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Teen Voices from the City:
How School Instrumental Music Students Persevere and Thrive

By

Robin Elizabeth Armstrong

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF
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Teen Voices from the City: How School Instrumental Music Students Persevere and Thrive

We certify that we have read this dissertation and approved it as meeting departmental criteria for graduating with honors in scope and quality.

We have found that it is complete and satisfactory in all respects, and that any and all revisions required by the final examining committee have been made.

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ABSTRACT

High school bands and orchestras in the United States reflect the rampant educational opportunity gap when it comes to the representation of Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) student populations, denying talented and passionate students the opportunities intrinsic to instrumental music participation (IMP) (Bradley, 2007; Elpus & Abril, 2011; Kozol, 2005; Salvador & Allegood, 2014; Stanford CEPA). The study's purpose was to understand how BIPOC students successfully participated in high school instrumental music (IM) ensembles. Using the theoretical lenses of Maslow's (2015) hierarchy of needs and Freire's (2013) critical pedagogy, this study asked: How do teenage BIPOC IM students experience, and make meaning of, their public-school IM journeys? Including, Who supported them?; What were the transitional points of decision?; What were the IM bonds that kept them participating? Using a constructivist phenomenological approach, this qualitative study interviewed 12 BIPOC high school graduates of a Midwest metropolitan area to learn how they made meaning of their IM journeys. Several common themes emerged. Participants' IM journeys were supported by family, peers, and IM teachers. Transition points included high school entrance, structural crises, and exclusionary experiences. IMP bonds to continuing IMP included mood, social connection, self-esteem/challenge, aesthetics, and agency themes. Recommendations include investment in equitable, culturally responsive IM programming and recruiting; targeted guidance and bridging strategies for high school IM transitions, private lessons for advanced students of low SES, the use of collaborative student-centered teaching strategies and culturally relevant literature; and targeted, caring anti-racist policies and strategies toward inclusion.

DEDICATION

Dedicated to the memory of “Uncle” Dean Kranhold,
early South Dakota feminist, band teacher extraordinaire,
mentor, principal, friend, and brother,
who always saw more in me than I saw in myself

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

This study concerns the opportunity/participation gap with students of color and of lower socioeconomic levels in high school bands when compared to white students and students from higher socioeconomic levels. As a former middle school band teacher who worked with students of color in the lowest socioeconomic areas of the Twin Cities metro region, I saw first-hand how band class sparked enthusiasm and joy in many students, and how easy it was to recruit 90-95% of each 6th grade class into our band program.

Many elementary and middle schools have band enrollments that reflect the diversity of their school populations. There is in many high school bands, however, inherent inequity visible in the underrepresentation of students of color and the lack of opportunity for instrumental music study for students of lower socioeconomic status (SES), especially in urban areas (Albert, 2006a; Bradley, 2007; Elpus & Abril, 2011; Salvador & Allegood, 2014). This discrepancy is part of the well-known systematic opportunity gap in American education today generally and is a matter of social justice (DeLorenzo, 2012; Kozol, 2005; Stanford CEPA). All interested students, of all ethnicities, cultures, backgrounds, and means, deserve to experience the intellectual, socioemotional, and spiritual nurturance that is often part of high school instrumental music study.

Statement of the Problem, Purpose, and Significance

The problem of underrepresentation in high school music ensembles by students of color and students of lower SES urgently needs more critical study. In a meta-analysis of instrumental music education research before 2006, Albert (2006a) found the SES of a school district or area was related to access to instrumental music study, with those children in lower SES districts having less access to music programs in multiple studies. Bradley (2007) reported that although a

large midwestern suburban school district had a 51% White student population in overall demographics, the high school music ensembles were comprised of 64% White students (p. 134). In a large 2011 study (n = 13,240+), Elpus and Abril found the highest SES quartile was 1.71 times more likely to belong to a music ensemble than the lowest SES quartile (p. 135). Salvador and Allegood (2014) found that schools in the highest non-white (NW) quartile of their study of music instruction in both the Detroit and the Washington DC areas were the most likely to have the least opportunity for music classes. In the Detroit area, where the difference was most striking, Salvador and Allegood (2014) calculated that 100% of the lowest NW quartile of schools offered music instruction, but only 40% of the high NW quartile of schools offered any music electives at all (p. 88). High school instrumental music ensembles are clearly underrepresented by both students of lower SES and students of color, a demographic intersection especially apparent in many densely populated urban areas.

Research repeatedly points to the many apparent benefits of school band for the students enrolled, including strong correlates of socioemotional enjoyment (Adderley et al., 2003; Edgar, 2016; Webster, 2015); stress relief (Henderson et al., 2017; Varner, 2017; Webster, 2015); and greater academic success (Babo, 2004; Fitzpatrick, 2006; Guhn et al., 2019). The benefits of instrumental music study may have future effects on students' lives, including higher ACT scores (Elpus, 2013; Moore, 2012) which, in turn, affect potential college enrollment and expanded career options in music education (Elpus, 2015); continuing socioemotional life satisfaction (Jutras, 2011); and better cognitive functioning in aging (Hanna-Pladdy & MacKay, 2011).

Documented benefits of instrumental music study only make the enrollment and opportunity gaps found in band programs more egregious and concerning. The purpose of this

study, therefore, was to explore issues of disparity in band enrollment by revealing recent graduates' views about why they continued to participate in instrumental music ensembles within a metropolitan area into their high school years. I explored the perceptions of 12 students of diverse backgrounds, all students of color, who were recently enrolled in high school instrumental music (IM) ensembles, to learn about their band experiences and the stories of their band journeys.

I wanted to understand who helped them to stay on their path, at what points in their journey they made decisions to endure in IM and why, and what personal meanings students found within their musical experiences that keep them bonded to instrumental music participation (IMP). By answering these questions, we learned more about systemic issues that can be addressed with school band programs, and what common teaching strategies may be crucial to inspire and support band students. If educators, school administrators, and policy makers learn more about these issues and strategies, IM study might become more available and more relevant to a wider population of young people. And, with changes suggested by this study, perhaps students from all socioeconomic classes and cultural backgrounds might be more likely to be enriched by high school music study.

Research Question

My research question related to the underrepresentation of students of color and students of lower SES in high school instrumental music programs, to help discover why this underrepresentation exists and what might be done about it. This issue, part of the larger educational opportunity gap in the United States, was and is a matter of social and racial justice. It has urgently needed more study. To explore this problem and potential solutions, I asked the question: How do teenage band students of diverse backgrounds experience, and make meaning

of, their public-school instrumental music journey? My sub-questions included: Who helped students to stay on their path of instrumental music study? At what points in their journey did they make decisions to endure in band and why? What are the personal meanings students have found within their musical experience that kept them bonded to instrumental music participation?

Overview of Chapters

In this first chapter, I have presented a case for studying my research question regarding the inequitable representation of students of color and students of lower SES in high school bands. After I define some important terms used in this study, I commence the second chapter with a review of the related literature, including an historical perspective of band education in the United States, followed by literature themes of the corollary benefits of instrumental music participation (IMP). The benefits surveyed include the academic, socioemotional, and cognitive domains. I next surveyed barriers to IMP, successful strategies of band teachers in recruiting and retaining IMP students, and qualitative studies which, like my study, have interviewed instrumental music youths about their IMP experiences. Chapter Two also includes overviews of two theories used as lenses in my study: Maslow's (2015) hierarchy of needs and Freire's (2013) critical pedagogy. I conclude Chapter Two with a description of the gaps and tensions I found in the literature review.

In Chapter Three, I lay out the research methodology used for my study including the research design, institutional review board (IRB) approval, and methods for data collection and analysis. Chapter Three concludes with a summary of my professional experience, revealing of my potential biases, and descriptions of how I ensured good validity, reliability, and ethics in my study. Chapter Four tells the individual story of each of the 12 participants in this study, offering quotes that reveal their unique voices, and organized by the individual themes that stood out for

each participant. In contrast, Chapter Five offers the results of the study using the strongest common themes found within each study sub-question.

Chapter Six returns to the theories of Maslow (2015) and Freire (2013) to view and analyze the study findings through those two theoretical lenses. After the analysis, I offer my conclusions in Chapter Seven, including a summary of the findings, limitations, implications, my recommendations to those in the field and for future related studies, and my concluding personal reflections.

Definition of Terms

I adopted the following terms to conduct my study:

Instrumental Music (IM): This paper addresses public school participation in band and orchestra, traditional large ensembles typically offered in American high schools.

Instrumental Music Participation (IMP): While not strictly exclusive to band participation, this paper primarily addresses the experiences of students who participated in middle school band ensembles, and/or who successfully completed at least one year of high school IMP.

IMP Bonds: The personal meanings and need fulfillments of IMP that act as bonding agents of students to IMP, motivating them to continuously enroll in IMP. These bonds may be found in the various domains such as the cognitive, socioemotional, aesthetic, and spiritual.

Personal Meanings: Verbalizations of values, beliefs, need fulfillment, and possible existential meanings related to music study. Musical discovery is commonly “spiritual and sensuous” in nature, communicates the ineffable in personal yet universal ways, and can represent larger meanings in life as students discover and articulate why they enjoy music (Jorgensen, 2011, p. 220).

Socioeconomic Status (SES): A categorization of a person's or group's status hierarchically regarding social and economic characteristics, including income, education, occupation, and, sometimes, place of dwelling (Oxford reference, 2020).

Successful High School IMP (Instrumental Music Participation): Enrollment in a high school instrumental music ensemble for two semesters (one school year) or more (defined for the purposes of selection into this study).

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Literature Review

To answer the question: What personal meanings inspired diverse students enrolled in instrumental music at the high school level to continue with the study of their musical instruments? I started by conducting a review of the existing literature by researching relevant studies and articles. The research is sorted into five themes: (a) the historical context of band programs in the United States; (b) the corollary benefits of instrumental music participation (IMP) including academic, socioemotional, and cognitive domains; (c) barriers to IMP; (d) successful strategies of teachers in recruiting and retaining IMP students; and (e) qualitative studies which, like my study, have interviewed music students themselves about their IMP experiences. This literature review begins with a chronological summary of the history of band in the United States.

Historical Context

The United States tradition of band can be traced back to the fife and drum corps which were part the earliest military units of the European settlers in the New World. As early as 1738, the Virginia legislature compelled free Black, multiracial, and Indigenous men to serve in militias (Clark, 2019). Because Black and Native American men were not allowed to carry weapons, some served in the fife and drum corps instead of performing the worst tasks comprised of hard labor (Clark, 2019).

After the War of 1812, musicians returning from military service formed community and traveling brass bands for entertainment (Clark, 2019). By the middle of the nineteenth century these bands were common, and by the end of the 1800's the bands were, like the rest of American society, segregated into all-Black and all-White ensembles (Clark, 2019). When

military-trained musicians returned home after the end of the Civil War in 1865, many members formed bands for various uses, especially for entertainment (Clark, 2019).

The culture of the African American marching band became especially strong in the international port city of New Orleans, where bands of people of color played in parades each Sunday accompanied by dance movements thought to originate in West Africa (Sakakeeny, 2011). New Orleans benevolent societies also sponsored marching bands to perform for many occasions, including funeral processions (Clark, 2019). The separate-but-equal doctrine of U.S. *Plessey v. Ferguson* in 1896 caused the lighter-skinned Creole musicians of New Orleans to meld their styles into new music along with the formerly enslaved African Americans. Creole musicians were often classically trained in the European style, and were, during pre-war, considered of a higher caste than enslaved Black people. In contrast, the newly freed Black musicians were generally trained in the military or were self-taught. Creole people were of multicultural roots, often having a combination of west African heritage, European heritage (especially French or Spanish), and/or Indigenous Mexican, Afro-Cuban, Puerto Rican, and other Caribbean and northern South American cultures.

The blended ensembles of freed Blacks and Creoles helped to birth distinctly American genres such as ragtime, Dixieland, blues, and jazz, which often also became infused with Spanish-influenced rhythms such as the habanera, rumba, or mambo (Narváez, 1994). One prominent New Orleans band composer was Mexican-born Lorenzo Tio (1893-1933), a Creole man of Spanish-African-American heritage. Tio's talented son, Lorenzo Tio Jr., went on to play in the jazz band of the famous New Orleans composer-pianist Jelly Roll Morton, who proclaimed himself the "inventor of jazz" (Narváez, 1994, p. 217).

In the years leading up to the turn of the twentieth century, Patrick Gilmore, John Phillip Sousa, and W.C. Handy, all famous military-trained band musicians, helped to make band extremely popular with their showy, virtuosic band performance tours and popular compositions (Clark, 2019). This period before and after the turn of the century, commonly called the Golden Age of bands in America, was what led to the school band movement in the U.S. (Mark & Gary, 2007). While community bands of the dominant White American culture were being modeled after the style of John Phillip Sousa (Mark & Gary, 2007), W.C. Handy was teaching music at Alabama A&M at the turn of the century (Clark, 2019). Handy composed and arranged popular music for the HBCU band, music which included syncopated rhythms and blues harmonies. Handy's work at Alabama A&M was influential in the inception of what was eventually to become the uniquely Black style of college marching bands at HBCU's, especially in the southern U.S. (Clark, 2019). The HBCU marching band tradition remains strong today and includes the distinct stylistic characteristics of military drill, high-stepping, dance, angular movements, a bright sound, and an informal competitive spirit (Clark, 2019).

When public school music during the early twentieth century was expanded to include band, mainstream American society modeled school band programs after the style of Sousa, with military marches as a repertory mainstay. After World War I ended, military-trained musicians once again returned from war to help lead bands, this time in the schools (Clark, 2019). Their return occurred just as the numbers of school bands started to rapidly increase causing a need for teachers (Clark, 2019). As community and traveling bands, which often played at trolley-accessed amusement parks, lost some popularity with the invention of the Model T Ford, school bands became an important feature of schools and communities (Mark & Gary, 2007).

School bands in the first half of the twentieth century performed patriotic music at town ceremonies as well as the popular community music of the time (Keene, 2009). School marching bands routinely performed at school football games and town parades. Although considered by some as the younger “illegitimate” relative of the classical symphony orchestra (Allsup & Benedict, 2008, p. 162), both concert and marching bands became a common and stable part of school curricula around the United States. During this time of school band growth, the early through the middle 1900s, Jim Crow laws caused a massive migration of southern Black people to northern cities. Along with this migration, New Orleans musicians brought an explosion of jazz music to clubs in Chicago and New York and spread the popularity of a uniquely American genre of music to cities around the U.S. and parts of Europe.

Parallel to the development of school bands in America was the continuation of the era of federal boarding schools, a time when children of Indigenous tribes in the United States and Canada were forcibly taken from their families. Commonly referred to as Indian boarding schools, the institutions were run with unprecedented governmental support by and for Christian schools (Newland, 2022). The boarding school era lasted for more than a century, from the mid-to-late 1800’s into the 1970’s. The purpose of the schools was to assimilate Native tribes into Euro White culture and to erase the students’ tribal culture and heritage; a common slogan of one of the early boarding schools was, “Kill the Indian, save the man” (Churchill, 2004).

In some of these boarding schools, starting near the turn of the 20th Century, Indigenous children performed in school bands (Parkhurst, 2014; Veerbeek, 2020). Patriotic music was used in these bands to indoctrinate the Native American children into White Eurocentric American culture and to assist the U.S. government in alienating the students from their tribal and familial ties (Veerbeek, 2020). Government boarding schools were often run like military schools

(Tapahonso, 2016; Veerbeek, 2020) and the band was an important part of the military school routines and daily ceremonies (Veerbeek, 2020).

In one case, the school band of Sherman Institute did multi-state performance tours to showcase the “civilized” Indigenous children’s talents (Veerbeek, 2020). While some of the former students remembered certain liberating feelings from IMP at boarding school, such as when taking band trips, music at federally-run Native American boarding schools was largely about propaganda and to erase the cultures of Indigenous peoples (Veerbeek, 2020).

Boarding schools not only featured harsh military traditions, but also malnourishment, torture, and neglect of the Native children in their care (Churchill, 2004; Newland, 2022; Stirbys, 2021), causing trauma to generations of Indigenous people, and still affecting their descendants intergenerationally (Dupris, 2021; Stirbys, 2021; Tapahonso, 2016). Further, it’s been estimated that thousands, if not “tens of thousands,” of Indigenous children died at these boarding schools, with their deaths often unexplained and their young bodies interred in unmarked graves far from their homelands (Newland, 2022, p. 93). This historical survey next turns to the mainstream U.S. educational trends co-occurring during the latter part of the compulsory boarding school era with Native American children.

