularly Black students, while elevating the mythos of European artistic supremacy resulting in cultural reproduction that exclusively benefited White students. Thus, the historical prevailing modes within music education can be understood as powerful mechanisms of cultural regeneration that serve to indoctrinate students into its succession.

The aforementioned dominant modes within music education are constructed upon ensembles, repertoire, content, pedagogy, and value systems consistent with the European models upon which they are derived. This is apparent in the categorization of the preponderance of music classes into the disciplines of choir, orchestra, and concert band, each having a repertoire steeped in the Western European canon (Bradley, 2007, 2015; Humphreys, 2016; Koza, 2008; Lind & McKoy, 2016). Moreover, these strands represent a cultural bias whose makeup is more representative of the military, church, and quotidian elitism, than contemporary society (Bradley, 2015; Humphreys 1995, 2016). When considering this architecture from which music education is constructed, it should come as no surprise that public-school music classes have continued to maintain an enrollment of primarily White students (Abril 2009; Elpus & Abril, 2011), even in schools and communities that are considered to have diverse populations (Bradley, 2007, 2015; Koza, 2008).

The continuing homogeneity in music class enrollment has been maintained in large part through the misrepresented axiomatic assumption of music as a universae lingua. Ironically,
music education in the U.S. has existed as anything but universal, in that it has been used to promote the values of Western classical traditions as “best.” Bradley (2015) argued that “By teaching only ‘the best’ music, one can easily hide behind a misguided sense of providing children with an equitable music education, overlooking the fact that such musical curricular choices represent a specific and narrow cultural perspective” (p. 197). Another way to discern this notion of best is to consider that it can only exist counter to that which is other than best, and invariably worse. When such a concept masquerades as objective knowledge within a public system of education, it inherently enforces cultural biases, inevitably leading to implicit modes of oppression, effectively serving to segregate those who participate in the discourse from those who do not.

Theoretical Framework

This study utilizes a theoretical framework premised upon two distinct but related paradigms in order to provide a lens to consider the multivariate question of how music teachers make meaning of gatekeeping practices mediated within hidden structures of White supremacy. Specifically, this study jointly employs the frameworks of critical pedagogy and critical race theory (CRT) to allow for a perspective that would not be possible with either of these approaches by themselves.

Within this framework, critical pedagogy provides a lens appropriately suited for the interrogation of the ways in which gatekeeping mechanisms maintain inequitable power structures, both inside and beyond classrooms, contributing to public education’s role in systems of cultural reproduction that maintain oppressive practices, curricula, and ideologies (Anyon, 1981; Benedict, 2015; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Giroux, 1997, 2011; Grande, 2004; Lind & McCoy, 2016; Woodson, 1933/2008). CRT offers an ideal perspective from which to study how
race and racism are understood within education, as well as the ways in which White supremacy permeates the professional identities and operational world of music teachers. This theoretical amalgamation is stronger than its constituent elements and ensures that the focus of the study addresses the ways in which music education impacts Black students and teachers most grievously.

**Methodology**

I chose a study design—critical discourse analysis (CDA)—that would best suit an inquiry concerning teacher understandings of discourse. CDA allows for the exploration of existing textual sources, as well as participant interviews focused upon teacher understandings of the text analysis, effectively creating a second level of discourse from interview text. I employed critical discourse analysis (CDA) through a design adapted from Fairclough’s (2009) dialectical-relational approach which treats the relationship between discourse and individual as a complex and reflexive correlation. This method, termed the dialectical-relational elucidatory approach (DREA), is a seven-stage process that contributes to current music education scholarship by shining light upon the multidirectional networks with which White supremacy permeates the professional world of music teachers, in full view for all who dare to cast their eyes.
This chapter is organized into four key subsections: Scope of Literature Review, Boundaries of Literature Review, Framework for Literature Review, and Theoretical Framework. The first three subsections of this chapter discuss relevant extant writing from contemporary and historical sources, particularly from the field of Social Justice in Music Education (SJME). This section establishes the research basis supporting the hypothesis that instigates the study; White supremacist ideologies are present in music education and they are bolstered through gatekeeping mechanisms. The fourth component, Theoretical Framework, constructs the theoretical foundation upon which this inquiry is premised and will be elaborated upon later in this chapter.

In the first component of the Literature Review section, under the name Scope of Literature Review, I set the parameters for the review, broadly discuss the field of SJME, and specifically name what is within and outside the scope of the analysis. In the second section, labeled Boundaries of Literature Review, I discuss two areas of SJME research often emphasized in social justice-oriented research that are problematic in contexts addressing White supremacy
in music education: multicultural music education and democratic music education. In the third section, Framework for Literature Review, I discuss literature and research informed by critical pedagogy and CRT in order to demonstrate their efficacy in exposing and confronting systemic structures of White supremacy made invisible through gatekeeping apparatus. In this section, there is a clearly delineated component that reviews the relevant work of scholars who conduct research from critical pedagogy traditions, but absent is one that solely focuses on CRT in music education. This intentional amalgamation represents how scholars most relevant to this review challenge White supremacy in music education through integrated theoretical frameworks. Lastly, the conclusion recapitulates the thesis of, as well as the need and urgency for, this study.

Review of the Literature

Scope of the Literature Review

Given the particular interests of this study, and thus its literature base, there are multiple areas of research within the music education canon that are not represented in this review. More precisely, this inquiry is not interested in subjects of study within music education that do not contribute to the identification and subversion of White supremacy in the field. One exception to these intentional omissions concerns the absence of policy critiques or recommendations. Although policy research and advocacy within music education represents a field that directly intersects the scope of this study and may serve to uphold White supremacy, the focus of this paper does not permit its inclusion.

Although the areas intentionally omitted do not necessarily represent subjects hostile or oppositional to this thesis, they may be representative of attributes or outcomes of music education that do not contribute to the analysis. One such example is this review’s lack of concern for the history of music education in the U.S., as the argument of this thesis has no
position of interest in the preservation of its past nor its traditions. Similarly, this literature review bears no concern with matters of aesthetic value, artistic integrity, or competitive elitist structures, as they represent historic considerations incongruous to the discussion. Limiting the scope of this study upon subjects that contribute to the understanding of the role White supremacy plays in music education may yield concerns for brevity but more importantly, they force an explicit introspection upon the dominant paradigms that define and preserve that which is believed precious.

In consideration of the indicated opposition to the ontological and epistemological illusions from which White supremacy operates through gatekeeping practices within music education, in this study, I explore issues relating to race, racism, and power that lie at the core of what is taught in music classes, the teaching practices employed, the institutions where music is taught, and the ideologies upon which they are structured. Such adherence to that which is associated with Whiteness persists throughout music education as its marrow, deep at the core, shoring up its systems, defining its roles, substance, and legacy all while assimilating, appropriating, and erasing the values, legacies, and traditions of musics from outside Western cultural spheres. In order to address these subjects, this review draws primarily from a literature base that intersects music education, critical pedagogy and CRT, and incorporates seminal texts and perspectives from the latter two dimensions.

**Social Justice in Music Education**

To make the case for the persistence of White supremacy within music education, this review draws upon sources from a literature base largely categorized under the heading of Social Justice in Music Education (SJME). The focus upon social justice in the field of music education represents a body of academic literature and research that intersects issues around music
education and equity including matters of race, racism, class, classism, colonization, colonialization, gender, sexuality, cultural identity, and disability (Benedict et al., 2015). In terms of ontology, epistemology, and theoretical perspective, SJME intersects all paradigms and incorporates scholarship across multiple disciplines, as the understanding of what constitutes social justice and who it should address is fluid, often overlaps, and contains conflicting views of what defines such work (Jorgenson, 2015). Accepting the flexibility within the field, there is a major commonality throughout the SJME body of work in the pursuit of an equitable society through the challenging of oppressive acts and the authorities that impose them, specifically within the world of music education (Woodford, 2015; Jorgensen, 2015).

**Boundaries of Literature Review**

This segment considers two domains of music education research with social justice orientations which inform this investigation but, I argue, fail to appropriately address issues concerning White supremacy. Using literature from each of these research areas, I make the case that multicultural music education and democratic music education modalities represent traditions whose values and assumptions are disharmonious with confronting issues of inequity around race.

**Multicultural Music Education**

Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) addressed their concern with multicultural rhetoric in education and considered the ideological frictions that exist between multiculturalism and CRT. They described multiculturalism as an educational reform movement that aimed to give students from diverse backgrounds, defined in terms of race, ethnicity, class, gender, ability, and sexual orientation, an equitable environment in which to learn. The primary problematics with the movement, Ladson-Billings and Tate elaborated, concern the practical limitations that exist in
public-school classrooms which result in “trivial examples and artifacts of cultures such as eating ethnic or cultural foods, singing songs or dancing, reading folktales, and other less than scholarly pursuits of the fundamentally different conceptions of knowledge or quests for social justice” (p. 61). Although these surface level understandings of cultural differences account for much of Ladson-Billings and Tate’s argument against multiculturalism in education, what they argued as more critical is the developing equivocation around its meaning and context.

Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) noted how multiculturalism has become indistinguishable from the obscure and all-encompassing term “diversity.” This has allowed multiculturalism to morph into “a term used to explain all types of ‘difference’—racial, ethnic, cultural, linguistic, ability, gender, sexual orientation” (p. 61). They offered that, through a multicultural lens, cultural differences are seldom interrogated and thus create an assumption of unity that essentializes all minoritized populations into a singular Other. Ladson-Billings and Tate argued that although multiculturalism is oriented towards justice, it is essentially enveloped by liberal notions of incremental change and complacency.

In music education, some critical scholars have found Ladson-Billings and Tate’s (1995) assessment of multiculturalism to be strikingly accurate (Bradley, 2006; Gaztambide-Fernández, 2011; Gaztambide-Fernández & Rose, 2015). Finding its attempts at cultural understandings cursory, or even casual, these scholars asserted that multiculturalism has failed to address the ways in which White cultural hegemony pervades music education. Despite its implication of “many cultures” (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995, p. 61), multiculturalism lacks a theoretical perspective on race and racism. Therefore, the theoretical foundation of multiculturalism lacks the critical elements that shape the realities of minoritized people.
In “The Diversification of Music Teacher Education: Six Vignettes from a Movement in Progress,” Howard et al. (2014) provided an aphoristic overview of the multicultural movement in music education. Their study was written in two sections. The first section served as an historical primer on the movement’s influence upon music education, as well as some resulting actions and perspectives from practitioners. In the second section, Howard et al. share six vignettes that illustrated how multicultural practices helped establish connections between American in-service and pre-service music teachers and musicians from outside their cultural traditions.

Howard et al. (2014) framed the multicultural movement in music education as owing to the increasing diversity of student populations, specifically in terms of languages spoken and “unique cultural practices” (p. 28) and offered two perspectives that have contributed to its discourse. Referencing Bourdieu and Passeron’s (1977) *Reproduction in Education, Culture, and Society*, the authors offered that minoritized youth may perceive participation in school music programs as lacking the social capital to warrant their engagement or participation and thus may avoid participation (Abril & Gault, as cited in Howard et al., 2014; Campbell, as cited in Howard et al., 2014). Acknowledging a paradox between student desires and music program potential, the authors suggested that students who have recently emigrated to the U.S. may seek Americanization—assimilation—that can serve as a catalyst for joining school music ensembles.

Howard et al. (2014) illustrated how easily music educators can categorize all minoritized youth into a singular, essentialized Other. This tendency towards essentialization suggests a deficit assumption of student realities, which can be understood through the American melting pot trope. This conception of inclusivity almost always neglects the aspect of cultural erasure that occurs through an assumption of willing assimilation.
In the latter section, Howard et al. (2014) described six classroom encounters with non-Eurocentric musics. In these vignettes, *authentic* examples of musics from around the globe are employed in music classrooms. The inclusion of authentic musical experiences alongside assimilative measures that inherently dissuade students’ cultural identities constitute a core friction between the liberatory practices inherent in critical and critical race pedagogies and those within multicultural music education.

**Democratic Music Education**

In order to identify what constitutes democratic music education, it is necessary to first establish definitions for democracy and democratic education. In his seminal work, *Democracy and Education* (1916/2004), educational philosopher John Dewey described democracy as something beyond a type of government. He characterized it as “primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience” (p. 121) where each member of society considers their own actions in the context of all others and equated it to the “breaking down of those barriers of class, race, and national territory which kept men [*sic*] from perceiving the full import of their activity” (p. 121). Accordingly, Dewey understood democratic education as a duty of a democratic society “which gives individuals a personal interest in social relationships and control, and the habits of mind which secure social changes without introducing disorder” (pp. 138–139). This Deweyan understanding of democratic education as one which enables citizens to enact change, so long as they avoid disruption, can be understood as a position of privilege that neglects issues of oppression and exploitation, and their essential exigency.

Democratic music education may be seen as the realization of democratic education within the field of music education. It should be no surprise then that democratic music education, like the broader field of democratic education, conveniently groups race-based
oppressions with other means of marginalization, effectively amounting to a silence on issues around White supremacy. Consistent with Dewey’s (1916/2004) notion of social transformation without trouble, this may be understood as an absurdity when considered through the lens of liberatory pedagogies and says nothing of the very real conditions of racial discrimination and oppression that are thrust upon millions of youth in classrooms daily.

Additional problematics with democratic music education can be located within the paradox of forming equitable teacher and student relationships within the contemporary organizational structures of schools. In practice, music educators engaging in democratic practices often base their methods upon the premise of creating meaningful musical experiences for students in order to “create pathways for student–teacher transactions that are inclusive, educative, ethical and transformative” (Silverman, 2013, p. 7). Such approaches acknowledge that students have a wealth of understanding, independent from anything learned through formal instruction, and seek to employ these assets in the classroom by democratically amalgamating teacher and student knowledges. Though student cultures are often understood as a value in such approaches, they can be exoticized and acquiesced as a gateway to something better. This brand of democratic pedagogy underestimates positionality and its role in undermining the synthesis teachers and researchers seek. Well intentioned as they may be, such designs highlight the dubious nature of the term democratic and its function in reproducing societal inequities, and thus calls into question its application in educational settings. Its most fundamental flaw is in its democratic conception for music education, which is premised upon an idealized connection between music education and society. This position takes the modern democratic paradigm for granted, assuming that its iterations are meant to serve the needs of all citizens, when they realistically serve those who benefit most from its use.
Paul Woodford (2005), the eminent advocate for democratic practices in music education, acknowledged what he understood as a disconnect between the roles of music teachers and discourse around democracy. In response, he offered a vision for democratic music education that went beyond a music education adaptation of Deweyan (1916/2004) discourse. Woodford premised his concept upon higher professional standards and a focus upon recruiting teachers who value such ideals as “personal creativity, integrity, and responsibility” (Woodford, 2005, p. 99) over what he described as the more traditional determinants of music teacher success: musical ability, knowledge, and pedagogy. According to Woodford, a concerted effort to recruit “music teachers who see themselves as public intellectuals and democratic leaders of children and not heroic leaders, dictators, or just employees of the state” (p. 99) could serve to reform the field into one where children are taught to question authority in order to seek truth.

Written from a Canadian and U.S. context, Woodford’s (2005) call for higher teaching standards to enable the development of teachers who would exhibit and model the democratic ideals that society apparently wishes to see in children, is essentially focused on teacher qualities, and more specifically on teachers who subscribe to a distinct democratic ideology. Moreover, it assumes a fixed definition of these democratic values, which are woefully ill-equipped to address inequities that minoritized children face inside and outside of schools, in spite of and as a result of their experiences within democracy. As with traditional iterations of democratic music practices, Woodford’s vision reflects how a democratic society could be, rather than how it is. As a result, democratic education and democratic music education operate on a premise that seems to will Dewey’s (1916/2004) democracy into existence. As a result, those who are marginalized by the mechanisms of pseudo-democratic societies are educated under the assumption that they have the same privileges as those who seek their domination, thus compounding the injustices
they already face with a false reality that does nothing to prepare them for an actuality that positions them on its periphery.

**Framework for Literature Review**

In the U.S. context, public schooling can be mistakenly understood as an *equalizing* institution (Kress, 2011), and this characterization is unjustifiably extended on to public music education. Through the assimilation of student cultural values into the American melting pot, historically marginalized populations may have attributes of their cultures reflected in curricula. However, such depictions are often fashioned through multicultural and democratic constructions that essentialize, exoticize, and genuinely serve to benefit the dominant culture, while leaving all other elements of the culture sufficiently Othered (Bradley, 2012; Campbell, 1994; Gaztamábide-Fernández, 2011; Kumashiro, 2009). There is nothing truly equalizing about music education and thus anything that supports the hegemonic structures that have oppressed non-European, non-Western, non-White students for generations must be exposed and dismantled.

The theoretical frameworks of critical pedagogy and CRT are both premised upon exposing and undermining power structures, institutions, and systems that create and enable oppression, marginalization, and exploitation in classrooms and the broader societal spheres in which they exist. Although, as explained later in this chapter, critical pedagogy and CRT understand the relationship between capital and race in seemingly antithetical fashions, in practice they support each other rather harmoniously.

This congruity between critical pedagogy and critical race theory is the rationale for why there is no single subsection devoted to CRT research in music education included in this chapter. Rather, there exists a single component that explores literature that combines CRT and
critical pedagogy effectively. In practice, the literature relevant to this thesis combined these frameworks, and thus, a section focused solely on CRT was not realistic.

**Critical Pedagogy**

Understanding the hypocrisy and fiction of what is currently understood to be democracy, critical theory challenges the fundamental assumptions of capitalism and liberalism and seeks to counter exploitative narratives that perpetuate such myths. Accordingly, critical pedagogy challenges the ways in which capitalism and liberalism have usurped democracy in a manner which camouflages its exploitative operations in nationalistic appeals. In music education, critical pedagogy can function as a mindset for engaging and empowering authentic student voice, agency, and self-determination through methods of cultural production.

Renowned critical pedagogy scholar Peter McLaren (2010), in “Revolutionary Critical Pedagogy” advocated a fundamental Marxist principle (1887/1984) which placed the utmost importance upon workers while juxtaposing the capitalist as a “pseudo-subject” (p. 2). Drawing a stark distinction between the value of the worker and the politically constructed value placed upon worker production, McLaren (2010) argued that teachers must consider pedagogy and curriculum as corresponding to Marx’s (1887/1984) perspective on mechanisms of cultural regeneration. Such a revelation would allow educators to embrace pedagogy as a living extension of human interactions between teachers and students, which would contrast the current setup in which teachers are transformed “into dead objects” (McLaren, 2010, p. 3) through the capitalization and cultural reproductions that maintain an exploitative social order.

McLaren (2010) described what he termed “critical revolutionary pedagogy” (p. 5) as a variation of critical pedagogy that places an even greater focus upon confronting the liberal and neoliberal structures that maintain exploitative wage labor as standard operating procedure.
McLaren understood a direct parallel between Marx’s (1887/1984) workers and contemporary educators, as well as a corollary between Marx’s production and curriculum and instruction. McLaren (2010) connected his notion around revolutionary pedagogy with capitalism and its inevitable partner exploitation and sought for teachers to realize “the internal relations of capital and struggles to overcome them, to transcend them by means of creating a world where value ceases to exist” (p. 7). This is only achievable within a social realm outside of capitalism’s influences and this, McLaren warned, calls for nothing less than total detachment from capital in order to disengage its hold. Thus, McLaren called for a framework that operates outside of current organizational and political systems in order to enable students to critique their worlds; he insisted that liberty cannot exist at the expense of the exploitation of others.

Critical pedagogy prioritizes challenging oppression and exploitation by focusing on the political roles that positionality and privilege play in the relationships between students and teachers. In this way, critical pedagogy could play an essential role in confronting the manners in which curriculum and instruction act as instruments of oppression in music classrooms. In practice, critical pedagogy calls for dialogical forms of instruction that are rooted in the experiences of, and between, student and teacher (Abrahams, 2005; Hess, 2017b; Talbot & Williams, 2019). Interestingly, it is the insistence upon these dialogic models that can often impede classroom adoption as such methods are often seen as inconsistent with traditional modes of music education such as Orff, Kodály, or Dalcroze methods (Abrahams, 2005; Gould, 2012; Talbot & Williams, 2019).

This absence of concrete and transferable curricula may serve as a foundational hindrance to the adoption of dialogic instructional practices by music teachers who are accustomed to traditional methods. Abrahams (2005) suggested that such a lack of “specific teaching techniques
or a prescribed body of musical repertoire” (p. 12) for students to hear or perform leaves teachers at a loss insofar as design instruction. Strangely enough, it is the very fact that critical pedagogy is not a prescriptive method, argued Abrahams, that allows for its synthesis of “philosophy and pedagogy, theory and practice” to “break down the walls between the teacher’s music and the student’s music, moving everyone from what is to what ought to be” (p. 19). Abrahams (2005) contended that a dialogical pedagogical mindset could help music teachers engage their students in transformative and individualized classroom experiences, but it cannot impose prefabricated curricula.

If it is the absence of prescribed curricula, techniques, and repertoire that serve as obstacles to the enactment of critical pedagogy for teachers, then it could be reasoned that there exists a need for an epistemological awakening within music education. This critical enlightenment would refute any fixed conception of knowledge and thus, by extension, no resolute curricula (Freire, 1974/2013). Sympathetically, Freire asserted that “whoever enters in dialogue does so with someone about something; and that something ought to constitute the new content of our proposed education” (p. 41). In practice within music classes, a Freirean perspective of dialogical action (1970/2005) positions the teacher as a pedagogical champion of their students who, situated within inequitable societal and educational systems, seeks an overarching discernment of communion.

Freire (1970/2005) argued that communion between teacher and student is only attainable through the critical and oppression-threatening acts of cooperation, organization, and unity. Educators working from such perspectives “do not come to teach or to transmit or to give anything, but rather to learn, with the people, about the people’s world” (p. 180, emphasis in original). Though he differentiated between the role of teacher and student, Freire
unquestionably cautioned that teachers (acknowledged as teacher-student) who position themselves and their knowledge above pupils operate within oppressive frameworks that validate their own worlds above those with whom they should seek to commune. Put differently, any system that presumes a superior cultural or intellectual position over those who it is designed to assist should be understood as a complex of cultural invasion, regardless of motivation. The goal of communion, Freire argued, is a true cultural synthesis, which coalesces from an authentic communion between teacher and student. Cultural synthesis is inconceivable without communion, and communion begins through dialogue.

As discussed in the first chapter, it was Freire’s (1970/2005) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* that contributed most to critical pedagogy scholarship on the topic of dialogue. Freire devoted the fourth chapter to discussing the application of both antidialogic and dialogic action and their interventive pedagogical roles in the respective oppression or transformative liberation of humankind. Dialogue, fundamental to critical pedagogy, centers student knowledges and experiences alongside those of the teacher. Methods of music teaching that preordain repertoire, techniques, and curricula are monologic and cannot, by their very nature, treat student knowledges and experiences as subjects of learning, but rather relegate them as objects to be controlled. Freire (1974/2013) understood this epistemological dilemma not merely as a technical matter to be worked out but suggested that “the difficulty lies rather in the creation of a new attitude—that of dialogue, so absent in our own upbringing and education” (p. 45). Freire cautioned that educators should be cognizant of antidialogue, which can be described as manipulation designed to beguile students into cultural submission. Although antidialogic and monologic practices reveal themselves relatively readily to critical scholars, the axiomatic
challenge for those seeking authentic dialogue is a species of democratic criticality that engages student voice as an instrument of assimilation.

Monologic practices are analogous to what Gaztambide-Fernández (2011) and Gaztambide-Fernández and Rose (2015) refer to as a “civilizing approach” aimed “to further assimilate marginalized or otherwise uncivilized students through opportunities to participate in dominant modes of music making” (p. 462). This approach is common within democratic practices and is consistent with the dominant narratives and methods within U.S. public-school music education. Within music education, environments that seek a synthesis between student and teacher musical preferences teeter at the edge of criticality and pseudo-criticality. In such contexts, student knowledge may be understood as independent from anything learned through formal instruction and thus can be engaged from a perspective of cultural synthesis or employed purely as a means from which to give the effect of trust and community, in order to provide a springboard to teacher notions of more appropriate classroom musics.

In music classrooms, teachers might include student musics as gateways to something better. Any approach that engages students’ cultural values by allowing their inclusion in the classroom inevitably leads to the exoticization and acquiescence of those student cultures. Such practices merely resemble a democratic amalgamation of teacher and student knowledges and are only faintly reminiscent of Freirean notions of communion and cultural synthesis, which are not possible within an environment where student and teacher positions are not understood as equal. Although such strategies aim to enable students to have deeper connections with their own culture through deeper experiences with music, they are more accurately a fusion of both dialogical and antidialogical practices, an impossible contradiction as any inclusion of the latter nulls any attempt at the former. These practices are representative of a liberal apparatus that
employs superficial elements of dialogue within the parameters of the hegemonic intellectual hierarchy. Using a Freirean lens, such manipulative acts may be understood as a cultural invasion of students.

Freire (1970/2005) observed that in acts of cultural invasion, educators structure pedagogical decisions upon their own perspectives, beliefs, and ideologies, and it is from such a frame that they enter the world of students. He contrasted this scenario with cultural synthesis, in which teachers enter student worlds from a stance of equity. “They do not come to teach or to transmit or to give anything, but rather to learn, with the people, about the people’s world” (p.180, emphasis in original). Invaders and preconceived instructional models are replaced with “actors who critically analyze reality (never separating this analysis from action) and intervene as Subjects in the historical process” (p. 181). It is only through cultural synthesis that the worlds of students and teachers can be reconciled through a dialectic that embraces the differences between them and positions all equally. The prevalence of pseudo-critical practices in music education raises the question of whether a system void of dialogue permits the impression of dialogue to appear liberatory.

A critical dialogic pedagogy demands that researchers and educators critique the narratives that dominate the field and can serve to liberate students and teachers from a discourse that refuses to address the structural and systemic realities embedded within every facet of music education and the broader society in which it exists. Contrastingly, the pseudo-criticality of democratic pedagogy can never serve to liberate, as it assumes a positional equity that may not exist in the meso, exo, and macro structures (Bronfenbrenner, 1976, 1979; Lind & McKoy, 2016) in which students reside. Thus, any attempt at promoting equity in the classroom without challenging the systems in which it operates discounts the realities of students whose experiences
are outside of Eurocentric norms. Even in situations where music teachers can eliminate classroom hierarchies and injustices, the inequities that persist beyond the walls can never be sufficiently reconciled (Gaztambide-Fernández & Rose, 2015).

Estelle Jorgensen (2007), in Concerning Justice and Music Education, addressed the role which social justice-oriented pedagogy can play in combating the Eurocentric norms that permeate the music classroom. In her examination of this intersection between justice and music education, Jorgenson asserted that music and music-making need not be part of a formal system but can operate in contrast and in protest to Western traditions whose discourse has been established and maintained by elitist and hierarchal cultural dominance. Rather than a thoughtless adherence to traditional methods, Jorgenson argued that music and musical meanings can be constructed socially.

The lack of critical examination within musical discourse concerned Jorgensen (2007) and she articulated her worry for the future of music education as a dichotomy between humanity’s actions and values. This human tendency to “perpetuate inhumane and unjust systems that stand against the value of people and things in the natural world” (p. 180) exists in opposition to struggles against institutional inequities. She saw hope in Freire’s (1970/2005) message of a “bottom-up, dialogical, and communitarian view in which change happens by dint of people becoming aware of injustice and acting collectively to correct it” (Jorgenson, 2007, p. 180). From this sense of hope, Jorgensen saw music-making as a means of opposing injustice and warned of potential liberators becoming “seduced by oppressive ideas and practices as means of attaining their ends” (p. 180). Unmistakable throughout Concerning Justice and Music Education was Jorgenson’s use of dichotomous frictions representative of the expressed tension between values and actions.
Elizabeth Gould (2012) explored the ways in which values become activated as mechanisms of indoctrination in the discourse and classrooms of music education. In *Uprooting Music Education Pedagogies and Curricula: Becoming-musician and the Deleuzian Refrain*, Gould considered the history and present of music education through the lens of the Deleuzian refrain. Gilles Deleuze, a prolific French philosopher of the latter half of the twentieth century, applied the recurring section of music known as a refrain as a mechanism for the indoctrination of historic cultural territories. These territories that Gould examined, namely the performance, reading, and notation of Western music for the moral good, have permeated music education from its origins in U.S. public schools. Gould submitted that, from its onset, Western music education has been used as a means of using what was understood as best music, both in the classroom and through public performance, to instill a singular Christian morality and national pride upon those who were deemed to need such improvements.

This Deleuzian refrain in music education, Gould (2012) argued, is actualized in the musical conceptions and skills that have permeated and encapsulated the profession since the nineteenth century. “Delineating these territories for students is what music educators ‘do’” (p. 76). This is “actualized through various forms of musical, social, pedagogical, and curricular control” (p. 76) that would otherwise challenge the refrain’s very existence. Such control over the system is maintained, Gould asserted, through structural gate keeping that limits the entrance of students and teachers who have not assimilated into the historical Western archetype of what it means to be musical.

Gould (2012) argued a collective mindset exists within music education of always being under threat of being diminished. From the Deleuzian perspective that Gould argued, the points of stability within such an environment become increasingly valued and exist in such forms as
content and achievement standards in music education, mandated curricula, and over-reliance on pre-determined pedagogical approaches. Gould has hope for the deterritorialization of music education and proposes that teachers need only music, encounters, and students to ignite the change.

Four years earlier, in Devouring the Other: Democracy in Music Education, Elizabeth Gould (2008) addressed the ways in which the democratic foundation of Western cultures served as the platform for what she might have later labeled “territorializations” in music education. Acknowledging the hypocrisy of contemporary understandings of liberal democracies that exist in multiple embodiments, she argued that no iterations of contemporary democracy have been able to guarantee or provide freedom, justice, and equality for its citizens. Gould argued that music educators have, in general, been conveniently unmindful of the calamitous dichotomy between supposed ambitions of democracy and the realities of its impact and has, in large part, continued to connect the liberal democracy fantasy with the field’s goals, despite allusions towards social justice.

Gould (2008) argued that the manners in which “so-called democratic practices” (p. 29) become actualized in music classrooms center around instructional strategies and discipline. She maintained that content relating to issues of social justice go no further than topics directly relevant to the field itself, such as teaching about female composers, but fail to engage students in broader power relations in their realities. The most egalitarian of practices include the sharing of classroom control and power with students, although Gould believed such actions to be empty gestures that leave the environmental power imbalances intact and unquestioned. Her contention lies in the manipulations inherent in the acceptance of democratic principles without consideration of how the acceptance of the centered members of the community excludes those
positioned on the margins. It is from this understanding that Gould expands Plumwood’s (1993) theory on dualistic logic and the devouring of the other that is unavoidable within a system that purports to acculturate differences in favor of master social, cultural, and legal narratives. From this perspective, any individual or communal inability to adapt to the prevailing systems is understood as a failure of the individual or group, and not the structures within which they operate. Gould argued that it is this contradiction that warrants the challenge and subversion of the dualistic system.

Gould (2008) upheld that the oppressions ingrained within liberal democracies, specifically classism, racism, and sexism, are vehemently despised by and integral to the societies who cling to its bedrock. This forges an epidemic of Othering by the centered group upon those at the margins, instilling yet another binary of master and Other. Gould connected such dualities to the elitist entrance practices required for music students to matriculate into university music programs and named all agents of the system as complicit in its domination, including academics, teachers, and students. Gould submitted that such practices contribute to the illusion of meritocracy and serve as evidence for the false equivalency between access and equity.

Gould (2008) characterizes these dualisms of liberal democracies as acts of symbolic violence, which inevitably manifest physically, amounting to literal violence against the marginalized Others. Using Plumwood’s (1993) stages of colonization, Gould (2008) connected the fourth stage of “a process of colonisation of otherness” as contemporary occurrences that amount to the ultimate acculturative act of “devouring of the other” (Gould, 2008, p. 37). Gould re-labeled modern liberal democracies as a mere “simulacrum, the ultimate bait and switch, as it promises what—by its very definition—it cannot deliver, can never deliver” (p.40) and argued
this understanding as “the cruelest blow of all, as it devours the Other” (p. 40). Gould challenged music educators to forgo the pseudo-democratic activities that award students opportunities for choice and decision making in favor of actions that focus on distinction and discord, believing these to be the only tools that can challenge the hold of liberal democracies.

Throughout *Devouring the Other: Democracy in Music Education*, Elizabeth Gould (2008) employed the use of binaries inherent within the field of music education. These dualisms present as master/Other, individual/group, center/margin, and assimilation/domination and can also be seen in Jorgenson’s (2007) positioning of justice/injustice, hope/caution, and liberation/oppression. In both Jorgenson’s and Gould’s (2008) arguments, dualities are stressed to represent the enmity that results from the manners in which music education maintains apparatus of oppression. The use of binaries in the critical pedagogy tradition represents an application of Hegelian dialectics and demonstrates how tensions between opposing forces can lead towards resolution. Freire (1970/2005) employed the use of binaries to leverage the manner in which they highlight the inherent tensions present in oppressive acts and believed the recognition of these tensions as necessary for moving towards *conscientização*.

*Conscientização*, or conscientization, can be understood as the ability to perceive one’s reality, the factors that control this reality, and the actions taken against the elements of oppression which become visible through this process (Freire, 1970/2005). To Freire, change or struggle cannot remain at the individual level and what begins with one’s *conscientização* transforms collectively once the community becomes aware of and intolerant of their oppression. From this cognizance, the community joins together in solidarity and, in this way, *conscientização* leads to cultural revolution, a community’s revolutionary combined effort at *conscientização*.
In *Critically Assessing Forms of Resistance in Music Education*, Talbot and Williams (2019) identified Freirean conscientização as both the goal and means of critical education within the music classroom and offered a thorough context in which the Freirean notion of conscientization can be understood, embodied, and actuated through student evaluation. The authors addressed the topic of assessment in music education from this critical pedagogy perspective to consider whether students should be assessed within a music class and, if so, if it can be enacted in a manner consistent with the values and goals of critical education.

Talbot and Williams (2019) acknowledged that critical educators often view assessments as unnecessary and oppressive, but they argued that they can be employed to “equip both teachers and students to see the inequities and oppressions of our world and to craft and implement radically differentiated ways of being” (p. 85). Talbot and Williams recognized traditional means of assessment as ill-suited for liberatory education and suggested they are completely removed from any purpose beyond their own false understanding of their neutral evaluatory functions.

As Freire (1970/2005) argued that education is never neutral, Talbot and Williams (2019) denied the fallacious idea that educational assessment can be unbiased. They offered that critical assessment could exist as “a socially embedded activity that can only be fully understood by taking account of the social and cultural contexts within which it operates” (Gipps & Stobart, as cited in Talbot and Williams, 2019). From this assertion, they offered that a wide array of assessments is needed to represent the critical work occurring in the classroom and offered several means by which music educators can authentically assess their students in ways that contribute to student understandings of oppression and resistance.
To Talbot and Williams (2019), assessment is not separate from the learning experience itself but is authentically integrated in a manner that serves the instruction and the students. They argued that critical assessments should be co-generated, representative of the collective and individual conscientization of the students, be non-prescriptive, and reflective of the knowledge and personal transformations inherent in the process. Recognizing the music classroom as an environment centered around resistance, they encouraged the use of formative assessment as a means of evaluating transformations in understanding.

**Especially Critical: Bridging Critical Race Theory and Critical Pedagogy**

In *Going for Broke: A Talk to Music Teachers*, Juliet Hess and Brent Talbot (2019) demonstrated how critical pedagogy and CRT perspectives can be bridged through their common anti-racist stances. In this text, Hess and Talbot evoked James Baldwin’s (1963/1998) *A Talk to Teachers* and echoed his call for educators to engage students in a form of learning that confronts the complex injustices inherent in Black American realities. Targeting music teachers, “Going for Broke” applied Baldwin’s call and used contemporary examples of racist narratives, acts, and policies as affirmation of the need for anti-racist pedagogical practices. Urging music teachers to “go for broke” by confronting the political powers that consume music education regardless of individual outcomes, Hess and Talbot offered that all teaching is political, and ignorance of this truth can only serve to support the message of the oppressor.

Hess and Talbot (2019) acknowledged the seriousness and danger in a contemporary U.S. context, citing numerous examples of sanctioned hate that has risen from the shadows since Trump’s presidency began in January 2017. Helping to historically situate Baldwin’s writing and to give chronological context to the need for anti-racist practices, Hess and Talbot provided relevant perspectives from Carter G. Woodson’s (1933/2008) *The Mis-education of the Negro*. 
and W.E.B. DuBois’s (1903/2018) *The Souls of Black Folk*. In addition to the added historical perspectives, the authors contributed that Baldwin (1963/1998) failed to recognize the manners in which systemic and societal forces impact Black women. To correct for this lack of recognition, they drew upon Kimberlé Crenshaw’s (1995) concept of intersectionality and Patricia Hill Collins’ (2000) matrix of domination to examine the ways in which multiple identities intersect and manifest.

Hess and Talbot (2019) connect the “intolerable trouble” (p. 93) of the Trump era to the adaptability of racism and slavery, in terms of social and legal apparatus that maintain systemic caste systems throughout American society. As Baldwin (1963/1998) beseeched teachers to engage in what Freire (1970/2005) would call critical dialogue, no matter the cost, Hess and Talbot challenged music teachers to do similarly, calling them to “go for broke” in order to equip students with the tools they need to identify and challenge the forms of oppression that have inculcated countless students. Baldwin (1963/1998) talked to teachers about their responsibility to examine society and the obligation to work towards transformation and Hess and Talbot contextualized that call to action as distinct from the historical role that education has played—one of socialization and indoctrination.

In order to challenge societal structures, Hess and Talbot (2019) addressed the role that an unlearning process must play in schools and in music classes specifically. They urged music educators to challenge Eurocentric musical traditions and reject such histories. Instead, the authors suggested, “we can create opportunities to talk about the significance accorded to particular types of music and the manner in which school curricula often hierarchize music” (p. 104). Once the cloak of the apolitical universality of music education is lifted, Hess and Talbot argued, the music classroom can be a space in which students and teachers can engage musics
they encounter with a critical lens that challenges all to take accountability and action within their own lives. For example, music teachers and students can examine performances that challenge norms as a point of departure for such discussions.

In *Musicking in the City: Conceptualizing Urban Music Education as Cultural Practice* (2011), Rubén Gaztambide-Fernández argued how rhetoric has contributed to maintaining oppressive structures in both music and music education. Through connections between the sociocultural understanding of “urban” with “musical styles associated with African Americans, such as R&B, soul, hip-hop, rap, and reggae” (p. 16), Gaztambide-Fernández argued that the word “urban” is coded language for Black. In the music industry, Gaztambide-Fernández contested, the innocuous term “urban” stands in for Black as a means through which to commodify the Black experience, thus providing what Leonardo and Hunter (2007) noted as illusory concepts of the positive “urbane” without containing any context of the negative “urban.” In an effort to situate the urban in the context of the music classroom, or vice versa, Gaztambide-Fernández (2011), using a CRT framework, positioned both “urban music” and “urban education” as points of privilege from a cultural perspective.

Gaztambide-Fernández (2011) suggested that understanding the urban as a concrete place with particular disparities of resources, material conditions, and spatial densities allows its central tenets of inequality, situated within close proximity, to become visible. This contributes to what he refers as both the widespread and narrowly imagined allusions of an “urban jungle” (Leonardo & Hunter, 2007) and its “culture of poverty” (Lewis, 1961). It is from such a mindset that educators in urban settings often enter their work (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2011; Leonardo & Hunter, 2007), and thus, this perception exists as the foundation from which a “dialectical relationship between real economic and racial inequality, and the way in which the urban is
imagined” (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2011, p. 21) begins. He stressed that the often-overlooked
dire reality of the urban imaginary occurs as a direct result of the production and reproduction of
the mindset and conditions that depict the racialized poor as marginal.

Written from within a Canadian and U.S. context, in consideration of how music teachers
become equipped for their careers, Gaztambide-Fernández (2011) called attention to music
teacher preparation and its insistence upon readying educators for “ideal students” (Fiese &
DeCarbo, as cited in Gaztambide-Fernández, 2011). He argued that the imagined ideal student is
most certainly White, and the imagined urban student is undoubtedly Black. This illusory notion
undoubtedly leads to an apprehension of the exemplar as being divergent from urban and Black,
Gaztambide-Fernández asserted, which has only functioned to cause music educators to be
woefully unprepared to meet the needs of their Black students. He insisted that this mentality is
embedded within the psychic devaluation of Black student bodies that has contributed to the
placing of obstacles in their paths.

Remediations of music teacher attitudes toward students in urban music classrooms,
Gaztambide-Fernández (2011) argued, would mean needing to abandon notions that high-value
music is inherently absent from the lives of Black students. Attempts to expose students to the
civilizing effects of Western musics brings with it a “hierarchical relationship between various
kinds of music, in which ‘urban music’ is hardly considered music at all, at least not music
worthy of the music education classroom” (pp. 28–29). Gaztambide-Fernández affirmed that
within this attitude, the antidote for poverty is the culture of the elite.

Gaztambide-Fernández (2011) stated that music education does not have to exist as it has,
and often does. He employed a CRT perspective to expose the inequities embedded in music
education through coded constructions and offered a critical approach, focused upon cultural
production, to “invite students to recreate images of themselves without re-circulating dominant relations” (p. 39). Further, he predicted the continued irrelevance of music education if it forgoes authentic cultural production in favor of the historical and contemporary reproductive traditions of Eurocentric culture.

In *Social Justice and Urban Music Education* (2015), Gaztambide-Fernández and Rose advanced Gaztambide-Fernández’s (2011) arguments on the understandings of “urban” and discussed different manners through which issues of social justice can be addressed in music education. Premised upon the assumption that music education must address issues of social justice, the authors (2015) argued that the field should focus on the economic inequities inherent in urban music classrooms. Building upon Gaztambide-Fernández's (2011) “three-pronged conception of the ‘urban’ as a space constituted at the intersection of specific material realities, symbolic imaginaries, and embodied cultural practices,” (Gaztambide-Fernández & Rose, 2015, p. 458) they discussed the positive and negative connotations implicit in the labels of both “urban” and “urbane.” The authors argued that naming the parameters that constitute the societal understandings of urban school environments is essential for committing oneself to social justice in urban music education, allowing teachers a lens from which to see injustice present in student lives.

Gaztambide-Fernández and Rose's (2015) arguments concerned four key issues: access to music education, curricular representation of students, reexamination of pedagogy, and a critical ideology. They acknowledge a predominant presumption that exposure to European musical traditions will benefit all children and claim that many music teachers understand this as a form of social justice. This attitude is consistent with Gould’s (2008, 2012) assertion that this all-too-common prescriptive civility has been the motive of music education in the U.S. since its
inception in the nineteenth century. Gaztambide-Fernández and Rose tied such perspectives of social justice with (White) saviorism that positions the music teacher as a hero who offers urban students salvation through their expertise of Western European music.

Gaztambide-Fernández and Rose (2015) contended that pedagogy needs to be reexamined in order to address the oppressive nature of the hierarchal classroom structure. Although models that center the teacher as the singular authority are unquestionably undemocratic, such approaches are the norm within the field. Though this de-centering of authority is necessary for social justice work in music classrooms, Gaztambide-Fernández and Rose warned of focusing this work solely on classroom environments, as this may lead students and teachers towards “a naïve conception of music making, as if it were removed from the larger social and political context that surrounds it, ignoring the fact that while power relations might be undermined within the classroom, they continue to persist outside” (p. 465). This acknowledgement served as an understanding of the limits of what many understand to be democratic modes of instruction within classroom environments.

Counter to democratic methods that are sequestered from the social and political contexts outside the classroom, Gaztambide-Fernández and Rose (2015) drew attention to the ways in which music and music education are suited to contribute to or interrupt dominant means of understanding and control. Rather than centering the practice of music-making, they propose a critical pedagogical approach “to engage students—particularly those who experience marginalization—in an examination of how structures of power work at individual, institutional, and systemic levels” (p. 465) in order to sever the ties of oppressive and essentialist practices and modes of thinking. Gaztambide-Fernández and Rose did not share any concern for the precious nature of the histories or traditions embodied by music education. Rather, they challenged
teachers to engage cultural production as a schema from which students can question and challenge their existence.

In *Detroit Youth Speak Back: Rewriting Deficit Perspectives Through Songwriting* (2018a), Juliet Hess conducted a critical ethnographic study that focused upon the youth-centered, transformational musical actions that Gaztambide-Fernández (2011) and Gaztambide-Fernández and Rose (2015) described. In this inquiry, Hess (2018a) sought to document and examine youth experiences in a Detroit community music school whose mission was to provide area youth with opportunities to challenge the public image and attitude of local urban youth of color through songwriting.

Hess’s (2018a) study was set in a non-profit community music school in Detroit and involved a total of 24 students, divided into five subgroups ranging from four to six students each. This study examined the ways in which songwriting may foster transformative conscientization through curricula grounded in meaning-making processes. Hess argued that songwriting was as an ideal method for music educators to build upon the already existing musical abilities and practices of their students. Songwriting could empower “youth to rewrite deficit perspectives of their lives and assert powerful counterstories” (p. 8). The asset orientation of CRT, particularly through counterstorytelling methods, perfectly align with Hess’s critically based research goals around conscientization, as well as the community music school’s mission to support youth artists in music-making and multiliteracy learning.

To Hess (2018a), the role of the teacher is to confront the myth of neutrality in education and oppose inequities in their classrooms. She challenged teachers to resist the deficit model that accounts for the lack of success of Black students in U.S. music education programs. She contended that teachers must understand the complexities of student identities and respond to
student experiences and preferences. Hess exposed, through the use of student initiated counterstorytelling within songwriting groups, that student artists were able to engage their voice and agency to challenge the mainstream deficit narratives, effectively turning those peripheries into zones of transformative resistance.

In order to connect with student musics, Hess (2018a) stressed the importance for music teachers to engage with genres that are embedded within youth cultures and argued for an awakening to those not traditionally taught in schools. She specifically named hip-hop as an ideal vehicle for counterstory, asserting that “honoring hip-hop in education facilitates a reframing of deficit narratives that plague youth of color and the elevation of underrepresented voices” (p. 11). She contended that using this strength-based approach allows youth to challenge dominant social narratives and their embedded myths of a socially just democracy. In addition, Hess connected this research with Freire’s critical pedagogy through the application of “critical hip-hop pedagogy to facilitate Freirean conscientization or critical consciousness through analysis of hip-hop lyrics in particular” (p. 10). Using hip-hop as a means of providing counterstory to the dominant narrative of the lives of Detroit youth served as the driving force behind Hess’s critical ethnography.

Of particular importance in this study was the presence of researcher humility. On this topic, Freire (1970/2005) shared that:

dialogue cannot exist without humility. The naming of the world, through which people constantly re-create that world, cannot be an act of arrogance. Dialogue, as the encounter of those addressed to the common task of learning and acting, is broken if the parties (or one of them) lack humility. How can I dialogue if I always project ignorance onto others
and never perceive my own? How can I dialogue if I regard myself as a case apart from others—mere “its” in whom I cannot recognize other “I”s? (p. 90)

Hess (2018a) reminded us of the ease in which researchers can misinterpret the meanings and intentions of students and their creative acts. She recounted how her positionality “as a White, politicized researcher” (p. 22) led to a misreading of the participant group’s call to action of “rising up.” Hess related how student understandings of this expression were one of “rising to the occasion” whereas Hess misinterpreted it as a rising up against an oppressive system. The divergence between the students’ intention and researcher’s interpretation “reminds educators and researchers to be aware of how their own identities enable assumptions about teaching, learning, and research processes” (p. 22). This insight was a demonstration of great humility, particularly because it did not have to be included, and served as an opportunity to remind educators and researchers of how easy it can be to lose sight of positionality and how readily this can interfere with interpreting student perspectives.

Deborah Bradley has penned a number of scholarly writings on the topics of anti-colonial and anti-racist music pedagogy (2006, 2007, 2012, 2015). In “Music Education, Multiculturalism, and Anti-Racism—Can We Talk?” (2006), Bradley identified “the ways race is embedded as coded language in discourse, and the ways our use of coded language hinders our ability to talk about race directly” (p. 2). In this piece, Bradley discussed decolonizing pedagogy as a countermeasure to the long history of a racist and colonial educational system. She identified the discourse within music education as complicit in the maintaining of hegemonic structures, specifically in terms of language used and the silences sustained as a result of failing to name race and racism.
Bradley (2006) began this work as a response to what she saw as a misdirection of multicultural pedagogies in music education, which had been gaining favor in music classes. She observed that these pedagogies used a coded vernacular that subjugated non-Western music to, what one discussant on a listserv called “primal forms of artistic expression” (p. 5, emphasis in original). When the discussant was confronted concerning that racist dialogue, the discussion ceased. This silence, Bradley argued, was representative of the silence that permeates music education discourse when topics of race arise.

Bradley (2006) argued that the growing popularity of multicultural discourse did not address systemic structures of racism in music education and “allow[ed] hegemonic Whiteness to remain unnamed, suppressed, and beyond discussions of race” (p. 8). Bradley asked, “How can we begin to move toward cultural understanding if we fail to recognize where and how race is coded into our own cultural thought and practice?” (p. 13). She countered this willful unconsciousness inherent in multiculturalism with what she coined “multicultural human subjectivity” (p. 17) as a “processual, emergent category of practice characterized by acknowledged feelings of connectedness to people in other places and cultures, in open-mindedness toward previously unfamiliar cultures, and through concern for social justice” (p. 17). This practice, paired with an anti-racist pedagogical framework, argued Bradley, offered a path through which music educators could work towards equity.

In “Good for What, Good for Whom? Decolonizing Music Education Philosophies” (2012), Bradley furthered her examination of colonialism in music education. In this work, she discussed “some ways in which philosophy (as a Western discipline) and philosophies of music education, influenced by colonialist thinking, reproduce epistemological colonialism” (p. 410). Acknowledging the need to undermine these epistemic assumptions, Bradley argued for the
necessity to recognize the implied binaries between the colonizer/colonized, colonizing/decolonizing, and West/rest. She maintained that “Such binaries obscure the ways the postcolonial world operates: through continuing entangled, hybrid, and symbiotic relationships” (p. 410). It is through such a historically dichotomous landscape, Bradley contended, that colonialism has had a calamitous effect upon music education scholarship. To counter the Western philosophies that bolster traditional understandings of music education, she suggested the use of philosophy of decolonization as a system to correct colonialist domination which would allow educators to make visible and address the ways in which traditional practices have served to discourage critical self-analysis of, and within, music education.

Like Bradley, Juliet Hess consistently addresses issues of race and colonialism within the context of music education. In “Upping the “anti-”: The Value of an Anti-Racist Theoretical Framework in Music Education” (2015), Hess offered anti-racism as essential to music education research as it “explicitly names the issues of race and social difference as issues of power and equity, rather than as matters of cultural and ethnic variety” (Dei, 2000, p. 27). Hess (2015) suggested that Dei’s (2000) conception of anti-racism as a critical discourse that uses “systemic change to address racism and interlocking systems of social oppression” (Hess, 2015, p. 66) is well suited to address the manners in which oppressive structures operate within music teaching practice.

Hess (2015) used empirical research collected during her doctoral dissertation, Radical Musicking: Challenging Dominant Paradigms in Elementary Music Education (2013) to focus upon oppression and discourse in music education. Hess investigated three core components of music education that could “push toward counterhegemonic change” (p. 67). The first component was positionality and its impact on classroom relationships and instruction. The
second addressed music teacher understandings of student worldviews and perspectives. The third concerned difficult conversations about culture and race as a means of working towards equity. The research involved four music teachers in four different school settings within Toronto, Ontario. Each of the teachers had anti-racist teaching philosophies with core values centered around confronting and questioning the dominant paradigms within music education.

In that study, Hess (2015) did not express an interest in causal relationships between anti-racist pedagogies and student outcomes but instead investigated understandings of student and teacher relationships and classroom interactions between teacher and students. She suggested that music instruction based upon an anti-racist foundation could serve “to formulate counterhegemonic education—to actively breach dominant discourses in society with a focus on agency, resistance, and action” (p. 73). Hess concluded that through an anti-racist framework, it is possible to do social justice work in music education by exposing and dismantling the hierarchies that maintain White supremacy and engaging students and teachers in knowing their worlds and contexts.

In Equity and Music Education: Euphemisms, Terminal Naivety, and Whiteness” (2017a), Hess investigated the language employed around race and racism in music education. More specifically, she sought to investigate the silences inherent in difficult conversations around race and “the importance of using direct language to identify structural and systemic racism” (p. 15). Akin to Bradley’s (2006) and Gaztambide-Fernández’s (2011) discussions around coded discourse, Hess (2017a) explored how terminology used in music education is consciously and subconsciously coded to avoid White fragility and maintain the systemic status quo. This is demonstrated in the language used throughout education such as “urban, at-risk, and
diversity to mean something very specific” (p. 18, emphasis in original), without ever explaining what is named.

In addition to the prevalence of silence and coded discourse in music teaching, Hess (2017a) applied Vaugeois’s (2013) notion of “terminal naivety” (p. 19), the explicit pursuit of remaining oblivious to factors that influence social constructs. In music education, this lack of awareness can be seen through the seemingly intentional willingness to ignore the ways in which the language employed supports systemic racism. Hess (2017a) offered that challenging White supremacy in music education begins with exposing and naming it. This underscores a conundrum considering the naivety, silence, and coded language that struggle against this very exposure, thus preventing music education and the broader society from moving forward.

These coded constructions, whether willful or not, are implicit adoptions of the mechanisms of White supremacy disguised as quality control criteria in a world where it is no longer acceptable to explicitly claim racial dominance (Bonilla-Silva, 2017; Kendi, 2019). To put it another way, the gatekeepers of music education cannot explicitly exclude non-White teachers from the profession, but they can maintain policies and practices that make it improbable for those outside of normalized Eurocentricity to gain entrance or coexist. *Plus ça change, plus c’est la même chose.*

**Theoretical Framework**

This inquiry is focused on how music teachers make meaning of gatekeeping practices that mediate hidden structures of White supremacy through an integrative theoretical design cast at the intersection of critical pedagogy and critical race theory (CRT) frameworks. This section

---

1 This phrase translates to “The more things change, the more they stay the same.” The French translation was chosen for this writing to pay homage to and to evoke this often used phrase of James Baldwin, who offered it as commentary on progress, inaction, and apathy.
clarifies the manner in which these two discrete, yet related, paradigms serve to provide a broad platform from which to address the multilayered and elusive subject of White supremacy within music education in the United States. Moreover, it demonstrates why each perspective cannot address the inquiry by itself.

The framework from which this study is premised is positioned upon the ontological assumption that reality should be understood as a dialectic relationship between external social influences and individual internal will. This Marxist understanding of the Hegelian dialectic definitively challenges manufactured social structures and recognizes them as instruments of domination. Said differently, in the context of music education, this research challenges the objectivist perspective that accepts the singularly focused understandings of what is best and what is Othered, and insists that music education must operate through a system that represents a synthesis between the “contextual realities” (Freire, 1970/2005, p. 104) of teachers and students.

**Critical Pedagogy**

Critical pedagogy, a manifestation of critical theory within the field of education, challenges monolithic knowledge constructions and recognizes such arrangements as tools of exploitation and indoctrination, wielded by those with societal power (Giroux, 2011). Giroux (2011) maintained that such inculcation occurs as a result of culturally regenerative teaching practices and argued that critical pedagogy must provide a lens in which to expose how cultural reproduction serves to maintain oppressive ideologies through what Freire (1970/2005) identified as banking models of instruction.

Freire (1970/2005) explained the banking model as one in which students are seen as repositories for preconstructed knowledge transferred upon them by their teachers. Asserting that unidirectional practices that position students as passive receivers of information are
manipulative and oppressive, Freire argued for a pedagogy that is both dialogical and problem-posing in order to engage “significant dimensions of an individual’s contextual reality” (p. 104). To do this, Giroux (2011) contended that teachers must “register their own subjective involvement in how and what they teach” (p. 38) and resist actions that diminish their role to “that of technicians or corporate pawns” (p. 40), in order to create learning environments that enable students to reshape their worlds rather than regenerate its oppressions. This position refuses to recognize any objective notion of knowledge as well as any instruction that centers teacher knowledge and experience over those of students.

In “Stepping Out of the Academic Brew: Using Critical Research to Break Down Hierarchies of Knowledge Production” (2011), Tricia Kress utilized critical pedagogy in her challenge to hierarchal epistemological systems within education, questioning the conventional unidirectional roles of practitioners and academics. Critical pedagogy, Kress asserted, must confront the education as equalizer mythos in order to reveal its history of upholding authority and capital in the hands of those in power, whom she recognized as “closely align[ed] with a [W]hite, western, middle class, heterosexual, male view of the world” (p. 268). Kress’s challenge to the dominant paradigms within education called out educators who refuse to step out of the traditional mindsets that contemporary education privileges.

Both Giroux (2004, 2011) and Kress (2011) urged against the unchecked monologisms that have become synonymous with mass education in favor of a dialogically premised education that is reliant upon the voices of students, dependent upon their engagement, and empowers their expression. To Giroux (2004), pedagogy can never be “theorized as either an a priori set of prescriptions or as a commodity to be applied in any context” (p. 42). On the contrary, he argued, it should always be adaptive: reflective and designed to challenge structures of authority, so as to
“encourage dialogue, deliberation, and the power of students to raise questions” (p. 43). Though the premise of dialogue is ubiquitous in critical pedagogy literature, it is perhaps Paulo Freire’s discussions in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970/2005) that contributed most to scholarship on the topic. Throughout his magnum opus, Freire challenged monologic pedagogical practices asserting that “the teacher is no longer merely the-one-who-teaches, but one who is himself [sic] taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn while being taught also teach. They become jointly responsible for a process in which all grow” (p. 80). Freire’s example prompts educators to enact a practice of equity by advocating for wholly new practices that position student knowledge alongside their own, encouraging learners to challenge the status quo, which includes confronting the authority of the teacher and the system in which they operate.

Central to critical pedagogy is its challenge to the rationales of neoliberalism and its impacts on classrooms. Asserting that all teaching is political, critical pedagogy recognizes what Giroux (2004) detailed as the reduction of democracy “to a metaphor for the alleged ‘free’ market” (p. 35). It easily assumes ideas and methods “from a variety of radical theories–feminism, postmodernism, critical theory, poststructuralism, neo-Marxism, etc.” (p. 32) in an effort to dismantle what Giroux calls the “dreamworld” (p. 32) of capitalism. This unapologetic positioning of capital as the root of oppression presupposes that human constructions of race must exist as a result of capitalism (Parker & Stovall, 2004).

Critical pedagogy can serve as an ideal framework from which to interrogate the ways in which issues of power in classroom contexts serve to bolster White supremacist ideology in music education. Critical pedagogy scholars argue that through culturally regenerative instruction (Giroux, 2001), banking models of teaching (Freire, 1970/2005) and hierarchal knowledge systems (Kress, 2011), classrooms are fundamentally zones of indoctrination.
Through this lens, music education serves as an ideal point from which re-culturation can be articulated. In critical pedagogy’s assertion of a dialogically based, problem-posing curricula (Freire, 1970/2005), music classes (in their literal artistic content basis) can become places where students and teachers synthesize original socially and culturally responsive content that challenges dominant narratives in their lives as well as in the education system itself, inevitably contributing to the weakening of White supremacist norms.

Though critical pedagogy may provide an effective lens from which to challenge oppressive educational systems that result from power and politics, particularly within classrooms and in teacher/student interactions, it does not offer the appropriate tools from which to consider issues of race. Hess (2017b, 2019) problematized the use of critical pedagogy in the classroom by suggesting that the framework may privilege White and male voices over those of people of color and women. Hess (2017b) discussed Ellsworth’s (1989) critique that critical pedagogy’s claim to honor all voices falls short, owing to its tendency to offer only “the most abstract, decontextualized criteria for choosing one position over others” (Ellsworth, 1989, pp. 300–301) to practitioners. In addition, Hess (2017b) referred to Razack’s (as cited in Hess, 2017b) and Ladson-Billings’ (1997) responses to Ellsworth’s critique of critical pedagogy. Razack, Hess (2017b) argued, was concerned that “people of color are often asked to tell stories for White people’s edification, which then reinscribe power dynamics” (p. 179). Ladson-Billings (1997) addressed critical pedagogy’s “failure to address adequately the question of race” (p. 127) and discussed how the then new to education field of CRT could be a more appropriate framework for analysis of race-based oppressions.

In Music Education for Social Change: Constructing an Activist Music Education, Hess (2019) offered an expanded critique of critical pedagogy based upon her research with 20
activist-musicians across the U.S. and Canada. She challenged the manners in which critical pedagogical practices may privilege the role of the teacher over those of their students. Specifically, Hess questioned the ways in which problem-posing practices position teacher knowledge over that of their pupils in the assumption that students may not be able to identify personal problems without instructor insights. This reliance upon an outsider perspective is inherently manipulative and reduces any authentic agency students have in their learning.

Particularly relevant to this study, Hess (2019) cautioned that critical pedagogy may worsen racialized and gendered power structures present in educational settings and systems. Hess maintained that “the question of who speaks as a critical pedagogue often reinscribes both patriarchy and Whiteness” (p. 33) and often involves White male scholars speaking on behalf of Others (Dei & Sheth, 1997; Hess, 2019). Hess (2019) contended that “attending to who speaks as a critical pedagogue thus involves interrogating whether those speaking reinscribe patriarchal or racist structures.” She proposed that approaching critical pedagogical practices with a measure of uncertainty and a steadfast self-awareness may allow educators to negotiate the power imbalances that result from problem-posing practices. Such humility and self-consciousness that encourages educators to embrace not-knowing may allow those practicing critical pedagogy to live up to its assertion of reflexivity, in order to oppose oppressive forces, rather than reinforce inequitable dynamics. This re-centering of mutuality, Hess contended, is vital to positioning youth parallel to their teacher in a process that truly responds to the issues of students’ lives.

Critical Race Theory

Hess (2017b, 2019) was not alone in acknowledging the limits of critical pedagogy, particularly in terms of race-based oppressions. Parker and Stovall (2004) argued that critical pedagogy’s situating of financial capital over race insists the role of the political economy as
situated prior in the order of oppression and upheld that CRT flips this arrangement. Expressed differently, they contended that repositioning race above capital recognizes that race has played a key role in the creation of nation-empires, colonialization, and slavery which, as a result, developed the idea of capital and constructions of cultural identities (Winant, as cited in Parker & Stovall, 2004).

CRT emerged in the 1970s in legal scholarship as a recognition of, and response to, the regression of the civil rights momentum of the prior decade (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001/2017). In their seminal work, which argued the need for CRT in education, Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) addressed the absence of a theoretical framework that appropriately engaged the significance of race in a U.S. educational context. They argued for a construction that recognized: the significance that race plays in the U.S.; the privileging of property over human rights in the U.S.; and the need for a focus upon the intersection of race and property. Almost two decades later, Ladson-Billings (2013) sought to clarify that scholarship around issues of race does not necessarily make it a work of CRT. In her “Critical Race Theory—What it is Not,” Ladson-Billings summarized Delgado and Stefancic’s (2001/2017) “basic tenets of critical race theory” (p. 8) into the following five defining characteristics:

- Racism is commonplace in the U.S.;
- White people seek racial justice only when there is an interest convergence—when their interests align with the needs of Black people;
- Race is a social construction;
- Intersectionality (the intersecting categories of oppression felt by marginalized peoples who embody more than one category of oppression) exists and must all be considered (anti-essentialism);
• The voices of the oppressed should be used to provide counterstories to dominant narratives.

Solórzano and Yosso (2002) expanded upon CRT and offered a “critical race methodology” (p. 24) to serve as a “theoretically grounded” (p. 24) “framework or set of basic insights, perspectives, methods, and pedagogy that seeks to identify, analyze, and transform those structural and cultural aspects of education that maintain subordinate and dominant racial positions in and out of the classroom” (p. 25). Their explanation of a critical race methodology in education, consistent with Delgado and Stefancic’s (2001/2017) tenets of CRT, challenged discourses that separate race from issues of gender and class and voiced urgency for the “intercentricity” (p. 25) of race and racism to be understood through interdisciplinary knowledge bases.

Delgado and Stefancic’s (2001/2017) intercentricity in education borrowed from legal scholar Kimberlé W. Crenshaw’s (1989) theory of intersectionality, which directed focus upon the intersections of multiple dimensions of oppression. In “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics,” Crenshaw first identified intersectionality as a theory for understanding the phenomena of compounding inequities thrust upon those who are neither White nor male in a White patriarchal society. Crenshaw argued that the “single-axis” (p. 58) understandings of both feminism and anti-racism (at that time) provided an erroneous picture of both, as they fail to acknowledge the multiple oppressions that exist for Black women through their intersecting identities.

Like critical pedagogy, CRT asserts a critical theoretical perspective that recognizes the concurrence of social constructions and internal influences on one’s rendering of reality. This
ontological and epistemological communion, along with a shared commitment to challenge
oppression might be used as a place from which to engage music students in the interrogation of
their worlds. In “Straight, No Chaser” (2012), Adrienne Dixson put forward CRT as a lens
through which to examine "the ways that race impacts the music education of students of color”
(p. 1) and posited that the framework could play a crucial role in reimagining the current system
of music education, which characterizes music-making in a limited fashion and thus neglects
countless ways in which music can include all students.

In her conclusion, Dixson (2012) urged music teachers to go beyond acts of
multiculturally inclusive curricula and seek out the reasons for the historic absence of Black
voices. She challenged researchers “to be brave enough to interrogate the Whiteness of music
and music education to disrupt these biases and beliefs that can sometimes have devastating
effects on students’ spirit and love for music” (p. 9). Fourteen years after “Just What is Critical
Race Theory and What’s It Doing in a Nice Field Like Education?” (Ladson-Billings, 1998),
Dixson’s (2012) provocation to music teachers served as an echo of Ladson-Billings’ fear that
the discomfort and danger of “assum[ing] the liminal position” (p. 22) will prevent educational
researchers from engaging in CRT as a framework for equity in education.

As critical pedagogy has been at the head of social justice-oriented music education
(Hess, 2017b), it has a research and practice base that can inform critical race scholarship in the
field. Hess (2013) found, in her research with four practicing elementary school music educators,
that aligning principles of both critical pedagogy and CRT allowed “their perspectives, practices,
and lived experiences [to] carry significance in exploring the lived paradoxes and possible
casualties of employing critical pedagogy in the classroom” (p. 173). CRT, perhaps owing to its
centering of race (which cannot be overstated), intersectionality, and insistence upon resisting
dominant voices goes further than critical pedagogy in terms of addressing the role that racial inequity plays within educational institutions, its systems, and its practices.

**Joining Critical Pedagogy and Critical Race Theory**

Both critical pedagogy and CRT can provide effective lenses from which to understand how music teachers perceive White supremacy in music education. Whereas CRT might be more appropriately suited to expose and interrogate the hidden structures of White supremacy within music education, a critical pedagogical lens may serve to interrogate both the implicit and explicit gatekeeping mechanisms within the field. Together, these two theoretical frameworks can aid in providing a more thorough understanding of individual music teacher mindsets and broader music teacher culture than they would on their own.

Critical pedagogy and CRT frameworks can function together to identify and amplify the ways in which educators can serve to counter the hegemonizing effects of those practices in U.S. music classes. Hess (2017b) proposed joining CRT with critical pedagogy by using the former to critique the latter, pointing out the potential for teachers practicing critical pedagogy to reestablish the oppression they seek to dismantle. Through this theoretical amalgam, Hess offered “a critical race analysis of critical pedagogy praxes in order to point to places where this pedagogy not only enables certain bodies to implement it more readily than others, but also does not necessarily serve students well” (p. 172). Hess’s arrangement, located at the intersection of critical pedagogy and critical race theory, presents a theoretical lens from which this inquiry will seek to understand the ways in which music teachers make meaning of the gatekeeping practices that mediate hidden structures of White supremacy.
Conclusion

Employing an integrative framework that blends critical pedagogy and CRT theoretical perspectives, this study considers the ways in which music teachers perceive the gatekeeping practices that bolster White supremacy in their field. Public-school music classes are often understood as de facto spaces for self-expression, creativity, and equity, but at the core, this narrative is false. Through hegemonic structures that engage the White students whom they were designed to serve, music classes have excluded and refuted the cultures of countless students. Acts of assimilation, appropriation, and ultimately erasure have been justified and glorified under the nationalistic fantasy of the American melting pot metaphor.

The ideologies, curricula, and practices that comprise music education in the U.S. are irrelevant to a great many students and represent a complex of cultural regeneration that ensures its survival (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). This system must be dismantled and rebuilt through a critical framework that engages students as equals to teachers and facilitates conscientização so they can challenge any person, group, or structures that seek to oppress, exploit, or marginalize their existence. Music education is particularly suited for this model as it is a subject in which teachers engage students in acts of cultural production. Authentic acts of cultural generation stand in stark contrast to the acts of cultural reproduction that currently inhibit music teaching.

There is a scant amount of music education research that examines relationships between teachers and their discursive contexts. Such studies might reveal the ways in which ideologies, practices, and curricula, taken as de facto modus operandi, are at the core of the continued dominance of White supremacy in education. This discourse maintains its influence in spite of the worthy intentions from the few who challenge Eurocentric hegemony in the field. In terms of music teacher preparation, even if universities were to adequately prepare pre-service music
educators to teach in ways that combat White supremacy, these new teachers would still enter a culture in which they may be ill-equipped, and outnumbered, to effect substantial change.

This research may help create an understanding of what it is about music teaching that allows White supremacy to survive and thrive. Through such an awareness, the structures which support the field can be willingly dismantled by those who formerly mortared its bastions. A critical framework for music education would provide an environment in which music education can become what it ought to be: a field that works in contrast to what was, and what currently is, by exposing and invalidating the injustices, inequities, and inhumanity at the core of White supremacist dogma, so that all students, all experiences, all art, and all cultures are acknowledged and centered.
CHAPTER 3

CLARIFYING NARRATIVES: A METHODOLOGY FOR ELUCIDATING DISCURSIVE RELATIONSHIPS IN MUSIC EDUCATION

This investigation considers the ways in which music teachers perceive the gatekeeping practices that bolster White supremacy in their field. As discussed in the prior chapters, these inequities go beyond the boundaries of music-making, ensemble choices, instructional content and repertoire—the low-hanging-fruit of music education—which, while important, ultimately direct discourse away from the acceptance of responsibility for the ways in which practitioners contribute to the regeneration of a discourse mired in White supremacy. Accordingly, the methodological architecture for this investigation was designed to elucidate teacher understandings of music education discourse as well as the manners in which teachers recognize their contributions to it. In order to construct a methodology that considered the ways in which members of a community understand and act upon discourse, so as to challenge the omnipresent White Eurocentric hegemony within, perspectives from critical discourse analysis (CDA) (Van Dijk, 1993) were utilized in the design of what I term a dialectical-relational elucidatory approach (DREA).
This chapter begins with a rationale for the methodological design for this research. This explanation is followed by a restatement of the research questions that guided the inquiry. In the data collection section, I identify, describe, and directly link the methods and tools for collecting data to the research questions that they address. Following the data collection section, I clarify the data management and analysis strategies, including storage and organization. I then discuss the analysis plan for each stage of data collection so that the strategies for reading, interpreting, and coding the information are clear. Finally, I lay out the measures taken for maintaining validity and reliability of the data and end with the conclusion.

**Methodology Rationale**

This inquiry’s reliance upon the analysis of text and language, as well as the consideration of the ways in which teachers make sense of this discursive context was motivated through a preliminary review of literature from a recent music educator conference. In considering the stark lack of presentations, panels, and performances that addressed any emphasis on the role that race, racism, or White supremacy plays in the profession, it became apparent that a thorough analysis of the discourse of such environs could provide a firm foundation from which to explore teacher perceptions of White supremacy. Put succinctly, Critical Discourse Analysis’s (CDA) priority upon language and its use in the production and reproduction of injustice and dominance (Van Dijk, 1993) serves as the foundation of this study.

Discourse analysis is an ideal approach from which to examine the manners in which language mediates the construction of meaning through social, cultural, historical and political means (Gee, 2005; Talbot, 2016). As music educators are a geographically dispersed professional group, the discourse analyzed was collected from settings in which they come together, namely selected professional conferences over a period of two years. Not unlike teacher
unions serving as representative bodies for public-school teachers, the National Association for Music Education (NAfME) reports to represent “all aspects of music education” (National Association for Music Education, 2018). NAfME offers a great deal of the professional development events where music teachers convene, including the conferences that this inquiry targeted as the source of discourse. Through an analysis of the workshop titles and descriptions from these national and select state-level conferences, I explored the context from which music teachers perceive and act upon this discourse.

Though NAfME is not the sole organizational voice for music educators, I targeted its discourse due to its size and influence. As the largest body of music education advocacy in the United States (National Association for Music Education, 2018), NAfME presumes to support and advocate on behalf of the needs and interests of music students and music teachers across all levels of governments. Perhaps the organization’s most visible imprint upon music education in the U.S. is the key role it played in the development of the current national Core Arts and Music Standards (National Association for Music Education, 2020a). Though technically not formal policy, these standards become legitimized through state adoptions or adaptations of the national model.