The Cold War era and the Civil Rights movements of the 1950s and 1960s began decades of various educational reforms, including in school music education. The Tanglewood Symposium of 1967 sponsored by MENC put forth new goals for school music including more inclusiveness and multiculturalism in curricula, as well as encouraging the use of more popular music forms (Mark & Madura, 2014). Stage bands/jazz bands and swing choirs were commonly added as adjuncts to music programs in the 1960s and 1970s (Mark & Madura, 2014). In 1972, the U.S. Education Amendments Act sent Title IX and Title VII funding to encourage more

inclusiveness, multicultural education, ethnic heritage studies, and needed remedial services for education. In the same decade, however, steep inflation began decades of cuts for school budgets, which impacted American school band programs negatively (Mark & Madura, 2014). Poverty increased in urban areas and lower test scores caused a back to basics mentality for school funding into the twenty-first century. The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) policy of 2001 was especially hard on instrumental music education programs. Neoliberal tax policies also contributed to continued cuts for funding to schools, often resulting in children of the lowest SES areas having the least opportunity to participate in music classes (Albert, 2006a; Elpus, 2014; Kozol, 2005; Salvador & Allegood, 2014).

Inequity became especially stark in lower socioeconomic urban areas where, due to historic systemic oppression like neighborhood redlining and other Jim Crow segregation laws, many families of color had been forced to live in the lowest socioeconomic areas of the cities, often in poor conditions (Kozol, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 2017). A systemic concentration of people of color, especially Black people, and of low SES as well, became entrenched in many poor urban areas where the residents tend to be racially segregated, isolated from political power and resources, and denied adequate education (Ford, 1995).

In addition to the loss of funding for education in recent decades, and especially in low SES urban areas, the school band may have lost some popularity due to cultural factors. School band programs, with their military traditions and male-dominated roots, have often come under criticism as hegemonic (Allsup, 2012; Allsup & Benedict, 2008; Bates, 2019; Bradley, 2007; Hawkinson, 2015) and even irrelevant to modern students (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2011; Reimer, 2004; Williams, 2011). As band enrollments drop (Elpus & Abril, 2011; Williams,

2011), bands are often underrepresented by students of color and students of lower socioeconomic status (Bradley, 2007; Elpus & Abril, 2011).

And as urban areas are often hit hardest by cuts to music programs (Albert, 2006a; Salvador & Allegood, 2014), critics rightly worry that the school band tradition is not serving students in an equitable manner. I address some of the existing barriers related to this issue of inequity in some detail but will first discuss some of the research on the corollary benefits of instrumental music study, including the academic, socioemotional, and cognitive domains.

Corollary Benefits of Instrumental Music Study

The disparity in representation of lower SES students and students of color in urban secondary music ensembles is especially concerning because of students who might be unduly excluded or who might drop out because they are, for whatever reason, poorly served by school music classes. These students, therefore, may be missing out on the myriad corollary benefits found with instrumental music study. Such related benefits include those in the academic, socioemotional, and cognitive domains. During recent decades of increased focus on high-stakes testing goals, researchers have, in an apparent effort to justify music education, repeatedly shown strong correlations between music study and higher achievement. I summarize some of these corollary studies in the next paragraphs.

Academic Correlations

Scholars have found positive relationships between IMP and academic performance. Babo (2004) analyzed IMP [instrumental music participation/participant(s)] in relation to academic achievement tests with New Jersey eighth grade students. Using testing data from the 1998-1999 California Achievement Test (CAT) and the New Jersey Grade Eight Proficiency Assessment (GEPA), Babo compared the test scores of IMP students (n= 93) and non-IMP

students ($n = 85$). Babo found significant associations between IMP and increased language arts and/or reading achievement, especially in the GEPA language arts scores, and even when controlled for gender, IQ, and socioeconomic status (SES).

Studying a larger population, Fitzpatrick (2006) found results similar to Babo's (2004) when conducting a statistical analysis comparing the relationship of IMP and SES in the standardized test scores of Columbus, Ohio students in the fourth, sixth, and ninth grades ($N = 15,431$) on Ohio Proficiency Tests. Fitzpatrick's (2006) analyses confirmed that low SES was related to lower achievement rates in Columbus, and that higher achievement rates were related to IMP in similar SES groups. Interestingly, students with low SES who were IMP also outperformed students in the higher SES group who were non-IMP. Fitzpatrick also concluded that higher achievers were more likely to enroll in instrumental music and then to continue IMP, since the scores in fourth grade (before IMP was fully available) indicated that higher-performing students in the fourth grade tended to enroll in instrumental music, and also endured in IMP through the ninth grade, at higher rates.

In a larger study ($n = 112,916$), Guhn et al. (2019) completed a formidable analysis of music achievement and engagement of students in grades 7-12 in British Columbia public schools related to achievement in English, math, and science. Guhn et al. found a positive relationship between music study and each of the three academic areas. The corollary academic relationships were stronger with IMP compared to participation in vocal music. Their analysis suggested that engagement in instrumental music over the course of multi-years may benefit students' academic achievement.

In contrast to studies that suggested a causal link between IMP and higher achievement, Kinney (2010, 2019), in studies of Midwest urban middle schools, found that higher academic

achievement predicted a likeliness to enroll in band in sixth grade, as well as a greater tendency to persist into the eighth grade. Kinney (2010) also found that students who joined and persisted in middle school band were more likely to come from two-guardian or two-parent homes, as well as from higher SES homes. In Kinney's (2019) later study, academic achievement and family structure did affect enrollment in 10th grade band, but SES did not. It is worth noting that two incomes likely create greater SES. And IMP often requires more time resources from families to get children to extra rehearsals and performances, as well as sometimes creating a financial burden for families with only one income. At any rate, whether achievement affects enrollment in band, or enrollment affects achievement, there appears to be a strong link.

It is not just studying music that may affect academic achievement in students (or vice versa), but the actual quality of the music program can affect achievement related to music study. Johnson and Memmott (2006) compared the math and English standardized test scores of 4,739 students comprised of elementary and middle school students from four different areas of the United States. They found students in exemplary music programs scored slightly higher in both mathematics and English than students who did not have high-quality music instruction. Interestingly, Johnson and Memmott (2006) also found that students in deficient instrumental music programs scored slightly higher than students in no music program at all or in the lower-quality choral programs.

In addition to higher standardized test scores, school instrumental music enrollment is also linked to better school attendance. Davenport (2010) ran a comparative analysis between sample populations of IMP and non-IMP students from Baltimore public high schools and middle schools. The two high school populations had statistically significant differences. On average, IMP high school students scored better in Algebra and English achievement tests, and

they also attended school an average of 2.6 days more per year than the non-IMP high school students, an amount that Davenport calculated as statistically significant (p. 61). The attendance analysis that Davenport ran on the middle school population data did not, however, produce statistically significant results regarding the younger students' school attendance.

In addition to being linked to school achievement and attendance, participation in music is sometimes significantly and specifically linked to one of the highest-stakes tests, the ACT (Courson, 2018; Edstrand, 2015; Heninger, 2017; Moore, 2012). In a study of IMP related to the ACT with 2011 high school graduates attending a large metro district in the Midwest, Moore (2012) found that IMP students had a composite ACT score average 3.71 points higher when compared to non-IMP average composite ACT scores (p. 92). Likewise, Heninger (2017) studied the ACT Aspire test results of an entire class of 233 ninth-grade students at a high school in western Wisconsin and found that IMP significantly correlated with higher Aspire test scores in English, reading, science, and math.

In contrast, Elpus (2013) found no significant difference in ACT scores when comparing the transcripts of students who took music in high school against those who did not participate, while factoring in covariates of demographics and achievement before high school, school attitudes, and time use. Elpus makes the general point that selection into music ensembles is complicated, and thus involves several factors.

Edstrand (2015) compared the school records of 50 eleventh-grade band students with the records of 50 eleventh-grade students who were not in band to find out how the two groups compared on the PLAN and ACT tests, as well as on their GPA's. In their Chicago suburb, the band students in the Edstrand study had significantly higher GPA's and also scored significantly higher on both the PLAN and the ACT tests than the students selected for the survey who were

not in band. To complement this mixed methods study, Edstrand (2015) also used online student surveys and interviews with the students' teachers. The students ($n = 100$) and their teachers ($n = 5$) perceived that high school band students exhibited character traits that may affect high achievement more frequently than did their non-IMP peers. Examples of the perceived character traits found more often in IMP students were teamwork, leadership, problem solving, work ethic, and creativity.

Closely related to the traits and skills of teamwork, leadership, and creativity are the many social and emotional benefits documented by scholars who study music education and music therapy. Several of these socioemotional benefits related to IMP are summarized in the next paragraphs.

Socioemotional Benefits

In addition to the enjoyment and challenge of making music, literature from studies of why students choose to participate in music evidence multiple socioemotional benefits of band participation. Such benefits may include feelings of belonging (Adderley et al., 2003; Varner, 2017); enhanced self-esteem (Devroop, 2012; Henderson et al., 2017); friendships (Adderley et al., 2003; Hewitt & Allan, 2013; Jutras, 2011; Stewart, 2005); and stress relief (Henderson et al., 2017; Varner, 2017; Webster, 2015).

In a sample of 114 middle school band students from three schools in a large midwestern city, Stewart (2005) found the most influential factors for students continuing in band were the advantages of private study, enjoyment of participation, interest and value of band, and enjoyment of performance outside of school. The relationship between the students' perceptions of the music reading or playing skills were not found to be significant. Most-frequently cited reasons students gave for staying in band in Stewart's study were friendships, fun, and travel.

Varner (2017) surveyed all the band students ($N=45$) at a private high school in Pennsylvania, and then interviewed ten of the same band students to ascertain students' motivations for IMP. The majority of students surveyed by Varner expressed that band met social and emotional needs, such as a feeling of belonging and stress relief, and also met cognitive needs, such as the enjoyment in the challenge of making music and of mastering their instruments.

Even in more advanced out-of-school ensembles, social needs are an important part of the experience. In 2013, Hewitt and Allan surveyed 72 youth in advanced out-of-school ensembles (band or orchestra) in the UK to learn students' motivations for enrolling or re-enrolling. Participants' motives for joining or re-enrolling in the ensemble often depended on having previous positive experiences in music ensembles. Students joined out-of-school ensembles for the benefits of the public performances, for musical satisfaction, to play with advanced peers, and to make friends. First-time participants were influenced by feedback from peers with ongoing participation based mostly on musical or social aspects, and not based as much on the location of rehearsals or the advice of parents.

The social benefits of band may last into adulthood. In Jutras' 2011 quantitative study of adults who participated in community band through New Horizons Studio ($N = 1,823$), study participants selected play/fun, making new friends, refining skills, and challenge to be the most highly-rated benefits of their participation in the ensemble. When compared to a similar previous study of New Horizon piano students, the categories of play/fun, technique, accomplishment, social/cultural benefits, and challenge were rated less highly by the piano students than they were in the band study. Jutras' findings suggest that, although the learning of skills was valued by the

adult band participants, the social and personal benefits were also very important to those who elected to participate in the adult band program.

Music participation may be especially therapeutic for vulnerable populations. In a meta-analysis of the research of the effects of music therapy and music classes on the social and emotional wellbeing and health of migrant populations, Henderson et al. (2017) examined 45 related articles published between 2002 and 2013. They included seven of the 45 articles in their final analysis, evaluated to fit the topic with the most relevance. Henderson et al. found that the most prominent theme within their analysis of the seven studies was social wellbeing, “followed by stress reduction, enhanced self-esteem, and emotional health” (p. 475). Similarly, Devroop (2012) studied the effects of IMP on the socioemotional well-being of 84 South African eighth graders of low SES participating in a school band program. After two years of IMP, the students were surveyed and, using Likert scales, they self-reported increased average levels of self-esteem, happiness, optimism, and perseverance related to their experience in the band program.

Some of the many emotional and social benefits of music-making have been explained in recent years by the explosion of scientific brain research related to musical experiences. The theory of “Music and Social Bonding” through “Self-other merging and neurohormonal mechanisms” proposed by Tarr et al. (2014) can shed some psychological and scientific light on the important friendships that may form during IMP. Tarr et al. (2014) proposed that social bonding in music happens because of the self-other merging that may occur during the synchrony of movement in music-making, as well as from endorphins released in the brain from the sensations and exertion of playing and listening to music. According to Tarr et al. (2014), the human body’s endogenous opiate system (EOS) involved in primate bonding produces some of the same brain chemistry produced during the rhythmic act of music-making, also sometimes

referred to as entrainment. Entrainment is also part of how other animals often coordinate their movements to travel and function as a pack or herd. Interestingly, ingrained entrainment styles in humans, for example in how they dance together rhythmically, are often culturally based (Gustafson, 2009).

The combination of social bonding and EOS during group music-making may create enhanced feelings of unity and friendship between band students, especially those who sit in close proximity, but also within the entire ensemble. While playing in band or orchestra, students sit closely shoulder to shoulder (an especially non-threatening stance), often tap their toe to the beat, move their fingers to play the same fingerings as their neighbors, and breathe, often all in synchrony. As people play in a band together, they may experience similar sensations in their bodies as they feel the vibrations of sounds simultaneously, and they likely share many of the abstract meanings and connotations of the music they produce together as well (Hodges & Sebald, 2011). Another area of scientific study related to music is brain research and I cover some examples of studies related to the cognitive benefits of music experiences next.

Cognitive Benefits

Although music has long been regarded as an important contributor to well-rounded human development, brain research in recent years related to music has become a popular topic. In the first decade of this century, fascinating and entertaining books were written, published, and then sold to the general population regarding brain research and the seemingly-magical effects of music on the brain. Popular books on this topic included those by Levitan (2007) and Sacks (2007). This public fascination was, at least in part, initiated by the famous so-called Mozart-effect, first reported by Rauscher et al. (1993).

Rauscher et al. (1993) studied 36 college students who completed the Stanford-Binet subtest of spatial reasoning intelligence after listening to a ten-minute Mozart sonata. For comparison, students also took the same test after listening to a relaxation tape, and after sitting in an equivalent amount of silence as well. The results showed that students' spatial IQ test scores after listening to the Mozart sonata averaged 8-9 points higher than after either of the other conditions (p. 611). This study which focused on the effect of music on the brain, especially of Mozart's music, music that is historically and universally deemed as complex and brilliant, became a public fascination. Mozart music recordings were consequently sold and purchased specifically to play for babies in utero, and for new babies and toddlers to hear as well, for the ostensible purpose of maximizing children's brain development and intelligence.

Intelligence in relation to music, especially the music of Mozart, became the subject of many scientific and educational studies in the years following Rauscher et al. (1993), and these myriad studies eventually resulted in multiple meta-analyses of the phenomenon (Chabris, 1999; Hetland, 2000; Pietschnig et al., 2010). In total, the Mozart-effect on intelligence was not always found to be consistent and was, over-all, generally deemed less effective than the results of Rauscher et al. (1993) claimed. Pietschnig et al. (2010) even suggested some evidence of laboratory bias in the original study. Chabris (1999) also explained some of the short-term effectiveness of listening to Mozart based on the concept of arousal from the spirited selection, and on whether the music was found to be enjoyable by various research participants.

The interest in the Mozart-effect, however, continued. In 2010, Aheadi et al. found that, when college musicians listened to Mozart just before spatial tasks, their scores on tests of spatial ability did not improve. The researchers did, however, find improvement in the after-scores of non-musician college students' spacial tests. Aheadi et al. (2010) explained this difference with

the “hemispheric-activation hypotheses,” meaning that music listening and spatial tasks have both been shown to be active in the right hemispheric parietal lobes, which explains why music stimulation might help warm up a non-musician’s brain for spatial tasks. Trained musicians, in contrast, have been shown to process music with both sides of the brain, which might explain why the musically trained college students scored higher than the non-musicians on the before-test of spatial ability, as well as why their scores on the after-test remained flatter after listening to Mozart. Aheadi et al. (2010) canceled out the influence of arousal by taking the pulse of participants before and after they listened to the Mozart.

Regardless of the benefits specifically attributed or not attributed to the Mozart-effect, what remains is a trend when correlating music study and intelligence: music appears beneficial for brain development. Moreno et al. (2011) found links in their brain research between music training and language development in young children. Moreno et al. tested 24 four to six-year-old children on the Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence-Third Edition (WPPSI-III) using subtests of verbal and spatial intelligence and tested them as well on a go/no go computer task. Both tests were given before and after four weeks of music instruction using a computer software program. When their WPPSI-III scores were compared with a matched group of children trained similarly on an art-learning software program, only the children in the experimental music group demonstrated an over-all significant increase ($p < .001$) of mean scores on the verbal intelligence subtest (p. 1,248). The results of electroencephalogram measurements of event-related potential (ERP) amplitudes of brain waves during the go/no-go tasks also suggested that even short-term music training improved the young children’s brain plasticity and executive functioning, and these brain benefits transferred to higher verbal intelligence scores on the WPPSI-III as well.

With an older group of children between the ages of six and eleven ($n = 125$), Schellenberg (2006) found a low but positive correlation between the length of music lesson study and the children's overall scores on the complete Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children-Third Edition (WISC-III), as well as with eleven of the twelve WISC-III subtests. Although the study took place in a Canadian suburban area, Schellenberg's study found the positive relationship between music lessons and the WISC-III was true even when variables such as parents' education and family income were held constant.

Brain and learning benefits of classroom music training have even been shown effective as late as during adolescence. Tierney et al. (2013) found that high school students ($n = 43$) who participated in two years of school music group instruction had significant improvement in neural timing when compared to students who participated in fitness training instead. At the end of the two years of training in their respective courses, students wore electrodes and responded to sounds as researchers collected the electrophysiological response data to measure students' timing of auditory brainstem responses. Neural timing is deemed an important component of speech encoding and speech-in-noise perception, two skills which are important for reading and general school success. Tierney et al. concluded that in-school music classes, even during adolescence, causally enhanced speech encoding and speech-in-noise perception. Their study evidenced that even group music instruction, and even group music instruction as late as high school, can make a difference in brain development and performance.

There is also evidence of positive long-term effects on brain-functioning from past music study that lasts into the college years. Schellenberg (2006) gave 112 college freshmen the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale-Version Three (WAIS-III) and compared the results to participants' length of previous participation in music lessons. The positive correlation was small

but significant for generalized intelligence, as well as for most of the subtests of the WAIS-III. Schellenberg proved no causal connection in the study, however, in discussion suggested several possible explanations and combinations of explanations thereof, including the complexity of skills needed to simultaneously read, aurally abstract, and physically produce music. An interesting possibility Schellenberg also proposed for the music-IQ connection is a circular explanation, wherein variables of music study and intelligence feed off of, and facilitate, one another during brain development.

Electroencephalography (EEG) imaging, a process whereby electrical activity in the brain can be depicted visually in waves, backs up Schellenberg's research on brain-functioning related to college students who have a history of music study. Cheung et al. (2017) used memory tests and EEG imaging to compare college-age subjects ($N = 60$) with instrumental music training ($n = 30$) to students without a history of instrumental music study ($n = 30$). The students with previous instrumental music training demonstrated significantly better verbal memory on written tests than those without. Additionally, the use of EEG revealed that, during their events of verbal memory encoding, the students with music training showed more left interhemispheric and right-left intrahemispheric coherence (meaning amplitude/wave height and frequency of neuronal activity in the left side and between the right and left sides of the brain) than did the students without music training. Cheung et al.'s (2017) study suggested that instrumental music lessons may change cortical synchronization relative to verbal memory formation in a lasting way.

The benefits of musical training may be very long lasting and may enhance brain health and the quality of life even much later into adulthood. By comparing aging adults ($N = 70$) between the ages of 60 and 83 years on a battery of neuro-psychological tests, Hanna-Pladdy and MacKay (2011) found that the group who studied instrumental music more than ten years

significantly outperformed non-musicians, especially in tests of naming, visuomotor speed, visuospatial memory, cognitive flexibility, and visuospatial sequencing. Further, Hanna-Pladdy and MacKay also found evidence that sustained musical activity for older persons may help them to maintain their cognitive flexibility and cognitive functioning longer than an advanced life without music.

In slight contrast to these aforementioned studies linking intelligence to music learning, Costa-Giomi (2015) found inconsistencies in a meta-analysis of the correlation between brain functioning and music study, especially when examined over the course of years. Like other researchers, Costa-Giomi made the point that the relationship between music study and brain development is complicated. Further, Costa-Giomi reported (unsurprisingly) that the amount of actual music practice was a large determinant in the strength of the long-term effect of the correlation. Although the long-term relationship between music study and IQ scores was often small in studies, Schellenberg (2006) emphasized that even a one-point difference in IQ score could correlate with many indicators of a higher quality of life, and so therefore, was still significant.

The surveyed literature indicated many of the beneficial correlates of music study, for the very young to those rich in years. In summary, these benefits may include higher school and test achievement, socioemotional need fulfillment in people of all ages, and enhanced brain development, brain functioning, and brain health through the life span. The benefits of music study bring back the unfortunate reality that these said benefits are not distributed with enough equity in our society. So, I turn next to the main topic of this study and survey: research about the challenges students face to persist in IMP, especially students color and students of lower SES. I also include recommendations from researchers and band teachers in the field working

with economically, racially, and culturally diverse urban student populations related to each barrier discussed.

Barriers to IMP

Some of the challenges that may keep interested students out of band include a lack of access to private lessons (Martignetti, 2017; Stewart, 2005); a lack of access to music instruments (Allegood, 2016; Mazzocchi, 2019); a lack of access to music electives (Allegood, 2016; Fitzpatrick, 2011; Wheelhouse, 2009); and generally-closed band systems (Hawkinson, 2015). I start this theme of barriers to music study with the issue of private instrumental music lessons.

Private Lessons

Traditional private or small group lessons are both historically and effectively an important and undisputed part of success in instrumental music study. Because lessons are often relatively expensive, students from families of lower SES may not have the opportunity to take lessons if their school does not offer them. In a mixed-methods study of midwestern middle school band students ($N = 114$), Stewart (2005) found that one of the most influential factors for students continuing to stay in band was private study. When schools do not provide lessons for students, students can feel less competent and develop a kind of low musical self-esteem, which is also a common reason why students drop out of band programs (Mazzocchi, 2019; Stewart, 2005).

Strategies band teachers have used to compensate for a lack of affordable lessons can include peer teaching, focusing more on technique during large group instruction, and offering pull-out lessons with the band teacher during other times of the school day. In 2017, Martignetti conducted an ethnographic study of a New York City high school with a thriving music program.

Martignetti described the students as school-dependent musicians because, due to low SES, their only option for structured music study was their large group classroom instruction at their school. Martignetti found peer learning and peer teaching to be valuable for student progress to compensate for the lack of private lessons, which many families could not afford. Methodical technique teaching/learning during ensemble time, rather than stressing competitive performance overly much, was also suggested as a useful strategy by Martignetti. The extra technique during class time helped students to master the fundamentals that were missed due to a lack of private lessons (Martignetti, 2017).

Some IMP teachers can pull students out of other classes to successfully teach individual lessons or small group band lessons to students playing homogenous instruments. Sanders (2001) interviewed the directors of performing arts programs in three Massachusetts school districts and surveyed the music teachers, principals, and parents there to find out how the music lesson pull-out programs fared compared to other solutions, such as lessons scheduled after school. Sanders' survey revealed the dropout rate in instrumental music was higher in the alternative lesson programs when compared to the programs where students were pulled out of class for band lessons. In addition to a lack of resources for private lessons, students from families of low SES may also have trouble affording a music instrument. The barrier of instrument affordability follows in the next paragraphs.

Lack of a Band Instrument

A lack of access to a playable music instrument, which can be relatively expensive to purchase and maintain, can be another obstacle to IMP for students with low SES. In a study of 58 ninth and tenth-grade students at an urban mid-Atlantic high school, Allegood (2016) found that the lack of an instrument created an access problem for students there. Mazzocchi (2019)

also listed having an instrument in disrepair as one of the reasons that students dropped out of band. In a 2011 study of instrumental music teachers in the Chicago Public Schools ($N = 90$), Fitzpatrick found the majority of the teachers' students required a school-owned instrument in order to participate in instrumental music. Fifteen percent of the teachers also responded that the "repair and purchase of instruments" was one of the top needs for their program to be more successful (Fitzpatrick, 2011, p. 249).

Some schools solve instrument access issues by providing music instruments for students who need them, and this can be a good solution. Albert (2006a) recommended school instrument loaner programs to counter a lack of access to instrumental music study, and to support retention with students of lower SES. In a meta-study of SES related to instrumental music study, Albert (2006a) did not find overall significant differences in attitude toward, or aptitude for, instrumental music study related to students' SES levels, and therefore suggested that districts loan instruments to students who need them.

Ester and Turner's (2009) study echoed Albert's (2006a) findings. Ester and Turner (2009) studied 245 middle school students and compared low SES students who used school instruments to students who owned their instruments on measures of academic achievement and personal growth. Students who borrowed school instruments scored similarly with band members who owned instruments on measures of focus, motivation, concentration, practice, and self-confidence.

In addition to a lack of access to private lessons and band instruments, a lack of access to music electives has also been a special problem for underserved students in recent years.

Problems with a lack of opportunity to take music classes are highlighted next.

Lack of Music Electives

Due to high-stakes testing that heavily emphasizes reading and math, students may have difficulty getting into the music class of their choice, or into any music class. School districts sometimes require certain students to take two periods of either reading or math during the school day for the purpose of raising test scores, resulting in students having few or no choice(s) of electives (Albert, 2006a; Fitzpatrick, 2011; Hoffman, 2008; Salvador & Allegood, 2014). International Baccalaureate (IB) schools also sometimes limit elective options for students because of strict course requirements (Fitzpatrick, 2011), and English Language Learners (ELL) may not have the option to take music electives because of additional language-learning requirements (Wheelhouse, 2009).

Students of color and ELL students may be further confused about their options for electives because of language or cultural communication barriers. In Allegood's (2016) study of 58 ninth and tenth grade students at an urban high school, of the 47% of surveyed students who dropped out of music, a lack of access to music electives was an issue for 58% of the former music students (p. 68). Reasons cited were a lack of elective offerings due to budget cuts and scheduling conflicts, in addition to the lack of student instruments. Registration mistakes made by school guidance counselors or school registrars were also listed as access barriers to music electives in Allegood's (2016) study. Students sometimes did not understand that a mistake had been made with their schedule(s) until it was too late to change it.

The structural inequities sometimes cut even deeper than these access issues; Salvador and Allegood (2014) did a quantitative study of student demographic information from public databases to examine how low non-White (NW) student-enrolled schools served students compared to high NW schools in two urban areas. They found that schools in the high NW quartile of their study were the most likely to lack music instruction in both the Detroit and the

Washington DC areas. In the Detroit area, where the difference was most striking, Salvador and Allegood (2014) calculated that 100% of the lowest NW quartile of schools offered music instruction, but only 40% of the of the high NW quartile of schools offered any music electives at all (p. 88).

Salvador and Allegood made two other important points in their 2014 study: First, it was very difficult to isolate influences of race and low SES because the two were so highly correlated in their Detroit and DC data. Also, public summaries about access to music and race, such as a concurrent study available at the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) (Catterall et al., 2012), did not fully reveal the inequities of music education opportunity because the national data was averaged over-all instead of separated into quartile comparisons. The NCES study also did not study or reveal the extent of resegregation in urban areas. In contrast, Salvador and Allegood's quartile comparisons made the inequities in opportunity of music and the resegregation in the two urban areas they studied appear quite stark.

When discussing of a lack of access to band for students of low SES and children of color, it is worth noting that Kinney's (2010, 2019) studies of urban schools found that transient students were much less likely to persist in band. Allegood (2016) followed up on the issue of geographic mobility in a study of urban students in a mid-Atlantic city and found that 53% of students in the three high schools surveyed had a non-promotional change in schools since the beginning of fourth grade. Although mobility was not found to be a definite corollary of dropping out of band, Allegood found that lack of access to music education was a strong and emergent theme. Studies of mobility and band attrition are, of course, difficult because of the lack of ease in obtaining follow-up data when students leave districts. Closely related to this lack

of access to enrollment opportunities for would-be band students is the closed nature of band that sometimes occurs in schools. The topic of closed band systems follows next.

Closed Band Systems

High school band may appear as a closed system to students who are left out of programs (Hawkinson 2015). In the qualitative portion of Hawkinson's (2015) study of students in a midwestern public high school who did not enroll in band, students gave examples of band as a closed system because of the difficulty in joining band during high school without prerequisite study. Hawkinson found that other reasons students did not sign up for band were because band instruction took place in large groups, that band was very teacher-directed, and that the teachers chose more traditional band music that was sometimes less meaningful and/or too difficult for students. I address more about the hegemonic nature of band in the section on critical race theory, however, now that I have touched on some problems related to access and equity found in U.S. music education, I next turn to some additional helpful strategies from professionals in the field.

Helpful Strategies

Teachers who work with racially, ethnically, and socioeconomically diverse student populations, and researchers of disparities in opportunity for students, recommend several strategies to improve the opportunity gap in education programs. Suggested solutions, in addition to solving the large aforementioned access and resource issues, include: the need to put extra effort into building relationships with BIPOC students and families (Albert, 2006b; Fitzpatrick, 2011; Mixon, 2005; Wheelhouse, 2009); the need to trend toward more teacher-student collaborative or student-centered education (Albert, 2006b; Hammond, 2015; Hawkinson, 2015; Hoffman & Carter, 2013; Jackson, 2011; Martignetti, 2017); and the need for more culturally-

relevant music literature and genres (Albert, 2006b; Bulgozdy, 2020; Legette, 2003; Mixon, 2006; Wheelhouse, 2009). I next discuss an essential aspect of teaching in general, one which appears especially mandatory when working with underserved populations: relationship-building.

Teachers who work successfully with underserved populations make extra efforts to connect with families and students to help them feel a sense of belonging and importance to the class or ensemble. In a phenomenological study of strategies for low SES school districts, Albert (2006b) found that teachers who used proactive strategies, such as checking in with students during out of band time and phoning parents to update them on student successes, helped build rapport and helped to trouble-shoot potential issues. Mixon, in a 2005 study of an urban school district, likewise suggested regularly contacting parents with positive feedback as a helpful strategy. Wheelhouse (2009) also emphasized the need for building strong relationships with families of underserved racial or cultural populations in order to facilitate their student participation in school music programs.

Robison (2006) found that four highly successful elementary music teachers of Black students from low SES families in a Midwest urban district, went out of their way to get to know the students, their families, and their traditions and cultures, often during off-school hours and in unfamiliar situations. In a mixed methods study of Chicago School District instrumental music teachers, Fitzpatrick (2011) likewise found that teachers interviewed ($n = 4$) for the qualitative portion of the study had a strong knowledge of urban context which included understandings of the students and their communities, and a need for a special set of skills for use in that context. Teachers viewed this contextual knowledge as more essential for urban teaching than it was for suburban teaching. Specific examples cited by teachers in the Fitzpatrick study included

knowing whether a neighborhood was safe enough for students to take instruments to their homes to practice and understanding the futility of using authoritarian strategies with traumatized or defensive students who may value public respect, or saving face, very keenly. Mixon (2006) likewise stressed the need to avoid calling-out students with regard to playing parts individually, and to find ways to rehearse parts in unison respectfully to help save face for students who may have less experience or confidence. In an informative essay on how to build IMP in an urban district, Mixon (2005) also expressed the primary importance of relationship-building within students' cultures' values, especially when cultures lack in material wealth.

Often part of building relationships with students includes changing the traditional authoritarian style of band-leading to a more democratic and student-centered approach. Research supports a more student-centered or collaborative approach to music education (Albert, 2006b; Hammond, 2015; Hawkinson, 2015; Hoffman & Carter, 2013; Jackson, 2011; Lind & McKoy, 2016; Martignetti, 2017). In a qualitative study of low SES school districts by Albert (2006b), a student-centered approach was helpful in keeping students active and engaged in their respective instrumental music programs. The teachers in Albert's (2006b) study believed that student input and shared-decision-making processes helped students feel essential to their music programs and was an important part of their decision to continue in IMP. In 2015, Hawkinson's interviews of non-band students found that a lack of student-centered pedagogy used in band sometimes negatively influenced their decisions to enroll in band.

Hoffman and Carter (2013) used independent and small group composition projects with mostly BIPOC seventh grade band students wherein the teachers functioned collaboratively as guides on the students' constructivist projects, rather than the kind of teacher-directed rehearsals the students experienced the previous year. Their qualitative study revealed increased student

satisfaction, empowerment, and healthy musician and cultural identity development within the classroom of students. Martignetti (2017) likewise found collaborative, student-centered, and constructivist approaches in ensemble rehearsals valuable in a qualitative study of a successful New York City high school music program. Martignetti also noted, however, that traditionally teacher-led and newer student-led approaches were both important in that program as the combination of the two modes helped to create balanced-learning for students.

Hammond (2015) explained that Eurocentric culture is often steeped in the “cultural archetype” of individualism, while many BIPOC students’ cultural roots are embedded with the cultural values and norms of collectivism, which may help explain why collaborative learning in the classroom is helpful with students of color (p. 25). Similarly, Jackson (2011) asserted that learners of Hispanic/Latino and African American heritage often tend toward a more “field-dependent cognitive style,” meaning a learning “style that is more socially oriented” (p. 83). Lind & McKoy (2016) recommended going “outside the traditional models of music instruction” to meet the needs of learners of varied cultures (p. 114).