Discourse can never be neutral, as it facilitates perceptions of reality, contributes to identity formations, and affects multiple dimensions of social-cultural constructions, including those associated with race (Gee, 2005; Talbot, 2016; Van Dijk, 1993). Gee (2005) argued that meanings attached to words are linked to their social and cultural frameworks and therefore cannot contain any objective significance without contextual consideration. Recognizing the impossibility of discursive neutrality, Talbot (2016) asserted that language analysis and interpretation must consider the manners in which social and cultural elements affect its usage.
and may serve to center or marginalize people. Talbot offered critical discourse analysis as a means from which to “empower people to remedy social wrongs, to give voice to those who are marginalized, and to expose power abuse” (p. 511). He argued for a discourse analysis that exposes and magnifies how language can be wielded as a tool of oppression.

Van Dijk (1993) contended that through the study of discourse, researchers may be enabled to ascertain the complex relationships between language and dominance that contribute to inequality through abuses of power. He prompted researchers to seek “change through critical understanding” (p. 252) in order to challenge the power elites that produce and maintain oppressive systems, in solidarity with those who are marginalized through such dominance. From such a perspective, critical discourse analysis may be understood as a crucial strategy for undermining injustices woven into cultural fabrics and maintained through normative practices. It is the tool from which (not necessarily) subtle manipulations of language are tied to action and are exposed for what they are.

Fairclough (2009) offered that CDA could be engaged as a linking apparatus between distinctive methods in “transdisciplinary social research” (p. 162) that brings distinct procedures together in a dialogue that bolsters each. Such interplay between methods is utilized in this study through the use of text analysis and interviews that position the results of each approach in conversation, ultimately producing findings informed by their parts but wholly new. More specifically, this study employs CDA within defined parameters of music education discourse in order to present participant music educators with context-specific exemplification from which to engage during in-depth interviews. The findings from both the textual analysis and interview methods were then juxtaposed to seek patterns and relationships between the individuals and their discursive context.
The methods utilized within this inquiry represent a seven-stage dialectical-relational elucidatory process (see Table 1) that fuses text analysis with interview methods. Adapted from Fairclough’s (2009) dialectical-relational approach to CDA and informed by Wodak and Meyer’s (2009) argument for the invisible interactivity that exists between individual social understandings and practices, these processes may contribute to extant music education scholarship by providing a means through which music teachers can be made aware of their own roles and agency within the epistemological assumptions, or epistemes (Foucault, 1978/1995, 1980) that live in their discourse.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Identify a social wrong, in its semiotic aspect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Collect discourse that may contain patterns and themes representative of obstacles to addressing the injustice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Analyze discourse and identify obstacles to addressing injustice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Interview members of the discursive group and present the obstacles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Identify themes and patterns in member responses to findings from discourse.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Consider the implications of member perceptions, alongside the findings from discourse analysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Identify possible ways past the obstacles.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Adapted from Fairclough (2009)

Not represented within this chapter are discussions around the first and last DREA stages. Stage 1 is represented by the first two chapters of this study and centers upon White supremacy’s hold upon music education. This stage represents the frame from which the data collection stage of the process embarks. Stage 7 will be articulated in the final chapter and will identify potential strategies for overcoming the injustices acknowledged in the preceding chapters. DREA Stages 2
through 6, which are elaborated in this chapter, can be considered the procedural representation of the methods hitherto described.

In accordance with the assumptions argued in previous chapters, essential elements of music education are inherently linked with the oppression of some at the hands of others and for that reason, the purpose of this study seeks to disrupt these inequities. This prioritization upon the interruption of injustice positions the duty of expressing what could be over the need to define what is within the field of music education. Stated differently, analyzing discourse and seeking educator perspective is imperative to this study however, this meaning is sought with the uncompromising goal of disrupting hegemonic systems within. It is from this perspective of alliance and understanding that this critical qualitative study employs an approach that draws from CDA traditions in its goal to confront and impede the regeneration of White supremacist mores within music education and in service of the countless music students and teachers who continue to be marginalized through its perpetuation.

Research Questions

In earlier chapters, I established the existence of gross inequities for non-White students and teachers within public-school music education in the U.S. as the result of White supremacist ideologies. The following research questions rely both upon the previously argued injustices and the data culled through the CDA processes. The principal research question asks: To what extent do music teachers make meaning of gatekeeping practices that mediate hidden structures of White supremacy? In order to direct the research towards this key query the following sub-questions were developed:

- What are the priorities and prevailing ideologies of music education discourse?
How do music teachers experience and understand the norms and practices expressed through the discourse in their field?

Data Collection

The data methods employed in this study represent DREA Stages 2 and 4 and were grouped into two sections: (1) textual analysis, and (2) interviews (see Table 2). The Stage 2 methods employed serve to address this study’s research questions by collecting discourse that may reveal patterns and themes representative of obstacles to addressing injustices within music education. The Stage 4 processes were designed to provide insight into the ways in which music teachers understand gatekeeping and White supremacy in their discourse in order to interrupt its regeneration. Following data collection, several layers of analyses were conducted to address each set of data produced, followed by an analysis which considered connections between them.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Method Purpose</th>
<th>Method Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stage 2</td>
<td>Collect discourse that may contain patterns and themes representative of obstacles to addressing the injustice.</td>
<td>Text Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 4</td>
<td>Interview members of the discursive group and present the obstacles.</td>
<td>Interviews</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Text Analysis: Data Collection

The initial methods within this research can be understood as a collection and analysis of rich, comprehensive data of the written language used in the planning and execution of music educator conferences across national and state levels. The data for the national focus were taken from documentation concerning annual NAfME conferences and the state level examination concentrated on those conferences within Massachusetts hosted by the state’s NAfME chapter,
the Massachusetts Music Educators Association (MMEA), during the 2018–2019 and 2019–2020 school years.

This portion of the study is concerned with the ways in which the priorities and prevailing ideologies of conference hosting organizations are visible within music education discourse. The first sub-question serves as a guide from which the investigation was conducted. The materials for analysis were downloaded from the NAfME website (National Association for Music Education, 2020a), to inform the national structural level analysis and the MMEA website (Massachusetts Music Educators Association, 2020) to provide data for the state-level investigation of Massachusetts. These resources directly correspond to the annual music educator conferences at these two levels during the 2018–2019 and 2019–2020 school years.

The justification for choosing Massachusetts for the subject of a state level analysis is two-fold and due to logistical and strategic interests. From a procedural perspective as the researcher, Massachusetts is my home and the state in which my children attend public schools, one in which I have taught music and supervised music teachers, and where the university from which the research being conducted is located. Also advantageous is Massachusetts’s storied history of public-school music education, as the setting for the first public school, the birthplace of public education in the U.S. (Urban & Wagoner, 2014), and the place where public music education began (Birge, 1966; Dwight, 1880; Eliot, 1841; Mark, 2008; Mark & Gary, 2007; Sunderman, 1971). Moreover, while the metrics involved are debatable, Massachusetts regularly receives top rankings as the best state for PreK–12 public education (Amadeo, 2019; Lloyd & Harwin, 2019; Stebbins & Frohlich, 2018), contributing to a reputation for forward-thinking public schools. Taking into account the Commonwealth’s reputation for progressive education,
historical significance, and geographic accessibility, Massachusetts was an ideal state for this study.

Discourse analysis was crucial in understanding the language and values behind the contexts in which music teachers engage (Carspecken, 1996). Discourse, the written and spoken language that represents social practice within a particular setting or context (Gee, 2005; Fairclough, 2001, 2009; Wodak & Meyer, 2009), directly contributes to an individual’s meaning-making within social processes and world view (Fairclough, 2001, 2009). This definition indicates that discourse is not merely language construction but a relational social practice (Fairclough, 2001, 2009). Wodak and Meyer (2009) expand upon Fairclough’s (2009) recognition by describing a dialectical relationship between social structures and individual discursive events, arguing that language and actions rely upon meanings assigned through social practices. Expanding upon the works of both Fairclough (2009) and Wodak and Meyer (2009), the discourse from conferences and the field of music education are intrinsically linked, but not necessarily in a manner that is visible or beneficial to those most dependent upon its influence, namely teachers and students.

This indiscernible discursive dialectic interdependence between conference language and teaching practice suggests that those with authority or influence over conference discourse have power to impact the reproduction or dismantling of unjust power structures and social practices in the field. Fairclough and Wodak (as cited in Wodak & Meyer, 2009) argued that discursive practices have significant ideological influence upon power relations in settings of positional disequilibrium, including those influenced by ethnicity, race, culture, class, and gender. Wodak and Meyer (2009) contended that while power may not invariably arise from language, language can be used as a tool to undermine or augment its influence. The imperceptibility of discursive
influence in music education marks the need for intervention as particularly pressing and CDA can be an especially pertinent lens from which to expose the inequitable parity of power.

The text-based component of the data analysis was adapted from Fairclough’s (2009) dialectical–relational approach (DRA) to CDA in transdisciplinary research, which is itself an adaption of Bhaskar’s “explanatory critique” (as cited in Fairclough, 2009). Here, the discursive element of the dialectical relationship between music education discourse and music teacher beliefs was organized so that it could be closely examined in the third stage. The data collected consisted of the titles and descriptions of presentations that occurred within these events. Within these selected texts, the focus of the analysis centered upon literal and coded language that corresponded to the confrontation or occlusion of White supremacy, race, ethnicity, and culture.

Once the chosen texts were downloaded from the NAfME (National Association for Music Education, 2020a) and MMEA websites (Massachusetts Music Educators Association, 2020a), they were manually inputted into Microsoft Excel in order to produce spreadsheets for each event. These data were organized within a single file, with each source separated and ordered within its own sheet. Each event-specific sheet was delineated using the source parameters of session title, session description, clinician name, and category of content and an additional column was created to address the role of the presenter. Although all of the information pulled concerning the music education conferences was from publicly available sources, personal information of the clinicians has not been shared in any form, including names and details that relate to their identities, with the exception of one presenter upon explicit consent. Only aggregated data concerning the frequency of presentation clinician type were shared.
Interviews: Data Collection

Whereas the discursive side of the relationship between discourse and teacher was addressed in the textual analysis, the interview methods addressed the ways in which teachers understood the discourse. Appropriately, the interviews component of this inquiry was premised upon assumptions consistent to critical race theory (CRT) and critical pedagogy, specifically that gatekeeping mechanisms exist within music education and that they maintain White supremacist ideologies. These assumptions were established in the previous two chapters and the methods of text analysis were designed to gather specific data that supports the ways in which White supremacy inhabits the music conferences with which the interviewees needed to have familiarity.

In consideration of the ways in which person-to-person interviews might be formulated to access the manners in which music educators perceive the discourse within their field, I chose an appropriate design that recognized the relational role of discursive influence upon social actors (Fairclough, 2009; Wodak & Meyer, 2009). This bi-directional influence transcends any individualized experiences and knowledges and relies upon the collective understandings of the social group. Wodak and Meyer (2009) identified a nexus between individual understandings and socially accepted representations that are effectively undetected, unrealized, and underestimated; the interview was designed for the exposure of this missing link.

In applying Foucault’s (1978/1995, 1980) conception of an episteme—the implicit epistemological assumptions of a people—to Wodak and Meyer’s (2009) missing link between social perspectives and individual agency, it is conceivable that the beliefs and norms underlying music education run so deep that many teachers would never consider questioning or challenging their basis. Derrida (1978) understood the connection between language and the construction of
reality as oppressions embedded deeply within violent social hierarchies. Akin to Freire’s (1970/2005) concept of conscientização, Derrida’s semiotic analysis, or deconstruction, ties resistance and transformation to language and its usage (Crotty, 1998; Derrida, 1978). Foucault (1978/1995) acknowledged such a power structure that enables a lack of awareness of its existence as a normalizing power. He argued that wholly repressive power requires explicit control measures, but a normalizing power operates undetected, manipulating individuals so that they believe they behave of their own free will. Further, normalization, Foucault argued, encourages pleasure when people play their social role, cementing its grasp by rewarding its effects. Foucault might suggest that the very premise of music education is not the ubiquitous, objective, and universal terrain it is understood to be but is rather historical, subjective, and contingent. That is, there is nothing within music education that need be the way it is and has been. On that premise, it is the role of a researcher to challenge the what is and share a glimpse towards what could be (Carspecken, 1996; Madison, 2019; Thomas, 1993).

Participants

Participants were selected for interviews using a criterion selection process; participants meet a particular standard to ensure a minimum baseline experience (Creswell, 2013). Given the previously cited homogenous demographic makeup within the field of music education (Abril, 2009; DeLorenzo, 2012; Koza, 2003; Lind & McKoy, 2016; Zubrzycki, 2017), race was not considered during the selection process for concern of lack of participants. This omission further highlights the urgency for research that exposes and confronts the complex and far-reaching ways in which White supremacy infiltrates public education and impacts people of color. Despite a selection process that did not deliberately ask for non-White teachers, four of the thirteen educators interviewed in this study identified as such, which allowed for a less homogenous
participant pool than expected. Specifically, nine of the participants identified as White, three as Black, and one as Filipino-American.

Music educators needed to meet the following criteria to participate in the study: (1) the number of years that they had been a music teacher, (2) their attendance at professional conferences, (3) the location where they teach, and (4) their interest in social justice. Participants were prioritized who had a minimum of three years teaching experience in the U.S. to ensure that they had experience working within the discourse. In addition, they were expected to have attended a minimum of two professional music education conferences at the state or national level to ensure that they have had access to the discourse context that is part of this investigation. While White supremacy undoubtedly permeates the teaching contexts of rural and suburban music educators, this study is focused upon teachers who work within urban environments. As such, participants were asked to have a minimum of three years of experience teaching within these settings. Lastly, though an interest in equity does not presuppose an awareness of White supremacy or the ways in which it operates, teachers who expressed concern for social justice in music education² were sought in order to provide the optimal potential for research outcomes that will inform the scholarship.

In consideration of sample size, this inquiry required a large enough interview pool to appropriately respond to the research questions concerning music educator perceptions, yet not so large that it thinned the detail of their experiences (Wolcott, 1999). In this regard, the intended sample size of interview participants was ten music educators. The participant pool was recruited using a combination of criterion-based recruitment flyers (see Appendix A) that were distributed

² Social justice in music education corresponds to pedagogy that intersects music education and equity including matters of race, racism, class, classism, colonization, colonialization, gender, sexuality, cultural identity, and disability (Benedict et al., 2015).
within social media groups for public-school music educators, upon administrator approval, and emailed using a snowball sampling strategy. From those interested in participating, teachers were selected based upon the degree to which they meet the determined criterion. Ultimately, the ten-teacher goal was surpassed, and thirteen educators participated in the study.

When participants were selected, they were notified and asked to agree to an Informed Consent Form (see Appendix B), which provided a description of the nature of the research, the potential risks and discomforts of involvement, a disclaimer concerning benefits to the participant, measures taken to ensure participant confidentiality, a notice of right to withdraw from research, and a consent to recording. As these interviews occurred during the global COVID-19 pandemic, and consistent with university policies around remote learning and research, all interactions with participants occurred through Zoom conferencing software and email. In lieu of a signed form, the consent document was reviewed, and each educator authorized the interview to be recorded, transcribed, and used in presentations and written products at the start of each interview recording. Beyond being a tool for the communication of expectations and parameters to participants, the form also aided in preventing potential ethical entanglements and complications that could occur from a lack of clarity around personal and identifying information within data collection, analysis, and publishing (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

**Interview Design**

The person-to-person interviews conducted in this study were designed to generate information concerning the personal perspectives of the music educator participants (Creswell, 2013; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Patton 2015). These interviews were semi-structured and designed to capture the ways in which music teachers make sense of the discourse within their
field. While this structure was sufficiently flexible to allow individual experiences to direct the inquiry, it allowed for each respondent to address specific elements gleaned from the textual analysis. The specific order of the questions was not determined in advance, nor was the exact wording of the questions, allowing for authentic and timely interactions (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The open-ended interviews occurred on video and its audio was recorded using the integrated recording capabilities within the Zoom software. Interview notes were written throughout the meeting and the audio was initially transcribed using Zoom’s transcription software. Each interview’s rough text was then imported into Microsoft Word and manually read and edited to ensure accuracy, while listening to each recording. The Microsoft Word files were titled with the date and interview number and then coordinated with a master interview number coding sheet, which were both password-protected and saved locally within an encrypted folder and backed up to a secure hard drive nightly. Final transcripts were emailed to participants to ensure accuracy. Once accuracy was confirmed, the transcripts were imported to HyperRESEARCH qualitative analysis software for analysis and interpretation.

Appropriate to the critical pedagogy framework which plays a key role in orienting this inquiry, the interviews were guided using a dialogic model with the aim of achieving a delicate balance between consciousness and self-consciousness that can only be fully realized through dialogic relationships (Madison, 2019). Through dialogue, Madison submitted, a pathway is offered “for readers and audiences to experience and grasp the partial presence of a temporal conversation constituted by the Other’s voice, body, history, and yearnings” (p. 18). In this way, dialogic interviews defy offering a researcher’s static monologisms as artifacts.

To ensure that participant voices were treated as equal to my voice as the researcher, dialogic practice took priority over the guiding questions of the semi-structured interview. This
allowed for the predetermined questions within the interview design to be positioned equally to the authentic direction from the interviewee. As in a Freirean (1970/2005) learning space, both parties were “jointly responsible for a process in which all grow” (p. 80). The goal then, was for the interviews to be considered as a form of conversational performance so that all parties could engage and provoke each other in an interchange that both resisted finality and sought reciprocity (Conquergood, 2013).

Adapted from Madison’s (2019) dialogic interview construct and informed by Bevan’s (2014) structure for phenomenological interviewing, the interview design represented within the Interview Protocol (see Appendix C) consisted of four dimensions: (1) Contextualizing, (2) Beliefs, (3) Response to data, and (4) Clarifying narratives. Each of these sections was intended to build upon the previous component and was loosely structured in order to frame and encourage a dialogic relationship between interviewer and respondent.

The first section, titled Contextualizing, served to build rapport with the participants while developing context for the subsequent sections of the interview, in order to provide background from which to understand the experiences and perspectives discussed (Bevan, 2014). The five guiding contextualization questions asked the interviewees to identify their motivation for becoming a music educator, discuss their attitude on the role of music education within public schools, reflect upon their experiences at music education conferences, consider needs that have not been addressed within these professional settings, and identify why they volunteered for the study. These questions were worded as follows:

1. Could you tell me what drew you to teach public-school music?
2. What do you see as the role, or purpose, of music education in public schools?
3. What sort of experiences from NAfME or NAfME subsidiary conferences stand out to you?

4. What types of professional needs do you wish NAfME or NAfME subsidiary conferences would address for you?

5. Tell me why you volunteered for this study.

The second section of the interview, labeled Beliefs, centered upon the ideologies and viewpoints of those in the interview. The guiding questions were designed to ask the participant to consider themselves within a specific context or a position in which they were asked for advice from another in order to elucidate points of views, individual ideologies, or temperament through imagined circumstances (Madison, 2019). Each question focused upon a different chronological point in which a music educator might face the effects of White supremacy: their time as a student, music teacher preparation, teacher licensing, and within their career. These questions were phrased in the following manner:

1. If a former student, now a high school junior, were considering becoming a music teacher and asked you for advice on how to proceed, what do you think you would tell them?

2. If you were on a panel that had the authority to change the current licensing process for music teachers, what sort of changes might you demand?

3. If a student came to speak to you about the music you are teaching being too White, how do you think you might respond?

4. Suppose another music teacher in your district confided in you that their colleagues were pressuring them to change their curricula and performances to be more “traditional” (whatever that means). What sort of advice would you give them?
The third segment of interview questions, titled Response to Data, presented music teachers with data gleaned from the earlier text analysis. Madison (2019) argued that presenting participants with direct quotations is an effective tool for engaging dialogically in abstract issues. Though Madison suggested such questions be used to ask respondents for their reaction to direct quotations from others, her approach was adapted to allow the data gathered from the text analysis to serve as the passages that were shared with participants.

The specific questions in the Response to Data category were based upon the findings from the analysis of the language used in the titles and descriptions of the music education conference sessions. Prior to the questions, I shared five findings that best captured the overall tenor of the data interpretation. These findings were:

1. All of the conference sessions were organized into strands. Of the four conferences, no strand addressed issues of race, racism, or White supremacy in music education.
2. None of the state level sessions contained language associated with issues of race or racism.
3. At the national level, 2% of sessions addressed issues of race or racism.
4. Three of the 561 sessions analyzed addressed issues around bias.
5. Eight of the 561 sessions analyzed addressed issues around justice.

After the findings were shared, the following questions were posed to the participants:

1. What are your thoughts around this information learned from the conference analysis?
2. Tell me about the ways that these data compare with your personal experiences at music education conferences.
3. What sorts of questions or ideas do these findings bring up for you concerning music education conferences?

The final set of questions, Clarifying Narratives, was designed to ask participants to reflect upon or provide a narrative of an experience, opinion, or context that had been broached earlier and could use elaboration. This section served as a space for the interviewer to prompt the connections between incidents of White supremacy and gatekeeping mentioned in earlier sections, as well as from the textual analysis section.

**Data Collection Summary**

Textual analysis and interview methods were amalgamated in this inquiry because alone, they could not adequately address the research questions presented. When utilized independently, each of the methods served to engage the sub-questions of this inquiry, yet it is only together that the primary question of this inquiry—concerning the extent to which music teachers make meaning of the gatekeeping practices that mediate hidden structures of White supremacy—could be considered (see Table 3). Explicitly, the data provided by the textual analysis method addressed the first of the research sub-questions by investigating the priorities and prevailing ideologies of a specific segment of music education discourse: that expressed through the themes and content of presentations at professional conferences representing music education. The interviews addressed the second sub-question, which queried how music teachers experience and understand the norms and practices that constrain their instruction and reinforce racist structures. The primary research question addressed both the discourse that mediates hidden structures of White supremacy and the ways that music teachers understand them.

Differently stated, this inquiry begins with an analysis of discourse which provides the context
from which the interviews embarked, which ultimately led to a side-by-side consideration of their relationship.

Table 3

Summary Table of Research Questions, Methods, and Data Collection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Method/Data Collection</th>
<th>DREA Stage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primary</strong>: To what extent do music teachers make meaning of gatekeeping practices that mediate hidden structures of White supremacy?</td>
<td>Both Textual Analysis and Interviews</td>
<td>2, 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sub-question 1</strong>: What are the priorities and prevailing ideologies of music education discourse?</td>
<td>Textual Analysis: Dialectical-Relational Approach</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sub-question 2</strong>: How do music teachers experience and understand the norms and practices expressed through the discourse in their field?</td>
<td>Person-to-person, open ended, semi-structured interviews</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Management and Analysis

Consistent with the methods for data collection, the methods for data management and analysis differed depending upon the phase of the methodological approach. Whereas the approaches to data collection were grouped into two sections, the methods for management and analysis required an additional component to consider the findings from the other categories together and were thus grouped into three sections: (1) textual analysis, represented in the third DREA stage; (2) interviews, expressed within the fifth DREA stage; and (3) the parallel analysis, articulated in DREA stage 6 (see Table 4).

Table 4

DREA Stages for Data Management and Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Method Purpose</th>
<th>Methodological Orientation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Analyze discourse and identify obstacles to addressing injustice.</td>
<td>Text Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Identify themes and patterns in member responses to findings from discourse.</td>
<td>Interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Consider the implications of member perceptions, alongside the findings from discourse analysis.</td>
<td>Parallel Analysis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Text Analysis: Data Management and Analysis

The third stage of the DREA analysis began upon the completion of the Stage 2 data collection. At this juncture, the information from the discourse texts underwent several manual readings to seek potential coding criteria that may not have been considered, and appropriate adjustments were made to preliminary coding categories. Following these revisions, I utilized Microsoft Excel to count and organize terms that corresponded with the three categories of analysis (see Table 5) in order to investigate the acknowledgement or lack of acknowledgement of White supremacy within the field. In addition to the formula-based analysis conducted through Excel, the data was manually analyzed to both confirm the contexts of the included data points and seek additional instances that were not able to be identified through the computer-based method, such as alternate spellings of terms and the overlap of similar terms within the same workshop. These categories of inquiry, selected to most fully consider the ways in which White supremacist ideologies permeate the discourse are as follows: (1) themes represented in presentations, (2) language used in titles and descriptions, (3) roles of presenters, and (4) pervasive phenomena.

Table 5

DREA Stage Three Substages of Text Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Substage</th>
<th>Method Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Themes Represented in Presentations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Language Used in Titles and Descriptions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Roles of Presenters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Pervasive Phenomena</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first category of analysis relates to the overall theme of each presentation. This analytic portion addressed the nature of the workshops delivered at the conferences under
investigation and anchored the investigation by illuminating what topics could and could not be accessed in these settings. Themes were grouped accordingly, based upon the topics or perceived needs that the workshops addressed, and were largely determined through the prearranged categorizations that were listed for each event. In a few cases, recategorization from the original was required when it proved vague or misleading. The theme categories for Substage 1 differed for each of the four conferences studied, as each conference used unique groupings of their strands (see Table 6).

Table 6

Published Themes/Strands Represented in Conferences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MMEA 3.19</th>
<th>MMEA 3.20</th>
<th>NAfME 11.18</th>
<th>NAfME 11.19</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>Amplify: Innovation</td>
<td>Amplify: Access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovation</td>
<td>Innovation</td>
<td>Amplify: Inspiration</td>
<td>Amplify: Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Music</td>
<td>General Music</td>
<td>Amplify: Involvement</td>
<td>Amplify: Creativity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choral</td>
<td>Choral</td>
<td>Amplify: Learning</td>
<td>Amplify: Instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Band/Jazz</td>
<td>Band/Jazz</td>
<td>Amplify: Technology</td>
<td>Amplify: Student Engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Interest</td>
<td>General Interest</td>
<td>Poster Sessions</td>
<td>Day-Long Experiential Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strings</td>
<td>Strings</td>
<td>Best Practice Sessions</td>
<td>Sponsored Sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial</td>
<td>MMEA</td>
<td>Sponsored Sessions</td>
<td>Poster Sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MMEA</td>
<td></td>
<td>Rotation Sessions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Whereas the first substage indicated intentions of NAfME and MMEA, the second section of Stage 3 investigated the manner in which language was used to represent the motivations of individual presenters. This analytic procedure parsed the chosen discursive representations used by presenters to represent their workshops through the identification of specific language used within the titles and descriptions of their presentations. Words were chosen that directly relate to topics around social justice, non-traditional genres, and coded language. Terms associated with social justice were selected to determine the presence of discourse consistent with challenging injustice. Text related to non-traditional genres were
chosen to ascertain to what degree conference discourse was directed towards music styles not consistent with the Western European canon. Discourse consistent with coded language was sought in consideration of substitute language being used to stand-in for issues concerning race.

The preliminary coding categories used for this second substage were first based on an initial examination of topics from music education conferences that I attended prior to the start of this research and updated throughout the data analysis (see Table 7).

Table 7

*Key Terms in Conference Session Titles and Descriptions*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of Analysis</th>
<th>Terms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Justice Related</td>
<td>race, racial, White (in terms of race), Black (in terms of race), bias intersection, intersectional, intersectionality, minority, minoritized, marginalization, marginalized, diverse (children, teachers, community), diversity, inclusive, inclusiveness, inclusivity, critical (pedagogy, theory, race), equity, equitable, equal, equality, access (to learning), socio (economic), SEL, social (emotional learning), special (needs, education, learner), culture, cultural, justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-traditional Genres</td>
<td>popular (music), modern (music), rap hip-hop (all spellings)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coded Language</td>
<td>impoverished, (low) income, low performing, title-I, (under) resourced, high needs, urban, achievement (gap), poverty</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The third subsection within Stage 3 considered the role of the individual presenting content within the workshops. The purpose of this phase of analysis was to glean understanding of whose voices were afforded platforms from which to engage the discourse in these conference contexts. In order to properly determine the appropriate role/s in which presenters were categorized, each person’s conference biography was explored, and their roles were triangulated by cross-referencing their position with information publicly available on their organization’s or institution’s website. The coding categories used were representative of the roles of conference presenters. In cases where individuals had multiple roles, the position within the organization
identified in the title or description was selected. The categories identified were: PreK–12 public-school teacher, undergraduate, arts administrator, private music instructor, academic/scholar/researcher, for-profit organization representative, non-profit organization representative, performer, and NAfME/MMEA staff.

After the first three substages were completed, the occurrences consistent with each code were counted and aggregated for analysis, with each conference treated as a distinct event with discrete findings. The analyses were conducted through formulas that counted the frequency of presentations within each strand, appearance of key terms, and presenter roles that corresponded with the coding categories and were then calculated in percentage terms. The data series from each conference was then considered individually and notes were taken regarding significant findings. Lastly, the findings from all four sets of data were considered together for the fourth subsection analysis. This final phase of the Stage 3 DREA analysis was designed to identify complex phenomena and relationships between all occurrences.

As indicated earlier, the data analysis within this text analysis component was subsumed as the third DREA stage, which is modeled after the third phase of Fairclough’s (2009) four stage DRA. This analysis was designed to gain an understanding of what music education discourse is so as to ultimately make recommendations towards what might be. This component served to determine what was, and was not, discursively represented within the conference presentations, in terms of White supremacy. Once this understanding of the discourse was ascertained, White supremacy was considered from the educator perspective through interviews so as to consider the manners in which music teachers responded to the findings.

Creswell (2013) identified measures to be taken to ensure the quality and security of data collected, as well as the anonymity of participants. Of the procedures specified, those appropriate
to the text analysis methods within this inquiry involve: (1) the storing and backing up of data, and (2) protection of anonymity of persons identified in the data. Once data was inputted into Microsoft Excel, the file was saved locally and password protected. Each evening, this file was saved on a local encrypted external storage device to ensure an appropriate and secure backup. Although all of the information pulled concerning the music education conferences was publicly available, only aggregated data was shared.

**Interviews: Data Management and Analysis**

The interview analysis process is situated within the fifth DREA stage and was conducted using a five substage procedure adapted from Creswell (2013), who recommended three categorical dimensions from which to carry out interview analysis: (1) memos, (2) categorizing strategies, and (3) connecting strategies (see Table 8). Whereas the DREA Stage 3 analysis concerned what the discourse put out, these steps investigated what teachers took in. Creswell (2013) identifies measures to ensure the quality and security of data and anonymity of participants. The processes appropriate to the methods in this section are: (1) the storing and backing up of data, (2) the quality of the recording, and (3) protection of anonymity of persons identified in the data. These issues are addressed as they occurred within the following design and explanation.

**Table 8**

*DREA Stage 5 Substages of Interview Analysis*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Substage</th>
<th>Analytic Category</th>
<th>Method Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Memos</td>
<td>Responding to interviews immediately after</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Categorizing Strategies</td>
<td>Coding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>Thematic analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Connecting Strategies</td>
<td>Connections and theme development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>Implications of themes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Adapted from Creswell (2013)*
While the formal analysis began after data collection, emerging patterns and themes were observed during and after each interview and recorded using memos immediately after (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2015). The memos provided important space for the reflection upon the personal experiences of the participants and served a crucial role in capturing timely analytic thinking about the data (Creswell, 2013). These reflections were written using Microsoft Word and were titled with the date, coded for anonymity, and then coordinated with a master interview number coding sheet. The memo files were password protected and saved in a folder along with the interview transcripts and master coding document, where they were saved locally, as well as backed up to a secure hard drive nightly. Transcripts were then deidentified further through the replacement of participant numbering codes with pseudonyms. Lastly, the documents were shared with participants to verify transcription accuracy.

Following data collection, the broader data analysis process began with two steps represented by the Categorizing Strategies substages. Notes and ideas were recorded in an analysis journal through the remainder of the analysis. The first of these phases, identified as Substage 2, involved a thorough review of interview transcripts and memos recorded in the earlier stage. Data chunks were identified and coded using HyperRESEARCH qualitative analysis software and reflected upon within the analysis journal. The coding categories emerged authentically throughout the repeated readings of interviews and were based completely upon the content produced in the dialogues. This text was coded and referenced from each of the interviews so that they could be readily identified to represent specific categorical descriptions in the subsequent phases of analysis. Substage 3 interspersed throughout the second substage and concerned the thematic analysis that developed as the data were reviewed and categorized in the
prior subphase. In this step the codes were further refined and aggregated into thematic categories, subcategories, and codes (see Table 9).

Table 9

*Interview Analysis Themes, Subcategories, and Codes*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Subcategories</th>
<th>Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Barriers for Black &amp; Brown students</td>
<td></td>
<td>White supremacy in Music Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Specific instances of White supremacy in music education</td>
<td>Specific experiences</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Perceptions of White supremacy in music education</td>
<td>Perceptions of White supremacy in music education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Certification examines a singular approach &amp; skill set</td>
<td></td>
<td>Certification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Certification exams create financial barriers</td>
<td></td>
<td>Gatekeeping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Certification process does not relate to actual teaching</td>
<td></td>
<td>Music Teacher Preparation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teacher prep programs need to recruit &amp; keep Black and Brown students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teacher prep programs should place students with Black &amp; Brown teachers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teacher prep programs should include non-Eurocentric content &amp; instruction</td>
<td>Music Teacher Preparation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teacher prep programs should include social justice training</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teacher prep programs should include urban placements and training.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Specific personal instances of gatekeeping in music education</td>
<td>Specific experiences with gatekeeping</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Perceptions of Music Education Discourse</td>
<td></td>
<td>Discourse Related</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Perspectives on changing the discourse of music education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Music education organizations are old boys’ clubs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Music education organizations are elitist</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Specific connections to music education discourse</td>
<td>Specific experiences with discourse</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Higher SES families monopolize opportunities</td>
<td></td>
<td>Urban School Related</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Music education organizations ignore urban schools</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Urban school systems often have unaligned &amp; random programs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Urban schools often do not have a budget to allow for conference attendance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Urban schools often don’t have budgets for robust music programs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The fourth and fifth substages were joined in the Connecting Strategies analytic category. In the fourth phase, the data, now organized into thematic categories and subcategories were connected across interviews in order to develop the most relevant themes more deeply. In order to best process the data that was being connected, a categorical coding matrix based upon Creswell’s (2013) “themes x data” (p. 108) table was utilized to lay out participant responses in relation to each of the research questions of the inquiry (see Table 10). In the fifth substage, memos, the analytic journal, and the coding matrix were reviewed to consider the themes developed and contemplate the implications. These data findings were recorded within the analysis journal and the measures taken to secure safety and anonymity were extended to include this additional information.

Table 10

Sample Categorical Coding Matrix for Stage 5 Data Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Participant 1</th>
<th>Participant 2</th>
<th>Participant 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White supremacy in Music Education</td>
<td>Interview Quote</td>
<td>Interview Quote</td>
<td>Interview Quote</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gatekeeping</td>
<td>Interview Quote</td>
<td>Interview Quote</td>
<td>Interview Quote</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discourse Related</td>
<td>Interview Quote</td>
<td>Interview Quote</td>
<td>Interview Quote</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban School Related</td>
<td>Interview Quote</td>
<td>Interview Quote</td>
<td>Interview Quote</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broad Music Education Issues</td>
<td>Interview Quote</td>
<td>Interview Quote</td>
<td>Interview Quote</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Adapted from Creswell (2013)

Parallel Analysis: All Together Now

Textual analysis and interview methods were used together in this inquiry because it was only through this partnership that the reflexive relationship between individual music teachers
and the discursive context within which they operate could be approached in accordance with each other. As introduced earlier, each research sub-question of this study was considered from the perspective of the corresponding method from the DREA process. The primary research question relied upon the previously analyzed data to consider how music teachers make meaning of gatekeeping practices that mediate hidden structures of White supremacy. This principal query insisted upon an exploration of what the discourse of the field represents and a probing of how those in the field make meaning of it. As Bronfenbrenner (1979) argued, the reflexive relationship between individuals and their context is too often not considered when seeking understanding of behaviors, and it is from this viewpoint that the methodology was designed.

Taken together, these data from Stages 2 through 5 represent a dialectical interaction between individual and discursive contexts that may reveal patterns and themes that lead to insights that may aid in challenging the hegemonic traditions of public-school music education in the United States.

To detect the patterns and themes within the teacher-discourse relationship, the pervasive phenomena determined through the text analysis from the third DREA stage was read alongside the themes and patterns from interview-generated text of the fifth stage. In this phase, the connecting strategies from the Stage 5 data analysis were adapted to investigate connections and themes between all data. A new categorical coding matrix was created so that the themes from the Stage 3 text analysis could be considered together with findings from the Stage 5 interview analysis in order to locate zones that indicated links between what one discursive side puts out and the other accepts (see Table 11). As with the Stage 5 matrix and findings, these data were recorded within the analysis journal and the measures taken to secure safety and anonymity were extended.
Table 11

Sample Categorical Coding Matrix for Stage 6 Parallel Data Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Finding 1 from Stage 5 Analysis</th>
<th>Finding 2 from Stage 5 Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theme 1 from Stage 3 Analysis</td>
<td>Relevant Pattern or Theme</td>
<td>Relevant Pattern or Theme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme 2 from Stage 3 Analysis</td>
<td>Relevant Pattern or Theme</td>
<td>Relevant Pattern or Theme</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Adapted from Creswell (2013)

### Validity and Reliability

To assure that this study produced findings consistent with the realities of the discourse and participants in this study, several strategies were utilized to ensure the validity and trustworthiness of data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In this inquiry, the biggest validity concern centered around my membership within the group under study as both a music educator and arts administrator. Consistent with the traditions from critical race theory and critical pedagogy, I understand my familiarity within the group as a position that fuels both the awareness of and urgency for this study. In this regard, my prior enmeshment required multiple tactics to minimize researcher bias and ensure data validity.

While it is impossible to eliminate researcher bias, to minimize its presence and the effects that is may have upon this research, only interview participants of which I had no prior relationship were considered. As the context being studied involved understandings of reality, data from each interview were member checked with participants to ensure accuracy and reliability (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The third measure taken to counter bias involved active reflection and disclosure of researcher positionality. By making certain that my experiences, perspectives, assumptions, and biases are clear to the reader and are actively reflected upon, the chance of data validity is increased substantially (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).
In addition to the processes adopted to ensure that researcher bias is countered, Merriam and Tisdell (2016) suggested measures to ensure the quality of the data produced. The design of this methodology involved multiple methods from different methodological traditions that served to triangulate the findings and provided a broader understanding of the phenomena under investigation than would have been possible otherwise, thus adding validity to the inquiry (Denzin 1978; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Patton, 2015). Further, a detailed account was kept of all methods, practices, and decisions so that an audit trail was maintained throughout the inquiry. In addition, rich, thick descriptions were provided so that readers may envision how their situation connects with those described and thus ensure transferability. Lastly, peer reviews were utilized to gain perspectives from colleagues, both familiar and unfamiliar with the research topic, in order to safeguard against flawed or unreliable reasoning and results.

**Conclusion**

This study is premised upon the reality that White supremacy is often invisible but very much real and present within music education. Once revealed and examined within an individual’s context, I seek for this study to aid music educators in peeling back the layers of whitewash that have effectively caused myriad gatekeeping practices in the field to be understood as necessary quality control mechanisms. Stripping the coats of White supremacy from music education has the potential to aid teachers in dismantling the gatekeeping structures in their profession.
The data collected in this study can be categorized into two sets: text analyzed from music educator conferences and interviews conducted with music educators. This chapter discusses the first set of data, which comprises the conference text, strands, and presenter roles, in order to explore the priorities and prevailing ideologies of music education and their relation to White supremacy. The procedures used in this analysis correspond to Stages 2 and 3 of the dialectical-relational elucidatory approach (DREA): the collection and analysis of discourse and identification of obstacles to addressing injustice.

This chapter begins with an explanation of the data sources from which the analysis was conducted and is followed by a clarification of the steps taken to ensure the validity and reliability of the data collected. The findings are then introduced, delineated through the categories used in the analysis: themes, language, and presenters. The component dedicated to language is further separated into subdivisions that address the text groupings used: coded language, non-traditional genre related language, and social justice related language. The chapter
ends with a discussion of the findings and a conclusion, which serve to inform the subsequent stage of this study.

**Data Collected**

Appropriate to the design of the study, the findings from this chapter are the first of three analysis sections: conference text, interviews, and parallel analysis. The conference text analysis served to address the first sub-question of this inquiry: what are the priorities and prevailing ideologies of music education discourse? The data used was drawn from four symposia hosted by the National Association for Music Education (NAfME) and their federated state association, the Massachusetts Music Educators Association (MMEA). The NAfME conferences occurred in November 2018 and November 2019 and the MMEA conferences took place in March 2019 and March 2020. It is significant that the latter Massachusetts event transpired as school buildings were being closed nationally and internationally due to the increasingly deadly COVID-19 pandemic. As I will expand upon in the following chapter, the U.S. response to the virus impacted participants of this study and their students in manners they understood as directly related to White supremacy.

The data collected aggregated themes, titles, descriptions, and presenter roles from 561 workshops conducted as part of four distinct conferences. The attention placed upon workshop themes is premised upon the assumption that these organization-created strands express the priorities and values of the corresponding host bodies. The study of language used within the session titles and descriptions presumes the text represents a relationship between the presenter, the language chosen, and their perceptions of the host organization’s priorities. The analysis of workshop presenter roles considered connections between those privileged to contribute to the discourse in these settings and their professional position. After these data were categorized and
analyzed, they were considered together to consider the presence of pervasive phenomena across all four sets.

Validity and Reliability of Data

Multiple steps were taken to ensure the utmost fidelity of data throughout this study, including and alongside ongoing active reflection and the disclosure of positionality. The research design utilized a variety of methods rooted in distinct methodological traditions, which provided a more extensive analysis than would have been possible individually, effectively triangulating the findings and adding validity to the study (Denzin 1978; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Patton, 2015). In addition, detailed notes were kept around all stages of the inquiry in order to maintain a comprehensive audit trail of the processes.

In addition to the measures taken to ensure comprehensive trustworthiness of results, efforts were taken to make certain that data specific to the conference text analysis were credible. In the earliest stage, the conference texts were sourced from event materials directly on the host organizations’ websites. Once this information was transcribed and categorized, each of the 561 sessions encompassing the four occasions were checked numerous times to both ensure that each identified incident accurately represented what it reported to and to seek language that may have been missed due to varying or unconsidered textual arrangements.

Findings

Music educators work within a highly dispersed field; thus, physical spaces of connection are key to making sense of shared discourse. Of these places, conferences stand out as an opportune setting from which to consider the exchange of language and ideas within the field. Four such symposia were selected from those offered by NAfME and MMEA as a focus for this investigation. The data analyzed were aggregated by theme, language used in titles and
descriptions, and the roles of presenters. The conference discourse examined indicates a silence concerning issues of race within music education and suggests a unilateral relationship between conference content and matters which teachers may seek to address.

**Themes**

The 2019 MMEA conference contained 132 distinct sessions that were organized and analyzed using the thematic strands of: Technology, Innovation, General Music, Choral, Band/Jazz, General Interest, Strings, Commercial, and MMEA (see Table 12). While a clear explanation was unavailable for how MMEA defined each category, only those titled Commercial and MMEA lacked self-explanation. Based upon the nature of the workshops categorized under each and the role of the respective presenters, it can be assumed that the Commercial strand category was designated for presentations by representatives of for-profit companies and non-profit organizations. Similarly, it is assumed that the MMEA strand identified workshops conducted by MMEA staff.

**Table 12**

*MEA 2019 and 2020 Conference Strands*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strand</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>#</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovation</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Music</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choral</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Band/Jazz</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Interest</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strings</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MMEA</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>132</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the 2019 MMEA conference, the greatest frequency of sessions within individual strands was listed under General Music and Commercial with 16% and 15%, respectively. When considering ensemble related sessions together, Choral, Band/Jazz, and Strings workshops accounted for 31% of all sessions, which may be expected when considering the predominance of choir, orchestra, and concert band in U.S. music programs (Bradley, 2007, 2015; Humphreys, 2016; Koza, 2008; Lind & McKoy, 2016). Workshops categorized under MMEA made up 12% of all sessions. Presentations relating to technology amounted to 10% of sessions and the rather broad areas of Innovation and General Interest each made up 8% of all workshops.

The 2020 MMEA conference had eight fewer presentations than the prior year with a total 124 sessions. This event used identical organizing strands as the prior year, save for one group: Commercial (see Table 12). This change does not seem to account for any radical shift in the way MMEA viewed the presence of commercial interests at conferences, but when considering presenter roles, the change seems to indicate that such workshops were subsumed under other headings. Technology, Innovation, and General Music sessions retained a relatively consistent proportion of sessions with the previous year. The most significant changes involved the MMEA related sessions, which decreased from 12% of all sessions to 3% and General Interest workshops, which grew from 8% to 18% of the total. The most noteworthy change relates to ensemble-focused strands; Choral, Band/Jazz, and Strings presentations combined to represent 45% of all sessions, an increase of 14% from the year prior.

The 2018 NAfME conference included 193 sessions organized into nine categories designed for music educators to share their practices, collaborate with one another, and develop tools and resources (NAfME, 2018). The largest share of these presentations was categorized under Poster Presentations, which accounted for 36% of all offerings (see Table 13). Five of
these categories were prefixed with Amplify, creating the categories: Amplify: Innovation, Amplify: Inspiration, Amplify: Involvement, Amplify: Learning, and Amplify: Technology (see Table 14). Together, these workshops accounted for 31% of all sessions offered that year. The remaining three strands offered were labeled: Best Practice Sessions, Sponsored Sessions, and Rotation Sessions, accounting for 21%, 7%, and 4% of all offerings, respectively.

Table 13

NAfME 2018 Conference Strands

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strand</th>
<th>#</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amplify: Innovation</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amplify: Inspiration</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amplify: Involvement</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amplify: Learning</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amplify: Technology</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poster Presentations</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Practice Sessions</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sponsored Sessions</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rotation Sessions</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>193</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 14

NAfME 2018 Amplify Session descriptions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amplify: Learning</td>
<td>Teaching Music as a Well-Rounded Subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amplify: Innovation</td>
<td>Cultivating Innovative Music Making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amplify: Involvement</td>
<td>Engaging Diversity in Music Making &amp; Teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amplify: Inspiration</td>
<td>Inspiring Students through Music Creativity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amplify: Technology</td>
<td>Teaching the Tech Savvy Generation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Compiled from NAfME (2018)

In the 2019 NAfME conference, the number of offerings decreased from 193 sessions, in the year prior, to 112 sessions. This change was likely due to the addition of Day-Long Experiential Learning sessions, which represented 29% of all presentations at the 2019 event (see
Table 15. These full-day sessions were organized around Gospel Choir, Steel Drum, Ukulele, Composition in Ensembles, Digital and Hybrid Music, Liberation World Drumming, Social-Emotional Learning, and Songwriting, and were created to “allow a teacher to dig in and learn a new instrument and how to administer a new program or give a deeper understanding of a relevant topic” (NAfME, 2019). The other notable categorical difference was the loss of a category dedicated to best practices, which was presumably absorbed by the other categories. The remaining strands were similar to those of the previous year, although labels had changed. As the year before, the 2019 symposium planners used the Amplify prefix to categorize five of their offerings: Amplify: Access, Amplify: Community, Amplify: Creativity, Amplify: Instruction, and Amplify: Student Engagement (see Table 16). Together, these sessions totaled 18% of all offerings during the 2019 conference, a sizable decrease from the previous year’s Amplify sessions representing 31% of sessions. The remaining two content strands offered that year were Sponsored Sessions and Poster Sessions. The frequency of Sponsored Sessions doubled from 7% in 2018 to 14% in 2019. Poster Sessions decreased 4% to account for 32% of sessions.

Table 15

NAfME 2019 Conference Strands

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strand</th>
<th>#</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amplify: Access</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amplify: Community</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amplify: Creativity</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amplify: Instruction</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amplify: Student Engagement</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day-Long Experiential Learning</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sponsored Session</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poster Session</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>112</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 16

NAfME 2019 Amplify Session descriptions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amplify: Creativity</td>
<td>How do we create a learning environment that supports student voice, creativity, collaboration, and choice, whether via composition, improvisation, in current ensembles, or other pathways for creative musical endeavors?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amplify: Student Engagement</td>
<td>How do we engage all students daily within our classrooms and throughout our schools as they create, perform, respond, and connect to music?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amplify: Instruction</td>
<td>How do we expand instructional practices to support student ownership, voice, choice, and assessment in Standards-based, high-quality music education?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amplify: Access</td>
<td>How do we expand instructional practices to support student ownership, voice, choice, and assessment in Standards-based, high-quality music education?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amplify: Community</td>
<td>How do we successfully create a musical community within our schools and/or beyond school walls in urban, rural, or suburban settings?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Compiled from NAfME (2019)

Language

Whereas the categories chosen by NAfME and MMEA may suggest the values and priorities of those organizations, the language used to describe offerings may be understood as a place in which to understand the perspectives of the presenters. I divided the language taken from the conference titles and descriptions into three categories of analysis: coded language, non-traditional genres, and social justice related. As the codes and categories of analysis are identical for each of the four conferences studies, the following subanalysis will be delineated by coding category rather than individual event.

Coded Language

The terms chosen to represent coded language in this analysis were selected as those which may substitute for the word Black in discourse and prevent direct conversations about race (Bradley, 2006). The MMEA conferences showed little trace of coded language in their session titles and descriptions (see Table 17); in the two events, there were only two incidents of such language and they occurred within a single session description. The NAfME conferences had
more occurrences of coded language than those observed in MMEA text. Most commonly employed was the use of the word poverty, which was seen in five independent sessions in 2018, and the term high needs, which was used four times throughout the 2019 NAfME text. As I discuss later in this chapter, the terms themselves do not necessarily qualify as coded; the context in which they are used, including what is not written or said contribute to the understanding of what may be used to stand in for race.

Table 17

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Words</th>
<th>MMEA 2019</th>
<th>MMEA 2020</th>
<th>NAfME 2018</th>
<th>NAfME 2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td># of sessions present</td>
<td>% total sessions</td>
<td># of sessions present</td>
<td>% total sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>impoverished</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(low) Income</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low performing</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title-I</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(under) Resourced</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High needs</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievement (gap)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poverty</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL SESSIONS</strong></td>
<td><strong>132</strong></td>
<td><strong>124</strong></td>
<td><strong>193</strong></td>
<td><strong>112</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
music appeared in 9.33% of all sessions and 8.03% of all workshop descriptions the following year. Rap and hip-hop appeared in far fewer sessions at the four conferences studied. Rap, in fact, did not appear in any of the 561 sessions conducted. Hip-hop appeared once at the 2019 MMEA conference, three times at the 2020 MMEA conference, twice at the 2018 NAfME conference, and once at the 2019 NAfME event.

Table 18

Non-traditional Genre Related Language Used in Music Education Conference Sessions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Words</th>
<th>MMEA 2019</th>
<th>MMEA 2020</th>
<th>NAfME 2018</th>
<th>NAfME 2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td># of sessions present</td>
<td>% total sessions</td>
<td># of sessions present</td>
<td>% total sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Popular (music)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.03%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.03%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modern (music)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.55%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rap</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hip-hop (all spellings)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.76%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.42%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TOTAL SESSIONS 132 124 193 112

Social Justice Related Language

To consider the prevalence of discourse directly challenging inequities in music education, 18 terms associated with social justice were counted across the four music education conferences (see Table 19). Neither the 2019 nor the 2020 MMEA conference had a single session with terminology relating to race, intersectionality, minoritized identities, equality, or socioeconomic issues. Issues related to bias and justice each occurred in one of the 256 MMEA sessions over the two events. Workshops with text related to marginalization and access to learning each were each present twice over the same conference span. Sessions that contained language related to diversity, inclusivity, special needs, critical pedagogy, and equity each occurred less than six times over that span. Terminology relating to social emotional learning was present in one session during the 2019 MMEA event and increased to six sessions in 2020.
Words relating to culture were present in 15 of the 132 sessions in 2019, and nine of 124 sessions in 2020.

Table 19

Social Justice Related Language Used in Music Education Conference Sessions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Words</th>
<th>MMEA 2019</th>
<th>MMEA 2020</th>
<th>NAfME 2018</th>
<th>NAfME 2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td># of sessions present</td>
<td>% total sessions</td>
<td># of sessions present</td>
<td>% total sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race, racial</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White (race)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black (race)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bias</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.76%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intersectional, intersectionality</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minority, minoritized</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marginalization, marginalized</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.76%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diverse, diversity (children, teachers)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.27%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusive, inclusiveness, inclusivity</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.27%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical (pedagogy, theory, race)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.76%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equity, Equitable</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.03%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal, Equality</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access (to learning)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socio (economic)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEL, Social (emotional learning)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.76%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special (needs, education, learner)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.03%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture, Cultural</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>11.36%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7.26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justice</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.76%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL SESSIONS</strong></td>
<td>132</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At the 2018 and 2019 national conferences, terminology related to social justice appeared more often than at the state level events analyzed. The only term considered that never appeared was *Black*, although *White* appeared in 3 workshops during the same period, and the word *race* appeared seven times. One of the 305 NAfME sessions offered made reference to minoritized
populations. Each of the two NAfME conferences studied had a single mention of terms associated with bias and intersectionality. Language associated with equality occurred twice during the 2018 sessions but not at all in 2019. References to critical practices and socio-economic issues each occurred in three of the 305 NAfME sessions offered. Marginalized populations were addressed three times during the 2018 sessions and once the following year. Issues concerning equity appeared in five of the 193 sessions in 2018 and just once during the 112 sessions the following year. Of the terms considered associated with social justice, four appeared to a degree greater than 5% of that event’s sessions. Sessions incorporating diversity amounted to almost 8% in 2018 and almost 9% in 2019. Inclusivity was addressed in just over 5% of workshops in 2018 and just over 7% in 2019. Culture was addressed in 7% of sessions in 2018 and 8% of sessions in 2019. Social Emotional Learning was present in close to 9% of all workshops in 2019.

**Presenters**

The subanalysis of presenter roles from the MMEA and NAfME conferences served to consider the positions of those whose voices had the platform from which to contribute to discourse in these settings. During the 2019 MMEA conference, 67% of presentations were delivered by PreK–12 or university educators, and this same group represented a 71% share the following year (see Table 20). When considered independently, during that same time, PreK–12 teacher-led presentations increased from 34% to 50%, and university educator-led sessions decreased from 33% to 21%. In 2019, 25% of MMEA presentations were delivered by for-profit or non-profit representatives, which decreased to 19% of all roles in 2020. All other presenter roles accounted for a total of 3% of sessions in 2019 and less than 1% in 2020.
Table 20

*Presenter Roles at Music Education Conference Sessions*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRESENTER ROLL</th>
<th>MMEA 2019</th>
<th>MMEA 2020</th>
<th>NAfME 2018</th>
<th>NAfME 2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>#</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>#</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PreK–12 Educator</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Educator</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts Administrator</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For-profit Rep.</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-profit Rep.</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performer</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Host Org. Staff</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Led</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>151</strong></td>
<td><strong>140</strong></td>
<td><strong>267</strong></td>
<td><strong>128</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Compared with the state-level symposia, workshops during the NAfME conferences had a larger percentage of university educators and a lesser percentage of PreK–12 educators who presented. During the 2018 conference, 51% of all presenters were university-based teachers, which increased to 58% in 2019. Counter to this increase, the 2018 and 2019 national conferences each included workshops led by PreK–12 educators 27% of the time. Considered together, both PreK–12 and university educators combined to account for 78% of all presenters of sessions in 2018 and 83% of those in 2019. These national conferences also had a smaller share of sessions hosted by non-profit organization and for-profit business representatives than MMEA events, amounting to a combined representation of 10% of 2018 workshops and 13% in 2019. Other presenter roles in the NAfME conferences analyzed amounted to a 7% share of all sessions.

**Discussion**

The strands used to organize conference sessions played a crucial role in both determining the content of the events and indicating the priorities of the hosting organizations.
By choosing the criterion upon which workshop proposals were determined, conference organizers framed and narrowed the pathways that lead towards acceptance, and ultimately made decisions concerning which sessions would and would not occur. As these strands exist as the foundation from which would-be presenters design their workshops, they effectively send a message of what is being prioritized for that conference, and by extension, what is valued by the organization at that time. With this in mind, the most striking aspect of the strand categorizations for all four of the MMEA and NAfME conferences is that none addressed issues connected with race, racism, or White supremacy.

Based upon the assumption that both strand selection and workshop proposal approval fall within host organization responsibilities, the frequency of offerings within each category may further represent organizational priorities. While all of the conferences studied provided indications of organizational priorities, they were perhaps most apparent with the preponderance of ensemble-based workshops at the MMEA conferences. Considering the commonness of choir, orchestra, and concert band in U.S. music programs (Bradley, 2007, 2015; Humphreys, 2016; Koza, 2008; Lind & McKoy, 2016), it is not surprising that 31% of all 2019 sessions and 45% of all 2020 workshops were categorized under the Choral, Band/Jazz, and Strings headings. Though not particularly surprising or extraordinary, the priority placed upon these dominant structures within music education inevitably limits all that might challenge the Eurocentric framework from which they are derived. Said differently, placing a high priority upon the systems and legacies that have persisted as instruments of cultural regeneration function to maintain its control.

Music education discourse has historically been complicit in maintaining hegemonic structures, particularly in terms of language and failure to name race and racism (Bradley, 2006). The extent to which coded language was present within the studied conference texts was
investigated to determine if it played any role in a willingness or unwillingness to address issues related to White supremacy. Detecting coded language involved an attention to the terminology used, the context in which it appeared, and an attention to what was left unsaid. By way of illustration, words such as poverty and high needs are certainly not interchangeable with Black, but attention to their discursive setting may indicate that the circumstances being addressed do concern race-based inequities. In such a context, silence concerning race likely indicates that those ostensibly race-neutral terms are indeed coded. More to the point, to address high-needs environments and poverty without addressing the ways in which these conditions intersect race represents a substantial silence within the context of a system that has, and continues to, marginalize Black and Brown students. Also significant is the physical context in which such language appears, as the degree to which an inequity is present locally will be amplified by a lack of explicit acknowledgement.

The limited use of coded language used in the descriptions and titles of workshops within MMEA conferences indicated relatively little incidence of substitute text. It would be irresponsible to consider this an explicit challenge of race-based oppressions because, as will be discussed shortly, there was a striking absence of language that considered race in any direct manner. The NAfME events demonstrated more usage of coded language than its Massachusetts chapter.

In considering term usage at the conferences associated with genres outside of the European canon, it is patently clear that workshops were presented that addressed popular and modern music and comparatively few that addressed rap and hip-hop. Popular and modern music are vague terms—indeed coded constructions—that correlate with music associated with White youth (Hess, 2018b). Rap and hip-hop, contrastingly, are genres unmistakably associated with
Black urban youth (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2011). The remarkable discrepancy between language associated with White youth and Black youth is worsened when considering that a single BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and people of color) presenter (J. Sheel, personal communication, December 13, 2020) was responsible for conducting 4 of the 7 sessions associated with rap or hip-hop, across all investigated MMEA and NAfME conferences. When this relative silence is placed within the context of a superficial willingness to explore non-canonical genres, the connection between coded language, silences, and Eurocentrism becomes increasingly visible.

The language used within conference titles and descriptions were examined to seek the usage of terms associated with social justice. Concerning that which was missing, some omissions were glaringly egregious. None of the 256 state level sessions and only seven of the 305 NAfME workshops contained text associated with issues of race or racism. Black, in terms of race, was absent from all text across all conferences and White, also in terms of race, was present in three NAfME sessions. In the 561 sessions analyzed, there was a single reference to minoritized peoples, two assertions of intersectionality, three mentions of bias, and eight instances where justice was present.

Counter to text that was absent, a few terms were strikingly present. Language associated with diversity was sparse during the MMEA conferences, occurring in five of the 256 sessions. The term was far more present at the NAfME symposia, appearing in 25 of the 305 presentation texts. Language associated with culture was well represented across all four events, occurring in 26 MMEA sessions and 23 NAfME workshops. Terms associated with inclusivity were addressed in five MMEA and 18 NAfME sessions.
It can be argued that the appearance of language related to diversity, culture, and inclusivity is a positive sign towards a shift in music education discourse. However, the failure to straightforwardly address race, racism, bias, Black culture, Black music, and Black people in the context of all-inclusive terms that apply broadly ignores the disparate impact that music education specifically, and education generally, have had on generations of Black students and teachers. Such neglect is akin to the underlying assumptions behind multicultural and democratic approaches in teaching that both ignore the lived experiences of BIPOC students and teachers, as well as the historic erasure that has existed within music education discourse and in music classrooms in the United States.

**Conclusion**

The data analyzed from selected MMEA and NAfME conferences consist of strands determined in advance by host organizations, language used by presenters to frame their workshops, and the roles of those who presented. When considered together, these data may represent a regenerative discursive cycle in which presenters discern what is expected and deliver what might be perceived as relevant and prioritized. Said differently, it is the conference organizers who set the agenda and the educators who must bend to fill it. In music education, where the majority of educators are White (Abril, 2009; DeLorenzo, 2012; Koza, 2003; Lind & McKoy, 2016; Zubrzycki, 2017) and the content is mired in Eurocentric cultural centering (Bradley, 2015; Humphreys 1995, 2016), this cycle cannot cease through incidental means.

The first subquestion of this inquiry relates to the priorities and prevailing ideologies of music education discourse. Based upon the investigation of the music education conferences hosted by MMEA and NAfME, certain conclusions can be drawn. In consideration of what are and what are not priorities represented within the discourse investigated, the relationship...
between the strand topics, the content of the workshop titles and descriptions, and the voices permitted to present cannot be understated. Considered together, these elements represent a self-congratulatory echo chamber of sorts, which persists to protect and maintain the hegemonic legacies of music education through discourse.

In terms of voice, the data suggests that MMEA placed a relatively similar value on PreK–12 educator and university educator voices in 2019, and in 2020 they placed a significantly higher priority upon the voices of PreK–12 music teachers. NAfME, the data suggests, placed a far higher value upon the voices of university educators. After school-based educators, both organizations placed the next highest value upon the presence of for-profit companies and non-profit organizations’ representatives. When considering this not-inconsequential degree to which representatives of commercial interests are present at conferences, the chance of subverting the regenerative cycle may be further limited through conflicting interests and priorities between organizations whose work centers on educating children and those centering profit.

As the de facto representative body of tens of thousands of public-school music educators, NAfME acts on behalf of civil servants who teach our nation’s children. There is a fundamental trust placed upon an organization that represents public school teachers by those teachers, that the work performed on their behalf represents the needs and interests of the constituency. There may be an interest in conserving public school music education and creating future music instrument industry customers. It would seem that the influence and collaboration of the for-profit sector enables a veritable system of shared participation and profit. Public education targets student impact and the private market targets profit and views the music education sector as a profit source. The Musical Instrument Industry does not hide their position on the financial value of music education and have admittedly cross-referenced the sales of
school musical instruments with PreK–12 school enrollment data for at least the past 50 years (The Music Industry Report Card for 2016, 2017). Even if discounting the selfish vs. selfless motivations in the conversation concerning music education policy, Schmidt and Colwell (2017) argue that private sector altruism and its influence will inevitably favor a privileged few, even when all stakeholder interests are met.

Unsurprisingly, strand data suggest that workshops that address topics concerning technology and general music content are valued, as are as those that speak to a rather narrow understanding of innovation: one which ignores ideological re-envisioning. Most prominent is the priority placed upon sessions addressing the teaching of the large ensembles of Band, Orchestra, and Chorus. Given the historical and contemporary nature of public-school music education in the U.S., it stands to reason that these principal mediums would be so highly valued, though their inherent cultural bias cannot be ignored (Bradley, 2015; Humphreys 1995, 2016). When considering the dire inequities within music education in the U.S. (Abril, 2009; Abril & Kelly-McHale, 2015; DeLorenzo, 2012; Elpus, 2014; Elpus & Abril, 2011; Gustafson, 2009) alongside the regenerative structures that endure within music conference structures, the unavoidable question concerning who it benefits must be examined.

In considering the priorities suggested by the conference text analysis, considering what is not a priority can provide a clearer glimpse into the ways in which language represents systemic inequities. The dialectic revealed by the positioning of what is present alongside what is not represented in music education discourse may contribute to both exposing and challenging the deeply entrenched inequities within music education (Foucault, 1980; Freire, 1970/2005).

The most unmistakable absence from conference discourse concerned the lack of attention to Black students, Black teachers, and Black culture. Attention to issues concerning
race, racism, bias, or minoritized peoples was virtually nonexistent. The acknowledgement within the discourse of nonspecific categorizations of culture, inclusivity, and diversity without naming race is consistent with color-blind racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2017), in the manner in which it serves to reach the all-encompassing *all*, while not seeing race. Challenging White supremacy in music education must begin with its exposure and naming (Hess, 2017a). Refusing to name race highlights a significant predicament in music education discourse that battles against the exposure and the naming that must occur in order for music education, education, and the broader society to move forward.

Genres associated with White youth culture were present, yet those connected with the culture of Black youth were absent. Addressing issues relating to equity without addressing the manners in which these issues impact race does little to address the continued marginalization of Black and Brown students in music classes and is illustrative of a collective silence from a system that has, and continues to, marginalize Black and Brown students. Considering that most of the very few workshops that addressed content relevant to Black youth culture were led by a single BIPOC presenter, it can be argued that the onus of acknowledgement is displaced from the White music educators who need to recognize it most.

The silence around contemporary genres associated with Black culture and the prevalence of language around those of White youth is amplified when considering the legacy of popular music genres. That understood as popular music has historically existed at the expense of Black musicians, whose artistry was often adapted for White audiences, be it rock ‘n roll, blues, or perhaps most grievously, jazz. The public outrage by White families and music educators leading up to the entry of jazz into public school music curricula resulted in a whitewashing of the genre to convert the form into something more palatable for White
Americans (Hardesty, 2016). This story of jazz was one of many historical instances in which White Americans grew increasingly threatened by Black culture and used both implicit and explicit modes of maintaining cultural, social, and political dominance (Dixson, 2006). Jazz music was not integrated into a broader American culture, but was rather stripped, diluted, and appropriated into a form that White American audiences could understand and deem legitimate.

Consider the state of jazz education today, one hundred years after it was introduced into U.S. public school music classrooms. At present, 99% of Black students quit music classes by the time they reach graduation (Gustafson, 2009), yet jazz is highly present within conference discourse, public schools, and universities alike.

A silence concerning Black peoples and culture within a contemporary context that has included countless clarion calls for Black Lives Matters may be considered paradoxical. Consider NAfME’s statement, made in June 2020, asserting what they believe concerning Black Lives Matter.

Racial injustice is real, and ongoing, and increasingly evident as COVID-19 disproportionately affects Black communities, and as we are again seeing videos of Black lives ending. We see it. And we reiterate: Black Lives Matter. We are listening. As teachers, we hear our students’ pain. (National Association for Music Education, 2020b)

To speak out for Black lives and to suggest an understanding of the multitudinous reasons why such a statement is necessary, yet do nothing to radically change the discourse, represents a dichotomy between expressed values and actions that has not gone unnoticed by the BIPOC music educators interviewed for this study. Worth noting is that, as of the publishing of this writing, MMEA has made no such statement concerning Black Lives Matter. In fact, their Twitter profile describes the organization as “seek[ing] to support comprehensive, quality music
education for all [emphasis added] students through advocacy, professional development, and a commitment to lifelong learning” (Massachusetts Music Educators Association, 2020). The continued focus upon all within a context that has historically benefited White students at the expense of Black students can be understood in relation to all lives matter rhetoric heralded in response to the Black Lives Matter movement; it is a context that fails to see the need for calling attention to Black lives and shuts its collective eyes to the inexorable harm for which it has both relied upon and compounded.

As NAfME’s Black Lives Matter statement (National Association for Music Education, 2020b) was issued three months after the last workshop studied, it is prudent to consider NAfME conference calls issued after their proclamation in June 2020. Though the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in many national and state-level conferences being cancelled, NAfME’s Eastern Division announced a virtual conference six months after the organization’s Black Lives Matter statement. This regional division includes the federated state organizations from Connecticut, Delaware, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Washington D.C., and an affiliate representing Europe (Massachusetts Music Educators Association, 2020b). This conference titled We All Belong! Proven Practices and Perspectives for Today’s Music Educator, was advertised as “focus[ing] on proven practices in the current climate of synchronous and asynchronous teaching, in both hybrid and in-person settings” (CMEA, 2020). This announcement called for would-be presenters to “please be cognizant of the areas of diversity, equity, inclusion, and access in music education for all [emphasis added] students.” It continued, “culturally responsive teaching, social and emotional awareness, creative, and innovative teaching concepts, and engaging delivery of instruction, are among the themes that will weave through the conference strands.” The strands used to organize
the conference, and more importantly the place from which presenters must target their presentation designs, are titled: Band-Elementary, Band-Secondary, Choral-Elementary, Choral-Secondary, Orchestra-Elementary, Orchestra-Secondary, Classroom-Elementary, Classroom-Secondary, Modern Band, Research/Higher Ed, Urban Music, Collegiate/Pre-Service, and Music Administration. Both the strands and the elements to be considered by presenters are consistent with the findings revealed in the analysis of the national NAfME and MMEA symposia. Though matters related to equity may be highlighted, they are coded as race, race-based inequities, and Black lives are notably absent from the conference description and strands.

NAfME’s Black Lives Matter declaration, prefixed with What We Believe, is undoubtedly a statement of organizational values, whether or not it was explicitly indicated. Yet, the actions of the organization continue to conflict with any attention given to Black lives within their discourse. Whether considering the state, regional, or national level conferences conducted under the NAfME moniker, language continues to be used to address issues such as access, diversity, equity, and inclusion without mentioning race. Moreover, the organizing strands have continued to direct presentations towards elements even further removed from race, eschewing issues of justice altogether. These absences and deflections occur too consistently and clearly to be coincidental and reflect a profound friction between what is expressed to be valued and the actions taken to effect change in discourse. The questions must be raised: Why is this friction present? Who, or what, benefits as a result of this order, and at the expense of whom?

The discord between what NAfME’s institutional values expressed through its Black Lives Matter statement and organizational actions relating to discourse may be seen as paradoxical or hypocritical. It may also indicate something far worse: deeply embedded systemic oppression. Such conflicts are consistent with what Freire (1970/2005) understood as systemic
binaries, which he identified to cast attention upon oppressions entrenched within social and educational structures. In the case of music education conference discourse, the binaries between what is present and what is not, as well as that which is stated and that which is acted upon are visible irrespective of level. Derrida (1978) might have considered such dualisms symbolic of deliberate hierarchies that serve to maintain systemic power. From such a perspective, NAfME and MMEA have nothing to gain from allowing contrary discourse through their collective gates and quite a bit to lose, as the recognition of centuries of exclusion (to say the least) might be considered an acknowledgement of harm and challenge the perceived identity of music teachers, individually and collectively.

Foucault (1978/1995, 1980) may have understood the frictions between the dichotomies present in music education discourse as indicative of a normalizing power, which thrives through a lack of detection. Such mechanisms may serve to manipulate teachers into believing that they are freely contributing when, in effect, they are playing a predetermined role towards rendering a regenerative discursive cycle that insists upon the exclusion of all that threaten it. Foucault might suggest that music teachers are enlisted to play their social role by delivering the sort of presentations that NAfME and MMEA ask for, and then are rewarded for with the experience of pleasure in playing their part, thus confirming perceived individual and collective identities.

The priorities demonstrated within music education discourse do much to indicate the prevailing ideology from which they stem. In consideration of what beliefs support the discourse and priorities established, an unmistakable ideology of White supremacy has been identified. As described in the first chapter, this inquiry focuses upon three modalities in which White supremacy operates: assimilation of minoritized people into the master culture, the appropriation of what is deemed useful from the marginalized culture, and the erasure of what, or who, is seen
as too different for the first two methods. These modes are characterized as tentacles of White supremacy, owing to the ways in which seek, grasp, and hold on to all in its path.

The music education conference discourse investigated in this inquiry demonstrated a commitment to preserving structures of both Eurocentricity and Whiteness through an assimilative apparatus that frames its priorities around singular understandings of best. This is a comprehension mired in large hierarchal ensembles, Western systems of notation, and an unrelenting worship of 18\textsuperscript{th} and 19\textsuperscript{th} century White, European, male composers. Any efforts towards innovation were made well within the boundaries of the Eurocentric model, ultimately serving to assimilate all who are not of the centered culture.

The presence of topics relating to jazz, modern, and popular music within the examined discourse can be understood as symbolic of the legacy of appropriation within music education. The correlation between the appropriation of Black music by White artists (Lordi, 2020) should not be limited to the social, cultural, and historical aspects of American life (Dixson, 2006) and avoided within music education, yet it often is unconsidered. This dichotomy between the historic pilfering of what is understood as culturally worthy and the systemic dehumanization of the people from whom it came is representative of a nefarious appropriation, which is worsened by the attrition of Black students from music classrooms.

The attrition of Black students from public-school music classes, combined with the whitewashing of historically Black music genres, equate to a form of erasure. The discourse examined indicates a thunderous silence concerning race-based issues that occur within the field of music education. This silence envelopes matters around contemporary Black culture, minoritized peoples, intersectional inequities, and biases. Even the most progressive aspects of the discourse incorporate aspects of White youth culture, while virtually ignoring that of Black
youth and uses coded language when regarding people and issues from outside the center. This is an erasure that declares all students matter, while professing platitudes about the importance of recognizing that Black lives have indeed not mattered for far too long. Black students and teachers do indeed count as Black lives, and they most certainly do matter.