Part of making education more collaborative and student-centered, and to make learning more relevant to students, is the need for more culturally relevant music literature. Reflecting “more diverse musical expressions” may be a challenging task for many teachers because of the White Eurocentric musical traditions in place (Lind & McKoy, 2016, p. 114). After surveying the major curriculum content of South Carolina music teacher preparation as well as other South Carolina state music documents, Bulgozdy (2020) criticized White Eurocentric dominance in the overall curriculum of the state. In essence, the South Carolina curriculum made BIPOC students practically invisible in the literature, likely harming student cultural identity. In a quantitative study surveying hundreds of teachers in a Southeastern state, Legette (2003) found that only

about one third of K-12 public-school music teachers surveyed actually programmed multi-cultural music in concerts, despite claiming a much greater valuing of varied cultures in the population.

Those who are using culturally relevant music and ensembles in their classrooms are finding some success. Mixon (2005, 2006) stressed the need to program styles of music relevant to students with the traditional large ensembles, using styles of student or community interest such as mariachi, jazz, and others. Smaller, culturally relevant ensembles, such as steel drum band, Afro-Cuban percussion, and mariachi or rock combos were also very motivating for students according to Mixon (2006). Albert (2006b) likewise recommended culturally relevant ensembles as useful for recruitment, for teaching musical concepts in a relatable manner, and for involving students of diverse backgrounds. Fitzpatrick-Harnish (2015) included klezmer music, polka music, bluegrass, Appalachian folk music, zydeco, and gospel as musics which might be culturally relevant to some students and communities, depending on the school population. Wheelhouse (2009) not only recommended more culturally relevant music and ensembles to enhance minority participation in music programs, but also recommended special cultural and musical events to celebrate the various backgrounds of students' families. Montemayor et al. (2018) gave examples of such cultural musical event options that may reflect the populations of a student body, such as:

Programming performances of a popular *banda* tune at the football game of a primarily Latino school, having traditional Native American powwow dancing as an opening performance for a pep rally, collaborating with a community *lion dance* group during Chinese New Year, or perhaps even by programming the jazz ensemble to provide backing for a lunchtime hip-hop open mic performance. (p. 15)

This portion of the literature review summarized access issues for IMP students including access to instruments, private lessons, and electives. I also discussed some of the ways successful band teachers of racially, culturally, and socioeconomically diverse student populations addressed these access issues and what some of their strategies were for success with teaching in low SES urban districts and with BIPOC students. Teachers' strategies included extensive relationship-building, student-centered teaching, and using culturally relevant literature, ensembles, and events. All these useful strategies are components of culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP). I later discuss the underpinnings of CRP in the theory section of this paper as I summarize and apply Maslow's theory of a hierarchy of needs, and Freire's theory of critical pedagogy to my literature review. First, however, I have chosen three qualitative studies of music education to summarize, each which included music student interviews as an important part of discovery, a research technique I used for this study.

Qualitative Studies of Band Students

This part of the survey of pertinent literature highlights three studies, all which used public school music student interviews as an important component of their research: "*A home away from home*": *The world of the high school music classroom* by Adderley et al. (2003), *A mixed methods investigation of student nonparticipation in secondary school music* by Hawkinson (2015), and *In their own voices: An ethnographic study of an urban public high school music program* by Martignetti (2017). First, the ground-breaking study by Adderley et al. (2003):

A 2003 study by Adderley et al. entitled, "*A home away from home*": *The world of the high school music classroom*, was one of the first of its kind to include interviews of IMP students, including those in band ($n = 20$) and orchestra ($n = 20$), as well as choir students ($n =$

20) (choir students were a previously studied population). Adderley et al.'s (2003) study of high school music students took place in an upper-middle class, mostly-White suburb of a northeastern city. The researchers discovered that this population of students valued the social aspects of their performance ensemble membership highly, and believed they were there nurtured psychologically, intellectually, musically, emotionally, and socially. Of particular importance to students was the social climate of their music ensemble, which often included supportive peer groups, subgroups, and various relationships that helped them to navigate the high school years in and out of the school day.

Hawkinson's (2015) dissertation, *A mixed methods investigation of student nonparticipation in secondary school music*, included a quantitative study of a midwestern high school ($N=319$) and disclosed IMP student data compared to non-IMP student data regarding demographics such as race/ethnicity, parent education level, academic achievement, and SES. In the second part of the study, Hawkinson (2015) interviewed 12 non-IMP students representing a cross section of demographics among students who either dropped out of band, or who never participated in IMP, to find out what barriers or influences may have prevented their participation in instrumental music. The themes of the student interviews included "non-participant musicians, choice as a hierarchy of personal values, school music as a closed system, the power of personal perceptions, and a desire for student-centered pedagogy" (Hawkinson, 2015, p. v). Based on this study, Hawkinson (2015) recommended more awareness of participation barriers to band in high schools.

Martignetti's (2017) dissertation, *In their own voices: An ethnographic study of an urban public high school music program*, was a rather complex ethnographic study of a large, diverse New York City high school. The school included a thriving music magnet program within the

walls of a regular high school. Martignetti ambitiously interviewed three administrators, seven teachers, and 33 high school music students from the various classes and ensembles offered at the school, as well as observed and participated in 55 days of classes and rehearsals. The concluding discussion was lengthy and included issues such as the value of participation perceived by the students, various issues of non-equity in and out of music education participation, and broader city-wide issues of a lack of equity in music education.

Summary

Like each of these three researchers, I sought to find out more from high school students directly about their perceptions of their school IM programs. My study most-closely resembles the qualitative portion of Hawkinson's (2015) study regarding the racial/cultural diversity of students. I also used interview and qualitative data processes like Hawkinson's study. This study differs in that I interviewed recent graduates of high school instrumental music (IM) programs instead of current high school students. My study also varied from Hawkinson's work in that I interviewed minority and low SES students who successfully navigated possible barriers to find out what made successful enrollment in high school IM possible for them.

This literature review covered the historical context of school bands in America; the corollary benefits of IMP including the academic, socioemotional, and the cognitive; the barriers found to IMP; helpful retention strategies used by band teachers, and three illustrative qualitative studies of high school IM student perceptions. In the next section, I summarize gaps and tensions in the literature.

Gaps and Tensions in Literature

A wealth of research connecting IMP to school and standardized test achievement is available and much of that research has been quantitative in nature. In recent years, there has also

been an explosion of scientific brain research connecting music to cognitive functioning and brain health, as well as helping to explain some of the socioemotional well-being related to music participation. The band opportunity gap, or the underrepresentation in IMP related to students of color and students of low SES when compared to White students of higher SES, has been less well understood. There have been, however, quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods research studies related to this issue conducted in recent decades. While some studies proffered information about helpful strategies as well as feedback from student voices, there has been more room for qualitative research practice to understand student perspectives. More voices of students of color, and of students of low SES, needed to be heard to find fuller solutions to the problem of the band opportunity gap. Such was the goal of my study.

A large tension obviously exists between the traditional nature of the school band, a tradition that has its Western cultural roots in militaristic, rigid, sometimes-competitive, and somewhat exclusionary practices on the one hand; and, on the other hand, the precious potential for the intrinsic value of music-making and student growth that is often found within the IM classroom. With this tension in mind, I have selected two theories related to realizing human potential for use as lenses in my analysis of the current research. I summarize and explore these two theories by Maslow and by Freire next.

Theoretical Framework

I chose two theoretical views to help analyze the data of my study: Maslow's (2011, 2015) hierarchy of needs, and Freire's (2013) critical pedagogy. Maslow's hierarchy of needs helps to analyze the innate human physical and psychological drives which aptly explain the needs and motivations band students may have for continuing in band study. I start the theoretical discussion with Maslow's theory.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Abraham Maslow (1908-1970) was one of the founders of humanistic psychology. This school of thought was created in part as a reaction to the behaviorist school and based on realizing human potential through choice and self-actualization. Humanistic psychology is supported by ideas from the existential branch of philosophy (Maslow, 2011). Maslow believed the arts were the best way to self-discovery in education and to the realization of one's authentic self (Maslow, 1958). The hierarchy of needs developed by Maslow is thus an apt lens for exploring students' meanings regarding their processes of music study and music study selection.

Maslow's famous hierarchical model helps explain human behavior and motivation in terms of how needs are met. Maslow (2015) proposed a model, often shown as triangle shaped, with needs placed from the lowest, most basic level at the wide bottom, to the highest needs at the pointed top of the triangle. Meeting the needs at each level is considered a kind of prerequisite for the next level above, although there is individual flexibility within the model and the interpretation is not strict (Maslow, 2015). There are varied versions of the pyramidal model, often with only five levels, but I chose a later, seven-level version found in Hodges and Sebald (2011) for its applications to self-actualization through music study. Maslow's levels (in Hodges & Sebald, 2011, p. 262) are listed as follows with the most basic needs, or the needs at the bottom of the pyramid, listed first:

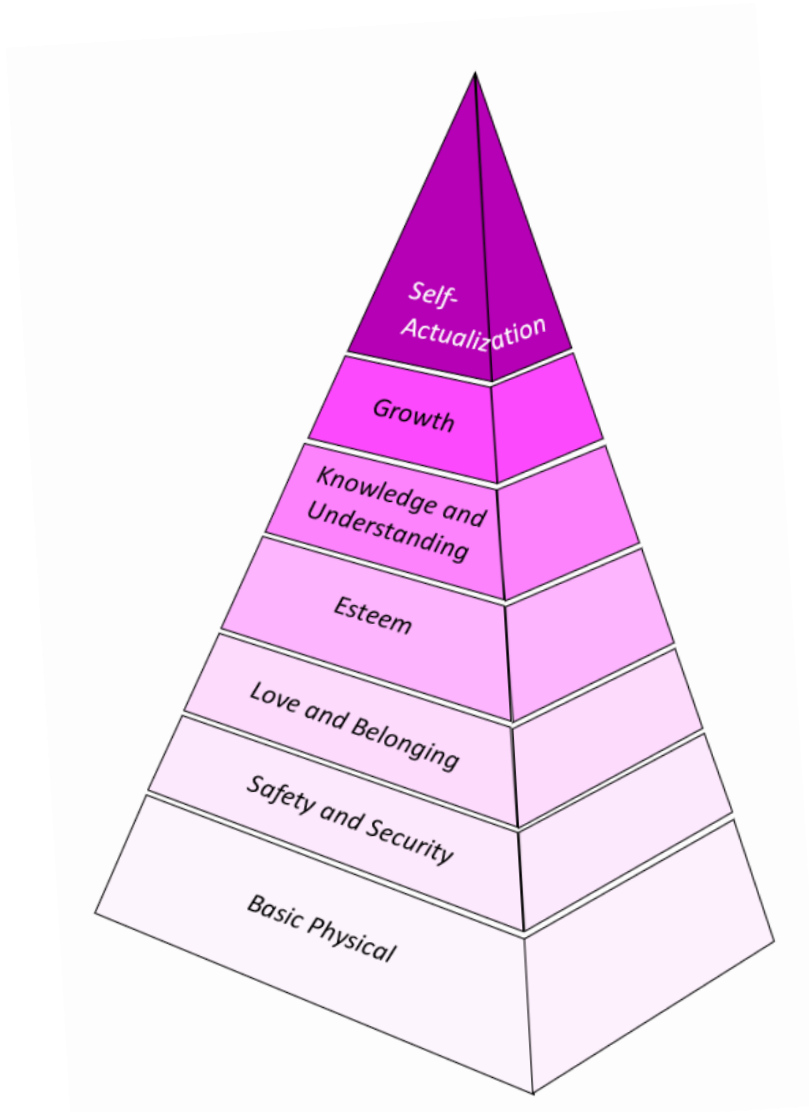
1. **Physical Needs:** At the bottom of the pyramid are basic physical needs such as air, water, food, and shelter. This level is about basic physical survival.
2. **Safety Needs:** Just above physical needs are the needs for safety or security, for life to be somewhat predictable and nonthreatening.

3. Love and Belonging Needs: If people feel safe, they are therefore freer to feel like they belong and are loved.
4. Esteem Needs: People who feel they belong and are cared about can grow in self-esteem. Humans need to feel good about themselves and to believe others esteem them and their abilities as well.
5. Knowledge and Understanding Needs: People whose belonging and esteem needs are met have more freedom to learn about and to understand their world, the connectedness of ideas, and the underlying theories about their world.
6. Growth Needs: As a person becomes freer to satisfy their needs for knowledge and understanding, they grow as they search more deeply to find their own beauty and truth in the world in the pursuit of self-actualization.
7. Self-actualization: This highest level of psychological health and human development includes becoming more truly oneself and becoming fully creative in the world.
(Hodges & Sebald, 2011, p. 262)

A visualization of Maslow's pyramidal hierarchy of needs is shown in Figure 1 with categories from Hodges and Sebald (2011). Maslow's hierarchy of needs can illuminate the importance of IMP, and the motivations to participate or not-participate in IMP, with facility. Following Figure 1, a discussion linking each level of Maslow's hierarchy to IM study is offered.

Figure 1

Maslow's Hierarchical Pyramid of Human Needs



(Adapted from Hodges & Sebald, 2011, p. 261)

Physical Needs

When working with band students of low SES, it is important to recognize that families who are working extra hours at low-paying jobs to put food on the table and to keep a roof over their heads may have different priorities compared to wealthier families. IMP may be viewed as too much of a luxury for families of low SES if it includes extra expenses for instruments,

instrument repair, private lessons, or transportation after school. In the case of after-school commitments, older children may also be needed at home to help with childcare while parents work extra shifts, or older students may need to work after school themselves to help support the family.

Safety Needs

The IMP classroom needs to be a physically and emotionally safe space for students and their families, and this is especially so for families who have had unhappy experiences, or even trauma, in school. If the band room has a welcoming social climate that is safe and inclusive, the next level of Love and Belonging should have a chance to thrive. This corresponds well with the relationship-building found in the research to be essential for teachers working with BIPOC students and families of low SES.

Love and Belonging Needs

Music ensembles at the high school level are often the best places in the high school for the largest number of students to participate in the same activity with the same teacher and classmates for years in continuity. It is little wonder that some qualitative researchers found that high school music programs felt like a “home away from home” (Adderley, et al., 2003, p. 190). Band students may experience the love from, and adult guidance of, a band teacher, as well as supportive love from band friendships. If, however, students find financial barriers to participation, if music electives are closed to them, or if the ensemble does not demonstrate valuing of their knowledge or culture, students may miss an opportunity to feel IMP connections. Such a missed opportunity might have been their best chance to feel connected to their school, and even to their education in general.

Esteem Needs

An important part of feeling esteem in the band room is the cultural competency of the teacher. The teacher needs to follow best practices to make sure students' cultural backgrounds are honored and appreciated, as well as to reflect students' cultures in the band literature selected. In the literature review, a student-centered, collaborative approach was found to be an important part of building esteem and empowerment in band students. When teachers build on the diverse strengths of their students, students may feel esteemed, have minds more open to learning, and can thus become learners and leaders in the classroom. Conversely, when students' individual cultures and ways of being are not honored during IMP, students may be forced into painful musical code-switching during IM class and may not feel valued and true (Robinson & Hendricks, 2018).

Knowledge and Understanding Needs

The need for knowledge and understanding is met more openly in IMP as students become secure in being esteemed. Again, wise music teachers build on skills and strengths students already have so learners can relate their new knowledge to their previously acquired knowledge constructively. Peer coaching and tutoring as students take leadership roles builds on values of collaboration and support and, in a circular fashion, builds on esteem and knowledge. This can lead to healthy risk-taking as minds become freer to understand the larger and more abstract ideas IMP offers.

IMP is particularly challenging to the intellect as music-making involves both sides of the brain and combines physical coordination with mental planning and emotional expression. As musicians become more advanced on their instruments, the complexity and learning builds and musical processes become more abstract, encompassing, and fulfilling. Students who do not drop

out of band before high school are more likely to experience these opportunities for higher levels of enrichment and growth.

Growth Needs

As an IM student finds their unique voice through their instrument and becomes more confident as part of the ensemble, their level of growth continues, and more growth is possible. Students may become freer to find their own special place of truth and beauty in the world, whether that is still more success in the world of music, or whether they apply that success; and the lessons of music practice, creativity, and expression; to other areas of their life. When IMP has an inclusive classroom, more students may choose to enroll continuously, hence having more opportunities to grow personally and musically. This may lead to states of self-actualization.

Self-actualization

The highest point of Maslow's pyramid is self-actualization, when a person becomes their most authentic and creative self. This ideal pinnacle of growth may be found related to school IM experience in myriad ways, especially when students are able to shine using their unique talents in personally satisfying modes, such as in leading, composing, arranging, improvising, or just performing their best on the instrumental voice that feels authentically representative of their own spirit.

Part of the state of self-actualization is often the phenomenon of peak experience described in Maslow's (1968, 1976) work. Peak experiences can be highly personal and vary between people, but they often contain a sense of awe and a kind of spiritual fulfillment. Such experiences are often related to aesthetic experiences in the arts, experiencing the beauty of nature, with religious awakenings, during athletic challenges, or while falling in love. When the

quality of a music ensemble is very high, opportunities for peak aesthetic experiences may be more plentiful.