An ideology of White supremacy is consistent with the dichotomy between expressed values and actions within the field. It is one that protects what has been done over what might be done. It accounts for the relationships between conference criteria and acts as a control mechanism for what presenters seek to address. This discourse is structured upon an ideology of White supremacy in its assimilative notions of best and appropriative legacies that continue to extract and adapt historically Black cultural products while Othering those from whom it was produced, all while quite literally erasing Black bodies from music classes. This ideology, from its origins, sought to create a universal cultural literacy fashioned upon an ethic of moral character “in connexion [sic] with the public and social worship of God” (Mason, p. iii, 1836/1844). This perspective has favored the cultural values of the White, Christian, Eurocentric students for whom it was designed for, at the expense of all others and has impacted Black students and teachers most considerably.
CHAPTER 5
ENGAGING DIALOGUE: AN ANALYSIS OF TEACHER UNDERSTANDINGS OF WHITE SUPREMACY IN MUSIC EDUCATION CONFERENCE DISCOURSE

Whereas the data analyzed in the previous chapter encompassed text from music educator conferences, the analysis described within this chapter concerns the interviews conducted with music educators. The procedures used in this analysis correspond to Stages 4 and 5 of the dialectical-relational elucidatory approach (DREA): the interview of members of the discursive group, including a presentation of obstacles determined in the prior stage, and the identification of themes and patterns in their responses. The interview analysis addressed the second sub-question of this study, and thus considered the ways in which music teachers experience and understand the norms and practices expressed through the discourse in their field. Considered together, these data allowed a broader interpretation of how music education discourse is understood and acted upon and provide a robust body of information to consider during the subsequent DREA stage in the next chapter: the extent to which music teachers make meaning of gatekeeping practices that mediate hidden structures of White supremacy.

I begin this chapter with a brief description of the interview process and the participants involved. This account is followed by an explanation of the measures taken to ensure that the
data produced through interviews was collected and analyzed in manners that are trustworthy and reliable. The next component contains the findings from the analysis, which are delivered in three sections: perspectives on White supremacy in music education, perspectives on conference discourse, and COVID-19, Black Lives Matter, and music education. The first of these subsections provides a general overview of the ways in which the educators interviewed understand the role that White supremacy plays in their profession. These perspectives are elaborated upon in detail in the next subsection, which addresses each participant’s perspective of conference discourse, as well as in Chapter 6. The final subdivision of the findings section addresses the contemporary issues of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Black Lives Matters movement and the manners in which both factored into the perspectives of the teachers interviewed. This chapter concludes with a discussion of the findings and conclusion, which argues the significance of the findings discussed.

**Data Collected**

The interview analysis conducted in this study addressed the second sub-question of the inquiry: how do music teachers experience and understand the norms and practices expressed through the discourse in their field? The interviews were constructed using a semi-structured dialogic model designed to engage participants in a manner in which their voices and perspectives were positioned equally with mine. These dialogues included four sections constructed to guide the discussions: (1) Contextualizing, (2) Beliefs, (3) Response to Data, and (4) Clarifying Narratives. The Contextualizing section functioned to build rapport between researcher and participants and establish context for the remainder of the interview. The Beliefs component focused on participant ideologies and perspectives on topics relating to potential occurrences of White supremacy and gatekeeping in music education. In Response to Data,
participants were presented with data culled from the conference text analysis and then prompted to consider connections between these findings and their experiences. The concluding section, Clarifying Narratives, served as a space from which to ask participants to clarify or elaborate upon earlier narratives.

Thirteen teachers were recruited to participate in this study, surpassing the original objective of ten participants. These interviews, designed to consider the manners in which music teachers made sense of the discourse within their field, transpired during the global COVID-19 pandemic and were conducted entirely through Zoom video conferencing software. Once transcribed, interview texts were analyzed using HyperRESEARCH qualitative analysis software, within which the text was organized into themes, subcategories, and codes to represent understandings of norms and practices within music education discourse.

**Validity and Reliability of Data**

As with the data discussed in Chapter 4, there were various actions taken to ensure the data collected were trustworthy and reliable. The DREA research design involves a variety of procedures rooted in distinct methodologies, which beyond providing a more extensive analysis than would have been possible independently, effectively triangulated the findings and adding validity to the study (Denzin, 1978; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Patton, 2015). In addition, I kept detailed notes around all stages of the inquiry in order to maintain a comprehensive audit trail of the processes.

In reporting participant experiences, I provide thick descriptions to enable readers the strongest chance to connect participant experiences with their own. To minimize researcher bias, participants were selected from volunteers with whom I had no personal or professional connections. To make certain that all participants were fully aware of the conditions of the
researcher and participant relationship, a comprehensive Informed Consent Form (see Appendix B) was issued in advance of interviews, reviewed, and agreed upon prior to the start of the dialogue. Once the interview transcriptions were completed, they were member checked with each participant to ensure accuracy and reliability (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Throughout the analysis, participants were contacted to confirm understandings of their perspectives, as needed. As a final measure of data validity, peer reviews were employed to assure against flawed analyses and conclusions.

**Findings**

The data collected through the interview of 13 music educators was analyzed with the aim of understanding the group norms and practices that are expressed through discourse. The interview participants were all music educators with a self-identified interest in social justice, have been to a minimum of two conferences, and have taught for at least two years in an urban public school. The need for remote interviews, as necessitated by the global COVID-19 pandemic, prompted what was initially a regional study to be expanded to a national pool of potential participants. As a result, the educators interviewed have lived and taught in urban settings across the northeast, midwest, northwest, mid-Atlantic, and southern regions of the United States, and teach music across all grade levels from prekindergarten through university (See Table 21). Specifically, nine participants identified as White, three as Black, and one as Filipino-American. The interview findings suggest that intentional dialogues around race in music education may lead to the exposure of the manners in which White supremacy manifests.

---

3 12 of the 13 educators interviewed had taught for three or more years. One teacher was about to begin their third-year teaching at the time of the interview.
### Table 21

*Interview Participants, Race, Experience, Region*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TEACHER</th>
<th>ETHNO-RACIAL IDENTITY</th>
<th>YEARS TEACHING</th>
<th>GRADES/DISCIPLINES TAUGHT</th>
<th>REGION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Joanne</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>6-12 Orchestra</td>
<td>Midwest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Randi</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9-12 Band</td>
<td>Mid-Atlantic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jaeden</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>PK-8 General/Instrumental</td>
<td>Mid-Atlantic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jill</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6-8 Band</td>
<td>Mid-Atlantic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kim</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4-5 Instrumental</td>
<td>Mid-Atlantic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traci</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6-8 Band</td>
<td>Mid-Atlantic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karam</td>
<td>Filipino-American</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9-12 Vocal</td>
<td>Northwest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gayle</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>PK-5 General</td>
<td>Mid-Atlantic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Troy</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9-12 Band</td>
<td>Northeast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Randall</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>University</td>
<td>Midwest, South</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carly</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>PK-5 General</td>
<td>Mid-Atlantic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renna</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>K-8 General</td>
<td>Mid-Atlantic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alston</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>K-8 General</td>
<td>Northeast</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Perspectives on White Supremacy in Music Education**

All participants involved in this inquiry shared expectations placed upon them from colleagues, school administrators, and their communities that disparately impacted students of color. Joanne and Traci, both White instrumental music teachers, each expressed clear expectancies from their communities that their music classes be performance-driven and focused upon takeaways external to musical instruction. Traci shared that her classes have been “really driven by the performances and driven by the, like, you know, the benefits that you can maybe get out of it as a student.” Joanne acknowledged that “the expectation is giving the people what they want, and I think that’s what stands in the way.” She reflected that the pressure to put on a performance that “wows” families, makes it less possible for teachers to engage students in “think[ing] deeply about a social issue.”

Karam, a Filipino-American vocal music teacher, who has been teaching for four years in the community in which he was raised, observed the regeneration of performance-driven nature in his own teaching. He shared, “I’m teaching in the community that I grew up in and that’s a
very diverse, very low socio-economic community.” This teaching placement within his own educational past positioned Karam to be able to reflect deeply upon his own student experiences while concurrently examining his pedagogy. He began to notice a pattern in which students were unable to attend their own school performances due to the sort of personal and family obligations common to his community. “And they would question me like why is my, why is my final grade so dependent on this one event? And I was . . . adamant about like, well then, if we’re not performing, then what’s the point?” Karam realized that the structure he was upholding was making it incredibly difficult for his students to succeed in music classes or take their musical studies further.

Kim, a White elementary school instrumental music teacher, shared that she feels pressure to balance the expectations inherent in the profession with her personal values, which are often contradictory. She explained “my district has a curriculum and so, I try to balance what they tell me to teach with my own personal interest and then also what I think that my community of students might be interested or need.” This is often difficult, when Kim’s understanding of her student needs conflict with what she is expected to teach, particularly with the content offered through music conference workshops.

Gayle, a White elementary school music teacher, reflected that “there are a lot of systems . . . that are White supremacist, that are within our profession” and acknowledged the risk involved in speaking out. Through hardships and “almost ending [her] career before it started” Gayle has learned to maneuver through structures to effect change without explicitly challenging those with institutional power. She shared, “it’s from learned experiences that I have sort of developed . . . this way within the system because I think that at first, I was the one spitting fire, like this is how we got to do it. This is how we’re going to make the change from the inside.”
Joanne also discussed the presence of White supremacy in music education, acknowledging “White supremacy IS permeating what I feel is viewed as traditional music and that comes from the repertoire.” She placed the onus for its persistence on administrators “who are just like, oh, well, you need to teach orchestra, because the kids want orchestra, and the parents want them to play.” She understood these boundaries as preventing teachers from being the “agents of change” students need, “which is kind of perpetuating White supremacy in its own way.”

Troy, a White high school band teacher, recognized his privilege, as a White, male, teacher who has earned tenure. Since achieving this professional status, Troy has felt emboldened to speak out for what he believes his students deserve. “I’ve only started saying that after I’m tenured, and because I’m a middle-aged White guy, and I have the confidence to stand up to people and say, hey, listen, that’s not okay.” He recognized that he has received very little pushback and noted, “if I was a young woman who came in the classroom to teach elementary school and, a 50 [or] 40 something year old principal said something, I don’t know that I would be able to say those things.”

Randall, a Black university professor with nearly 40 years of experience teaching in both public PreK–12 schools and universities, distilled the expectations from the field into the “vitriol” that came in response to Professor Philip Ewell’s plenary talk at the Society for Music Theory’s annual meeting in November 2019, which addressed the White racial frame of music theory (Ewell, 2020), particularly critiquing the ideologies of music theorist Heinrich Schenker. He noted the White supremacist roots of the responses and the ways in which such public reactions serve to keep detractors from challenging the foundational structures of music education. Randall argued that a disposition of “we’ve got to protect this” ran throughout the
profession. He added that “people are in their comfort zone [and] they don’t want to step out.”

He spoke of “gatekeepers [who] maintain the status quo, you know. And it’s about that. It’s about supremacy and elitism, and all the, a lot of other -isms.”

Randall connected the White fragility (DiAngelo, 2018) of the music academy with the reluctance for any substantial consideration of Black music and Black musicians in music education and concert programming. He discussed the marginalization of the Black culture through Black History Month performances and occasional inclusions of Black composers and musicians noting, “we’ll program the music, but you don’t put it in any . . . context. You don’t prepare. You don’t tell them anything about this music. You know, you just, oh, let’s put a spiritual in the concert.” He elaborated, “the, so-and-so symphony has decided this year in honor of diversity and Black Lives Matter, we’re going to program one piece by a Black composer on each of our concerts . . . That’s something. But, doggone it, one piece? One piece?”

Randall was not alone in both his acknowledgement of racism in music education and his awareness of the impact of the Black Lives Matter movement’s effect on the profession. Though Randall acknowledged that the movement served as yet another way for White educators to marginally honor Black culture, Jaeden, a Black elementary and middle school music teacher, noted a personal impact in the way it motivated him to speak out against race-based inequities in music education. When asked why he volunteered for this study, Jaeden responded, “because I’m tired. Because I’m tired. I’m tired . . . The Black Lives Matters movement . . . I realized that it was time to come forward, and I see things happening in my community and . . . everyone wants to speak for me.”

Karam addressed the idea of BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and people of color) voices in music education from a different perspective. Where Jaeden noted the prevalence of others
speaking for him, Karam recognized the frequency of which he is expected to speak for others. He contended, “I don’t speak for Filipino people! I’m... part of the culture and there are so many aspects of the culture.” He addressed an uncomfortable paradox that arises for him at the intersection of being American and something other. “Literally, I... went to the Philippines... my cousins were talking to me like I’m not from there, which I’m not, you know?” He spoke of a dual identity, a “weird dichotomy of being a blank-American, a Filipino American, like my foot is always in one... It feels like it’s one in one world and, and, and, another, right?” It is this ethno-racial binary, Karam shared, that has contributed to an assumption by professional music education organizations that he should be the one to take on work that addresses inequities in the profession. “To have me do cultural work for you when I don’t even get the opportunity to explore those in ways that like, makes sense to me and... that are sometimes in conflict? How shitty is that? How, how, oppressive?”

Karam noted that the ways in which White educators have assumed his labor are not isolated manifestations but are rather symptomatic of a naivety concerning the nature of White supremacy within music education. He spoke of surface-level commitments to social justice, noting the manners in which many “take on the anti-racist trend” without committing to the “internalized work of, can they catch themselves, you know? And, can they realize, oh, I’m making a mistake here or, oh, I’m being defensive here, or oh like am I actually listening to the student in front of me?” Karam shared an urgency and a frustration common to the participants: “it needs to be said like this, THIS SHIT CANNOT be swept under the rug anymore.”

**Perspectives on Conference Discourse**

The discourse investigated within the text analysis was pulled from four specific conference contexts and while there certainly was overlap between these events and those
connected with educator experiences, the following perspectives are representative of encounters from a broader perspective. All of the music educators interviewed were critical of the nature of conferences, particularly in terms of representation, singular values expressed, and silence concerning issues of social justice. Their insights concerning multiple aspects of conference culture, priorities, and workshops should be understood as commentary on the discourse itself.

**Kim**

Kim reflected that the content addressed at conferences is “not reflective of the population in public education. It’s not reflective of the population of students, it’s not really reflective in like budgets.” She acknowledged that the disconnect between her professional context and the tenor of conference events make her feel like a stranger amongst her fellow teachers. While she recognized her positionality as a White woman who “belong[s], in every sense of the word,” Kim recognized that she often feels “like an outsider because of where [she is] choosing to teach, and the population [she is] choosing to teach, and the way that doesn’t fit the mold of so many presentations that . . . those type of events tend to be about.”

Kim revealed a “brutally honest” understanding of conferences and their content that led her to believe they target teachers for these events who work in environments different from her own. “I think, the dream job of music educators . . . from what I’ve observed at these events . . . is that you teach in . . . a well-funded, which usually means White, which usually means suburban, school.” Kim acknowledged that her decision to teach students within an urban setting “conflicts with a lot of . . . best practices” she observed in presentations. She shared, “I’ll sit in those presentations and think, well that’s great, but that doesn’t work in my classroom, or that won’t work for my students, or that’s great but you’re missing this whole other . . . population
. . . that you haven’t even considered.” Though she recognized that there are other teachers in similar positions, and likely with similar perspectives, Kim acknowledged that she does not “necessarily think they’re always the voices at the front of the room with the microphone. So, there’s a little bit of mismatch.” Ultimately, this disparity between her needs and those expressed through discourse result in her leaving workshops frustrated. “I take from it what I can, and I definitely learn, but I often walk out and [will] be like, okay, I need a break from that environment.”

Understanding her own positionality as a White woman and recognizing that many more music teachers identify similarly, Kim wished that workshops would address the life experiences of BIPOC students. She reflected that “there’s never been . . . a conference session [addressing] how White women can be effective teachers in Black and Brown students’ lives . . . I guess that’s ultimately what I need to know.” Noting that after the number of years she and her colleagues spent studying how to teach music, she wished conference organizers would stop re-teaching those things and would start offering sessions on connecting with students who have different experiences than their teachers.

Renna

Renna, a White elementary and middle school music teacher, understood conferences as “very suburban focused” and perceived an extreme lack of offerings that connect with her teaching environment. Reflecting upon the sorts of choices of which she is presented at conferences, Renna indicated “there weren’t a lot of times where I had to make a decision, because there were not many things that would necessarily be, um, useful to me to go to.” In describing her state and regional conference environments, Renna characterized it as a “very White situation, including like the students, ensemble, and all the colleagues . . . they all look
like me.” As a result, “there were many, many years where I didn’t even keep my membership current because I didn’t feel it offered anything.” In making sense of the lack of discourse relating to issues around race, Renna offered, “I think that people are uncomfortable if they’re not used to talking about things like this, so I can . . . see conference selectors not gravitating towards those things.”

While reflecting upon the absence of conference sessions she might find helpful, Renna suggested that conference organizers “might think that they are being inclusive when they are actually not.” To illustrate her point, she described her enthusiasm in finally seeing a session on the use of hip-hop in the music classroom, only to get let down by the surface-level approach taken, which left her disappointed.

Last year, I went to a session on using hip-hop in your classroom given by a White lady older than me, which okay, maybe she’s fly, I don’t know . . . who teaches in a wealthy suburb and it was . . . more about . . . letting students play the music that they liked in your classroom, not about like issues of social justice and hip-hop.

She suggested that many teachers attend such sessions “thinking they’re giving a nod to this other kind of music that they didn’t really wanna include” in order to incorporate “a race thing” within their conference experiences.

Traci

Traci reflected upon her experiences at conferences and shared that the workshops that relate to any part of her job tend to be focused upon directing bands, small ensembles, or preparing students for All State auditions. “So, it’s basically like kind of like that skill building type of thing.” After 14 years as a music teacher, she related that she finds them redundant and lacking any connection to her teaching environment. She wondered, “is it because it’s too
uncomfortable to talk about with the national [organization]? . . . Let’s get some un-
comfortability in there. Let’s do something new.” She recognized that “most people who go to
those conferences, go every year” and argued “let’s change what we talk about, you know? How
many times can you say what type of reed you should be using on the clarinet and saxophone and
whatever?”

Carly

Carly, a White elementary school music teacher, observed a lack of conference
workshops that “had anything to do with race, or racism, or bias, or justice.” She connected this
infrequency with there being “not a very diverse group of people” present at the conferences she
attended. She reflected that when she was in college studying to be a music teacher, she revered
such conferences as “the end-all-be-all” but no longer has such feelings. She related, “now that
I’ve been teaching, I mean, I’m going into my fourth-year teaching, I see how under-represented
my students are” and connected this homogeneity with “a lack of diversity” in conference
attendees.

Like Renna, Carly saw the link between the representation at conferences and the lack of
attention paid to students like those she teaches. “I don’t know if it’s intentional . . . I don’t know
if everyone who’s a part . . . of the conferences is doing it intentionally, but I do think . . . they’re
not thinking about the students, my students. They’re just not thinking about their experiences.”
Carly, in considering the relation between her own perceptions and the broader profession,
reflected that “music education has always been the same thing for so many years.” To clarify
her meaning, she shared that the manual from her own state NAfME chapter “doesn’t even have
female classical composers. I think there’s maybe one song, one song in maybe each level.” She
continued, “there’s maybe one song that’s written by a woman and I don’t even, I can’t even
begin to say how many songs are probably written by anyone who isn’t a White man.” She suggested that “we need to change our way of thinking and I think more people need to check themselves and I think we need a fresh pair of eyes in, in charge of those conferences.”

**Randi**

Randi, a White high school band teacher, also felt a disconnect between her own role “as an urban educator, and especially as an urban band director” and the content covered at her state’s NAfME conferences, noting that she has never felt like she fit in. “People are rubbing elbows and people in the suburbs know each other and they’re all hey, how you doing, you know, at these conferences and I never feel that sort of camaraderie.” She discussed a tendency towards “pretentiousness” from her suburban counterparts and acknowledged the way conferences are designed to meet their needs, sharing that “it’s nice if you work in a suburban district, you know, and so it’s great. There’s a lot of great things. But what we deal with is so different and so challenging.”

Beyond the urban/suburban dichotomy, Randi acknowledged gender-based inequity at conferences, noting “I’m female, like I’m just going to stick that out there. I’m female so, you know I get treated differently anyway because of that.” She acknowledged that “there’s always like this old boys’ club that I feel like I’ve never been a part of . . . Maybe it’s just in my head, but . . . I’m not an idiot . . . you can feel it.” Randi recognized that she must use the privilege afforded her by both her racial positionality and tenure “to talk a little bit more on the state level and say, hey, this is wrong, like you’re doing a lot of things . . . that we could be doing differently, in a better way.” She believed that an immediate step that conference organizers must begin is to include bias training sessions in all symposia.
Randi shared a story from one of her state’s NAfME clinics, to which she went with her students, noting a combination of expectations that she could feel implicitly but were also explicitly communicated. She was told by conference staff that her students needed to remain silent outside the auditorium and present a certain way or the judges would “look down” upon them. They outright conveyed that her “kids have to look a certain way. . . They have to look the same. They have to look, you know, proper.” She recalled, “we don’t fit in those boxes” which she described as, “you have to look a certain way, you have to act a certain way, you have to play certain literature and we just weren’t, you know, we weren’t going to fit.” In discussion concerning the motivation for such expectations for her students, Randi reflected that “a lot of these conferences, a lot of these organizations, are run by old White men. . . if you look at [my state’s] . . . Facebook banner . . . the whole board is White people.” She expressed a core disconnect between the conference hosts and the students that so many teachers work with sharing “it doesn’t affect them. . . That’s the root of the problem. . . They don’t see a bias because it doesn’t affect them. You know?”

Joanne

Randi was not alone in feeling a misogynistic element at music education conferences. Joanne noted that every conference she has attended has been “very male director heavy” and shared that “when walking through these conferences, I look at all of the men, the White men, MOSTLY White men in three-piece suits.” She connected the predominance of male music teachers with a general sense of bravado that she discerned when attending these events. She also noted the consistent and persistent focus upon music programs with “the highest . . . like exemplary . . . level of music” and a complete lack of attention on issues relating to urban-based music educators, acknowledging that at most, “there has been like the session or two about . . .
urban music ed[ucation].” Joanne shared that she is “just kind of baffled at like, it’s like just a giant competition of whose band or orchestra is the best and who has the biggest name, and who are the university instructors who are doing like these great things.” Rather than functioning to support educators, Joanne lamented that conferences “feel like everyone’s going there to be seen and see others and it’s less about how to become a better teacher. I know that sounds really extremist, but that’s how I feel.” In contrast, something far more helpful, she reflected, would be based around the Black Lives Matter movement. “That’s so hard for people to relate to if they haven’t experienced it . . . that’s my big question . . . How can I use [music] . . . to make it more real to my students, instead of it just being a headline on CNN?"

Gayle

Gayle noted a slowly changing faction of music educators working to change not only discourse, but the profession. She acknowledged the work of Decolonizing the Music Room (Decolonizing the Music Room, 2020) as an organization doing a great deal to shift paradigms and perspectives within music education, particularly in the way it has created a safe online community from which she and other White music educators can observe and learn how to confront their privilege and contributions to unjust structures. Noting her privilege as a White woman, she expressed that the very nature of the profession inherently promotes “see[ing] the race as the other” and recognizes “why that’s problematic.” “For us to create more inclusive spaces,” Gayle shared, “you have to start inviting other people in and creating the safe space for them to do that. I think that is kind of the only way to do it. I think it really is, person to person.”

Gayle shared an experience she had at a past state NAfME conference, where she “got to see this amazing steel pan ensemble and a Mariachi band . . . and it was the most buried concert time.” She understood these ensembles as remarkable, as they were so incredibly different from
the bands, orchestras, and choirs that typically performed at conferences. She also noted that the performances were scheduled for the early morning, which she perceived as an intentional marginalization of music representative of cultures outside of what is traditionally regarded in such spaces. She noted that “the night performances are the premier [time] and it was a morning performance.” She described how sad the experience made her due to “the time that they chose to present these amazing ensembles because they were so good . . . they should have been the prime-time events, because kids were smiling, and kids were participating, and I loved this.” Gayle acknowledged the racial and ethnic diversity of these ensembles, noting “White children . . . Black children . . . [and] Latina/Latino children. To see . . . a child wearing a headscarf . . . it was like, wow. This has so much energy . . . so much life . . . and everybody at this conference should be watching it.” Instead of attending this concert, Gayle noted that attendees were “at sessions, or they slept in . . . That made my heart hurt.”

Gayle reflected upon how the steel pan ensemble and mariachi concert impacted her both experientially in the moment, and long term in the way it motivated her to bring the music to her students. Ultimately, she believed that the lack of attention paid to students who look like her students and the minimal and reductive ways in which non-Eurocentric genres are treated, lead to a perception that the conferences have nothing to offer to teachers from her city.

Gayle reflected upon the ways that race and racism are present in the world and the need for music teachers to reflect deeply upon their own practices and language. She shared that she has learned to be attentive to her words and writing so that she can consider the impact they have, regardless of intent noting that “of course, intentionality is not the issue . . . because everyone comes to everything with their own positionality and it’s, it can be problematic.”
Jill, a White middle school band teacher, shared Renna’s perception of NAfME conferences “favor[ing] suburban and predominantly White programs.” She noted that “in [her] state, most of the people that are high up on the programming boards and whatnot, you look at where they spent their careers and they’re in very well-funded suburban districts.” She shared that she loves presenting at conferences, but what sticks out in her memory far exceeds reflections of her own sessions. She shared, “I sit in a lot of these workshops and I’m like, this does not apply to me. This does not apply to my students. I feel that urban programs are not just underrepresented, but are often like, undervalued.”

Jill connected the dearth of relevant content for educators who work in communities with heterogeneous populations as symbolic of music education conference culture. Noting the way teachers from suburban districts regard her and colleagues, Jill shared, “sometimes I’m at our state conference and you’ll start talking to someone . . . and then they hear you’re, you’re from [my city], and not the suburbs, and the conversation is over pretty quickly.” Over time, the culture leads her to feel “put off by it all, like . . . our students, their concerns are not as strongly represented.” Jill shared that this attitude toward teachers who work in urban settings has resulted in situations where “people have directly said to me, like do you work there because you couldn’t get a job in the suburbs? I’m like, I don’t know. I never applied for a job outside of [my city].”

Beyond the way Jill and her colleagues are regarded by suburban teachers, she related that the most significant representation of conference culture came in the form of “these big lavish parties.” She explained that “there’s so much money spent, and every year there are more kids from [my city] that get into All State, but they can’t go because they just can’t afford the
Jill expressed, “I wish they could skim 10% off of these lavish parties and things and earmark money to help kids from [our city] . . . get to [the conference], and have a place to stay, and a safe way of getting home.”

Jill wished that conference organizers would include sessions that placed an “emphasis on music of composers that are women, minoritized peoples, people of color, Asians, more of a focus on urban schools, grant writing, and things that we need to support our students.” She added, “I just wish they could be more inclusive.” She shared that “there’s a lot of great work being done in urban schools. It may not always look or sound the same, but the underrepresentation of it has long time frustrated me.”

Troy

After nine years as a music teacher, Troy has grown increasingly frustrated with how music educator conferences continue to ignore issues related to race and racism in the profession. He reflected upon a recent virtual conference he had attended and how of all the workshops, “only one of them was about racism or . . . racial justice in the classroom, over a two-week span.” Troy revealed that he has long felt “that for the most part, the people who were running the sessions, conferences, classes, or teaching these courses, were generally old White men, and I think that has really stuck out to me.” Troy expressed how clearly he sees the “misrepresentation of populations in music education” and elaborated an uncomfortable friction between his own identity as a jazz musician who has “been playing music made by Black Americans for [his] whole music career” and the reality that he “only had one Black teacher.” He related disappointment that the conversations at workshops are not “actively changing as much as [he] would hope” but, like Gayle, noted a growing faction of music educators “trying to effect real, actual change.”
Alston

Alston, a Black elementary and middle school music teacher, shared experiences from conferences and professional developments that were deeply personal. He relayed a particularly distressing experience that he had at a conference, where a White educator presented strategies for using hip-hop in the music classroom as a culturally responsive tool for engaging students. In this session, the presenter “based off her own implicit bias and her . . . stereotypes . . . created a presentation that she thought, and her peers must have thought . . . [was] a good product for teaching hip-hop.” Alston described how the presenter broke down songs and applied a Western theoretical lens, “but because it didn’t have eyes on it that were culturally competent . . . failed.” He reflected on her content, sharing “I would never present that to my students, ever.” He acknowledged that while there may have been some interesting aspects to the presentation, what stood out to him was how fellow workshop attendees were rapt and writing everything down as if it were holy. “It’s, it’s, devastating, because you have to understand . . . they’re writing this down, like it’s the Bible.” Alston reflected, “It makes me think, what do the conferences, what do they value? What do they see as important? Because to me, this should be top priority.”

Alston suggested that conference organizers are preoccupied with planning sessions that focus upon musical skill development and do not see “the importance of race issues, racism, injustice, all these things, as something that would appear in the classroom.” He related that music teaching is not merely about instruction and skill building and considered the dangers of the workshops he has seen, sharing “you can do something with the right intent, with a maximum negative impact.” He related the significance of the teacher in establishing safe learning contexts and argued, “you can’t learn music until you’re comfortable in the environment that you’re in,
and if injustice is reeking in your environment, if there’s nothing but stereotypes and . . . not culturally competent hip-hop teachers,” real learning cannot happen.

Alston wished that organizations such as NAfME would offer workshops that addressed ways in which to include relevant curricula that are responsive to the races and ethnicities of his students. He hoped one day he might see sessions that would “just communicate to teachers who are White . . . some tips on how to communicate these particulars.” He noted the tragic dichotomy that “there are resources for a Black, male, music teacher to assimilate . . . into White culture and teach . . . That’s very easy . . . but there’s nothing for a White teacher to look through the eyes of a Black Person.”

**Jaeden**

Like Joanne, Jaeden observed a sense of male-centered bravura at music conferences and suggested that it contributed to a disconnect between what organizers believe is important and sessions relevant to teaching Black and Brown students in his district. He shared that this sense of machismo is consistent with the sort of workshops he continues to see that cater to teachers of homogeneous student groups. He shared an experience he had after one presentation, wherein he relayed to the presenter his interest in applying the concepts taught to “heterogeneous beginner groups.” The presenter responded that he had no experience teaching in such an environment and could not offer any advice. To Jaeden, this interaction embodied his frustration with music education conferences. He reflected that, “it’s coming from the people teaching this stuff, who are people who never had to struggle a damn day in their life . . . they never had those kinds of obstacles.” When asked if he believed that NAfME understood this disconnect, he responded, “I don’t think they realize, because they don’t care.”
Like Alston, Jaeden acknowledged the biases he observes within many music educators at workshops and shared an experience he had at an implicit bias training for music teachers in his district. He discussed that this particular session “brought out some people, because you got to hear people say things that really showed, not really who they were, but just how [they] thought.” Jaeden heard some disturbing narratives that day, which he described as symptomatic of White music teachers not acknowledging their own biases. He explained that as one of the few people of color in attendance he had an initial inclination “to sit back and sit on [his] hands” and not speak up, especially concerning matters of race. He found this increasingly difficult as he observed his fellow music teachers neglect to acknowledge race while speaking rather comfortably about LGBTQ+ biases.

Jaeden shared that he felt both a frustration for the lack of ownership of racial biases and an understanding that “a lot of people, for career purposes . . . are not going to come forward on certain things.” He connected his own hesitance to speak up with the low number of Black music teachers, sharing, “that’s why the numbers are low too. There are people who just don’t see things and there are people who see things but don’t want to come forward because they’re afraid.” He continued, “I remember how I just sat just back. I’m talking about, oh, I didn’t say anything because I’m afraid. That is what’s going on.”

*Karam*

Karam observed the sort of biases in music educators that Jaeden and Alston discussed and as they had, experienced racism through discourse in deeply personal ways. Akin to Jaeden’s experiences, Karam discussed how White music teacher colleagues attend workshops on topics such as constructing anti-racist curricula, “and they’re not even talking about race. They’re not
even talking about people of color.” Karam connected this reluctance to name race as one part of a broader disregard for the harm his profession perpetuates upon people of color.

Karam shared an experience remarkably similar to Alston’s narrative of the irresponsible hip-hop lesson. He recalled a recent webinar where he felt the need to step in when the presenter suggested that adopting a “world music pedagogy [was] going to save their asses when it comes to cultural responsivity.” He shared that this moment was just one of countless times when he had to step up concerning issues of race, ethnicity, or culture and noted an ongoing expectation from his White colleagues to educate them around issues relating to race. Further, Karam expressed that he is often expected to speak not just for all Filipino people, but other marginalized peoples with which he does not identify. He recalled that these were only a few of the innumerable incidents of harm caused to him and others through a reluctance to acknowledge the ways in which racism plays out in music education. Karam disclosed that he had “to develop some really thick skin” in order to move through these professional contexts. Ultimately, he understood that “these folks are teaching students, or teaching teachers who teach students” and refuses to let that happen.

Underlying the unwillingness to address race within music education, Karam suggested an aversion to engaging in the sort of individual and collective reflection that might actually enact change. He reflected upon the need for teachers to probe the roots of music education and the effects it may have on students.

The first question that you asked, why are we here? You know, I feel like we need to start asking those kinds of questions . . . I think teachers don’t go deep enough with that question . . . don’t examine further . . . with a really good equity lens . . . how that impacts student learning, how that impacts the representation in our field, how that
impacts who becomes music teachers, or who is, who are determined to be the music makers.

Karam argued that “positionality work, that like really deep understanding of where . . . someone comes from through . . . the lens of what has happened in history” is missing from many attempts to address inequity.

**Randall**

By far, Randall had the most experience with music education of all interview participants. After 39 years in the profession, teaching public school music in the Southern U.S., college in the Midwest, and attending conferences consistently the whole time, he had much to share. While discussing some of his earliest experiences at conferences, Randall recalled that “there was almost no people of color present, as you walked through the hallways into the concerts into the exhibit hall, almost none . . . It was just a handful, you know.” Although representation has improved through the decades in terms of clinicians and attendees, he acknowledged that he “would like to see more conductors of color . . . They’re just, they’re still not there.”

Randall recalled some of his earliest experiences attending conference workshops and noted an abundance of sessions related to “nuts and bolts kind of things [that] were relevant, but there was there was nothing about inclusion or diversity. There was . . . no content about that. There were no presenters like that. Conductors, guest conductors, zero. I mean ZERO.” When comparing those recollections with recent experiences, he noted that “it still has more a ways to go, but it is significantly different. And, and the one thing now . . . that that still kind of persists . . . very few people of color who bring their ensembles.” He shared that there are “fabulous teachers of color out there, everywhere . . . doing remarkable work with limited resources, but
limited to the point that probably even if they were selected, would they have the resources to bring that group?” Randall linked the lack of representation with the structures of the host organizations. “When you look at . . . the structure, who was an officer, who’s on the advisory board. They’re not, they’re still to this day, not very diverse . . . and so, okay, here’s the table . . . what voices are around the table?”

Randall, like Alston, Jaeden, and Karam, acknowledged the seemingly superficial manners in which White colleagues tended to address issues concerning race and racism. He observed a reluctance for White colleagues to do the sort of introspection that is needed to acknowledge one’s own role in maintaining White supremacy. Noting the prevalence of book clubs, chalk murals, and hollow value statements, Randall acknowledged that “so many times, those types of activities don’t require any real change in you.” He shared a frustration for what he accounts as a form of “tokenism . . . because it really doesn’t require any type of overt change in your behavior.”

COVID-19, Black Lives Matter, and Music Education

This research was conducted during a particularly unique era across local, national, and international landscapes: a period in which the COVID-19 pandemic has been widespread, poorly handled by the U.S. government, and has disproportionately devastated Black and Latinx communities (Chastain et al., 2020). On May 25, 2020, within the context of mounting COVID-19 deaths, the world witnessed the murder of a Black man named George Perry Floyd Jr. by a White Minneapolis police officer, who knelt on his neck for almost nine minutes.

George Floyd’s murder was not the first, nor was it the last, slaying of a Black American at the hands of law enforcement. Just over two months earlier, as the U.S. was beginning its sweeping shutdowns, a Black woman named Breonna Taylor was killed by police officers during
a mishandled raid on her apartment in Louisville, Kentucky (Oppel Jr. et al, 2020). These two killings are far from isolated and represent a history of law enforcement officers unlawfully ending Black lives—a history that dates to the arrival of the first enslaved people in Jamestown, VA (Davis, 2017). Over 400 years later, Black Americans are three times more likely to be killed by police than their White neighbors, and despite accounting for 13% of the U.S. population, 28% of all people killed by police in 2020 were Black (Mapping Police Violence, 2020).

The murders of Breonna Taylor and George Floyd sparked the largest protests for racial justice in a generation (Millis, 2020). Despite the pandemic, and without significant incidence of COVID-19 spread (Neyman & Dalsey, 2020), hundreds of thousands of Americans protested in cities around the nation shouting and writing “Black Lives Matter.” Although the pandemic and the killings were not topics designed into the interview structure, its dialogic nature allowed for what was most relevant to come to the surface; it was inevitable that they would arise. Participants made connections that are particularly valuable and speak directly to music education discourse.

As school buildings around the U.S. closed and remote learning became a reality for students and teachers nationwide, the inequities inherent in public schools became increasingly visible. Gayle and Randi both addressed the manners in which the pandemic served to amplify inequities within music education. Gayle observed that the reliance upon technological resources to teach and learn made visible what she had often felt was unseen in her city’s school district. “We’re not well funded. We’re not well equipped and the pandemic is making that quite evident. Something that I saw every day, other people now have access to.” Randi also indicated gross inequities made visible by school building closings:

It really became apparent once COVID hit . . . out of eighty kids, maybe thirty
participated in the online instruction that I had . . . right there . . . you see the disparities . . . what some kids have versus other kids . . . that was really apparent there.

Kim and Traci each discussed the ways that the unmistakable tragedies and inequities revealed by the pandemic yielded some unexpected positive outcomes. Katie acknowledged that the school building closures allowed her to learn deeply about anti-racist teaching practices. “I’ve just been like SEARCHING for things, like searching for things to read, searching for things to get involved in, searching for ways to learn and it’s, it takes a lot of work.” She recognized that if she weren’t forced to be at home, she would not have been able to “put all this effort in to learn about anti-racism and White supremacy in classrooms.”

Traci recognized the ways in which the technological nature of remote teaching has helped her to see music teaching in a “stripped away” manner. “There’s no performances. There’s no audiences.” She had to accept that she couldn’t get instruments to students and had to ask herself, “what else is there then? What instrument could [I] get to them? What instrument could they go get? What instrument could they build? What could they use with tools that they will actually have?” She acknowledged that these pandemic experiences have taught her new ways in which to envision music education that go beyond performance.

Randall addressed the ubiquitous nature of organizations issuing Black Lives Matter statements in response to the historic protests and the seemingly newfound awareness of police violence on Black communities. He reflected upon a friend’s Facebook post, in which they had proudly shared a music education organization’s Black Lives Matter statement. He recalled, it said “we are committed . . . to Black Lives Matter and blah, blah, blah, blah and blah, blah, blah, blah, blah.” As he read through the declaration, he thought “your officer structure does not reflect what you just said . . . your membership structure does not reflect what you just said.” He
considered both the audacity of the organization in making such a statement without addressing actions it would take to address racism in its own structures or music education alongside the disappointment that his friend would buy in to such an empty proclamation.

Randall expressed no issues with organizations speaking out for Black lives. On the contrary, Randall reflected upon the sort of readiness with which White educators adopt platitudes without looking within at the ways they, individually and collectively, contribute to the very injustices they speak out against. “And my friend was proud to share. He’s a member and I…felt the need to respond.” Randall acknowledged that he was “glad to see that they are stepping forward, you know, putting this out there” but felt less than optimistic concerning the organization’s willingness to put their words to action. He noted that “only time is going to tell whether it’s just words or whether they’re going to manifest, or how they’re going to manifest, these things that they put in that statement.”

Aside from the generality of statements issued and inequities amplified throughout the pandemic, Randall expressed an optimism regarding some positive collateral effects that resulted. He shared,

I’m seeing a lot more people who are creating their own tables that have not done it before. They’re creating their own tables and I think that that’s a plus. And I think that’s one of the ways that the tragedy of this pandemic . . . is going to move us forward . . . move us to a more positive perspective . . . I think that’s, that’s, going to be one of the good things that comes out of all this when things kind of settle down and hopefully people stop dying, you know, in the thousands.

Randall’s perspectives concerning the year’s events related to both COVID-19 and Black Lives Matter suggested a cautious optimism, tempered by witnessing years of both incremental change
and undeniable reluctance to confront the core of the inequities within, and beyond, music education.

Discussion

In consideration of the manners in which teachers experience and understand music education discourse, certain commonalities were made clear through the interviews conducted. Among the participants, there was a common belief that White men have a disproportional amount of authority and influence within music teacher organizations and, as a result, the discourse that exists within their profession. Though all 13 teachers interviewed observed a steadfast lack of attention upon their students by conference discourse, eight of the nine participants who identified as White women explicitly discussed the ways in which their gender positionality was also marginalized within conference discourse. These teachers all discussed using their positionality to connect, and empathize, with the struggles of their Black and Brown students. They all acknowledged employing this perspective in order to help them understand the lack of discourse around topics of race or racism and saw this as symbolic of the invisibility of their students to their broader profession. Gayle and Renna each lamented that the absence of race within discourse has compelled many of their colleagues to stop attending conferences.

Most striking was an experiential alignment from the four educators who identify as Black or BIPOC. Although every White teacher interviewed acknowledged teaching primarily students of color and was vehemently clear on their positions against racism and White supremacy, their experiences are inarguably privileged when compared to those of their Black and BIPOC counterparts. This is not to undervalue the importance of White teacher narratives, but rather to give clarity as to the contexts of the experiences expressed.
One such example of the disparity between responses concerns the perception of conference sessions addressing issues around social justice. Common amongst the educators interviewed, was a perspective that when sessions do address topics relating to social justice, they are often superficial, inopportunistly scheduled, or tokenized. Whereas the White teachers expressed disappointment in the scarcity and flippancy of such offerings, all four BIPOC teachers identified just how often presenters handle these topics in harmful ways. Visible in the Randall’s discussion of a friend’s Black Lives Matter statement, Karam’s experience with hearing that world music is saving music teachers’ collective asses, Alston’s position in the misguided hip-hop lesson, and Jaeden’s frustration towards his colleagues for readily seeing their LGBTQ+ biases while ignoring race, all BIPOC educators interviewed shared instances of being in positions where they had to decide whether or not to intervene. Also common amongst BIPOC educators was a distressing realization that the inadequate manners in which race was addressed in conferences gave White teachers the impression that they were doing the necessary work to address racial inequities, when they were actually compounding the harms already present.

In addressing the second sub-question of this inquiry, namely the manners in which music teachers experience and understand the norms and practices expressed through the discourse in their field, the music educators interviewed conveyed an awareness of a self-perpetuating racial discrimination within conference discourse. Whether motivated by a solidarity with students, personal experiences, or both, each participant’s consciousness of music education discourse manifested in a unanimous belief that it was targeted towards those who teach White suburban school children, at the expense of Black and Brown students.

The perceptions expressed through the interviews conducted in the study illustrate the manners in which educators are aware of the terminal naivety (Vaugeois, 2013) expressed in
music education discourse. The frustration they all expressed came from a belief that those with institutional power in their profession remain seemingly intentionally unaware of the exclusion of race from the discourse. While not all participants immediately named White supremacy or explicit racism as the motivating factor behind this omission, by the end of each interview all participants acknowledged White supremacy as the system which enables the continuing regeneration of the race-based problematics within music education.

Educator consciousness of the conference component of music education discourse should be understood equally with all that is expressed through conference texts. Together, they represent a discursive relationship that cannot be wholly understood in parts. In the next chapter, the educator realizations introduced in this stage are considered alongside the findings of the text analysis in order to expose the consciousness expressed within conference discourse and confront the power dynamics that have continued to regenerate the inequities and oppressions in music education.

Conclusion

In U.S. public education, there is a striking disproportionality of Black educators (Farinde, Allen, & Lewis, 2016; Farinde-Wu, Allen, & Lewis, 2017; Farinde-Wu & Griffin, 2019; Taie & Goldring, 2017). In consideration of the predominantly White workforce within music education (Abril, 2009; DeLorenzo, 2012; Koza, 2003; Zubrzycki, 2017), the importance of considering the manners in which teachers perceive the discourse of their profession is paramount to understanding how the dominance of Whiteness continues.

Comprehending the ways in which music teachers perceive the norms and practices expressed through discourse is essential to considering the ways it is understood and acted upon. Consistent with the ontological and epistemological traditions of critical pedagogy and critical
race theory, this critical discourse analysis functioned to expose and interrogate hidden structures of inequity within music education in order to challenge the power structures from which it is supported. More specifically, this analysis component addressed the extent in which language may be manipulated to maintain a normalizing power that controls discourse in order to manipulate social members into doing what serves the institution, while believing that they are acting of their own free will. From the purview of this analysis, understanding the ways that music teachers perceive their discourse may contribute to the elucidation of the extent to which it contributes to both White supremacy and gatekeeping in the profession.

Exposing White supremacy within music education is key to challenging its hold, and this cannot occur without a consideration of the way in which it permeates the discourse within the profession. This understanding cannot be accomplished through an analysis of conference text alone but is dependent upon a consideration of the ways in which teachers understand the epistemological assumptions or epistemes (Foucault, 1978/1995, 1980) that live within the multidimensional discursive domain. To understand the manners in which assumptions operate is to understand the way educators perceive their discursive contexts and their roles and agency within it.

The participant pool was narrowed to include educators who have taught for three or more years and had attended two or more conferences, worked in urban environments, and self-identified as interested in social justice; these qualities were identified in order to contribute to the significance of the findings. The desire for music teachers to have familiarity with the discourse was crucial in determining the way in which they understand its messages. Less obvious may be the need to select teachers from urban teaching environments who are interested in social justice.
The music educators interviewed each expressed an awareness of racial discrimination within music education conference discourse. By the end of each interview, all participants specifically acknowledged White supremacy as the system which enables the race-based problematics they initially described. Through dialogues that directly addressed data from, and their experiences with, professional discourse the participants acknowledged that White men have a disproportional amount of authority and influence within music teacher organizations and upon discourse. There was also a unanimous belief that discourse was targeted towards those who teach White suburban school children, at the expense of Black and Brown students. Further, there was a belief that those with institutional power maintain an intentional unawareness of the exclusion of race from the discourse, illustrating an awareness of the terminal naivety (Vagueois, 2013) expressed in music education discourse.

While all educators recognized silence concerning race in discourse throughout the entirety of the interviews, not all White participants immediately named White supremacy or explicit racism as the motivating factor. That said, there was an experiential alignment between the four educators who identified as Black or BIPOC. These educators named White supremacy early in the dialogue, within the first section. Whereas the White teachers interviewed expressed disappointment in the scarcity and flippancy of conference offerings, all four BIPOC teachers identified just how often presenters handled these topics in harmful ways and shared that in those instances, they were left in positions where they had to decide whether or not to intervene.

The acknowledgement of White supremacy within music education discourse by social justice minded teachers has implications for the ways in which it can be addressed in the profession. It indicates that the critical analysis of discourse specifically, and of the profession broadly, can lead to the exposure essential to oppose the system. Concurrently, the findings also
suggest a core privilege inherent in White teacher experiences when compared to those of their
Black and BIPOC counterparts. There is an urgency that needs to be addressed that is not
experienced by White teachers, even if it is observed. These experiences, which will be explored
more deeply within the parallel analysis in Chapter 6, are real, serious, and run counter to the
*universae lingua* narrative of music education.

These findings indicate that deliberate dialogues that directly address the subjects of race,
racism, and White supremacy in music education can lead to the exposure of how White
supremacy is present. The data also indicate that immediate and intentional actions must be taken
to address the corporeal harm brought about daily upon teachers of color. This is an injustice that
affects every dimension of well-being for Black and Brown students and teachers and continues
to erase their bodies and minds from music education, endlessly regenerating the hegemonic
structures within the profession.

As Michelle Alexander (2012) argued, racism is highly adaptable and transforms rather
readily as its mechanisms become exposed. Addressing the quotidian manifestations of racial
discrimination while maintaining apathy and naivety towards the roots of its system functions to
maintain White supremacy far more than explicit acts of hate. Consider Randall’s observation of
the ways in which music teacher organizations declare that Black lives matter but do nothing to
confront their own individual and collective roles which suggest that they, in fact, do not matter.

In the coming chapter, I share participant experiences that illustrate manners in which
schools have incorporated anti-bias trainings for teachers and how representative organizations
have included teachers of color into their committees and boards. While these actions have been
important, they represent incremental changes that address symptoms within systems that
continue to adapt and do not address the manners in which White educators and institutions
undermine and subjugate Black and Brown students and teachers. As NAfME’s Eastern Division *We All Belong!* call for proposals indicates, the organization asserts a Black Lives Matter statement, but maintains an *all lives matter* conference structure. White supremacy persists and racism modulates to meet its needs. Incremental changes won’t work, don’t work, and haven’t worked. While there is certainly no monolithic BIPOC voice within music education, the experiences shared by the four teachers of color interviewed as part of this inquiry are not anomalous and must be heeded. It is time for all stakeholders in the predominantly White profession of music education to confront its legacy and dismantle the foundation from which it emerges.
CHAPTER 6
LINES OF LATITUDE: A PARALLEL ANALYSIS OF DISCOURSE AND EDUCATOR UNDERSTANDINGS OF WHITE SUPREMACY IN MUSIC EDUCATION

It began to seem that the machinery of the organization I worked for was turning over, day and night, with but one aim: to eject me.

—James Baldwin, Notes of a Native Son

Whereas the text and participant interviews each explored distinct perspectives of music education discourse, the parallel analysis considers these components together in order to determine the extent to which music educators understand gatekeeping practices and White supremacy within their profession. The two antecedent chapters corresponded with Stages 2 through 5 of the dialectical-relational elucidatory approach (DREA) which functioned to investigate music education discourse from distinct vantage points. This chapter represents DREA Stage 6: a consideration of member perceptions alongside findings from the text analysis.

This element of the investigation takes the form of a parallel analysis which juxtaposes these perspectives to consider the role that representative bodies in the field of music education play in discourse, the manners in which educators understand that discourse, and the degree to which educators understand their own role within that exchange. The primary inquiry of this investigation—the extent to which music educators understand gatekeeping practices and White
supremacy within discourse—is explored through these discursive dynamics between educator and organization.

This chapter is organized into four sections: Response to Data, Gatekeeping, Discussion, and Conclusion. The Response to Data section examines participant responses to five key findings shared from the conference text analysis. The Gatekeeping component explicitly considers the manners in which gatekeeping practices intersect with mechanisms of White supremacy through both the data from the text analysis and participant interviews. This section is subdivided into four temporal zones in which gatekeeping was evident throughout the lives of music teachers. In the Discussion section, the relevance of the findings within music education is considered. The significance of the inquiry for the future of the profession is addressed in the Conclusion.

**Response to Data**

This first section of the parallel analysis was initiated through the interview component titled Response to Data, in which participants were presented with data from the conference text analysis that directly connected to the injustices that motivated this study. After the educators interviewed were confronted with some key findings from the earlier analysis, a dialogue commenced around their perceptions of the information learned and their perspectives on how the data compare with personal experiences at music education conferences. The findings shared were:

1. All of the conference sessions were organized into strands. Of the four conferences, no strand addressed issues of race, racism, or White supremacy in music education.
2. None of the state level sessions contained language associated with issues of race or racism.

3. At the national level, 2% of sessions addressed issues of race or racism.

4. Three of the 561 sessions analyzed, addressed issues around bias.

5. Eight of the 561 sessions analyzed, addressed issues around justice.

After the findings were shared, the following questions functioned to guide the dialogue:

1. What are your thoughts around this information learned from the conference analysis?

2. Tell me about the ways that these data compare with your personal experiences at music education conferences.

3. What sorts of questions or ideas do these findings bring up for you concerning music education conferences?

All of the music educators interviewed showed some level of surprise at the data shared. Joanne believed that there “should absolutely be more people addressing bias and cultural climate within their music” and noted that she “just can’t believe these percentages are so low.” Gayle expressed that if this study had looked at her state closely, instead of Massachusetts, the data would be similar. Randi reflected that she thought the disparity would be far worse. She shared that “the racism . . . does not surprise me at all . . . none of this surprises me . . . but it just made me think . . . my god, we need to get more of the stuff in here.”

Kim acknowledged that the findings matched her experiences well, noting “I’ve never felt like I fit in and I think one of the ways that’s true is . . . the people presenting and the people attending are not talking about things I want to talk about or that could help me as an educator.” She asked, “how can we expect educators to be better if this is what’s being offered?”
recalled one of her earlier reflections about the pandemic providing her the time to create her own learning opportunities about White supremacy and anti-racism in music education and shared, “if all I had access or time to do was like, state and national organizations, I wouldn’t be learning anything about race or oppression, or any of it.”

Renna admitted a combination of shock at the findings and expectancy in the realization they were consistent with her own experiences. She shared, “when I go to a conference, I already assume that this will be the case and . . . I’m disappointed because . . . these are the things that I would gravitate towards: bias, racism, justice.” Renna elaborated that the findings reinforced her understanding that conferences are not “for the people who teach in the environment that I teach in” and that these unrepresented topics would benefit “students who are in other districts, other environments, [who] are not getting these discussions and these experiences either.” “Unless someone is making it a priority,” Renna considered, “they’re living in a[n] all lives matter kind of universe.” She suggested that conference organizers are likely “putting things out according to what they think the need is based on their membership because their membership largely comes from, um, from Whiter areas.”

Carly shared, “it’s so upsetting . . . it’s upsetting when you are just a human being seeing this and knowing that it takes place . . . especially when you teach Black and Brown students, and you see how it affects them.” She noted that this is especially troubling when she remembers the encounters she has had with other music teachers who act as if Black and Brown student experiences don’t exist.” Carly imagined that future conferences will likely see improved numbers due to “the Black Lives Matter movement happening this year. I imagine, next year . . . it might get bumped up to like 3% of sessions will address issues of race and racism, but it’s only going to be because it was so popular.” She asked, “why don’t other music teachers care about
White supremacy? Why don’t we care about racism? Is this something we’re not talking about?”

Carly’s sardonic suggestion that the increased awareness of the Black Lives Matter movement may motivate increased attention towards systemic racism is perhaps somewhat answered by the NAfME Eastern Division We All Belong! Proven Practices and Perspectives for Today’s Music Educator call for proposals.

Jaeden was surprised that the data did not reveal even lower frequencies of workshops addressing issues of race, racism, White supremacy, bias, and justice. He shared, “I’m actually surprised to see that much . . . for me, I’m like, oh, at least they’re talking about it because you know what I’ve understood is…when you talk about race, people get very uncomfortable.” He then elaborated, “as a Black person if you talk about race you . . . you might as well end your career.”

Randall first expressed shock at the findings but then somewhat relented. He reflected upon the demographics of music education and remarked

I’m not trying to make excuses or anything, but you can kind of expect . . . that the people who are attending there are not necessarily going to be diverse, and [so there is] probably not gonna be lots of diverse . . . presentations.

He recalled conferences that he has attended across the country and noted that regardless of the degree of diversity he has noticed, it never resembled the diversity of the states where the conferences were hosted. He recalled his initial surprise that in North Carolina “even though that state boasts more historically Black college [students] than any other state in the nation” the “officers, a lot of the presenters, [and] the performers, were not people of color.”

Upon hearing the data, Alston suggested that the findings represented a lack of importance, remarking “I guess they think it doesn’t appear in music ed[ucation].” He reflected
that the lack of content addressing White supremacy, race, racism, bias, and justice are consistent with a field that is mostly White. He added, “why would they see a need to have a conversation on race . . . if they are not seeing the importance of race issues, racism, injustice, and all these things.” Alston wondered “if the powers that be are culturally competent” and then noted, “in my mind, they’re not because they have 2% of sessions addressing race and so little around bias.”

Karam reacted, “I’m just thinking through, like how I go to conferences that I literally count . . . how many people of color are here. This . . . literally . . . this just confirms why I do that process.” He continued, “but it’s also indicative of just relations of race.” Karam elaborated that to him, the data confirms both the profession’s refusal to address issues of race and the way this silence contributes to the continued absence of teachers of color.

While some educators interviewed noted the presence of White supremacy in music education discourse at the onset of the interview, by the time each participant responded to the text analysis findings, they had all acknowledged its presence and correlated the findings with personal experiences. This inquiry focuses upon the manners in which White supremacy functions within music education and specifically considers three means by which it operates: assimilation of minoritized people into the master culture, the appropriation of what is deemed useful from the marginalized culture, and the erasure of what, or who, is seen as too different for the first two methods.

The participants’ responses to the findings of the text analysis indicate that when confronted with data that supports the presence of White supremacy in their profession, the music educators saw its presence. The following section of this chapter uses this understanding expressed by participants, supports it with additional interview data, and considers it alongside the text analysis data to explore the manners in which the veiled modes of assimilation,
appropriation, and erasure operate as gatekeeping mechanisms to filter out those whose attributes and culture do not contribute to the conservation of the system.

**Gatekeeping**

Though the text analysis, interview analysis, and participant responses to the data served to elucidate much in terms of the ways that teachers understand and experience White supremacy through music education discourse, the primary research question requires an explicit consideration of the ways it persists in keeping “rogue voices” out of the profession. Whereas the prior section concerned educator responses to specific data from particular discursive settings, the following section is based upon an expanded understanding of discourse, which includes the language studied throughout the analysis, the contexts in which the language is used, the consciousness of the ways in which that language operates, and the outcomes that result.

The primary question of this inquiry concerns the extent to which music teachers make meaning of gatekeeping practices that mediate structures of White supremacy in their profession. In its most basic form, gatekeeping can be understood as the actions undertaken to manipulate access within a field. In more detail, gatekeeping is a systemic framework that persists throughout music education as a means, independent of any individual or collective intention, to filter out those who challenge the preservation of the system. This section focuses upon three modalities in which White supremacy operates—assimilation, appropriation, and erasure—and positions them along four temporal zones of gatekeeping within music education: PreK–12 Schooling, College/Teacher Preparation, Certification, and Career (see Figure 2). This intersection between White supremacy and gatekeeping is representative of the complex and hidden manners in which assimilation, appropriation, and erasure function within discourse to preserve, bolster, and regenerate the hegemonic systems and legacies within.
The parallel analysis section indicated that participants observed inequities rooted in White supremacy within music education discourse and the findings throughout the inquiry have suggested that these disparities contribute to the continued disproportionality of teachers of color within music education. The argument within this subsection is premised upon a chronological pattern revealed through the analysis of all inquiry data, which suggests key groupings in which gatekeeping operates. More specifically, this inquiry revealed four distinct but related categorizations of gatekeeping that exist throughout the life of a music educator and intersect the mechanisms of White supremacy to maintain White cultural hegemony in music education and serve to preclude dissidents from the field.
Zone 1: PreK–12 Schooling

As schools function as a wellspring for cultural regeneration (Anyon, 1981; Benedict, 2015; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Giroux, 1997, 2011; Grande, 2004; Lind & McKoy, 2016; Woodson, 1933/2008) and music education deals exclusively with cultural (re)production, it should not be surprising that public-school music classes serve as the initial locus of gatekeeping in music education.

Renna described an imagined characterization of Black children in urban public schools that she observes from suburban counterparts and suggested that it is often these perceptions around urban public schooling that first impact students of color in her city. “I think there are many people, um, colleagues who teach in surrounding areas who are like, I could, I could, never.” She offered, “they think that teaching in the city is scary, because it’s Black and Brown children and they don’t know. Their . . . cultural norms are foreign to them . . . you know, these boisterous students that they’re not familiar with what they think.” Renna understood that this impression of Black students keeps some people away from teaching in her district. Those who do teach there despite such reservations either learn better or cause harm to students.

Renna acknowledged that urban school districts are not only misconceived but are often unvalued by those in the surrounding communities. “Not being valued isn’t really a thing about me, but about us . . . the district. It feels like the general mindset of those who live in the surrounding communities is that we are to be pitied but not assisted.” She related the inaction that continues to occur whenever her school district faces budget cuts. “People gasp when they see . . . what cuts will mean . . . They add their sad face emoji to Facebook . . . but very few people do more than that. They don’t follow through on contacting legislators, sending emails, showing up to board meetings.” Renna voiced her frustration and suggested an erroneous
collective *bootstrap* mindset where “this is America and anyone who works hard enough should be able to succeed, and if you don’t, it’s your own fault.” She expressed an inability for such people to understand “the systemic things that are in place to hold poor people and people of color back.”

Kim’s perspective was consistent with that of Renna although her lens was placed upon the public-school systems that directly serve students of color. She argued that schools and districts systemically position students of color as inferior to their teachers. She shared, “I think that public education systems have done a good job teaching students that teachers know more than them and have more power than them.” Recognizing both her positionality and its impact, she acknowledged, “I don’t know that I’m exempt from that, that message of this large institutional setting.” Carly also acknowledged the systemic devaluation of students of color noting, “I’m pretty sure they know that their cultures and their experiences are being ignored.” She explained that even if teachers are aware of their role in such systemic harms, they would have to reinvent everything they do to make it responsive to the children they teach. The problem is caused, Carly acknowledged, “not just by music curriculum, but just by curriculum as a whole . . . that expect students to have the suburban environment, the suburban experience. It’s just assumed.”

As a Black male music teacher working with primarily Black students, Alston’s perspective concerning the ways White teachers interact with students of color is both informative and poignant. Whereas his White colleagues may readily cast their eyes on systemic issues that affect Black children, Alston noted the reluctance with which White teachers examine the ways they contribute to the harm enacted on his students. He shared a story of an interaction between himself and a White colleague concerning disciplinary policies for children. Alston’s
colleague was advocating for the removal of students from their classes for misconduct. He shared, “what the White teacher was advocating for was to send out the students more often, like, out of class [to] a dean’s office, where we send them out if they have a misbehavior.” Alston reflected upon his own approach, noting that misconduct was not an issue in his classroom, because when he observed that a student might be upset, he acknowledged their humanity, rather than inflicting consequence. In such an instance, he shared that he might say, “hey, you look upset. Come talk to me . . . what’s going on? Okay, I can see why you feel that way. Let’s talk about that.”

Alston shared that his advocacy against ousting students from classes was met with animosity. “They were mad at me that I wasn’t sending them out. I said, I will never . . . Until they threaten to kill me . . . they’re staying right here, and I love them so I’m going to actually treat them with respect.” He added, “I’m going to not just send them out because they’ve done something INCONVENIENT for me. Maladaptive behaviors are SUPPOSED to happen in class because no one’s perfect.” Alston indicated that this disagreement with colleagues was typical, often divided by race, and demonstrated that the teachers who throw kids out of classes for disagreeable behaviors do not understand the ways they are contributing to the marginalization of their students.

Alston shared that, regardless of the opposition he faced from colleagues, his expertise with students was often called upon to help when problematic situations occurred with Black students. He relayed, “if I saw them getting upset, I knew their triggers better than their [other] teachers.” Alston described his continued concern for students who are further harmed due to a general sense of White teachers feeling threatened by the slightest inconvenience. He argued that
they were “very much not accepting of the whole child, you know. They want the best parts of them, but when something, you know, occurs, they just want to send them out.”

Alston indicated urban schools are well-suited for the type of disconnect he observes between students and educators, due to what he sees as a large rate of teacher turnover. He suggested that a predominance of teachers inexperienced in such settings only exacerbates a mindset in which students are understood as challenges to their authority.

It is from a context of disconnection, unfamiliarity, and a sense of cultural superiority that such biased understandings of Black and Brown children “has been passed down from generation to generation.” This is a perspective that the “thought processes of . . . Black students are weaker, or not as smart, or more fragile, or all these things. None of those are true. And that’s passed down.” He explained that “we’re in a place where people are subconsciously . . . choosing to support or defund certain schools, based on the amount of Black or Brown students they have, because they…already have preconceived notions of where those students are going to end up.” They think they can tell “whether [students are] going to go to college, whether they’re going to go to community college, whether they don’t go to college, whether they are going to kill someone, or shoot someone, or steal.”

Alston shared an experience with a colleague that pushed him over the edge and prompted him to resign a former position. His colleague had asked Alston if he had heard some news. “Did you see, so-and-so on the news? He got arrested . . . he killed someone . . . he used to be a student here…we always knew he was going to be like that.” Alston was stunned. “I was like, what? And that day is when I quit.” Alston shared that this perspective exemplified how his White colleagues assumed the absolute worst outcomes for their Black students.
The presence of considerable psychological, social, and emotional factors that contribute to the harmful treatment of Black public-school students functions in addition to significant discursive inequities. As discussed earlier, the nature of urban schooling and the manners in which issues relevant to such contexts are addressed in discourse has a dual impact upon Black students, affecting them through their teacher’s development and directly. In reflecting upon the connection between conference discourse and her students, Jill reflected that “our children’s issues and interests are not being represented . . . invisible is such a good word.” Jaeden articulated the absence of relevant discourse in his discussion of one particular workshop which he left feeling his needs especially unmet. He recalled thinking, “this would be great if I had, if I had all my clarinet players having . . . private lessons or . . . if I had trumpet players who I didn’t have to speak Spanish to all the time.” Jaeden consistently felt that conference content displayed a complete lack of concern for his students.

While the impact of music education discourse upon teachers should not be minimized, the consideration of the direct experiences of students at conferences cannot be ignored. Such student encounters typically occur when school ensembles perform at symposia or through adjudication opportunities that may occur at such events. Randi and Troy each expressed discomfort and frustration concerning the experiences their students had at such festivals in their respective states. Randi reflected, “We get looked at differently, including, you know . . . by the judges that are there. They talked to my kids differently and the, the other participants, and the directors . . . look at my kids differently.” Troy discussed one such festival: “we went there for the sessions and for the feedback from the judges and it was part of our learning experience to expand our horizons.” He shared that “one year, they just lost our comments. We didn’t get any feedback from the judges. No recordings. We were the only school that happened to. It could
have been by accident, you know. Sometimes accidents happen. That’s fine.” A different year, he relayed, “the clinician just tears my kids apart, didn’t give any positive feedback, [and] was totally negative . . . [it] was just like one thing after the other.” He talked about troubling encounters that occurred, year after year that have made him reconsider whether he should continue to expose his students to such a hostile environment.

Karam expressed disgust and exhaustion concerning the ways his “Black, Brown, Indigenous, and Asian students [have been] underserved.” He shared, “I’m tired of all this shit that is being upheld . . . in navigating professional development spaces and in teaching in the LITERAL community that I grew up in,” adding “music education right now in the United States is not serving my community.” In addition to the ways in which music education discourse impacts students of color, Karam indicated the gross funding inequities that exist between urban and suburban schools. “We literally don’t even have money . . . to go to our region’s festival . . . We don’t even have money for me to get a sub sometimes. We don’t even have money to replace some risers that like are an actual hazard.” Karam argued that often, “we don’t have money to buy music . . . literally, my band teacher and I shared a budget of a thousand dollars, and . . . a band program typically like needs much more than that.” He acknowledged an understanding that suburban music students would never be permitted to learn with such financial restrictions.

Like Karam, Alston compared the public-school contexts of students in urban environments to those of students in the suburbs. Notwithstanding the severity of the other obstacles facing the children he teaches, he argued that “there’s so many barriers in front of students and the biggest barrier, so far, has been financial.” From his experience, music teachers in urban settings are forced to “figure out a way to make whatever amount [of money] work so that they could, you know, teach and do what they need to do.” Jaeden’s experience with music
program budgets and their impact upon students mirrors that of Karam and Alston. He reflected, “emotionally, it becomes draining after a while . . . but I do it because [my students] are . . . entitled to the same level of . . . music instruction that’s going on in [private] or [suburban] schools.”

This discernment of the financial disparity between the budgets facing urban and suburban schools was universally understood among all participants in the study. Gayle and Jill each noted that the budget disparities in their cities result in music programs existing at the whim of principals. As a result, their districts do not have any alignment across grade levels. Gayle shared, “in [my city’s] schools, you can go to an elementary school that has a music program and then go to middle school, and it’s a totally different focus and then go to a high school, and there is no comprehensive design.” They both shared that from such a randomized model, it is far less likely that students in these districts can have consistent musical experiences in their public schools.

**Zone 2: College/Teacher Preparation**

For Randall, the absence of Black professors in college was particularly striking. He recalled the first and only time he had a professor who was not White: “I was a graduate student . . . and so, it was the health teacher . . . That’s the only one. Period. In college. Period. And then in music, zero. ZERO. And when I . . . tell my students that, they’re just like, what?” Though Randall entered the teaching profession 39 years prior, and Carly was a fourth-year teacher, their experiences were frustratingly similar. Carly, when considering her own experiences in college, could also name just a single Black professor, and they, too, were not in the music department. Troy, a jazz bassist, recalled, “my first two bass teachers were, were, White. Um, the jazz drum set teacher, White. Jazz piano, bebop ensemble, White. Big band ensemble, White.” Troy
recollected that not until he was a junior in college that he had his first Black teacher, ever. He deliberated the weight of this realization noting, “I didn’t have any in high school, middle school, elementary school. So, in education, we know there’s already a disparate, like a disparity, between people of color in teaching positions, and especially Black teachers.”

Aside from, and as a result of, a disproportionately White teaching force, Jaeden offered several narratives representative of the blatant racism he faced during his personal journey through his own music teacher education program. He recalled that one professor, after hearing him play for the first time, commented “I’m surprised you get such good sounds. You have such big, look at those beautiful big Black lips of yours. I’m surprised you can play an instrument.” He cautioned that Black students considering music education need to have thick skin and be prepared for both implicit and explicit acts of racism: “People are going to undercut you. People are going to think you need remedial classes. People are going to think that you don’t understand anything, that you have a learning disorder, all kinds of things.” He continued, “even though you’re probably better than some of your studio mates, be prepared that you are not going to get the same attention or same play, and how you vocalize it makes the difference.” Jaeden’s cautionary recommendations applied beyond course work and ensembles. He advised that students may “run into racism, where a roommate may not, may not want to live with you because of your color. Be prepared . . . of the code of conduct. There’s a certain way you have to carry yourself. Be prepared for those things.” His final piece of advice cautioned “and, be prepared to feel alone.”

It was only recently, in his seventh year of teaching, that Jaeden first observed White music educators willing to truly listen to the ordeals that he and other Black music education students faced in college. He shared that “it wasn’t until a lot of Black musicians started to come
forward” that he felt empowered to share the experiences which were unseen and unaccounted for when they occurred. He recalled the shock from White former schoolmates when he shared some experiences that he had in college through Facebook. “People were like, oh my god . . . no wonder why you were acting like that. I never knew that.” Jaeden reflected,

Oh, I said it loudly. You weren’t listening . . . I told you the same sh-. I told you. I told you that she was putting me in the lowest ensembles and not giving me lessons. I told you this.

He recalled some responses he heard back in college: “Oh, you were whining. Oh, you’re just upset. Oh, you’re just . . . you’re overreacting.” “It was the worst case of gas lighting I’ve ever seen in my life,” he shared, “and now, every one of those same people are like, (imitating crying) oh my god . . . this is such a shame you had to go through this.”

In addition to the explicit acts of racism discussed, evident in the participant interviews were discussions of curricular designs that worked more subtly to weave White supremacist ideologies into the fabric of music education. Gayle recalled her experience at a university in her city, which had “a very, very heavy classical music focus, like all the dead White guys. Nothing past 1920.” She explored how this program had an implicit expectation for “people to be a certain thing and to have a certain background.” She related that classmates came from a diverse array of backgrounds and had a variety of motivations for attending the university but once accepted, students were expected to master Classical Eurocentric music. Gayle described the school’s attrition rate and noted that when she began her studies as a freshman, “there was maybe like 60 students. We had to have two sections of Sight Singing and Dictation 1 . . . and it was packed . . . there weren’t enough chairs. But then my senior year, you know, there’s like five
people.” Gayle was clear that the diversity she observed as a freshman was no longer present when she graduated. The students of color were gone and those left were unmistakably White.

Jill also understood university music education curricula as problematic. She argued “more than changing curriculum,” universities need to work on “changing the attitude of what’s valued and what’s valuable.” Jill’s perspective concerning collegiate music education programs went beyond her own student experiences, as she worked as an adjunct professor for such a program, in addition to being a middle school band director. She shared, “I can tell you from the college that I teach, [that] there’s been a concerted effort, thankfully, amongst faculty to help students of color get through the program, and we’re getting more and more of them through.”

She noted that while individual instructors may be supporting students of color through the program, the broader systems in which they operate are supported by the administration and are disproportionately “stopping a lot of young, often African Americans, sometimes poor Asian kids . . . that just like can’t make it past those exams.”

Jill named gatekeeping in her description of the systemic funneling of non-White students out of university music programs. She explained, “unfortunately, when you talk about something like gatekeeping, the colleges and universities, they only emphasize one type of music. They only really study one type of music theory.” She advised future music education students to “get real good at that because that’s what they’re going to ask of you, and that’s the only way you’re going to get in. It’s the only way you’re going to stay in.” Jill offered that if “you want to make a difference in the profession, you’ve got to play that game until things change.”

Karam understood a sense of urgency that may not have been compatible with Jill’s assessment of “play[ing] that game until things change.” He reflected about a former student who is now in college studying music education, sharing that “even though he already has
amazing foundations as an educator . . . with an equity lens, I’m worried that [at . . . the university level . . . his piano skills and his theory skills are not going to be high enough.”