Closely related to the peak experience is the feeling of flow, when a person becomes joyously lost in an activity, and time and place become more subjective or distorted (Csikszentmihalyi, 2008). Flow is common occurrence within advanced levels of playing a music instrument. The potential for flow is generally proportional to the level of passion for the activity mixed with related skill development. Some of the other experiences within flow include complete attention to the activity, a sense of joy or ecstasy, a sense of control or competence, a peaceful loss of self-consciousness, and an in-the-moment satisfaction of doing an activity simply for the reward of doing it (Csikszentmihalyi, 2008). According to Csikszentmihalyi (2008), flow occurs in music playing when there is the right balance of skill with challenge, so that neither anxiety nor boredom from difficulty stop the flow or divert attention. Some describe the feelings of flow as being moved from the physical world into a more spiritual dimension, very like the transcendence of Maslow's peak experiences.

Both types of experiences, Maslow's aesthetic peak experience and the sense of flow, can be addictin for young people in a positive way and can bond them to enjoying music for life. As skills grow, so does the potential for intense enjoyment. And, as the research review (Chapter Two) found, the socioemotional and cognitive benefits of music study can last and increase during the life span as adults continue to grow and self-actualize through IMP.

While the levels of Maslow's pyramid are quite universally and easily applied to human psychology and humanity in general, critical pedagogy is helpful when attempting to understand the specific needs of underserved populations in social context. Critical pedagogy highlights and illuminates ways of empowering historically oppressed populations, such as students of color

and of low SES in the United States. I survey and apply Freire's famous social theory to music education next.

Freire's Theory of Critical Pedagogy

The theory of critical pedagogy was developed by philosopher and educator, Paulo Freire (1921-1997), during his tenure as a teacher of illiterate adults in Brazil in the 1960s (Abrahams, 2005, p. 3). Freire (2013) believed literacy was the key to freedom because it can raise consciousness in oppressed people. According to Freire, a process called conscientization or conscientizaçao helps citizens become empowered to view themselves as integrated subjects in the democratic story of their time in history, rather than naïve adaptive objects in the myths pushed by the wealthy and powerful during a changing epoch. Tenets of Freire's teaching include:

1. Education happens best in a dialogical, democratic manner wherein teacher and students propose and solve problems together as equals.
2. As students become conscious about the reality of their place in society, they become more responsible for change and for solving the problems of their society, including that of massification, or the oppression of the masses by the ruling class.
3. Learning happens best when students generate learning based on their familiar culture, extending and linking learning to what they already know.
4. By working collaboratively with the teacher, both the educator and the students learn, create culture, and are transformed through the relationship.
5. To the above tenets, Abrahams (2005) adds the reminder that education itself "is political," since those in power decide what will be taught, how resources are

allocated, etc. (p. 4). Effective educators using critical pedagogy “resist the constraints” those in power attempt to enforce. (Abrahams, 2005, p. 4)

The knowledge and culture of students is honored by the teacher who uses a philosophy of critical pedagogy. I relate these tenets of critical pedagogy to music education research next, supported by some recent thought leaders in culturally responsive education, a more modern branch of critical pedagogy.

Dialogical and Democratic

Education happens best in a dialogical, democratic manner wherein teacher and students propose and solve problems together as equals. Tenet number one directly relates to findings which advocate for more teacher-student collaboration and more student-centered approaches in the IM classroom. Freire taught impoverished, illiterate farm-laborers how to read by first finding out what words in their known-vocabulary were important to them, by respecting and building on the knowledge that his students already possessed and, thereby, participating as an equal in the teaching. Learning, therefore, happened in both directions: teacher-to-student, and student-to-teacher. An egalitarian educational method helps build connections or bridges (Ladson-Billings, 2009) for learning, and is especially important for people in society who feel a lack of political or social power, or who have had negative experiences previously in their educational experience.

Awareness of Social Power

As students become conscious of the reality of their place of power (or a lack thereof) in society, they become more responsible for change and for solving societal problems, including massification, Freire’s term for the oppression of the masses by the ruling class. In a famous qualitative study detailing the habits of eight exemplary teachers of Black children, Ladson-

Billings' (2009) found the teachers led brave political discussions about power and race in the classroom to help students see the realities of their place in society. Along with those classroom learnings were discussions about solutions and change.

Success in public education is a step toward the dream of a more equitable society, and culturally responsive teachers are aware-of and use their own personal power in the classroom toward that end. This tenet is yet another reason that bringing out youth voices through instrumental music is so important: bringing them out through literature selection, through transcriptions of youth music, through relevant compositions, through student composition and improvisation; and through student-led performances, including performances at important cultural and political occasions; and for both verbal and musical expressions in the cause of justice.

Learning Built on Student Knowledge

Learning happens best when students generate learning based on their familiar culture, and by extending and linking learning to what they already know. Therefore, culturally relevant music literature and culturally familiar ensembles, as suggested within the literature review (Albert, 2006b; Mixon, 2006; Montemayor et al., 2018; Wheelhouse, 2009), are important in culturally competent music-teaching. Validation and application of students' prior knowledge of music, especially of the music and culture that is familiar to them, helps to lift esteem and build readiness to learn new knowledge. When students teach the teacher what they already know about their own world using reciprocal learning, the student comes to better-understand and prize their own culture, and both student and teacher develop their own cultural-competence in the process (Ladson-Billings, 2009). Ladson-Billings (2009) explained that it is particularly important for Black students to learn and affirm their own cultural identity in the educational

process, because assimilation processes in education have historically denigrated African American cultural identity.

Collaborative Cultural Transformation

By working collaboratively with the teacher, both the teacher and the students learn, create culture, and are transformed through the relationship. As Ladson-Billings (2009) wrote, cultural knowledge “is continuously re-created, recycled, and shared” through the process of teaching and learning with a culturally responsive teacher (p. 88). Culture exemplified in language or music is a live and negotiated entity. As philosopher Jorgensen (2003) posited, music education involves both transmission and transformation of the art. Therefore, music needs to involve a dialectical process between teacher and students as it is viewed critically for its traditions of hegemony, appreciated for its beauty and creativity, and newly reimagined through classroom processes. Through the democratic process of the student and teacher working hand-in-hand to transform the music, so do they also pursue social and political equity together (Montemayor et al., 2018).

Education as Political

Education itself “is political,” since those in power decide what will be taught, how resources are allocated, etc. (Abrahams, 2005, p. 4). To teach effectively using critical pedagogy, educators need to “resist the constraints” those in power attempt to enforce (Abrahams, 2005, p. 4). The knowledge and culture of the students is honored by the teacher who uses culturally responsive pedagogy, even if that means ignoring hegemonic mandates. Gay (2018) stressed that teachers’ culturally responsive teaching practices must become normalized and centered in a broadened way within the varied cultures of the classroom, leaving the dominant White culture as one of many cultures creating the strength of classroom diversity.

The exemplary teachers of African American children in Ladson-Billings' (2009) study tended to be rebels, as they practiced "a subversive pedagogy" (p. 140). As the teachers thoughtfully questioned and deliberately deviated from prescribed texts, so they also taught their students to question knowledge and to understand the political underpinnings thereof. Racism, according to Ladson-Billings (2009) must be intentionally "delegitimized" in and out of the classroom by being consciously pinpointed and placed "under scrutiny" by teachers to prevent its political legitimization by the systems in place (p. 142).

Abrahams and Schmidt (2006) likewise pushed the idea that teachers who practice what the authors dubbed "Critical Pedagogy for Music Education" (CPME) should resist the limitations of those who hold power and should help to make music an empowering art for students (p. 154). Hess (2015) also discussed the need to decolonize music education by making it less hierarchical, less based on a dominant Western view, and more rhizomatic and dialogical. Further, Hess (2015) stressed that music education should be comparative and egalitarian, instead of based on a kind of voyeuristic "tourism" of ethnic musics from a Western gaze (p. 339), analogous to feminist literary criticisms of the male gaze of cinematography. McLaren (2011) asserted that White Eurocentric cultural imperialism has been active in the corporate control of society. Cultural hegemony is sometimes disguised within a neoliberal veil of superficial efforts at multicultural curricula where underrepresented cultures are framed as the other (McLaren, 2011).

Along these same philosophical lines, Gaztambide-Fernández and Stewart Rose (2015) emphasized the need for urban music education to reframe music education based "on a dynamic conception of culture and social change" (p. 457), bringing new musical practices into the urban classroom, with social justice at its core. Hawkinson (2015), Martignetti (2017), and others were

on social justice missions as they increased the academic body of knowledge by using qualitative methodology, at least as a part of their studies, to fully listen to and hear from young people of diverse backgrounds. In the next chapter, I outline more specifically how I built on their work.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Research Design

I conducted a phenomenological case study by interviewing recent high school graduates in order to find out what perceptions and meanings inspired them to continue with their instrumental music (IM) study into high school. My world view, or paradigm, was constructivist in philosophy and I used a phenomenological approach to conduct a qualitative study of the topic. After describing the approach and method I used, I will discuss the Institutional Review Board (IRB) process, the selection of study participants, and the data collection and analysis. I begin with an explanation of a constructivist worldview and the underlying theoretical assumptions.

Constructivist Philosophy

This study is a qualitative study of instrumental music students' experiences with, and meanings of, participation in high school instrumental music (IM) in a large Midwest metropolitan area. I selected racially, culturally, and socioeconomically diverse students who attended more than five different high schools in a city and its adjacent suburbs in order "to show different perspectives on the issue" (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 99). I approached my research with a constructivist philosophical worldview. In my work as a constructivist researcher, I strived to honor the many individual realities that I discovered therein (Patton, 2015).

Constructivist philosophy has its roots in the premise that knowledge, or epistemology, is subjectively and socially constructed within societal patterns and power structures. Patton (2015) posited that the constructivist researcher is not truly objective and is therefore actually a part of constructing ever-evolving knowledge. Further, Patton asserted that a constructivist researcher should strive to capture and honor the varied realities of the study's participants. A constructivist

researcher needs to keep an open mind to the details found in participants' meanings within their perceptions. Other assumptions of constructivism include that facts are not objective but are given value; cause and effect relationships likewise exist only by imputation; phenomena must be understood in context and not generalized to other situations or viewpoints; and, lastly, data from a constructivist inquiry does not have a "status," but is simply one view on the road toward consensus (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, pp. 44-45).

All this is not to say that socially constructed realities are unimportant. As the Thomas psychological theorem states: "What is perceived is real is real in its consequences," Thomas and Thomas (1928 as cited in Patton, 2015, p. 121). Social constructs do have real power and so, a researcher viewing data through the lens of critical pedagogy, as I did, should have an awareness of social power. Because I claimed constructivism as my research paradigm, I therefore completed an in-depth search of both the shared and the unique views of recent graduates of high school band within shared and unshared social contexts.

Qualitative Inquiry

Qualitative inquiry is a way of researching that helps others understand the complexities, nuance, and details of human experience that are difficult to capture in quantitative research. Patton (2015) credited qualitative inquiry with seven important contributions: helping to illuminate meanings, understanding how things work, collecting stories to understand experiences and perspectives, understanding systems and their effect on peoples' lives, understanding context, understanding "unanticipated consequences," and comparing cases to discover themes (pp. 12-13). The 12 participants generously revealed each of these kind of understandings through the semi-structured interviews we completed for this study.

The approach we used for the qualitative interviews was phenomenology. The tenets and characteristics of a phenomenological view follow next.

Phenomenology

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2019) phenomenology “refers to a person’s perception of the meaning of an event” (p. 233). German Philosopher Husserl first applied phenomenology to social science research in the early twentieth century. The most basic assumption “was that we can only know what we experience by attending to perceptions and meanings that awaken our conscious awareness” (Patton, 2015, p. 116). Phenomenology is about perceiving first with the senses, and then describing, analyzing, and interpreting those sensory perceptions to make personal meaning of the experience. Through phenomenology, participants’ gathered meanings and social constructions were formed. Social context of the participants and the patterns of social constructivism may then emerge during interviews.

The psychological safety of the participants was of paramount importance when we gathered personal, and potentially sensitive, views from vulnerable young people during interviews. We put procedures in place to protect the participants. Protocols for human research studies are covered next.

Institutional Review Board

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of St. Thomas (UST) meets regularly to evaluate the appropriateness and safety of studies sponsored by the University. UST requires researchers to take online Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) training, which covers research safety protocols. A CITI certificate must be obtained before applying to the IRB for permission to conduct research and no research may be conducted without IRB approval.

I completed the CITI training in 2020 and my certificate is attached as Appendix A. St. Thomas' IRB makes guidelines for the study of humans clear and we used those guidelines to protect the participants in this project. A colleague and I interviewed recent high school graduates who were eighteen to twenty-two years of age, within four years of their high school graduations.

The interviews took place using the UST Zoom online program as required by the IRB Covid pandemic guidelines. Because five of the participants were former middle school students of mine, my friend and colleague, Dawn Peanasky, conducted the interviews with my former students. Dawn is a former band director and a licensed, and very experienced, school counselor who raised three teenagers of her own. Interviewing with Dawn gave my former students a chance to share with a non-threatening interviewer who did not share a history of authority in their lives (as I did).

Although technically adults, the participants were still young and somewhat vulnerable. I took care to obtain informed consent from the interviewees before any interview took place. Both Dawn and I used our experienced judgement gained in decades as teachers, as licensed school counselors, and as parents, as we each attentively read young people's voice tones and nonverbal cues. We both made certain participants did not feel pressure to participate in an interview and, if at any point they became uncomfortable, they knew they were free to stop the interview.

Confidentiality was (and remains) a sacred trust between the interviewers and the participants so that they felt safe in sharing during the interviews and would have trust in the continuing process of confidentiality with the data. We communicated clearly with interviewees so that they understood their right to withdraw consent from participation at any moment. As

active researchers in critical pedagogy, Dawn and I respected the participants' personal power and autonomy, and we stayed aware of our own power and its potential effects. Although young adults, participants were in control of the situation and functioned on a respected equal footing with us.

The participants in the study understood the boundaries of the process from the outset. They knew that our relationships were of a warm, trusted, and confidential-yet-temporary nature. Dawn and I used our skills as licensed school counselors to perceive if a participant's feelings became too raw or exposed during the interview. We used our experienced judgement to determine when to slow the pace of the interview, to pause the interview, or to check in with interviewees about taking a break. An ethic of care was paramount in our work. Two participants felt uncomfortable about the video component of the interviews for their different individual reasons and the cameras were adjusted so that they were completely or partially out of view to accommodate their wishes.

I used pseudonyms for participants' names in all the documents and prevented, and will continue to prevent, any reveal of their identity with the utmost care. I cautiously stored notes, interview recordings, and interview transcripts in my computer. My computer was and is password protected and I am the only person who knows the password. All confidential material will be safely destroyed as soon as my final dissertation copy has been approved by the committee.

Because of the COVID-19 virus global pandemic there were no in-person interviews allowed by the IRB during the period the interviews took place. I was therefore required to arrange to use a special HIPPA compliant version of Zoom. <https://www.stthomas.edu/irb/> Selection and recruitment of participants is described next.

Selection and Recruitment of Participants

Upon the approval of my study from the UST IRB, I commenced selection and recruitment of the participants. I sent emails to area band directors and to teachers of college freshmen, and I posted a flyer on the Facebook social media site. Not surprisingly, most participants who initially responded were former students who already had a connection with me. Those students helped me get in touch with their friends in a snowball effect. The last three interviewees were recruited by an area high school band teacher, Mr. Gooddude (a pseudonym), who was kind enough to reach out to me after I emailed him. With his referrals, I was able to complete the goal of 12 interviews.

When a potential participant contacted me, I explained my research proposal to them, describing what the interviews would entail. I summarized the data-gathering process in a non-threatening manner, including the confidentiality of the information to be obtained. Explanation was accomplished in both verbal and written form. Potential recruits understood that participation in the study was optional and, even if they initially elected to participate, they had the right to stop the interview anytime, and/or to withdraw from the study if they chose.

I also explained that the research might be used to benefit future IM students in a broader way if we were able to obtain in-depth information about their music learning experiences and development. My scripted ask to the potential participants contained a balanced explanation of the importance of recruitment to the study with an emphasis also on their freedom to participate, or not participate. The written form of this explanation/presentation can be found in Appendix B.

I specifically recruited BIPOC young people who attended middle school or high school within a specific metro district. My goal was to interview young people of color to project underrepresented voices and to learn about possible alternative or ignored realities (Delgado &

Stefancic, 2017). The participant's SES status was not part of the recruiting, but it turned out that at least 9 of the 12 students had families qualified for free or reduced lunch while they were in school. Because of the concentration of both poverty and BIPOC people in specific areas of the school district, this was not surprising.