Karam’s worry that the system would not allow his student to pass through its’ gates was based upon his own traumatic experiences as a student of color studying music education. His sense of urgency was tied to a deep understanding of the students of color who struggle to make it through.

In explaining the hidden ways in which White supremacy operates in university music education programs, Karam recalled one university professor’s ardent position concerning the value of performance ability. This instructor masked those intentions with an “I’m going to develop your musicianship and your vocal technique” approach which, Karam described as, “all in service of his vision of an artistic performance based in . . . the Western classical canon.” He described this professor’s agenda as not particularly well hidden or unique.

Karam discussed a concert at his university, where a gospel choir performed along with other choral groups. He shared, “I just remember the gospel choir performed, and I remember hearing all these White grad students being like, this is, this is not music. This is noise. They’re just screaming.” Karam described his astonishment, “at the time, I just like I sat with that and I just didn’t know how to respond.” His silence is understandable given the Eurocentric musical context in which this concert occurred. That choir stood in contrast to the values expressed through the music education program; to stand up against it was to single oneself out as against the system. Karam recalled the reaction from a professor, “when the performance was done, he stood up, started applauding. He gave up a standing ovation.” Karam reflected, “my bullshit meter like immediately turn[ed] on . . . you’re fucking fake, dude . . . there is no way you would
ever perform any of this music and here you are . . . pretending like you support [it]. It’s such a fake support, you know?”

Aside from the historic lack of representation, explicit racism, open hostility, and hidden curricula rooted deeply within music education preparatory programs, participants discussed inherent issues with the ways in which student teaching placements are assigned. Renna suggested that student teacher placements should include “more exposure to the different teaching environments . . . instead of just the middle of the road suburban programs that [serve] people from the suburbs.” Joanne argued that “every single music teacher entering the field should have to do K-5 general music in an urban setting before they move on to any other position.” She maintained that urban settings are “the hardest for planning. It’s the hardest for social-emotional. Um, it’s the hardest for personal self-care. Also, she suggested that “community work with diverse populations . . . [meaning] economic, racial, ethnic diversity,” should be included in teacher training programs. Traci believed that there should be a requirement for “at least observing, if not . . . student teaching” in a variety of different school types beyond suburban schools and also suggested the value of requiring community work for pre-service teachers.

Like her co-participants, Randi believed that music education programs need to offset the lack of experience many teachers have in urban contexts but argued that mere placements are not enough. She offered that university programs need to explicitly educate their students concerning matters of social justice. She recalled her own naivety as a new teacher and shared, “now that I’m older, I see how ignorant I was in my first urban job.” She reflected further: “I grew up in a White . . . rural town and what I always knew . . . I came to find out was wrong . . . I wish I could go back in time . . . and fix who I was back then.” She expressed a recognition of the ways in
which her biases had seeped into every aspect of her teaching and understandings of her students. Randi wished that she had training that would have helped her understand her students of color before she began teaching.

Randall agreed pre-service music teachers need broader experiences than are being provided by many institutions and posed questions that he felt were unconsidered and unanswered. He asked, “wherever you send your student teachers . . . do you ever place any with, with, cooperating teachers of color? Well, how many of your students? What’s the . . . demographic breakdown of your students coming into your program? How many of them graduate?” Randall understood these absences as the symbolic of the refusal to do the types of work that might actually create equitable representation within music education. Instead, he offered, “they will program one piece of music by a Black composer” and consider their efforts complete.

**Zone 3: Certification**

In addition to the barriers observed within the structures of PreK-12 music education, and higher education, the music educators interviewed in this study expressed understanding of gatekeeping within music teacher certification processes. In order for educators to acquire their license to teach music, they must demonstrate mastery of music history, literature, and culture, music theory and analysis, and music pedagogy (MTEL, 2021; The Praxis Study Companion, 2021a; The Praxis Study Companion, 2021b). The teachers interviewed who recalled their certification process, acknowledged that these topics are considered through a strictly Western European perspective, although they recalled a few questions that addressed world music.

Jill connected the certification processes with the values and expectations determined in higher education, suggesting that certification requirements are in a direct relationship with
“what coursework is being taught and what we VALUE in our college students.” She maintained that university music education programs and certification exams are structured upon a singular understanding of best and essentially “tell certain people that their way of learning is not valued, that learning by ear and learning by rote is not as good as reading Western notation.” To illustrate her point, Jill shared that the “success in [her] program is built on . . . rote teaching and aural, and singing, and learning to sing and hear the notes, and play them, and then eventually, yes I do teach them to read.” She argued that this type of teaching and learning is not consistent with what is being taught at universities and being tested in licensure exams.

Jaeden connected the expectations of certification exams with the insufficient experiences of pre-service and rookie in-service music teachers. He shared, “I really feel like there’s no way a person who has not taught is going to be able to pass that test.” He spoke of a friend with a doctorate in music who struggled to pass the certification exam because he had no practical classroom teaching experience. Jaeden helped his friend and was left frustrated with the random expectations placed upon test takers. He posed, “how do you expect a person out of college who’s only . . . student taught, or who’s only maybe . . . just took methods classes [to pass]? They’re not going to know that.”

Like Jaeden, Carly argued that the requirements for certification exams, like the edTPA, are “just not appropriate for somebody who [is] student teaching . . . They’re asking you to reflect on your teaching, on your teaching philosophy, and you’ve been teaching for a couple of months. It’s just completely unrealistic.” In addition to unrealistic expectations around experience, Carly noted the financial barriers that exams create for many students. She suggested, “let’s either take away the amount of money you have to pay to get your license to begin with . . . or get an extreme discount.” Carly related that while in college, several of her
friends struggled to pay for the exams and this experience stuck with her. She acknowledged, “I understand that . . . someone’s got to get paid for grading it at some point, but it doesn’t need to be $300. There’s no need for that.” She added that the nature of the exam and the exorbitant fee structure suggest to her that those in charge of licensure exams must intend for certain kinds of people to fail.

Karam and Carly acknowledged the financial barriers created through requiring such large sums of money in order to take certification exams. He expressed, “I didn’t grow up with money. I still don’t have that much money even, even, after four years of teaching because we don’t get paid shit anyway.” Karam understood that his situation was not unique and that many others struggle to pay exam fees. Karam acknowledged that for many music educators of color, who come from a background outside of the Eurocentric norm upon which music education is based, passing the test means taking it multiple times. He asked, “why would you make me do the same fucking test three times? And each test was like $275, and so . . . I had to pay . . . the same amount of money, and they were literally the same test.” As a start, he suggested the elimination of fees altogether, but argued that a better solution would be the elimination of the tests completely.

Alston shared Karam’s perspectives on the disproportionate effect of certification exams on teachers of color and understood it as a mechanism from which to maintain a particular kind of quality control. He argued that costs of certification tests are “absolutely there to minimize the amount of minority teachers who can even access the test.” He disclosed, “I have taken the [test] so many times and I have received no support. I’ve emailed the teachers union. I’ve emailed every single person I could think of. I told my administration. People could care less.” Alston summarized the problematics of the certification machination:
You’re going to demand [payment] every single time, knowing people are taking it [and] not passing, that means that you have a group of people, whether minority or not, but you have a group of people who are choosing to either take that test, or pay their bills. That’s what you’re doing . . . So, now you have a barrier of access, and now you have a barrier of timeliness. You have to find a four-hour block, if you’re not working, like I am, all the time . . . to take the test. Then you have the barrier of accessing the test . . . 60% of the test is listening. So, you have a huge barrier around what particular [aspect of] Western civ[ilization] we’re going to focus on when you put on those headphones.

Alston expressed that the power holders in education should know better than to maintain a single mode of entry into the profession. He argued that “standardized testing is only one form of assessing if a person is able to teach or reproduce what is put on that paper.” He questioned how a profession dedicated to learning could possibly determine if someone could be a good teacher through such an exam. “It just means that they’re a good test taker. That’s all it means . . . That doesn’t . . . make much sense to me, that they take a test in order to teach.”

**Zone 4: Career**

There is a direct relationship between the ways in which students of color have been assimilated through, and erased from, public-school music programs and the experiences of their BIPOC teachers. Alston shared that he routinely observed White, often new, teachers respond to minor transgressions from Black students in ways that escalate the behaviors and worsen the outcomes for everyone involved. Alston recalled how, due to his positive relationships with students, he was often called in to help during these situations, noting “even in the most minor situations, I had teachers telling me ‘aren’t you gonna grab them? Are you going to take them out of here?’” Alston was routinely outraged by his colleagues’ inability to see the connections
between forcibly removing Black students from classrooms and the increasingly visible acts of violence against Black children and adults by law enforcement. He recalled one such moment when he responded: “absolutely not. I’m not a police officer. These students right now, the student is escalated. They’re upset. They might be throwing a pencil. There’s no damage being done to themselves or others.” He argued his refusal “to reproduce or recreate a situation that, that, really encapsulates jail for them. I’m not going to do that.”

Alston recalled an incident in which, after being called in to help with a student, a White colleague complained about him to their principal. He explained how the coworker objected to Alston’s refusal to restrain their student. “Why didn’t he grab him? He threw my board on the floor.” Alston recalled his explanation that, “according to safety training and crisis intervention training” which all teachers had taken, “he wasn’t a danger to himself or others. He wasn’t trying to hurt you or me. He’s upset with you because you didn’t call his hand. He had it up for 30 minutes.” He recalled arguing that the White teacher was unwilling to take responsibility for their own role in the escalation of the student’s behavior. Even after having been through trainings aimed at peaceful de-escalations of behavior, this teacher acted in a manner harmful to students. He reaffirmed, “you know how to calm them down. You refused to do all those things. You have this problem and now you want a quick fix. I’m not gonna band aid your fix. Oh, no, no, no.”

Alston recalled an especially traumatic incident that occurred with a White colleague, who acted as proxy for the entire fifth-grade team. During this meeting, the grade-level team confronted Alston around his manner of advocacy for students and revealed several weeks of conversation with the principal on the subject, without his knowledge. Alston recounted:
The entire fifth grade team wanted to meet with me and . . . I get in the meeting, and they’re like, well, we’ve been talking to [the principal] . . . for a few weeks and, um, they just feel, we just feel that, she feels too, that you shouldn’t be [advocating for keeping students in class]. And I was like, excuse me? So, what the White teacher was advocating for was to send out the students more often, like, out of class.

Alston explained to his colleagues the need for resolving issues with students in context, explaining that “kick-out culture is representative of the school-to-prison pipeline.” Alston recalled that they didn’t want to hear his rationalization. Afterwards, Alston met with the principal who offered no insight or concern. Instead, she responded “for your evaluation this year, I’m gonna have to grade you here because of your relationships with the fifth-grade teachers.”

Alston described the manners in which he and his Black colleagues were treated by White teachers and supervisors. He explained the way they are looked at, as if under a microscope, and how their qualifications are routinely called into question. “If we made a mistake it was highlighted, but if a White coworker made a mistake, they’re all friends.” He spoke about the way supervisors questioned the tone used by Black staff. These soft, difficult to prove, assertions made by White supervisors against Black teachers are often used during the evaluation process, Alston acknowledged, to push out teachers who do not fit the culture school leadership desires.

Alston explained that “the assessment process was how they got rid of people. So, if they didn’t like someone, they would score them low.” He shared how he once served on a committee to help his school “retain teachers of color and to figure out what’s . . . causing this mass exodus of Black educators to leave.” He explained that most teachers who left did so as a result of “the
assessment process . . . [specifically] the one-on-one conversation[s] with your supervisor around your performance.” He described an insurmountable obstacle for Black teachers, to either assimilate into the school culture or leave. “The Black staff could feel it. If they didn’t like you, you were gone . . . or you had a year to get it together . . . to assimilate. And if they didn’t, they were gone. And so, I’ve seen . . . multiple examples of that.”

These incidents when Black teachers are forced into positions in which they need to defend the humanity of Black children are not isolated, nor are situations in which White colleagues report perceived misconduct by Black teachers to supervisors. He and his BIPOC colleagues have these experience this daily, Alston shared, and the impact upon the well-being of students and their teachers is often unseen. Alston expressed that he survives teaching by “staying focused on the students, staying focused on the progress of students, staying focused on parents, and my after-school music program I created to keep students engaged, and I did not pay attention to anyone except for that.” He admitted that anything more would have singled him out and noted, for example, how he felt when colleagues complimented the music program: “I would be like, oh, thank you . . . I appreciate it, and then keep on moving because anything I say could be used against me or manipulated to mean something else that I didn’t say.”

Jaeden also described the way he and his Black colleagues were constantly looked at more acutely than their White counterparts. He related “we’re under a microscope. Anything you say, anything you do . . . especially if you cannot fight back, especially being untenured or being in a probationary contract, you really can’t say anything.” He recalled how once, his principal “literally put their finger in my face, point[ed] at me, yell[ed] at me, scream[ed] at me, in front of my children, berate[d] me in front of them. And I was like, and I can’t say nothing. I can’t.”
Jaeden recalled another time where a principal said that he “didn’t want a Black Yankee in his school” claiming he “wasn’t a good BOY because [Jaeden] didn’t call him sir.”

In consideration of the professional obstacles Jaeden faced, he understood a need to have irreproachable qualifications to be a successful Black band teacher. He shared that “being a Black music teacher, I was going to have to have some banging-ass credentials, because I knew what was going to be in store for me.” Jaeden acknowledged understanding this necessity from his earliest experiences in music education, noting “I knew from the moment I walked in [that] if I wanted to be a teacher that I knew I had to have the credentials . . . so, when a person looked at my resume, they were like OOH!”

He recalled an incident which confirmed his understanding of the disparity between Black and White music teachers. At a professional development in his city for music teachers, a White fellow band teacher told Jaeden, “oh, I’m not really a band director . . . I just got the job. I really play piano and guitar.” Jaeden was left livid, but not terribly surprised as this sort of experience was commonplace, he revealed. Jaeden compared that teacher’s story with his own journey through multiple music education programs and a dual master’s degree in instrumental music and conducting, all to struggle to find a position that would permit him to teach band. He acknowledged, “there’s something wrong with that.”

Jaeden shared a duality he faces daily as a Black music teacher. He discussed the stereotypes presumed and assumptions placed upon him by both colleagues and administrators, noting “I’m tired that…as a Black music teacher, I’m not Black enough, or I’m not cultured enough. I should be teaching gospel and hip-hop.” He told of one job interview where a principal was shocked that Jaeden didn’t sing gospel music. Jaeden recalled thinking, “HAVE YOU
LOOKED AT MY RESUME? I’m like, why do I have to sing gospel?” Other times, it is assumed that he must rap. “This is the inequity. This is what, this is the problem.”

Jaeden suggested that such monolithic assumptions of what Black teachers must be, and ought to do, leads to problematic assertions of what Black teachers need. Jaeden is frustrated by the prevalence of people speaking for him. Jaeden shared “I will say this. I’m tired of people speaking for me . . . I’m also tired of being one of the few Black males every time I go to a damn city-wide P.D.? . . . Why am I one of the few?”

Jaeden recalled a touching moment, rather isolated from assumptions, stereotypes, and expectations he faces as a Black band teacher. This incident occurred when he volunteered to help with his city’s All-City band program. He recalled:

There was a Black kid that was playing oboe and his oboe was out of adjustment . . . and I fixed it. You know, I fixed it. And there was a Black security guard watching me, and the security guard was impressed . . . I fixed it and gave it back to kid and I was like, now you try. And I said, well use this fingering and all that and the kid sounded wonderful. And you know, the security guard came over to me, he said, young brother, do you want, you want this coffee? I bought it and I already had enough coffee. You want this?

Jaeden revealed the power of that moment, sharing “it was the fir-, it was the only time in my career that I had a Black little boy come to me with an oboe and I was able to help them, fix it, make it better.” Moreover, he highlighted, “I got acknowledgement from another Black person who actually saw me doing something that we normally don’t do. That was the only time in my career that I’ve ever had that kind of acknowledgement.” He continued, “I know the only reason why he gave me that coffee was because he was, in his mind, he was like, go ahead young brother . . . In that moment, like, I felt like I’m doing the right thing.”
Jaeden discussed that such moments of recognition are rare. The chances of having a Black student musician, a Black music teacher, and a Black elder in a public-school music learning context are exceptional due to the barriers they confront. Jaeden contended, “there is no equity” and stressed the need for people to understand “why race is important.” He shared, “I know in my heart . . . that if I was a White teacher, I would be so further along in my career.”

Like his fellow participants of color, Karam discussed their need for “thick skin” in navigating the profession of music education. When he started teaching, Karam would shake off the ignorance he witnessed from colleagues concerning the impact of race and racism on students and teachers. It didn’t take him long to come to the realization that “DANG, these folks are teaching students, or teaching teachers who teach students.” He explained that it was this understanding that motivated his continued work in the profession. He recognized, “I see this shit. I still want to fight it because . . . I go back to my students.”

Karam drew connections between the needs of students and teachers of color. He described himself as “the son of Filipino immigrants who were divorced when I was at a young age . . . I lived in a single [income] family household . . . in a very . . . diverse community and neighborhood.” This background is from where Karam’s motivation “to go back and teach where [he] grew up” sprang, although he acknowledged at first, “I didn’t realize how important that was for me . . . to be a representative, especially in music, until I started teaching in my community, because it was just like, oh . . . these students look like me.”

Karam shared that he never had a public-school teacher who looked as he did. Moreso, he acknowledged “very little representation of people who look like [him] in the education field, let alone the music field.” This impelled him from first “wanting to develop spaces for students to really find themselves” to the realization of “oh, no, no, no. This is about representation. This is
about being the best teacher so that folks who look like me . . . can relate to me [and] will be like, oh, I could do that job.”

Karam recalled the scarcity of professional spaces that exist with music education “where it’s ONLY people of color.” He noted an inherent power and validation that comes from the solidarity experienced within a group of teachers who see and feel the things he has encountered. In these spaces, he argued, teachers of color can be together, can say “yep, we've, we’ve felt that too. You’re not crazy . . . stay on this path because I'm there with you.” Such spaces exist, but Karam suggested that they do so in spite of music education discourse, because he feels the consistent push from his profession to assimilate.

Randall also acknowledged the paucity of Black music educators in his profession. He recalled “I’ve been in many situations where there were no people of color, except me . . . but you got to teach. You got to guest conduct. You got to do, you know, these things.” He connected this absence of Black educators with bias and scant efforts to represent the work of Black artists. He conceded that in spite of any progress that has been made broadly, “music is still one of the most biased disciplines in the Academy. Where I work, where I previously worked, [and] where other people that I know work, it is still, to this day, one of the most biased.” He noted that “Dr. Ewell’s paper about the Schenker shows us that.” It is from such bias that Randall explained the minimal amount of work done to credit Black composers, performers, and conductors. He argued, “you don’t include it as part of the content of your class. And, and, I and I feel very strongly, it shouldn’t be an add on. It should be infused from day one.”

Randall discussed his own work to make certain that Black artists are represented alongside the White European canonical mainstays, and the pushback he has received from students and colleagues as a result. Randall shared stories about students who have challenged
his inclusion of Black music and musicians within his curricula. “You should see some of the student evaluations that I’ve gotten. They call me everything except the N word . . . some of them came right up to the line, you know.” He recalled one particular comment from a student that read, “he programs too much music by Black composers. Why are we wasting time on that?” Randall shared that year, “we did one concert, because a faculty member . . . passed away . . . the program was built around a piece by him, like a memorial.” Several evaluations that semester contained similar remarks. Randall reflected,

when somebody tells me, you are programming way too much Hindemith, Persichetti, Milhaud, Holst, and any number of others. When somebody writes in my evaluation that your program has too much of that music, then and only then will I be ready to have an intelligent conversation with you about why I programmed this other.

Randall revealed that he continues to program and teach works by Black artists, noting “I don’t wait for February. I celebrate Black History Month . . . every month. I don't wait for February to program a piece by a Black composer. I don’t wait.”

The pushback Randall has faced from White colleagues concerning the integration of Black music and musicians into his curricula has been equally troubling. Randall discussed fellow instructors questioning his constant tendency to discuss race in his classes. He acknowledged, “when I walk in the room, Blackness walks in the room . . . I can’t leave it at the door.” He offered that he would often hear “people say stuff, [like] . . . I don’t see color” when defending their refusal to address race in their classrooms. “When people say that to me,” he shared, “I’m saying, what? I’m offended. You just dismissed my entire life. My entire life . . . You just said you don’t see color . . . Don’t say that to me.” Randall identified color-blind racism
(Bonilla-Silva, 2017) and acknowledged that his colleagues do not “value scholarship relative to Black issues or supremacy issues . . . because it’s not Bach, Beethoven, or Brahms.”

Like Alston, Jaeden, and Karam (to be elucidated shortly), Randall shared experiences in which White colleagues assumed that he had an attitude of aggression. He recalled one such time in a committee meeting when he was accused of being hostile after not agreeing with a White colleague. Reflecting, Randall noted: “I’m not yelling. I’m not screaming. I’m not pounding on the table. I’m not shouting. I’m not cursing. But the fact that I don’t buy whatever you’re saying 100%, I’m a bad person. I’m aggressive.” He added that he too often hears the same narratives told from colleagues “in sociology, history, and English, and adult education, in biology, and physics, all across the United States. I hear the same thing. It’s not just here . . . So, what is going on here? We are not imagining this. We are not.”

Karam told of how he is the only person of color on the board of a music education organization in his region. He recalled a time when the group was discussing what topics they might focus upon for their next professional development session. He remembered hearing suggestions such as “let’s focus on issues of LGBTQ people” and “let’s talk about issues about like, Black music.” He reminded his fellow board members that “for folks of marginalized identities, like this, as someone who is both queer and a person of color, none of these are accessories that we can put on and take off.” His argument was, he explained, that if they agree to do these sorts of sessions, then they must commit to “actually do the internal work and . . . integrate this into everything that we do.” He challenged his fellow committee members not to “put it on like some sort of earring . . . and then just take it off when . . . we feel satisfied.” Karam noted the acrimonious reaction that came as a result of his provocation, noting “I got so much SHIT for that.” In response, the board members wrote Karam a letter that claimed he had
made everyone else in the room so uncomfortable that they all wanted to quit, and demanded that instead, he should leave. Karam summarized it as an “either YOU quit, or THEY quit” memorandum. Interestingly, this letter was written but never sent. Karam learned of it because it was developed in tandem through a shared organizational Google Drive folder, to which Karam had access.

Karam shared another anecdote that exemplified his experiences with music teacher organizations. He told of an experience he had at a professional development workshop sponsored by a local chapter of a national music teacher organization. The presenter, who identified as White . . . claimed that she was the expert in quote/unquote Black music. She made jokes about the KKK. She made very transphobic remarks. She refused to use . . . a microphone to help those who had . . . auditory disabilities.

“Okay, more context,” Karam added. “This person is SAYING this to a room full of White folks.” He continued, “there is one Black educator in the room. Uh, there is one Asian-American educator in the room. There is one Latinx educator in the room. And there’s also one trans person in the room.”

Karam, with a group of colleagues, demanded that the presenter use a microphone and address the language that she was using. “This group of educators and I, including all the folks of color that I just mentioned, we . . . went up to this presenter [and said] this is not okay . . . we need to stop this.” Karam described the animosity that came next: “we were met with defensiveness, White fragility, you know? The hostility towards Karam and his colleagues continued beyond the workshop. Karam spoke of the organization’s board president’s “hostility, White fragility, [and] defensiveness” towards their group demanding a public apology when he suddenly fell silent. After a few seconds, he continued:
I’m pausing because I’m just, even though, like we’ve been going on, this has been going on for the past two years, it’s still actually kind of fresh . . . because . . . I still see these people at conferences, you know. I still see those folks who literally, who LITERALLY TOOK A HAND TO MY FACE AND SAID stop talking, because I was telling this person, our president, to like, like back down. You’re, you’re defending racist ideals here. You know?

Karam took a few deep breaths and continued, “the only . . . Black educator in this FUCKING organization like LITERALLY is telling you that this person made a joke about the KKK…and this person is met with . . . I don’t believe that, or I wasn’t in the room.”

**Discussion**

The parallel analysis addressed within this chapter addressed the invisible interactivity (Wodak & Meyer, 2009) that exists between the social understandings and practices within music education in order to determine the extent to which teachers are aware of the epistemological assumptions that live within their discourse. The 13 teachers interviewed expressed a consciousness counter to one expressed in the discourse: that White supremacy, race, and racism are not a priority. These counternarratives revealed a friction between what the participants—a sub-group of music teachers who teach in urban contexts and identify as interested in social justice—understand and what is being conveyed through discourse.

In a general sense, the music educators interviewed expressed both surprise at the disparity revealed in the conference data and realization that the findings were consistent with their experiences. More explicitly, their responses to the discourse revealed that the ways in which they understood White supremacy in their profession manifested along four temporal
zones throughout the life of a music educator: PreK–12 Schooling, College/Teacher Preparation, Certification, and Career.

It should be noted that although urban should not be understood as interchangeable with Black, there was a tendency to treat the words synonymously within the interviews. Notwithstanding the potential for this being representative of coded language, due to the participants’ commitment to acknowledge topics concerning both urban contexts and race, this tendency is likely owing to this inquiry’s focus upon such settings, as well as it being a shared context for the teachers. Based upon the connections between urban schooling environments and perceptions of students within these contexts, the nature of music classes in urban public schools can be understood through the lens of the first zone of gatekeeping.

The views concerning the perspectives from which White teachers perceive Black, urban students may speak to the “urban jungle” (Leonardo & Hunter, 2007) and “culture of poverty” (Lewis, 1961) mindsets from which educators who work in urban contexts often frame their teaching (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2011; Leonardo & Hunter, 2007) and contribute to the continued marginalization of the racialized poor. This perspective of the urban, Black student in contrast to the imagined ideal pupil, who is most certainly understood as White (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2011) is one about which the educators interviewed all expressed recognition, in some manner.

All participants acknowledged material and financial barriers within urban schools (Farinde-Wu, 2018; Gaztambide-Fernández, 2011; Gaztambide-Fernández and Rose, 2015; Milner et al., 2015; Schaffer et al., 2018) that have resulted in under-resourced music programming, lack of continuity for students who want to pursue music across school levels, and a disparate impact upon students of color. Educator narratives concerning perceptions of the
racialized poor in urban schools suggest that this mindset contributes to an undervaluing of the urban schools that so many BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and people of color) students attend and a multigenerational history of perceiving Black and Brown student as intellectually inferior and less capable than their White peers. These perceptions of students of color ultimately led to the narratives shared concerning the assumptions of worst possible outcomes for Black and Brown students and the enacting of excessive, dehumanizing disciplinary measures upon them. Based upon the connections made between urban schooling environments and perceptions of students within these contexts, the nature of music classes in urban public schools can be understood through the lens of the first zone of gatekeeping in music education due to the manners in which assimilation, appropriation, and erasure align to funnel students in a manner that leads to a 99% attrition rate from music classes by the time Black students graduate high school (Gustafson, 2009).

Apparent throughout the textual and interview analyses was evidence that conference discourse was overwhelmingly representative of a Eurocentric cultural perspective. Also clear through both discursive facets was an understanding that the students addressed through conference text were White and attended schools within suburban settings. These defining qualities suggest that music education discourse is premised from a fundamental assumption that the lived experiences of their Black and Brown students were not valued within the discourse of the profession. The value placed upon Eurocentric notions of best alongside the perceived inferiority of Othered students is both an obstacle and catalyst for innumerable barriers that arise from the assimilative “civilizing approach” (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2011; Gaztambide-Fernández & Rose, 2015) which occurs through the resulting antidialogical practices that function to manipulate—assimilate—students into cultural submission.
Also visible throughout the discourse, but less explicitly so, was the appropriation of student cultural values into the centered European norm, which could be observed through the dichotomy between the presence and absence of particular language associated with music genres consistent with White and Black youth. On its own, the consideration of the discursive silence around contemporary music genres associated with Black culture might be considered an erasure of Black culture. However, when considered alongside the presence of language relating to music popular with White youth, a different narrative can be gleaned concerning assimilation. Considered through yet another lens, the legacy within music education of pilfering historically Black music, adapting it for White audiences, and dehumanizing all else about the culture bearers is representative of a deeply entrenched and regenerated cycle throughout American music education history and its discourse (Dixson, 2006; Hardesty, 2016; Lordi, 2020). This unmistakable presence of language concerning music popular with White youth that was stripped from Black youth culture, while virtually ignoring Black music genres is exemplification of appropriation to the highest degree. Alongside the history of jazz education in U.S. public schools, including its current prestige in the discourse, the growing acceptance of popular and modern music genres should not be surprising. Alston’s experience with the inappropriately instructed hip-hop lesson and Renna’s understanding of the hip-hop workshop she attended indicates that music education discourse is beginning to welcome a white-washed version of the genre.

Together, the assimilative and appropriative acts observed throughout PreK-12 music programs contribute to the profound attrition of Black students from music classes. This dissolution of students must be understood as an erasure of Black bodies from music education. The students who continue their music studies through all of high school, whether in school or
privately, have further obstacles to face if they choose to enroll in a college to study music education.

The second zone of gatekeeping encompasses a music educator’s journey through higher education and the discourse examined revealed all three tentacles of White supremacy working within. Entry into this zone is accessible by those students who have been determined worthy of admittance through a series of auditions and tests, based upon master cultural values and norms. If students have not assimilated into the Eurocentric cultural norm prior to this time, this teacher preparation period will further work to assimilate them through Eurocentric curricula and performance expectations.

Karam’s observation of the reaction to the gospel choir performance demonstrates a manner in which music outside of the cultural norm is only marginally tolerated in higher education. As the concert context was one of Eurocentric performance structures, the position of the choir was one outside of established norms. On its own, this inclusion is not appropriative—though it may have been tokenizing—however the broader conditions from which the concert was presented may shift this understanding. Context is important because it represents the complex realities in which lived experiences occur. It may be rather innocuous to include a gospel choir in a concert, but if the department, university, and professional structures marginalize the genre, the context in which the ensemble performs is problematic.

In the case of Karam’s experience, the inclusion of the gospel choir may be understood as an appropriation of an aspect of Black culture that was found worthy enough for the public event, while members of the normalized group marginalized its essence as “not music” and “noise” off stage. From this perspective, it served as both ornament and bolster to the Eurocentric ideal. While the performance may have contributed to the all-encompassing
"universae lingua" mythos of music education, the context in which it occurred was one in which the understanding of the genre and performance were Othered. This subtle appropriation of Black culture was detected by Karam’s “bullshit meter” and climaxed in the form of an instructor who had made his values and perspectives so clear to his students that they were comfortable qualifying the music as noise, even as he was publicly rising in applause. Simply put, a particular aspect of African American culture was appropriated into the margins, while other aspects of the culture and the people from which it came are systematically compelled to assimilate or are erased.

Through its regenerative lack of representation of both students and instructors of color, open hostility and patent racism exhibited by its standard bearers, a curriculum centered upon a singular cultural perspective, as well as student teaching placements that leave music teachers ill-equipped to meet the needs of Black students (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2011), the second zone of gatekeeping contributes to a funneling of potential music teachers out of pre-service programs. Those who do remain are constrained within assimilative parameters designed to ensure graduates are knowledgeable of the various elements of Western music required to graduate, achieve licensure, and get hired.

As with the two categories before it, the third zone of gatekeeping presents aspects of assimilation, appropriation, and erasure. In one respect, participants recognized certification exams as a mechanism created to assess their knowledge of Western European music history, theory, composition, performance, and music pedagogy. In quite a different regard, participants recognized it as a wall that stood between their desire to teach public school music and societal permission to do so.
The emphasis on content that is so distinctly focused upon Western European cultural values in an exam that quite literally bars entrance into a profession is assimilative in its essence. It sends a clear message that music educators are expected to teach students a very particular kind of music, and if they cannot prove mastery, they may not enter. The manner in which world music content was recalled as sparsely present within these examinations only contributes to the manners in which multicultural topics are pulled from their contexts, inserted into marginalized positions within discourse to be studied through exoticized and essentialized lenses that place little to no value on the larger culture, or the people from which it came.

The Eurocentric focus of certification exams and the recurring costs associated with testing fees, combined with the attention placed on pedagogical content to which pre-service and new teachers may not have access, privileges three groups of pre-service teachers: those who are assigned student teaching placements within well-funded suburban schools, those who grew up attending schools in those environments, and those with financial privilege. Based upon the discourse studied, these three groups are often identical.

Though the observation of barriers within the certification processes for music teachers were consistent amongst all 13 participants, the differences between the ways they impact teachers of color cannot be ignored. The obstacles expressed have a disparate impact upon the entrance of BIPOC teachers into the profession and should be understood as a form of erasure. The paradox inherent in a barrier to teaching that is oblivious to the multifarious manners in which learning and teaching may manifest suggests something other than quality control: a deeply embedded inequity that benefits some at the expense of Others.

The entirety of the text analysis discussed in Chapter 4 supports the presence of assimilative, appropriative, and eliminative properties within music education discourse and the
experiences expressed by the four participants of color corroborated these findings. These accounts, which elucidated the fourth zone of gatekeeping, should be understood as counternarratives to the values and priorities expressed through conference discourse. It is not surprising that within a group of participants who all expressed a commitment to social justice and demonstrated an awareness of the mechanisms in which White supremacy operates in music education, it was the four BIPOC teachers who were able to illustrate the manners in which it plays out during a teacher’s career.

As music education conferences serve as key sources of professional development for the teachers, the mechanisms of Eurocentric assimilation described in Chapter 4 are especially relevant. Further, the national Music Standards (National Association for Music Education, 2020a), which were heavily guided by NAfME, may also be understood as a means of assimilation through the ways in which they both serve as de facto guidance for music educators and inform the state-level policies from which music educators are evaluated (Kos, 2010).

As within the prior three zones, appropriation operates rather subtly throughout the fourth zone of gatekeeping. This particular tentacle of White supremacy can be observed within the experiences Alston shared about how his colleagues expected him to police their Black students. Alston was utilized for his relationships with students, which were valued to the degree in which they served a particular purpose: controlling Black students. When Alston was called upon for help, he was reported to his supervisor for not providing assistance in a manner that his colleagues, or principal, expected. Further, an entire grade-level team spent weeks commiserating upon these expectations without him. Though his connections with students were valued, the perspectives from which those relationships were formed, the cultural values from which his perspectives emerged, and the legacy of the treatment of Black children in the United
States were dismissed; Alston was disregarded. Put simply, Alston’s colleagues sought to appropriate his capacity for speaking to Black children but wanted nothing of his Black identity.

Erasure may have been the most readily seen aspect of White supremacy present within the fourth zone of gatekeeping. Each of the educators of color interviewed experienced similar acts of erasure that functioned to push dissident voices from the profession. While some of these acts were explicit representations of bias and racism, others were more subtle. Alston, Jaeden, Karam, and Randall each acknowledged being treated differently than their White colleagues. Jaeden and Alston expressed how their actions were acutely monitored alongside the use of unfair evaluative processes to push out BIPOC educators. Kalani and Randall each shared experiences in which they were accused of hostility for dissenting from White colleagues. Common amongst all four participants was a sense of isolation that existed as a person of color in music education. This sense of seclusion as a music teacher of color may be explained through the understanding that Zone Four is the gatekeeping locus with the most disproportional ratio of White to BIPOC educators: the stem of the gatekeeping funnel.

Conclusion

The primary question of this inquiry considers the extent to which music teachers make meaning of gatekeeping practices that mediate hidden structures of White supremacy. I contend that the music educators interviewed collectively understood these gatekeeping measures through four temporal zones that delineate across a person’s experiences up to, and including, their time as a music educator. While every teacher interviewed did not see every aspect of gatekeeping considered in the aggregate, the demarcation of four distinct, but interrelated, zones became apparent.
Though all four temporal markers represent unique combinations of forces that serve to
dissuade outsider influence within music education, it is the first and fourth that are most
explicitly tied to the structures of PreK-12 public education. Students of color in U.S. public
schools are subject to music classes that are structured upon an ideology centering White
Western European cultural norms and marginalizing all else. The educators interviewed
discussed prevailing perceptions of Black and Brown students as less capable and intellectually
inferior to White peers, and these perceptions often led to dehumanizing disciplinary measures
taken upon them.

The realms of higher education and licensure are intimately connected in their
gatekeeping apparatus. In the higher education context, music education is only accessible by
those students who have been determined worthy of admittance through auditions and tests
centered upon Eurocentric cultural values and norms. If music education students make it
through this barrier, four or more years of assimilative instruction will serve to ready them for
licensure. In order to achieve their license to teach music, pre-service music teachers need to
demonstrate mastery of Western music history, literature, culture, music theory, analysis, and
music pedagogy. These first three barriers of PreK-12 public schooling, higher education, and
licensure disproportionately impact teachers of color, incessantly reducing their representation in
public schools and perpetuating a music teaching force that remains overwhelmingly White.