The diversity of SES backgrounds, cultures, and genders of the interviewees gave intersectional variety in the perspectives. While my focus was mainly on the projection of BIPOC voices, I hoped that the qualitative method would reveal some of the complexities of how individuals were situated, including whether they were eligible for free and reduced lunch. When participants revealed issues related to SES, I included the examination of possible SES constraints in my analysis, in hope that issues related to neither race/ethnicity nor SES, which are frequently intersectional, would be diluted (Bates, 2019).

The 12 participants in this study graduated from six different public high schools and represent a variety of IMP experiences. I successfully found a collection of diverse voices to be represented in the study. The participants all shared freely and generously.

Data Collection

Each participant talked about their perceptions from a list of prepared open-ended questions which we asked during a recorded interview of about forty-five to sixty minutes. Interviews were all scheduled at a convenient time for participants and took place online. The interview questions are attached in an Appendix C. Examples of interview questions included: What were the high points and low points of being a beginner in band? What helped you get through those difficult times? If a choice of whether to continue in instrumental music (IM) was difficult, what do you think was the thing or things that tipped the scale for you on that decision?

How could building principals, teachers, or your parents have made IM a better learning experience for you?

I studied the phenomenological perceptions of 12 former high school instrumental music students, allowing their experiences to unfold in a “naturalistic” manner during my research (Patton, 2015, p. 91). We gathered information through “in-depth, semi-structured interviews” (Leedy & Ormrod, 2019, p. 236) with 12 recent graduates of high school IMP (within four years of high school graduation).

I collected thick descriptions of the phenomenon I studied and discovered new insights to add to what was already understood about the ways students have experienced instrumental music study. The interviewees shared about the many factors that helped, supported, and motivated them as they chose to participate and persist in instrumental music at the high school level, as well as some unexpected obstacles to their IMP journeys.

Data Analysis

Transcriptions of interviews provided the raw data for my study. After each interview, I transcribed the recording of the interview and then coded and analyzed the information, looking for patterns, themes, and unusual responses. I used NVivo computer software to help sort and analyze my data <https://www.qsrinternational.com/nvivo-qualitative-data-analysis-software/home>. In some cases, I asked follow-up questions if more elaboration or clarification seemed needed and appropriate. Next, I focused on re-coding data as needed and completed further analyses of patterns. I used the data to draw out and write about any new implications generated within that might produce deeper knowledge in the field (Charmaz, 2014).

Ultimately, as I discovered themes within the data, found both commonalities and differences in themes and individual perceptions, and discovered new insights, I further analyzed

the connections between themes. After I wrote summaries about the individual IMP experiences and then of common cross-themes and connections therein, I used triangulation to check for validity and reliability, concepts I describe in the next few paragraphs.

Validity

Validity in a qualitative study is a kind of “truth value” that gives the study a credible and “authentic portrait” about the experiences studied (Miles et al., 2020, p. 306). I found truth in my research by finding the meanings in participants’ narratives, and by describing them in a way that is rich with context and thick with description (Miles et al., 2020). To increase validity, I triangulated through “member checking” (Bazeley, 2013, p. 408). I accomplished member checking by checking in with participants’ perceptions concerning my descriptions of their experiences and words to see if they perceived the descriptions as true. I also asked one of the area band teachers to check in with the perceptions of his former students who were interviewed.

Reliability

I believe this study gives a reasonably reliable view into the inner workings and perceptions of IM learning experiences of these young adults who recently participated in a high school band program. The fairly young age (18-22 years) of the respondents assured that memories they shared were relatively recent and, therefore, somewhat reliable. By recruiting recent graduates of six different metro area public high schools, I found 12 participants from a variety of socio-economic, racial, and ethnic backgrounds who contributed to the understanding of my selected topic.

As experienced teachers, Dawn and I were able to help interviewees feel comfortable so that they were reasonably able to share their reliable truth. By keeping organized records, I kept track of notes and analysis and was able to audit my data for rechecking accuracy of perceptions

as needed. Dawn also acted as a shadow coder to help me to increase both the reliability and validity of the project during the analysis stage (Bazeley, 2013). We coded some of the same material and used a process of code checking/comparisons to provide intercoder reliability. Like increasing reliability, minimizing bias is also an important part of making the research more valid. Issues of researcher bias are covered next.

Researcher Experience and Bias

As older, educated White women from the upper middle socioeconomic class, Dawn and I needed to acknowledge our privilege as we each interviewed vulnerable young people of various cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. An ethic of care and our backgrounds in school counseling helped guide us to make caring choices as the young people shared with each of us. As we were each entrusted with their precious stories, the participants in my study seemed able to trust that Dawn and I observed high standards of confidentiality. We utilized our skills, sensitivity, and judgement as experienced educators and school counselors to help the participants share at a level that was comfortable and appropriate to the situation.

The entire premise of my study was based on the notion that participating in a high school band has value, and that the voices, stories, and viewpoints of young people are important. The band ensemble is historically steeped in the patriarchal, Western military tradition, and is rooted in a kind of ‘manly’ call-to-battle. Both Dawn and I viewed the tradition of school band, however, from a more feminist perspective; believing band may be a source of excitement, power, social connectedness, and musical expressiveness for young people of all forms of gender, racial, and ethnic identification. With the traditional large band ensemble often serving as a basis for the school instrumental ensemble, individual forms of expression can and do branch out to include participation in the full orchestra, solo work, jazz, rock, mariachi, hip

hop, rap, compositional or improvisational creativeness, and any number of individual and small group musical endeavors. Developing competence in playing a musical instrument is a wonderful experience for many and this was and continued to be my bias.

While band or orchestra are not the perfect course of music study for every young person, these large instrumental ensembles are the current traditions we have in schools, and my bias, for the purposes of this study, was that these ensembles have value. My bias was also that there were students who could have benefited from band who were being left out of IMP. This was the ultimate purpose of my research, to find out how we might help more students develop a positive instrumental musician identity for the purpose of expanding advanced opportunity and participation in high school IMP in the future. Of course, I had my own philosophical and theoretical views developed during my tenures as a music teacher and as a scholar. My personal curiosity and passion about motivation and the process of learning, however, outweighed my conviction to my own preconceived ideas during this study. As I was deeply interested in furthering the art of teaching and learning music, I enthusiastically sought unbiased truth to the best of my ability in this project.

By inviting recent high school graduates to recount their musical journeys, experiences, and decisions thereof, I believe I discovered more about what helps some students in school IMP to be successful as they move through the middle and high school years. I also made discoveries about how systemic issues and barriers to IMP have been experienced, and how those problems might be addressed, as well as more about teaching strategies that were inspiring and helpful to the participants of this study. Perhaps more students from all socioeconomic classes and backgrounds might be more included in high school music programs in the future because of the information offered by the young people of this study.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE INDIVIDUAL STORIES

According to Delgado and Stefancic (2017), “stories and narratives may begin a process of correction in our system of beliefs and categories by calling attention to neglected evidence and reminding readers of our common humanity” (p. 51). With the idea of projecting neglected voices, we interviewed 12 young BIPOC people for this study to document their 12 unique journeys through instrumental music participation (IMP). By honoring their individual themes first, without comparative analysis or any kind of initial grouping together of themes, I kept the focus on their precious, and often singular, views and needs.

I therefore wrote each of their stories based on the participants’ three to four individual main themes, not on commonalities with other participants but based on what stood out as the most impressive themes within each of their unique paths. While some individuals had major themes in common with others, those common themes are not addressed as so in this chapter, but instead, similar themes and sub-themes are addressed in Chapter Five using a more traditional style of revealing common data themes. Table 1 shows some of the pertinent participant demographics as an overview of the interviewees. The individual IMP stories of participants follow Table 1 in alphabetical order according to their pseudonyms.

Table 1

Participant Demographics

Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Primary race /ethnicity	Years of private lessons	Prior Years in band	Years of High school IM completed	Total years of IM	Eligible For Free or reduced Lunches
Adriana	F	22	Mexican American	0	0	4	4	Yes

Alejandro, "Lele"	F	20	Mexican American	0	2.5	1	3.5	Yes
Ava	F	21	Native American (Ojibwe)/ European American	10	4	4	12+	No
Danielle	F	19	African American	0	3	4	7	Yes
Dominique	F	21	Multi-cultural (African American/ Native American)	0	1	3.5	4.5	Yes
Emelia	F	19	Mexican American	0	3	3	6	Yes
Hasina	F	20	African American/ Native American	0	2.5	3	5.5	Yes
Isaiah	M	18	African American/ Ghanaian American	0	3	4	7	Unknown
Isabel, "Izzy"	F	19	Mexican American	0	2	1	3	Yes
Mai	F	19	Hmong American	0	2	4	6	Yes
Marcus	M	18	African American/ Tanzanian American	0	4	4	8	No
Meng	M	22	Hmong American	0	1	2	3	Yes

Adriana's Story

Dark-haired and tentative, twenty-two-year-old college student Adriana economized her words and kept her video image in a shadow during our interview as she somewhat-shyly relayed her narrative of learning to play flute, a story that did not begin until her freshman year of high school. Her story reveals important themes of a family tradition of instrumental music, the

therapeutic value of instrumental music (IM), and Adriana's personal strength through hurt and disappointment.

A Family Tradition of Instrumental Music

It is somewhat unusual for students to have the courage to begin learning a band instrument as late as the ninth grade; Adriana's confidence was no doubt a product of a tradition of music-making in her family, a proud Mexican American family descended from the Monterrey and Chihuahua regions. Adriana stated, "It was because of my family. My dad played guitar and my grampa played violin. Musicianship was in me, passed down in my family ... I always felt like it is part of who I am because of family heritage." In Adriana's middle school, there was no option for band, but due to her musical family roots, she found band to be an "easy choice" as a freshman in high school. Further, parental interest and support helped sustain her choice to persevere in band. Adriana said her family gave her the most support for her band journey and she stated meaningfully, "Mom and Dad were always there."

The Therapeutic Value of Instrumental Music

Adriana's story exemplifies the therapeutic value of instrumental music. She viewed band as a therapeutic outlet in her high school life and the band room as a mostly safe space. Adriana intimated that she suffered some private trauma before and/or during high school; she said in her succinct manner, "Music was a nice distraction and got me through the hard times." Further, Adriana found making-music in school somewhat emotionally addictive and her IM involvement appeared to support her education generally. She said, "Music inspired me to do my best and keep going."

Personal Strength

Adriana also experienced hurt and demonstrated personal strength in the face of her painful feelings related to band when she was excluded from an important performance during her junior year of high school. Apparently, the band was divided up according to skill level for a graduation performance, and Adriana, with her late start in band, found herself left out of the event, an event with her favorite band friends. She felt deeply hurt. Initially, the perceived slight caused her to drop band for her senior year.

After she dropped band, however, she changed her mind. As Adriana explained, “The director found me, and I changed my mind. I forgave him and played senior year after all.” Adriana explained that there was a particular band award for four years of band participation that was important for her to be able to wear at high school graduation. The goal of earning that band award supported her determination to complete the four full years of band, therefore enabling her to continue to enjoy IMP membership her senior year. In Adriana’s words, “I played for myself and decided, ‘I’m okay whatever I do.’” Her own strength and determination brought Adriana through the adversity.

Adriana’s story of high school IMP contained themes of a family tradition of IM, the therapeutic value of IM, and personal strength through hurt and disappointment. At the time of the interview, Adriana was attending a community college with a medical career in mind and was also working in retail. She does not plan to play in a college ensemble but believes she may again play her flute and possibly perform in a more casual capacity at some point.

Alejandro/Lele’s Story

Twenty-year-old Alejandro, heretofore called her nickname “Lele,” had shiny, thick, layered dark brown hair, and a friendly smile. She was in the bloom of young motherhood, and

she frequently touched and cuddled her several-months-old baby boy during the interview, clearly proud of him. Lele's story of band was a contrasting mixture of joy, struggle, and sadness. One joyful theme was her connection to her cultural roots as a trumpet player, and one of her struggles was discovering brass male chauvinism with her chosen instrument when she started high school. Heartbreak and disappointment marked the end of Lele's high school band experience as she gave up band at the beginning of her sophomore year due to increased feelings of racial and cultural isolation.

Connection to Cultural Roots

Lele began playing trumpet in sixth grade at a small, diverse (97% BIPOC), charter middle school. She discovered that she was sometimes "a perfectionist" on the trumpet, and she worked hard to learn the band pieces, becoming a section leader in her middle school band. She remembered being especially excited when was chosen to play "The Star-Spangled Banner" as a soloist at the end of seventh grade for a graduation ceremony. Lele said that one reason the trumpet spoke to her as a choice of instruments was that it provided her a cultural connection to her Mexican heritage. She remarked that it "was one of the first things that connected me to my cultural roots." Lele explained:

I just really liked playing the trumpet. And one of the things that made me want to stay in there longer was the fact that a lot of Mexican music has trumpets in it, you know? I thought that was cool because I was like, you know, getting closer to my culture.

Lele explained that her trumpet experience also helped her mother to open up to Lele about their Mexican cultural roots, helping to lessen her mother's anxiety about her daughter being culturally "different" in the dominant White culture:

My mom was really overprotective about me not showing too much of my culture and I think that's because she was nervous that I would get bullied in school. So, I think that trumpet got me into knowing more about my culture.... That was really cool for me because my mom wouldn't really show me my culture and it became me showing (her) that, "Yeah, I want to know more about my culture, all these things." I think that opened her up more. She could tell me more about her experiences, like about living in Mexico and stuff.

Lele shared the cultural joy of her trumpet skills at home with her extended family too, playing traditional Mexican songs and the "birthday song" for family birthdays. She joked, "I was like, 'You don't have to get mariachis no more.' (laughs)"

Brass Section Male Chauvinism

Lele's trumpet joys changed into more of a struggle during her freshman year of high school as she transitioned from the small middle school near the city center into a large public high school at an inner suburb. She felt comparatively unprepared because the other students in her section were "advantaged by private lessons," something her family could not afford. Additionally, for most of her band career, her family lived in an apartment building, making home practice a challenge. One of the struggles in high school was the realization that the trumpet section was not only mostly White, but culturally male-dominated and very competitive. She found it difficult to make friends and did not feel the support she had in middle school band. About her freshman year, Lele said, "The first year, they were, like, talking behind my back and acting like I wouldn't hear them. But I would hear them, and they'd be, like, 'Oh she can't hit that note.' Stuff like that."

Still, Lele worked hard and generally kept up in freshmen band even without the private lessons, and she also made one band friend later in the year, easing her comfort level somewhat. She said this was all despite the boys in the trumpet section sometimes causing her to “feel less-than or dumb.” Then, at one point, she was even selected to play a solo, albeit with her confidence waning somewhat from her freshman experience:

In the trumpets, trombones, and all that, yeah--I think there was like a hierarchy and I was at the bottom. I remember one time at this concert: We were playing this song and I got one of the solos. And I was like, “Oh no, I don’t want this—give it to him, he’s so much better.” But, at the concert, I think I did pretty good, you know.

Racial/Cultural Isolation

And Lele was brave enough to sign up for a second year of high school band, however, nonverbal microaggressions in an even larger and more advanced band class caused her feelings of racial and cultural isolation, triggering her feelings of inferiority. Immediately at the start of her sophomore year, Lele’s hope of playing trumpet turned into disappointment:

The second year of high school I walked into class, and everybody just stared at me with this, like, ugly eye. It was just the fact that I was like the only Latin person walking into the class so, I don’t know; I just felt really uncomfortable. And everybody throughout the summer had private lessons. They had, you know, all of these practices and I couldn’t because I had to work and stuff--because I had turned sixteen. I wasn’t at the same level as them and I just decided that I can’t be in band anymore.... I was getting older and I thought, “All these people are more educated than I am, and I’m just going to be there wasting the teacher’s time,” you know?... I just had to quit band.

Lele’s story of band joy, struggle, and disappointment, included themes of connection to

cultural roots, brass male chauvinism, and racial/cultural isolation. She appeared to continue to be done playing trumpet at the time of the interview. Lele believed, however, that she would become a supportive band mother if her son became interested in joining band someday.

Ava's Story

Twenty-one-year-old Ava, in her senior year of private college on the west coast, cheerfully volunteered to be interviewed. She had large gray eyes with short-cropped light brown hair and fair skin. Of Ojibwe heritage on her mother's side, she referred to herself as "passing White" because she was light skinned compared to some others in her family. Ava humorously and animatedly shared the details of her very successful musical story, a journey that continued through her college years. Main themes from Ava's story included a family tradition of instrumental music, commitment, and a creative spirit.

A Family Tradition of Instrumental Music

Ava was born into a musical family tradition with a mother who was a professional music teacher, and who also served as Ava's first music teacher. After exploring a few instruments during her childhood, Ava settled on the flute as a favorite. She was enrolled in private flute lessons for five years starting at eight years old while the family lived on the east coast and Ava attended private elementary and middle school there.

Commitment

After moving to the Midwest, Ava joined the high school band at a large public high school where, initially feeling a bit uncertain about how she best fit in at her new school, she was able to gradually discover a true sense of commitment to her ensemble. She felt challenged in a new way by the high school music program and found a sense of belonging in the friendships and community of the band. Supported and held to task by a "motivating" high school band

director who was “a really good dude,” and also challenged by a new private flute teacher (who “coached the hell out of” her), Ava was a standout in the flute section of the band. She also played in the full orchestra and other special ensembles at school. Ava felt she mattered to the music groups and was committed because she knew “others were counting” on her to be there. She and her mother also both volunteered to help the school music program with booster activities, such as with fund raising.

A Creative Spirit

Ava, a naturally creative spirit, found that flute playing was one fulfilling way to express her creativity. She repeatedly described her high school band experience as both fun and challenging. Although Ava’s musical background was based on a strong Western tradition of private flute lessons, Ava discovered that she also had good improvisatory skills. This became apparent to her when she lost her place in her sheet music at a college flute audition but was able to continue the performance without any obvious blip. Tempted by a music scholarship at her chosen college, Ava successfully continued as a band member for all four years of her private postsecondary education.

Ava’s band story included main themes of a family tradition of instrumental music, commitment, and a creative spirit. At the time of the interview for this research, Ava was preparing to graduate from college with a degree in studio arts and visual studies, interviewing for jobs, and making plans to continue her successful and creative trajectory.

Danielle’s Story

Nineteen-year-old Danielle had large expressive brown eyes and long, straightened, light reddish-brown hair. A proud, young African American woman, Danielle also had also an unmistakable charisma. In addition to her fringed eyes helping (over a face mask) to tell her

story, Danielle was also prone to the frequent use of humor and artful hand gestures for emphasis. Her narrative of playing trombone through middle school and high school revealed themes of concert adrenaline, expression of an indomitable spirit, and band camp camaraderie.

Concert Adrenaline

Danielle found the excitement of the band concerts to be the highlight of her school music experience and described the concert adrenaline from the pressure and excitement of public performance. She also told of the communal beauty of sharing her efforts with the audience, and basking in the crowd's appreciation thereof:

I really loved the concerts; it was the big moment. It was always, “Don’t mess up. Don’t mess up. You got this....” Because after practicing, it let me know that there were people there that actually wanted to listen and hear, you know?... There were a lot of people at those concerts, a lot of parents, teachers, you know? And I love that moment, standing up and just listening to them clap and enjoy the music.

Expression of an Indomitable Spirit

For Danielle, playing trombone appeared to be an expression of her indomitable spirit. She developed a special affinity with projecting herself through her large, and often cumbersome, instrument. Danielle shared that “playing loud” on the trombone was a very satisfying and exciting part of expressing herself:

My favorite music that we played had to be the Star Wars theme song, only because the loud instruments usually take the lead in that. We were able to be as loud as we want in that song (laughs)! So, I really did enjoy playing that song.... Because I was ready (gestures with strong fist) and it’s most like me. Because--me talking about my feelings, how I feel in my feelings—I really don’t do that (dismissive hand gesture). How I express

it is through music. Once we got to “dudududahh” (sings Star Wars Theme), that’s most like me! It’s just like me expressing without all my filters, and it’s just going and going (circular gesture with both hands).

Band Camp Camaraderie

Danielle also explained that attending a band camp as a middle school student on a college campus was pivotal in her choice to continue band into high school. It was at music camp that she found other like-minded trombone aficionados. The camaraderie with trombone students in greater numbers at camp, based in a kind of love-of-being-loud, appeared to cement Danielle’s feelings about her choice of instruments.

It definitely opened me up because, at first, before I attended the music camp, I didn’t know if I wanted to continue to do band in high school or not. When I did that (camp), it definitely made me feel like, “Yes, this is what I want to do; this is the instrument I want to play.” I did have a few thoughts on switching my instrument but as I went to the music camp, I saw all these people that played the same instrument as me. I’m like, “Well--they love it as much as me!” So, it definitely made me feel like that was the instrument that I needed to play because I’m kind of a loud, energetic person and ... I love the trombone because it’s loud and it’s energetic. It makes people want to get up and dance.

It is interesting that, despite experiencing some brass male chauvinism from others about playing her trombone (as Lele did about playing trumpet) Danielle seemed undaunted. It appeared that the camaraderie she felt with other trombone students in her section supported Danielle’s confidence in playing her chosen instrument:

The other students that had trombones, we had a better relationship than anyone else, only because everyone else was like, “Eewe! You play trombone?” And they’re like,

“You’re a girl!” And I’m like, “What does that mean?! (with raised eyebrows)” So, I definitely had a closer relationship with the other students that played trombone because they got me. They knew exactly the reason why I chose the trombone and why I wanted to continue to play it.

Danielle continued playing the trombone through all four years of high school band. Her story of school band included themes of concert adrenaline, expression of an indomitable spirit, and band camp camaraderie. Of her future plans for playing the trombone, Danielle said:

Well, now I work in a school. I love to work in the music classes of course (laughs). I haven’t had any time to get back into playing because I’ve got so busy, but I probably will in the future, I feel--if I get that time, just because I know I’m more of a person that needs a little personal time. That will be something I would do to calm myself. So, I still feel in the future, I might end up pickin’ back up on that.

Dominique’s Story

Danielle’s older sister, twenty-one-year-old Dominique, was tall and regal in appearance and identified as multicultural, since she was of both African American and Native American heritage. She sported a high, natural, African style updo, a pierced nostril, and had an enthusiastic and energetic personality. Dominique began playing clarinet in 8th grade when band was first offered at her middle school. She then played most of all four years in her small high school band. Themes from her band story were finding personal mettle, band camp camaraderie, and the band room as a second home.

Finding Personal Mettle

Although Dominique knew she wanted to play the clarinet, she found it overwhelmingly

difficult at first. She struggled in “trying to learn the instrument, in like what fingers go where, what note is what. It was very difficult.” She continued, “I was like, ‘How do I do this? All these fingerings!’” Dominique said she often complained to her teachers, “This is hard! I don’t know if I can do this!” Through learning clarinet, however, Dominique discovered her own personal mettle. She explained:

At first, I didn’t think I had the determination or motivation ... just having the willpower to learn on my own and actually pick up the clarinet at home and to keep learning and keep going, although I kept messing up. I didn’t think that I could do it. I think the determination and motivation that I personally had for my instrument was what I learned about myself.

Dominique skipped recess after recess in middle school to work on her skills in the band room and realized, “If you just keep at it, you’ll get it. It’s like that in the beginning. It’s not going to be so easy, but everything is like that—life is like that.” Supported by her mother and middle school teachers, Dominique persisted and developed her clarinet playing technique.

Band Camp Camaraderie

Band camp camaraderie was another important theme in Dominique’s band story. Her newly found wisdom and clarinet skills earned her a scholarship to a music camp on a college campus during the summer before high school. At the band camp Dominique was thrilled to find like-minded people who also enjoyed playing musical instruments. Before she played in band, she was more of a private, studious individual at school, but band camp helped Dominique feel like she was “part of something bigger.” Of her first day at camp she said, “I didn’t know any of these people but everyone just kind of comes up to you, introduces themselves, and you feel this warm welcoming.” Dominique went on:

Everybody there was just super happy because we were there for the music. Yes, we made friends ... but what brought us all together was we all had music in common. So that was the main conversation, like when we were at lunch.... I mean, we talked about family and stuff too, but music was like the main topic for all of us.

It was because of the camaraderie Dominique experienced at music camp with other “band nerds” that she made her final decision about going on to play clarinet in high school band. Her high school band was small, composed of only about 30 students, and she also bonded with her classmates there and experienced a supportive learning environment:

It felt like we were very much a family; everybody was close and everybody’s always there helping each other. Everybody always gave advice, criticism, and positive criticism.... So, it was just really nice. And it was like that through my years in band.

The Band Room as a Second Home

A third theme in Dominique’s band story was the band room feeling like a second home for her. In addition to describing her band mates as “family,” Dominique also described her band rooms, both in middle school and high school, as second homes. Of the high school band room, Dominique said, “His (her band director’s) room was a safe haven place.” When comparing the band experience to other high school classes, such as English, Dominique simply said that, unlike band, “English was just English.”

Three themes that stood out in Dominique’s band story were: finding her personal mettle, band camp camaraderie, and the band room as a second home. At the time of the interview, Dominique was attending college with a medical career in mind, participating in the Marine Corps Junior ROTC training, working at a full-time job, as well as at another part-time job. While she does not expect to have time to “ever pick up another clarinet again,” Dominique

continues to enjoy the therapeutic benefits of listening to music as an important part of her life and believes in supporting band for her younger siblings and her own, possible future children.

Emelia's Story

Petite with large brown eyes, wavy pink hair, and a kind smile, nineteen-year-old Emelia spoke gently and fondly of her love of playing both the flute and bass guitar in her high school band program for three years. Her story reflects the meanings and mental balance she found in the school instrumental music program. She also described a particular heartbreak over dropping out of the program for her senior year, primarily for financial reasons. Within her story of instrumental music are meaningful themes of the therapeutic value of instrumental music, self-expression through performance, an indescribable “harmony” Emelia felt with the music, and band class as a mind opening experience.

The Therapeutic Value of Instrumental Music

Emelia repeatedly described music as something that helped her feel emotional balance and better mental health through her adolescence. Regarding her middle school years, Emelia said:

Well, at the time I was really in a hard place. And being a teen, everyone gets anxious, especially when you're a tween in the middle school age. You get so anxious! And I noticed whenever I was in band my anxiety would go down for a bit.... I feel like it really helped me gain a bit more stability in my mental health.... It (band) was just like ... a therapeutic session.

Emelia described playing her flute and bass guitar as “so soothing.” She said, “It’s just so calming!” The act of entering the band threshold each school day throughout her years of high school IMP marked a relieving emotional transition for Emelia:

It was relief when I walked into that classroom. It was relief! I could just calm down and let my worries flow by. It was always like that. I love band class.... And I always looked forward to that—and that part of the day because it’s just so ... soothing.

Emelia faced a difficult choice when she discovered a schedule conflict at the end of her junior year. Due to financial reasons, she felt like she could not turn down a class conflicting with band because the class offered free college credits. Emelia said she had an obligation to drop band for her senior year in favor of the financial savings. She described the loss of band during her school day as “losing a part of” herself. Emelia said this choice was “heartbreaking” and said it adversely affected her mental health:

what I noticed when I stopped playing band—my mood did switch up a lot. I was more grumpier. I was just more sleepy. It just wasn’t the same. And once I would pick up my flute, a little bit of that went away, but I would have to play alone without the band, and it just wasn’t the same. That’s what I do regret; I regret not joining band because it just brought out a little bit of the worst in me. And I didn’t really like that for my senior year.

Self-expression Through Performance

In addition to experiencing more emotional stability through band participation, Emelia also found joy and pride in her self-expression through performance. She described being able to show off her new playing skills in middle school as meaning “everything” to her. Of her Mexican American heritage, Emelia described feelings of cultural and musical pride from playing a Mexican march during the Cinco de Mayo parade with her high school band. And in another particularly memorable performance event, Emelia shone musically at her very own quinceañera when she suddenly “stole” the bass guitar from a performer in the mariachi band and climbed onto the stage to feature her own playing along with the ensemble. Emelia appeared

to revel in performance and found a large part of her identity as an instrumentalist. As she said, “I feel like I was meant to play the bass guitar and the flute.”

Indescribable “Harmony”

Emelia resonated with music performance in a special and emotional way, which she described as “harmony.” She articulated her ineffable connection to music with feeling:

I think “harmony” would be the word I would choose. It was just that harmony and sooth-ness that just made me want to keep going. Just the beauty of the many pieces that are just stuck in my head. It was just so beautiful. Yeah. I just don’t know how to explain it. It’s just something that’s so unique.

A Mind Opening Experience

Emelia believed her IMP helped to expand and open her mind to different genres of music and to the varied ideas of others. She said she used say, “no, this is the only one (genre) I listened to” but her instrumental music experiences helped her become able and “willing to listen to everything” with a sense of greater curiosity. She stated that IMP, “did open my mind more.” Emelia further explained that class discussions about music during band class helped her become a better listener and more open to others’ ideas.

Emelia’s story of her relationship with instrumental music starts her love of the beauty of music and music performance. The musical and social connections of band class gave her meaning, opened her mind, and helped her openly and creatively express her true self while also helping to stabilize her mood. Financial concerns and a scheduling conflict caused grief and less mood stability for Emelia during her senior year when she was not able to participate in band as she had hoped.

Hasina's Story

With dark brown hair, light mocha skin, a bright smile, and fringed lashes, twenty-year-old Hasina was spirited and expressive as she generously told her varied personal tale of band study, often in beautiful detail. A proud young African American woman who also claimed indigenous American tribal heritage, Hasina's fascinating story of playing the clarinet (and sometimes percussion) in band revealed four main themes: the power of a professional musical model, leadership confidence, culture shock, and cultural competence.

The Power of a Professional Model

One of Hasina's formative instrumental musicianship experiences was a performance by professionals at her middle school where she was a beginning band student. The skill of the performance amazed her, captured her imagination, and helped her view clarinet playing as a legitimate lasting pursuit, thus demonstrating the power of a professional model of music performance. Although Hasina experienced musical encouragement in the home and already had talented church and hobbyist musicians as role models in her family (such as her creative stepfather), the school performance by professionals opened her eyes and inspired her in a new way:

it was a guy who came to the middle school. I think we were in seventh or eighth grade, and he performed on clarinet. I think that performance was motivation for me and really stuck with me--that I wanted to play the clarinet and that this was something I really liked.... I think that concert was like a good turning point, because it was ... --like seeing someone else succeed so well at it. At first, I'm thinking, "This is something you just do in school. It's something you do in your high school, and when you're out of school it's

just something you don't continue." But he was a grown man, and he was very advanced in it! I think that was just like, "Yeah! This is it; this is what I want to do!"

Leadership Confidence

Hasina found leadership confidence through success in band. She discovered that she was a leader and was "comfortable" in a leadership role. In middle school she enjoyed the friendly competition of completing achievement goals, felt rewarded for her efforts, and learned that she also liked to encourage others. In Hasina's words:

I'll say, "I'm a leader." I like to take that role in things. I think I was kind of iffy about that before but being in band helped me show that in other ways. For example, that year I became captain of the basketball team and stuff like that. I was taking roles in other places. I know that I like to be a leader now.

After a somewhat rough start in band her freshman year in a private high school, Hasina continued to feel "comfortable" in leadership roles in her sophomore year of band and beyond. Hasina's skills and recognition for her leadership made it easier for her to enjoy band and to stick with it:

Well, I was like a model student. Like it was a little embarrassing sometimes when, in most of the schools I went to, they were like, "Oh Hasina, could you show these kids how to play this part of the song?" or "Would you play this note? For the class?" It was a comfort zone for me, I guess. It was just always something--I was just like, "This is where I am, like right here." So, yeah, it wasn't really ever difficult to choose, and it was like, "Yeah, this is what I'm going to do each quarter."

Culture Shock

Hasina appeared to rely on the confidence she gained as a leader in band to continue to

persevere as a band student as she went on in high school. As the only African American student, or one of a couple, or one of a just a few African American students in her various high school band classes, she repeatedly faced the challenges of culture shock. Hasina's small middle school was almost 99% children of color and, while the school was comprised of only about 19% Black students, she found her middle school band to have an integrating effect in a safe atmosphere. High school, however, was a contrast to Hasina's middle school experience.

One of her most intense feelings of culture shock was at a mostly White, private high school band in the ninth grade where she attended on a scholarship and in which she was only one of two African American students. Then, during her sophomore year, Hasina played in band at a culturally-Hmong charter school where she was the only African American student in the band. And during her junior year, Hasina attended a very large, regular public high school where the population was generally diverse. In band class, however, Hasina was only one of a handful of African American students.

Hasina described these various experiences of culture shock as "awkward" or "uncomfortable," and sometimes, "alienating." Her explanation of feelings of isolation follows:

The worst part (of band) ... was probably always being the minority of the group. That was kind of always something I experienced in every setting at every school I went to as a minority. Especially in band ... it was really awkward at first, because as much as people try to act like, "Oh, we don't see color," when you walk into the classroom, and you see that no one else looks like you, you're going to be uncomfortable. I don't really care if anyone says otherwise or says they "don't see color," you're going to be taken aback for a second.... You're going to be like, "Well, this is a little awkward." Because most ... try to migrate toward people with the same background and people you're

comfortable with. So, I would. Even in middle school ... the Hmong kids, Hispanic kids, African American kids--they all go sit by each other, because that's where you migrate to. Like even when you're at the park ... I would go towards a Black kid before I go to a White kid. Now, it's not because I'm racist; it's just because that's where my comfort zone is.... Most people try to act like they don't see color and I just feel like that's where you're gonna go subconsciously even if you're not trying to. My feet are gonna walk toward this African American kid.