The fourth zone has an altogether different construction than the previous three and
implicate myriad social constructions, evaluative procedures, and cultural norms embedded
within the teaching profession that serve to alienate, discount, and erase those who have made it
to that stage. Said differently, the largely White music teaching force (Abril, 2009; DeLorenzo,
2012; Koza, 2003; Lind & McKoy, 2016; Zubrzycki, 2017) maintains a culture representative of
the larger teaching domain and operates in a manner rife with White fragility (Bradley, 2007; DiAngelo, 2018) and White rage (Anderson, 2016) which operate to Other educators of color so that they assimilate or quit, all the while appropriating the elements from their culture which serve their master narrative. Stated in yet another manner, “the machinery of the organization . . . was turning over, day and night, with but one aim” (Baldwin, 1955/2012, p.96): to eject educators of color.

The parallel analysis discussed within this chapter should be understood as a critical discourse analysis that encompassed both the textual analysis of music conference content and interview data conducted with music educators. Beyond the individual analyses considered in the two prior chapters, the parallel analysis exists in the interactions between the individual and collective actors in the field, the content, and the contexts within both the discourse and the profession to reveal a consciousness within music education discourse. This study exceeds the constructivist traditions of discourse analysis which employ understandings of consciousness in order to discover their meanings and understand the realities created by individuals and groups. Instead, this inquiry incorporates aspects from multiple traditions, including discourse analysis and ethnography in its critical foundation premised upon the exposure of the consciousness within music education discourse to confront the power relations that support the inequities, marginalization, and oppressions within. As such, the last three chapters have highlighted binaries within, and between, the expressed values and practices within music education through, both appropriately and ironically, a Black/White dialectic, in order to call attention to the tensions between the opposing forces, with a goal of exposing, clarifying, and challenging the inherent oppressions within.
Liberation is thus a childbirth, and a painful one. The man or woman who emerges is a new person, viable only as the oppressor-oppressed contradiction is superseded by the humanization of all people. Or to put it another way, the solution of this contradiction is born in the labor which brings into the world this new being: no longer oppressor nor longer oppressed, but human in the process of achieving freedom.

—Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*

This chapter relates directly to the final stage of the dialectical-relational elucidatory approach (DREA): the identification of potential paths past the obstacles of implementation. The chapter begins with a discussion of the limitations of this inquiry, in terms of both constraints upon the scope as well as obstacles to exposing, confronting, and untethering White supremacy’s hold upon music education. In the following section, I consider the implications for this research in music education and its potential significance in the wider field of education as well as broader social systems. Next, I explore paths forward so as to provide the avenues of application for which this research may be applied. This chapter and inquiry, concludes with both synopsis and expectancy for the future of music education.
Limitations of the Study

When considering something as pervasive as White supremacy, there are sadly any number of departure points from which to proceed, and this inquiry is limited in that it only investigated the relationship between music teachers and a particular aspect of their professional discourse. Given the highly dispersive nature of music educators, a consideration of the places in which they convene became the point from which this inquiry departed; however, there are other elements of the discourse which, though not addressed, would contribute to the findings expressed in this inquiry including journals, books, and social media.

In terms of methods, the text analysis did not include the language used during the delivery of each conference session. Though I believe the presenters’ written words to be more representative of interactions between themselves and their conference hosts, a consideration of spoken language during each workshop would likely provide important insights. The conference data studied is also limited by its inclusion of only four conferences from two conference hosting groups in the United States. An additional study of discourse used within local, national, and international music educator organizations would provide valuable data from which to analyze. The analyses used with the DREA were narrow in that attention was focused upon matters of White supremacy, race, and social justice. While this concentration was necessary to answer the queries of the inquiry, it ultimately left many other aspects of injustice within music education unstudied.

This study included a participant pool of music educators who self-identified an interest in social justice. This limitation was premised on a belief that teachers who consider equity might be more able to access conversations around injustice within their profession. While this
does limit the participant pool in one particular way, it allows for dialogues and discussions of experiences that are more readily accessible by music educators determined to make use of the findings. Though it may be advantageous to consider the extent that teachers who do not self-identify as interested in social justice perceive White supremacy in their profession, the lack of research in this area suggests that the chosen criterion would prove the most useful to the most educators. The purpose behind choosing teachers who teach within urban contexts speaks to the urgency related to perceptions of the urban imaginary that occurs through the reproduction of the mindset and conditions depicting the racialized poor as marginal (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2011). In other words, given that little research exists which connects White supremacy, gatekeeping, and discourse in music education, this is the context, and these are the teachers, that may enable the most profound impact.

One particularly vital concern outside the scope of this inquiry relates to the manners in which teachers may act upon their understandings of music education discourse and their awareness of White supremacy within it. The importance of understanding the ways in which music teachers interact with each other and with students cannot be understated. To this end, the current inquiry may provide the context from which to study the deep cultural milieu in which music teachers operate and how their experiences and perceptions relate to wider social structures of oppression in music education.

Though this study engages individuals and one particular access point within their professional sphere, multiple access points exist from which White supremacy can be investigated. An appropriate extension of this study could more thoroughly address the role that collective identity plays in challenging ideological assumptions within music education. In addition, another examination might conduct a comparative analysis of the manners in which
White supremacy is expressed between music education and other subdisciplines within public education.

Beyond that which this inquiry did not include, there are obstacles to the implementation of the recommendations provided within this chapter. Not dissimilar to music educator conferences, online music educator groups provide digital forums in which teachers can exchange ideas and express their perspectives. Facebook is the source of many of these online subcommunities and has proved to be the locale for many discussions related to race and racism in music education. Two such conversations occurred as the inquiry neared completion that are emblematic of the barriers to exposing and confronting the legacy of White supremacy in the profession.

The first of the online exchanges occurred within a music teacher group and concerned the NAfME Eastern Division *We All Belong!* call for proposals discussed earlier in the inquiry. In a discussion concerning the ways in which this conference might address racial inequities, I indicated that race was not named in the conference literature. I was met with acknowledged confusion by some music educators, some of whom were affiliated with the organization. The conflicting public and private responses I received fell into four categories: 1) the attention to diversity, equity, and inclusion is a starting point and is an important small step, 2) the title and description of the conference suggest a culturally responsive lens, 3) modern band is all about inclusion and diversity, and 4) *urban* in this context is not coded language.

The exchanges revealed obstacles that represent how problematic discourse can be obscured within narratives of social justice, as well as the tendency for social justice minded educators to be comfortable with incremental progress. To broadly address issues of equity within a discursive context that has systemically subjugated people of color without mentioning
race is a grievous disregard for the harm caused within the profession. This omission of a direct naming of race is further compounded by the societal attention to Black Lives Matter, the murder of Black lives, and the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on communities of color (Chastain et al., 2020). Within such a context, attention placed upon wide-ranging issues of justice is dismissive of specific race-based harms caused within music education much the way the all lives matter counter-movement was never about all lives. Such an approach cannot be understood as a positive step, as its very nature does not lead towards addressing the root causes of racial animus.

In a discursive setting of racial silence, attention given to urban music education is questionable. I have argued throughout this inquiry that music education in the U.S. has continued to benefit the White students that it was designed to serve. As the profession has never served all students and has yet to address race in any systematic manner, an attention to urban music education is not suited to address issues of race, racism, or White supremacy. Much like the broadly applied strategies that purport to consider inclusion, diversity, and equity, a focus upon urban schooling functions as coded language, signaling educators that they are addressing racial inequities when they are not. While there very well may be a culturally responsive lens cast upon this conference, the degree to which race is ignored suggests that the scope may be bound by particularly narrow—White and Eurocentric—parameters. This is equally apparent in the belief expressed that modern band programming was inclusive and diverse by its very nature.

These proclivities expressed within the online discussion suggest perspectives influenced by terminal naivety (Vaugeois, 2013), White fragility (DiAngelo, 2018), and color-blind racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2017). They are representative of barriers presented by those who either believe in the efficacy of incremental change or seek to preserve music education and its discourse.
These perspectives can be clarified through the connections Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) drew between multiculturalism and all-encompassing social understandings of diversity that essentialize “all types of ‘difference’” (p. 61). These understandings are rarely interrogated and create an assumption of equity through the homogenization of all minoritized populations into a singular Other.

Another episode, in a different Facebook music teacher community, highlights additional obstacles to exposing and confronting White supremacy. This particular conversation began when a user asked advice concerning her teaching of Jingle Bells. I shared that the song has roots in minstrelsy, provided an article on the topic, and suggested that if they are considering teaching it, or through it, it is important to understand its history. The teacher agreed and expressed appreciation for the insight that I, and several others, offered and decided not to continue teaching the song. While the original poster’s responses were thoughtful and reflective, the reactions from other music educators in the group included hostility and indignation. One teacher noted that Jingle Bells was a part of our music history and the notion of questioning it was a display of political correctness. Another indicated that one can find issues with just about anything if they look hard enough. Yet another teacher shared that people choose to be offended when there is nothing offensive present. Interestingly, no poster had ever suggested removing the song from the canon, but rather had recommended allowing the knowledge of the song’s history and context to guide decisions and instruction. Additionally, no user had ever expressed any offense taken by the song.

The extreme reactions to suggestions that a song’s history is a relevant consideration in choosing repertoire was certainly connected with the role that race played in the context. The assumptions made upon the motivations of those offering advice and the rapid escalations...
towards hostility indicate something more than the presence of White fragility (DiAngelo, 2018) and terminal naivety (Vaugeois, 2013) or a desire towards conservation of the canon. It suggests White rage (Anderson, 2016).

Though there are obstacles present to challenging both White supremacy and gatekeeping within music education, there are indications of solidarity and hope. Most profoundly, I saw hope in the future of music education because 13 thoughtful music educators volunteered to be interviewed for this study, knowing that their only remuneration would be the chance to contribute to research that confronted the injustices they witnessed or experienced daily. I saw hope in each of the online discussions described, when BIPOC and White teachers spoke up against oppressive rhetoric. Within NAfME, I see hope that the confrontation of racial inequities and Whiteness within music education discourse may be drawing nearer.

One such indication of a shifting understanding of Eurocentricity’s grasp of upon music education came from one of NAfME’s federated chapters. The Maryland Music Educators Association created a new event in which students were able to participate during the autumn of 2020. This Fall Solo and Ensemble Festival invited students to submit recordings for adjudication with no parameters concerning repertoire, no instrumental or vocal styling restrictions, and the option of submitting solo or ensemble performance videos (Maryland Music Educators Association, 2020). JJ Norman, the Executive Director for the Maryland Music Educators Association shared, that “educators and students were encouraged to select repertoire reflective of the student’s personal experiences and cultures.” (JJ Norman, personal communication, January 10, 2021). Though this event did not name race or remove all barriers for students, such as eliminating fees and the need to have a teacher be a NAfME member, it sets
a striking precedent in the weakening of Eurocentricity’s grasp upon music education discourse, which will hopefully be replicated nationally.

Also encouraging is the intentionality that NAfME’s president, Dr. Mackie V. Spradley, has shown since starting her leadership in June of 2020. Since beginning, Dr. Spradley has written several membership-wide emails that have explicitly named systemic racism within the organization (M. V. Spradley, membership communication, November 4, 2020; November 30, 2020; January 4, 2021) and has called out the mere allusion to “equity, diversity, inclusion, and access as important goals” (M. V. Spradley, membership communication, January 4, 2021) within NAfME. I hold optimism that this intentional reframing of NAfME’s legacy will contribute to a shift in discourse throughout the organization.

**Implications**

Though the understandings expressed in this inquiry have implications within music education, they are more broadly representative of education as a whole and may be applicable in social and professional networks outside of teaching and learning. In this manner, the binaries highlighted throughout this inquiry function as emblematic of the manners in which White supremacy may manifest in a variety of social systems. Through its processes of assimilation, appropriation, and erasure White supremacy is woven throughout the fabric of systems which privilege White people at the expense of non-White Others.

Music education, as a subdiscipline within education expressly concerned with cultural (re)production, has served as an ideal point from which to observe the manners in which White privilege, terminal naivety (Vaugeois, 2013), and color-blind racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2017) combine to mask the complex systems of White supremacy. Though music education may have served as the context within which this inquiry was bound, the wider context of public-school
education suffers from a parallel relationship with White supremacy. It, too, is focused upon curricula and instruction, with relatively little emphasis on the ideological foundations upon which they are based. As with music education, such an environment functions as an ideal medium for the cultivation of White supremacy. Contrary to narratives that music teachers are inherently different from their colleagues, music teachers function within the very same frameworks as all public-school educators. While they teach a different subject and may approach instruction differently, all public-school teachers exist within the same broader social context. All teachers are subject to the quality control machinations that exist throughout the zones of a music educator’s life and all subdisciplines have discourse that drives curriculum and practice. There is no indication that the findings from this inquiry would not be germane to all of education; however, analyses of the ways in which discourse and gatekeeping operate within other aspects of public-school education are worthy of study.

Considering the imperceptibility of White supremacy and its mechanisms, I believe that it is reasonable to expect application within social systems beyond education. Any social grouping which maintains both discourse and an accountability apparatus which unilaterally defines success is well positioned for White supremacy to take hold. As such, these structures will be able to apply the findings within this inquiry to their contexts, particularly if there are symptoms of inequities as witnessed in music education.

Although there exists a shared social context in which all public-school teachers exist, music education is distinct from other subdisciplines in practice. Particularly unique to music, as well as other areas of arts education, is the attention to the creation of cultural artifacts. As such, the imperceptibility of White supremacy in music education specifically can be somewhat understood through the *universae lingua* fiction, which characterizes music as impartial by
design. Contrary to the presumed universality of music, the foundation of music education is not, by its very nature, just. In the U.S., it is premised upon Western classical traditions of best which places all else as worse and, as such, privileges some at the expense of everyone else. Through this narrow vision of worthiness, it has caused harm to countless Black and Brown students across multiple generations. Educators must acknowledge the legacy of harm caused within music classrooms in order to appropriately acknowledge the potential for which damage may continue to occur. Only then will they be able to see beyond the symptoms of racial animus so as to confront the systems that enable their adaptions and persistence. The findings within this inquiry indicate that far too many voices have been silenced for far too long in service of a singular vision of music education; the profession must change. It must be reconsidered from the ground up, without sentimentality for what was and what is, with its collective eyes wide open and directed towards what might be.

In consideration of a missing link (Wodak & Meyer, 2009) between the individual perspectives expressed within the interviews and the epistemes (Foucault, 1978/1995, 1980) that live within the broader discursive scheme of music education, tensions were revealed between what participants understood and what was expressed collectively. This misalignment between individual and collective perspectives is representative of the inherent binaries within oppressive acts. These frictions are not only representative of inconsistent mindsets but suggest a concerted effort from within institutions to control the character of the discourse in spite of opposing voices. Left unexposed and unaddressed, these antidualogical manipulations will continue to regulate what is written and said within conferences, professional developments, and organizational literature, effectively manipulating the ways in which many music educators
perceive the reality of their profession; this is a machination of a normalizing power functioning to prevent shifts within music education through control of its discourse.

Through assimilation, appropriation, and erasure, the normalizing power exerted by institutional authorities within music education functions antidialogically to present a narrow understanding of the nature of the profession and impede dissenting perspectives, while appropriating enough of their parlance to convince members that they address the inequities they perpetuate. Such tactics manifested in the final reminder for NAfME’s Eastern Division We All Belong! call for proposals. In an email (NAfME, membership communication, January 13, 2021) and corresponding Facebook post, NAfME used identical messaging from prior proposal calls, save one term. On this occasion, the strand “Urban Music” was replaced with “City School Music” (although the linked website text remained unchanged). While I do not know if my feedback motivated this change, the edit suggests an acknowledgement that there is an issue with the term urban music and a simultaneous disregard for problematic usage of such coded language within a context absence of race; changing the code does not change the presence of coded language.

The manners in which the tentacles of White supremacy can be seen within the functions of NAfME’s control over discourse suggests that their presence throughout the four zones of gatekeeping in music education are not incidental. In consideration of the role music education plays in cultural generation and regeneration, I contend that the mechanisms of gatekeeping operate in conjunction with discursive manipulation to uphold, not just a singular type of music education, but a singular type of cultural standard: Whiteness.

Through the manipulation of conference discourse and their pivotal role in developing the national music standards, NAfME effectively enables and maintains the criterion for classroom
instruction, music teacher education, and professional licensure. In this regard, I argue that the missing link (Wodak & Meyer, 2009) between individual perspectives and epistemes (Foucault, 1978/1995, 1980) that lives within music education discourse is White supremacy.

**Paths Forward**

It is possible that some teachers and institutional power holders are unaware of the oppressive nature of music education and thus may not consider questioning or challenging the beliefs and norms that both their profession and identity rely upon. This unconsciousness may be explained by homophily (McPherson et al., 2014), clan control (Wilkins & Ouchi, 1983), or a combination of the two which may serve to cement a professional identity so firm in its association with Eurocentricity that the thought of confronting the status quo either never occurs or represents a threat to identity. It is also possible that the preservation of White supremacy is occurring intentionally and maliciously within music education with the express purpose of subverting dissenting voices; it might be in the space between. Whatever the reason, the binaries present within music education discourse are representative of deeply embedded oppressions, which most significantly impact BIPOC students and teachers. It need not be this way.

The racial and ethnic disparity we see in music education is the result of a regenerative system that centers Whiteness and marginalizes all else. Though individuals may witness, experience, and confront the effects of White supremacy and the manners in which it manifests in gatekeeping practices in music education, the discourse examined showed that collectively, the profession does not recognize or prioritize what is hidden in plain sight. This dysconsciousness might be addressed through a direct confrontation of the epistemological and axiomatic assumptions that drive much of the work throughout the profession. Said differently, an intentional and considerable effort must be made to scrutinize the ideologies behind music
education discourse and encourage individual and collective criticality. Discourse directed towards curriculum and practice without a meaningful commitment to the assumptions from which they derive supports the continued regeneration of what is, and prohibits transformation.

In music education, the silence concerning the assumptions and lenses which frame the curricula and practices that dominate the discourse suggests that collectively, the ideological foundations within the profession remain unexamined. This unrelenting focus upon content and instruction within music education disallows the exposure of the veiled underlying beliefs upon which they are based. At worst, this persistence elucidates the manners in which mechanisms of White supremacy may be intentionally employed to assert a normalizing control over discourse (Foucault, 1978/1995). At best, it is representative of an inherited or inadvertent representation of the regenerative nature of the priorities which frame discourse. As the ideologies and systems of White supremacy require no awareness of their existence to function, the regenerative cycle created by the continued focus upon curriculum and instruction signify a discursive dysconsciousness of the manners in which assimilation, appropriation, and erasure occur systematically throughout music education.

The binaries revealed within both music education discourse and practices expose a most disheartening side of the profession. Though undoubtedly discouraging, these tensions may be engaged dialectically in processes that confront the inherent contradictions in order to unravel the essence of their relationships. This application of a Freirean understanding of the dialectic relationship between opposing social forces relies upon the intrinsic linking between awareness, reflection, and action. In this process, contradictory elements can serve to clarify one another and ultimately be instrumental in developing deep understandings of the oppressive forces within music education. This awareness can contribute towards a teacher’s conscientização—
consciousness of one’s reality and the factors upon which it is influenced—and praxis—the reflection and action upon one’s world so as to reshape it (Freire, 1970/2005).

If music educators can be encouraged to engage in practices of conscientization, it might lead to them to join in solidarity in order to oppose the discourse and policies that dominate and manipulate the nature of their profession. For this to occur, organizations such as NAfME would need to act against their own demonstrated interest of maintaining systemic power and Whiteness. History suggests that this will not occur unless music teachers compel them to do so. Said differently, NAfME will not address race or their complicity in upholding White supremacy within music education simply because broader public sentiment suggests that Black lives matter. Rather, organizational messaging will bend to give the appearance of the consideration of racial inequities, while transforming nothing; transformation must be demanded, in solidarity and relentlessly.

A focus upon teacher conscientization, solidarity, and praxis is essential to change but requires an intentional focus upon the antidialogic machinations that proselytize ideologies into attitudes and actions. Though they are the essential first steps towards change, they are inadequate in wholly confronting the oppressions inherent in music education. As argued throughout this inquiry, discourse both represents the implicit epistemological assumptions of a people and influences their constructions of reality; the manipulation of discourse does not change its impact. From the understanding of White supremacy as the missing link (Wodak & Meyer, 2009) between the epistemes (Foucault, 1978/1995, 1980) with music education and teacher constructions of reality, the importance of considering the ways in which ideologies both inform and command discourse, curricula, and practices is essential.
Notwithstanding the manipulative orientation of normalizing discourse (Foucault, 1978/1995), individual ideologies exist as a dialectic tension between external influences—such as social and professional expectations—and individual values. As their respective positions influence all that educators say and do in their music classes, a considerable focus must be placed upon the values and ideals that inform the profession. Such attention to what informs the ways in which music educators move and act within their worlds may have an impact broader than the acquisition of such consciousness. The awareness of, and reflection upon, the ways in which ideologies infiltrate broader societal systems may enable educators to develop culturally responsive curricula and practices that engage their students in both meaning making and cultural generation through music.

In consideration of whether a concerted focus upon ideologies can influence curricula and practice, I contend that it already does. Though this inquiry did not seek out all ideological perspectives that may influence music education, the data reveals that the beliefs and tactics inherent within ideologies of White supremacy are present throughout music education discourse. Consequently, ideology is already dominating content and instruction throughout the profession and has had an incalculable impact of harm for generations. Bringing consciousness to its operation may allow more music educators to see the roots of racism, rather than its symptoms.

The struggles and perspectives expressed within the educator interviews are consistent with the understanding that individual consciousness is fundamental yet insufficient on its own in the dismantling of systemic oppressions. The narratives suggested that individual cognizance of injustice in their profession may have affected participants’ respective spheres of influence but did little to effect systemic change. This is hardly surprising, considering the manners in which
the mechanisms of White supremacy readily adapt to isolated interventions. If White supremacy is to be challenged at its source, individual actors must join together in solidarity, regardless of personal path. Because of this need for union within the highly dispersed profession, representative organizations for music educators are ideally suited in both reach and impact.

NAfME might use its platform to name race and racism and to dedicate space and time to confronting the legacy of White supremacy in the profession, as well as the ways in which it lives in the discourse, repertoire, ensemble constructions, curricula, and practices within music education. Music education conferences ought to be designed to include dedicated strands that name race and resist the proclivity to essentialize race-based inequities within broad categories of marginalization. The tentacles of White supremacy are unquestionably present throughout music education and this must be addressed by NAfME and other music teacher organizations. To not confront White supremacy in music education is to maintain a position of neutrality—an imaginary stance—that serves to further suppress change.

**Conclusion**

PreK–12 public-school music education in the U.S. has historically and systemically functioned to perpetuate ideologies of White supremacy, not just within the profession but throughout broader social structures. The study began with a recognition of gatekeeping for White supremacy as the veiled modes in which ideologies, curricula, and teaching practices stand in for assimilation, appropriation, and erasure. However, the inquiry revealed that White supremacy does not influence the ideologies behind music education; White supremacy *is* the ideology of music education in the United States. Therefore, the tentacles of White supremacy are not wrapped around ideologies, curricula, and instruction, as indicated earlier, but are
enclosed around discourse, which then manipulates curricula and practices indirectly without leaving any trace of its cephalopodic grasp (See Figure 3).

**Figure 3**

*Concept Map of Influence of White Supremacy in Music Education*

The methodological design for this inquiry utilized a dialectical-relational elucidatory approach (DREA) in order to wholly investigate the extent to which music teachers make meaning of gatekeeping practices that mediate hidden structures of White supremacy in their profession. The analyses revealed that both White supremacy and gatekeeping were visible to music teachers within their profession and its discourse and through dialogue, it was clear that participants understood the connections between the two mechanisms.

The manners in which White supremacy presents within discourse to influence curricula and practice in music education is analogous to the ways in which it appears throughout the four zones of gatekeeping. In both models, the mechanisms of White supremacy are veiled,
manipulative, and operate through the tentacles of assimilation, appropriation, and erasure, leaving little in terms of footprints. Whereas with curricula and practice the tentacles are screened through discourse, in the life of a music educator they are diffused through contrivances of quality control (see Figure 4). In this latter model, quality control is nothing more than a proxy for Eurocentric understandings of best, professional standards, licensure, open hostility, explicit racism, color-blind racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2017), implicit bias, terminal naivety (Vaugeois, 2013), White fragility, and White rage (Anderson, 2016), which are experienced throughout the life of BIPOC music educators. Though this study investigated discourse as a means of seeking connections between White supremacy and gatekeeping within music education, the findings suggest that discourse itself is a veiled apparatus for White supremacy. Together discourse and gatekeeping work in parallel, as twin spawn obscuring their nefarious progenitor in an abhorrent twist upon whitewashing, brushing layer upon layer of chaos and confusion in efforts to distract and obscure their source.
In order to expose, so as to subvert, the mechanisms of White supremacy and gatekeeping within music education, this study has drawn connections between both, so that the foundations which support their persistence could be addressed directly. The edifices of music education must be uncovered and recast with no sentimentality towards preserving that which has been produced at the expense of Black and Brown students and teachers. An ideology of music education that holds no regard for notions of best but maintains a fundamental value in meaning-making would engender teachers and students to define their own roles within their individual and collective worlds and would be both culturally relevant and culturally responsive.

As teachers must recognize the history of, and potential for, harm in their classrooms, representative music educator organizations must acknowledge their collective role in contributing to a discourse that has caused incalculable injury. Representative bodies must advance understandings of the historical, social, and political contexts in which students and
their teachers exist. They must support educators in engaging students to recognize their individuality and power, even if it jeopardizes what music education has been, how music teachers function, or the roles that these organizations play in the future of the profession.

In order to subvert paradigms of assimilation, appropriation, and erasure in favor of critical perspectives that center student experiences and realities alongside those of their teachers, power holding organizations must be challenged to abandon the reins of discourse and quality control that continue to be tethered to tentacles of White supremacy. These appendages need not loosen their grasp while their presence remains unseen and thus cannot be disentangled through well-intentioned efforts targeted at the symptoms of their malevolence. In this manner, power holders will not relinquish authority or yield control when music educators center their efforts on confronting only the manifestations presented within curricula and practice. For genuine change to occur within their profession, teachers must shift their attention from how White supremacy is present in music education to how it steers it; only then can they fully confront their complicity in upholding its legacy. Then, if educators can unite, solidarity may yield systemic transformation.

As the epigraph suggests, liberation is birth, and within music education, it is long overdue. As painful as it may be, the journey towards a pedagogy of transformation will yield a new music education “born in the labor which brings into the world this new being: no longer oppressor nor longer oppressed, but human in the process of achieving freedom” (Freire, 1970/2005, p. 49). Music educators must collectively demand that their representative organizations shift their focus away from curricula and practices that situate teachers over their students and center a Eurocentric cultural perspective. Instead, they must impel organizational leadership to dedicate time and space to in-service and pre-service music education pedagogy...
that confronts members with the historical impact that music education has had on communities of color. If organizations refuse to transform, then their power over the institution must be supplanted through mass exodus. Solidarity around the confrontation of White supremacy unmasked will allow the collective to unbridle its hold on discourse and reveal the quality control mechanisms for what they are: instruments of assimilation, appropriation, and erasure. An alliance that frames music education in a manner that recognizes within each classroom, there exists multiple centers and margins, always in dialogue and in constant flux, would have the capacity to shift music education from a sphere of manipulated regeneration to one of collective generation. If music educators fearlessly engage the ideologies of White supremacy that steer their discourse and drive BIPOC students and teachers out, then they can begin confronting the generations of harm caused under their profession’s banner. If music educators prioritize attention upon race, racism, White supremacy, and Black and Brown lives, then the racial and ethnic diversity within the field may move towards being representative of the communities in which music is taught. If music teachers can join in solidarity to demand these changes, then curricula and practices might finally and actually express value for all peoples, enabling slogans such NAfME adages as *We All Belong!* to actually ring true.
APPENDIX A

RECRUITMENT FLYER

Are you a public-school music teacher interested in social justice? Do you teach in an urban environment? Have you been teaching music for more than 3 years? Have you attended at least two music education conferences?

If you answered yes to all of these questions, you are invited to volunteer to take part in a research study.

Your part in this research will be confidential.

If you decide to participate, you may be asked to engage in an interview that will take a minimum of 60 minutes but may take up to 2 hours.

The purpose of this research is to seek and consider the ways in which educators perceive music education discourse and the manners in which they recognize their contribution.

More specifically, this study seeks to expose and interrogate the white and racist structures hidden in music education discourse. While there is no direct benefit to you from participating in this study, your participation may help us learn more about the role that white supremacy has played in public-school music education.

The researcher is Brian Gellerstein, doctoral candidate in the Department of Urban Education, Leadership, and Policy Studies Program at the University of Massachusetts Boston.

For more information or to sign up for the study, email: Brian Gellerstein at brian.gellerstein001@umb.edu
APPENDIX B

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

University of Massachusetts Boston
Department of Urban Education, Leadership, and Policy Studies Program
100 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, MA 02125-3393

Consent Form for Daring to See: White Supremacy and Gatekeeping in Music Education.

Introduction and Contact Information
You are asked to take part in a research study. The researcher is Brian Gellerstein, doctoral candidate in
the Department of Urban Education, Leadership, and Policy Studies Program at the University of
Massachusetts Boston. Please read this form and feel free to ask questions. If you have further questions
later, Mr. Gellerstein will discuss them with you. His telephone number is 617.913.4299 and email
address is brian.gellerstein001@umb.edu. In addition, you may also contact his dissertation committee
chair in this research study, Dr. Farinde-Wu at abiola.farinde@umb.edu.

Description of the Project:
The purpose of this research is to understand the ways in which White supremacy exists within music
education discourse and the ways in which educators perceive it. If you decide to participate, you will be
asked to engage in a semi-structured Zoom interview that will take a minimum of 60 minutes but may
take up to 2 hours. The questions which guide this semi-structured interview have been designed to allow
for a dialogue between you and the researcher in order to discuss your experiences as a public-school
music teacher and your perceptions of its music education discourse. You are encouraged to use
anecdotes that relate your experience of being a music teacher and to relay any emotions and perceptions
that you deem important. You may skip any questions that you wish to pass over.

Risks or Discomforts:
Although this study is of minimal risk, a risk of participation is the emergence of negative or distressful
feelings in engaging with the research materials. You may speak with Brian Gellerstein to discuss any
distress or other issues related to study participation. If you wish to discuss concerns with Dr. Farinde-
Wu, you are encouraged to contact her at abiola.farinde@umb.edu. Another risk of participation is a
breach of confidentiality. We will do everything we can to protect your information.

Benefits:
This study seeks to expose and interrogate the White supremacist structures that exist throughout the
discourse of music education in the United States. While there is no direct benefit to you from
participating in this study, your participation may help us learn more about the role the ways in which
White supremacy has played in public-school music education.
Confidentiality:
Your part in this research is confidential. That is, the information gathered for this project will not be published or presented in a way that would allow anyone to identify you. Your name will be concealed with a pseudonym, and information concerning your identity and data collected will be coded in order to protect your confidentiality. This information can only be linked to you through a coding system known only to the researcher. Information gathered for this project will be password protected and only the researcher will have access to the data. The University of Massachusetts Boston Institutional Review Board (IRB) that oversees human research and its representatives may inspect and copy your information.

If identifiers are removed from your identifiable private information that are collected during this research, that information could be stored indefinitely and used for future research studies by the researcher without your additional informed consent.

Voluntary Participation:
The decision whether or not to take part in this research study is voluntary. If you do decide to take part in this study, you may end your participation at any time without consequence. If you wish to end your participation, you should call Mr. Gellerstein at 617.913.4299 or email him at brian.gellerstein001@umb.edu to relay your desire to cease your involvement.

Consent to Audiotaping & Transcription:
This study involves the audio taping of your interview with the researcher. In the event of a synchronous computer-based interview, only the audio recording will be saved. Neither your name nor any other identifying information will be associated with the audio recording or the transcript. All files will be encrypted so that only the researcher will be able to access to the recordings.

The recordings will be kept for about one year. The recordings will be transcribed by the researcher and deleted once the transcriptions are checked for accuracy. Transcripts of your interview may be reproduced in whole or in part for use in presentations or written products that result from this study. Neither your name nor any other identifying information (such as your voice) will be used in presentations or in written products resulting from the study. Immediately following the interview, you will be given the opportunity to have the recording deleted if you wish to withdraw your consent to recording or participation in this study.

By agreeing to each item, you are consenting to participate in that procedure:
- having your interview recorded;
- to having the recording transcribed;
- use of the written transcript in presentations and written products.

Questions:
You have the right to ask questions about this research before you agree to be in this study and at any time during the study. If you have further questions about this research or if you have a research-related problem, you can reach Mr. Gellerstein by phone at 617.913.4299 or email at brian.gellerstein001@umb.edu. In addition, you may also contact his dissertation committee chair in this research, Dr. Farinde-Wu at abiola.farinde@umb.edu.
If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, please contact a representative of the Institutional Review Board (IRB), at the University of Massachusetts, Boston, which oversees research involving human participants. The Institutional Review Board may be reached by telephone or e-mail at (617) 287-5374 or at human.subjects@umb.edu.

By verbally agreeing to participate and participating in the interview, you will be agreeing to participate in the research.

Please keep a copy of this form for your records or if you need to contact me.
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL: Daring to See: White Supremacy and Gatekeeping in Music Education

**TYPE OF INTERVIEW**: Person-to-person semi-structured critical ethnographic interview adapted from Madison’s (2005/2019) outline of the structure of dialogic interviewing.

**DATE:**

**PLACE:**

**INTERVIEWER**: Brian Gellerstein

**INTERVIEWEE**: 

**POSITION OF INTERVIEWEE**: 

**BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT**: The questions which guide this interview have been designed to gain an understanding of the ways in which music teachers make meaning of gatekeeping practices that mediate hidden structures of white supremacy.

**Confirm:**
- Go over Informed Consent
- Recording in Audio Only
- If you need a break, let me know.
- I appreciate your time and insight.

*Remind participants not to use their real names or any directly identifiable information in the interview.*
QUESTIONS:

**Contextualizing** Descriptive/Narrative context questions to build rapport and elicit context for subsequent sections of interview.

- Could you tell me about what drew you to teaching public-school music?
- What do you see as the role, or purpose, of music education in public schools?
- What sort of experiences from NAfME or NAfME subsidiary conferences stand out to you?
- What types of professional needs do you wish NAfME or NAfME subsidiary conferences would address for you?
- Tell me why you volunteered for this study.

**Beliefs** Advice questions are asked to elucidate points of views, individual ideologies, or temperament.

- If a former student, now a high school junior, were considering becoming a music teacher and asked you for advice on how to proceed, what do you think you would tell them?
- If you were on a panel that had the authority to change the current licensing process for music teachers, what sort of changes might you demand?
- If a student came to speak to you about the music you are teaching being too white, how do you think you might respond?
- Suppose another music teacher in your district confided in you that their colleagues were pressuring them to change their curricula and performances to be more “traditional” (whatever that means). What sort of advice would you give them?
As part of this research, the language used in the titles and descriptions for all sessions of four distinct music education conferences were analyzed—two at the national level, and two at the state level. The following findings and questions relate to this text analysis. First, I will share 5 findings and then I will ask a few questions.

1. All of the conferences were organized sessions into strands. Of the four conferences, no strand addressed issues of race, racism, or white supremacy in music education.

2. None of the state level sessions contained language associated with issues of race or racism.

3. At the national level, 2% of sessions addressed issues of race or racism.

4. 3 of the 567 sessions analyzed, addressed issues around bias.

5. 8 of the 567 sessions analyzed, addressed issues around justice.

- What are your thoughts around this information learned from the conference analysis?
- Tell me about the ways that these data compare with your personal experiences at music education conferences.
- What sorts of questions or ideas do these findings bring up for you concerning music education conferences?

Descriptive questions will be used to ask participants to reflect or provide a narrative upon an experience, opinion, or context mentioned earlier.

- Probing of prior discussed areas that would benefit from elaboration.
- Descriptive questions will be used to ask participants to reflect upon connections between white supremacy and gatekeeping practices in music education through a recall of incidents from the prior question categories.
APPENDIX D

TRANSCRIPTION CONVENTIONS

R    Researcher
P1   Participant number
( )  words spoken, not audible
[    overlapping talk begins
]   overlapping talk ends
why  emphasis
YEAH louder than surrounding talk
*yes* softer than surrounding talk
heh heh laughter
-hhh  in-breath
hhh-  out-breath
(?)   too obscure to transcribe
(.)   small untimed pause
(2.0) paused time in seconds
:::    prolonged sound, lengthening of sound
word… sentence trails off
…word sentence picks up
Redacted personal information redacted from transcript
REFERENCES


The Praxis Study Companion. (2021a). *Music: Content and Instruction* [PDF].


The Praxis Study Companion. (2021b). *Music: Content Knowledge* [PDF].