Cultural Competence

The fact that Hasina braved and endured so many of these culturally “uncomfortable” situations, is a testament to her personal courage, curiosity, and the precocious cultural competence she developed during her journey. Hasina credits some of her middle school band experiences as facilitating her cultural competency and familiarity/comfort with various cultures. In a diverse middle school of mostly Hmong and Mexican heritage students, Hasina found herself interacting with students of other cultures during middle school band in a way that she did not interact during the rest of the school day:

I think it really like helped me connect with a lot of people who I probably would have never really talked to outside of band, because we went to like a really diverse school. In most schools like that, most people hang out with their own ethnic group, like African Americans, Hmong kids, stuff like that. But we all--were kind of just together (in band class). That was something we all bonded over because you had no choice but to work together. There's like literally no choice.

In addition to bonding with students of different cultures in her small middle school

over a shared musical mission, Hasina also credits attending a mostly-White music camp during middle school with her developing cultural competency and her courage:

Honestly, like it (camp) was just really an outgoing experience, because when we got to go to band camp, that was one of my first times seeing anywhere that was predominantly White.... I'm glad I got that experience, because I ended up later in a predominantly White high school. It gave me experiences for later in life and I probably would have never experienced those if I wasn't at band camp. I literally took a lot of risks because I had that experience. I went to a predominantly White high school, and then I went to a predominantly Hmong high school that was like 95% Hmong. And I played in the band there too. I don't think I would have had the confidence to do any of that if I didn't previously have experiences with band camp or being around other big ethnic groups that weren't African American (in middle school).

Hasina's story revealed themes of the power of a professional music model, leadership confidence, culture shock, and cultural competence. Her story of varied band experiences clearly shows that instrumental music was valued and formative for her in several ways. At the time of the interview, Hasina was working at her former middle school as an educational assistant and attending community college. She was not playing her clarinet at school but occasionally played the guitar for fun.

Isaiah's Story

An eighteen-year-old college freshman, Isaiah was a proud young Black man (he said he had some "Black Panther" in him) and he had a striking appearance with close tight braids and a broad smile. Even more striking was his charismatic verbal eloquence and expressiveness. A deep and critical thinker, Isaiah was as analytical in his descriptions of his intellectual music

curiosity as he was about the social structures and segregation he encountered in his former high school. These two themes, combined with his hope for systemic change of the segregation issues, plus the teacher mediation that was part of an important relationship Isaiah experienced with his high school band teacher, were all highlights of Isaiah's band journey narrative.

Intellectual Music Curiosity

Isaiah began playing trumpet in middle school and appreciated that he had a middle school band teacher who challenged him cognitively, encouraging his intense intellectual music curiosity. He said, "I think she respected her students' intelligence to the point where she allowed us to learn some really advanced topics that might not have been taught by a different teacher." With strong family music values, a skilled middle school band teacher who also helped him solve the challenges of his beginning trumpet embouchure, and supportive middle school peers, Isaiah grew and thrived in the challenge and practice of working out the details of music creation.

Segregation

As a freshman, Isaiah enrolled in the band of a large, diverse, public high school and, while he found the teaching and learning satisfying, he found the band class, like the AP classes in his school, to be plagued by racial segregation. Although the school was about 40% White, Isaiah was one of only a "handful" of BIPOC students in the band class, making the band composed of about 90% White students. Isaiah thought deeply and critically about the segregation at his high school, and believed structural issues caused some of the problem.

One example of a structural issue contributing to segregation at Isaiah's school was a scheduling conflict he encountered when he wanted to go on into an advanced band class, which was scheduled the same hour as African American Literature during his sophomore year. The

special English credit course was, understandably, very popular with Black students at the school, and was a course Isaiah was much looking forward to taking. Solving the scheduling conflict problem was a struggle, but Isaiah's band teacher convinced him to keep up his skills in band by re-enrolling in the less-advanced band course, with the assurance that Isaiah would be able to hold his seniority in band for the following year. This was a disappointment for Isaiah, but he was a flexible and dedicated band student. He therefore agreed to stay in the less challenging band ensemble during his sophomore year to make it possible to sign up for the African American Literature class. Isaiah analyzed his tough choice:

I was kind of stuck in that decision right there.... I think at first it was (a disappointment) but I really had to kind of reframe my mind of accepting that I am still in a space where I can continue to learn, and I know that I have the skill set needed to be in that higher level; it is just not being shown in the current view.

Along with the structural segregation issues, Isaiah encountered racism and disrespect in some of his band mates and this increased a type of segregation within the band as well. He found racist behaviors to be even more prevalent in band than they were in other classes. Isaiah detailed:

I think that a lot of students (in band) had a bit of insensitivity and willful ignorance to the experiences of BIPOC individuals. I've heard, like many times, kind of ignorant comments or whatever near me that I didn't really appreciate.... If I could tell you anything in specific ... like, I remember people making fun of mannerisms of African Americans. Or, I remember the specific comment, a very insensitive comment, about Asian dialects, especially East Asian dialects. And these are some comments I heard from, like, my band.

Isaiah critically observed that the social hierarchy of band included those he called “band members” and also, “people who were in band.” These two groups delineated a dominant band culture of “band members” (who were also White) characterized by the insensitivity and subtle bullying, along with a humbler subculture (the one Isaiah preferred) made of “people who were in band” more to just “be themselves and to learn.”

Hope for Change

Along with Isaiah’s thoughtful criticism of the issues of segregation and racism within his school band experiences was an optimistic hope for change in the systemic issues entrenched in school programs. When asked what administrators and educators could have done to make his school IM experience better, Isaiah had ready and thoughtful answers. He suggested band should be available at the elementary level, accessible to all during the school day. Isaiah also proposed “tailored advertising” for the program to attract more BIPOC students by using, for example, familiar music of their diverse childhoods.

Isaiah also suggested that administrators troubleshoot scheduling conflict issues that contribute to segregation in band and that school leaders and teachers work together to provide “more focus and care to the environment when it comes to (inclusivity).” Isaiah felt his band teachers made very good personal efforts toward inclusivity within the classrooms but that a “full restructuring of environments and education” was needed to effect real change.

Teacher Mediation

The cultural and racial issues existed in Isaiah’s band class despite an evidently exemplary band teacher who not only helped Isaiah navigate the previously described scheduling conflict, but who also did much to provide teacher mediation to ameliorate the painful racial and cultural issues in band, and in the school. Isaiah’s band teacher regularly “did the most work”

teaching about BIPOC struggles, culture, and race issues. His director also led class discussions on the cultural and historical significance within the varied repertoire he and the class chose to learn in band class.

Further, Isaiah's personal relationship with his band teacher was special and important to him. His director "took a very vested interest" in Isaiah and his future. Isaiah's teacher did much to encourage Isaiah to feel valued throughout his high school years in band and to open up about his needs and goals, as well as to make suggestions to improve band class:

Many places in school, you don't really have that much control over your life, your education. But I was asked many times, you know, "What can we change about this? What can we do? What can we add?" And I was involved in that, and I think that that's a really big thing for me.

The questioning and personal support from his band teacher helped bring Isaiah through.

Despite the many challenges, Isaiah completed all four years of high school band thanks to his supportive band teacher, as well as his own curiosity, flexibility, strength, intelligence, and drive. Isaiah had pride about his accomplished years in band and considered his school band career a "shining achievement." He summed it up, "And the fact that I have that behind me, in fact, that I continued to put in the work is probably the most encouraging part of it: I created that experience with my own hands."

Isaiah's band narrative, a story that included his "shining achievement" in IMP, revealed themes of intellectual music curiosity, segregation, hope for change, and teacher mediation. At the time of the interview for this research, Isaiah's musical curiosity was continuing in varied forms, including by making curated playlists for musicians, and his future ambitions of studying, and creating with, music technology.

Isabel, “Izzy’s” Story

Twenty-year-old Isabel, called “Izzy,” was a young woman of strong Mexican heritage attending college with a goal toward a legal career. Long-haired, smiling kindly, and slightly shy, Izzy bravely shared her narrative of playing flute in the school band from seventh through ninth grade, a journey that included heart-breaking contrasts of happiness and disappointment. Themes from Izzy’s story included the joy of instrumental music, family support, and then, during high school: humiliation. The latter experiences caused her to leave the high school band before she was a sophomore.

The Joy of Instrumental Music

Although Izzy got a later start in middle school band than most of her peers, there she eventually found the joy of music. She had a positive attitude, using self-talk to encourage herself through the struggles. If she made a mistake as a beginner, she would tell herself, “You know, I’m just starting--I’ll get through it; I’ll become better.”

With practice, Izzy did develop her skills, and “the art of playing” the flute became an important source of joy in her life during seventh and eighth grade. Playing music with her friends was part of the excitement of attending middle school band class for Izzy. She said, “It was something I always looked forward to. I always got excited when it was time for band class. I would run in: ‘Ohmigod, yes!’” Izzy also recounted the joy of the special performances, such as playing for the middle school graduation ceremony.

Family Support

Izzy had strong family support for playing the flute. Part of her choice to join band was her desire to continue the family tradition of instrumental music. For example, her father played piano when he was young, and her brother played guitar. When her mother saw how much her

daughter enjoyed the flute, she took Izzy to buy her own flute in preparation for high school band. With gratitude for the support, Izzy hoped to show her mother the purchase was worthwhile long term, and she dreamed of playing the flute all four years of high school.

Humiliation

Izzy, however, was overwhelmed, and perhaps shocked, by the difference between her middle school band and her high school band; at times she even felt humiliation and hurt. Unprepared for the difficult level of music at high school, she was not able to feel socially comfortable either. The band class did not feel like an emotionally safe environment to Izzy. Her band teacher used an old-fashioned spot-check technique during full band class, picking short passages and testing students one by one in front of the entire band class. Izzy felt humiliated by the experience:

I remember some people made comments after I was done, not directly at me, but I would hear them murmur or talk about how I was playing. It made me feel uncomfortable because nobody likes to be talked about. I didn't feel the best; I just didn't feel confident. They were just like, "Oh yeah, she missed the beat, like this person's better, or this person does this better." It was just really really awkward.

When Izzy tried to explain to her band teacher privately how bad the spot-check experience made her feel, her teacher made it clear that she believed perfecting the music was "too important" to change the high pressure spot-check technique, as if the end justified the means, and the technique could not be questioned or adjusted. Although she found her teacher generally kind as a person in many other ways, Izzy continued to feel felt inadequate and miserable during band class. She often noticed other band students acting "mean" or "rude" without any apparent consequence or change in strategy by the teacher to help mend the culture.

To her credit, Izzy continued to dutifully attend classes and performances, completing extra work on her flute parts after school with her teacher, as well as practicing at home, either alone or with friends from the clarinet section. She decided, however, to give up her dream of playing all four years of high school and dropped band at the end of her freshman year.

Izzy's band story included themes of the joy of music, family support, and humiliation and hurt. Her high school band disappointment was ameliorated by Izzy's supportive family. Izzy's mother was empathetic through struggle and trusted her daughter's decision about band "either way." Izzy loved flute playing so much that, months after she left high school band, she performed traditional Mexican Christmas music on her flute at her church, and she also played at home for her family during Navidad.

Mai's Story

Dainty with straight shiny dark hair and a poised demeanor, nineteen-year-old college student Mai told her story of playing flute in band with care and detail while she lovingly babysat her toddler brother. Mai's band story is one of initially becoming a band student by accident. Her eventual joy and success at playing the flute included the theme of cultural bridging as she introduced her own parents to the band genre. Mai also found a kind of dual enjoyment in both the group work in band and in the solitary flute practice at home, and she described becoming conscious of her own uniqueness as a band student as well.

Cultural Bridging

Mai, a child of Hmong immigrants from Laos, was initially unfamiliar with what band actually was, and she joined middle-school band class with the idea that she would be able to play the violin. When violin was not offered in band class, she tried the flute instead and became proud of herself for meeting the challenge of mastering the embouchure, fingerings, and

melodies. Eventually, Mai was also proud to introduce her parents to her new hobby, as they were initially puzzled by her pursuit of band, because of its unfamiliarity in traditional Hmong culture. Mai described a touching scene with her father:

(My parents) didn't really understand band but then they gave that indirect support....

One specific time that I felt support from my parents was when I was practicing in the living room and my dad walked by and watched. Although, there was no verbal support, the fact that he even stopped and listened meant to me that he cared and was supporting me in an indirect way.... It really motivated me to do my best because ... they didn't understand what band was for or what it meant, but for them to take an interest in something they don't understand makes me motivated to do my best, to show them a different world.

Mai's interaction with her father demonstrates her pride in performing a kind of cultural bridging between her parents and her public-school music studies. She seemed honored that her parents became more open and interested in her work on the flute, and she was proud to share her passion for playing.

Dual Enjoyment

Mai described a kind of dual enjoyment of flute playing as she experienced excitement of learning and performing with the band class, as well as finding fulfillment in the solitary and contemplative time alone playing her flute. Band gave Mai a change of pace during the school day, a psychologically safe space where she felt free to make mistakes and learn. Band class was "a break" from the rigidity and pressure of her other rigorous core classes, and a place to learn cooperatively and socialize within the flute section. Mai described her joy of playing and

improving her skills with the full band as “exciting.” When going to band class, she most looked forward to:

Playing with other people, other instruments, because you can only do so much alone.

For me, going to band was hearing the outcome of much practice and hearing that it sounds a lot better than in the first place--the difference between when I first started and how it's, like, “wow!” That definitely was the most looked-forward-to thing for me in band.

Public performance with the full band was an additional thrill for Mai during her high school years:

Every time we did get to play (publicly) it was really exciting. And it was super fun because ... in band you can produce music and it felt really nice to be able to play some music for a lot of people just for no reason.... I want to say it was kind of exhilarating because you really get the thrill out of playing in front of a really big audience. You always play in the same room, but then, once you get to play somewhere else, it's like a whole new experience; it was really thrilling.

The second part of Mai's dual enjoyment of IMP was her solitary practice of the art of flute playing at home. Mai found playing alone to be a meditative, thoughtful, and creative endeavor where she had a chance to concentrate on her own feelings about her life and the music, and she was free to interpret and express the music at her own tempo. On playing alone, Mai said the following:

I feel like it allows me to think about how I'm feeling as compared to what other people may be feeling. When you're in a group or practicing with other people, you don't really have time to really think about what this specific piece of music is about or the composer

of the song. And I feel like when I'm playing alone, it really allows me to think for myself and think about how and why this piece is composed and relate it to how I'm feeling as an individual as compared to playing with other people.... Different pieces for me, depending on how fast or how you play it or how you emphasize it--I feel like when I play alone, I kind of have the choice to kind of change things up and play how I'm feeling. And it allows me the chance to express myself.

Uniqueness

Mai believed that enrollment in band helped her discover her uniqueness as a high school student. She was proud to have taken the risk to try the flute and then to have developed her playing skills, an accomplishment that was somewhat unusual at her school, as well as culturally unfamiliar to her originally. She recounted a moment during a guidance activity when band participation became an important part of her identity, as well as part of her vitae of accomplishments:

I guess it would have been around like 10th grade where we started learning about writing resumes and thinking about like, "what is special about you?" When you're writing resumes, they want you to put what's good about you, what makes you unique. I felt like band was definitely something that made me feel like I was unique.... Yeah, that was when I just started to think that I should really continue band, not just because I really enjoy it, but because it can also benefit me in other ways.

Mai's "accidental" band story was full of successes, enjoyment, and sharing; it included themes of cultural bridging with her parents, dual enjoyments in making music, and the discovery of her own uniqueness with a band student identity. Although Mai chose not to enroll

in band during her college studies, she said she continued to enjoy playing her flute on her own at home as a “hobby.”

Marcus’ Story

Marcus was an eighteen-year-old college freshman and the son of Tanzanian immigrants. Although he was short-haired and mustachioed, with a dignified posture, his appearance could not hide his youthfulness. His unabashed enthusiasm about the creative process of music betrayed his age as he told his story of band study in a highly verbal, detailed, and often excited manner. Special themes from Marcus’ story included a family tradition of instrumental music, family support, a creative spirit, and an unexpected pandemic benefit.

A Family Tradition of Instrumental Music

Marcus’s father was important in his life, and he established a strong family tradition of instrumental music for his son. When Marcus was a little boy, his dad worked part-time as a music producer and keyboardist, first in a home studio and then at a separate building in a more professional studio. Marcus accompanied his father to recording sessions, observed his dad’s play-by-ear creative process, “messed around” with the instruments, and even appeared in one of his father’s music videos. Because of these and other early musical experiences, Marcus said he felt like creating music “was in my blood.”

It seemed only natural then, when band was offered in fifth grade at his school, that Marcus signed up. He started on the saxophone, which turned out to be “a bust” because of confusion with his recess supervisors about his enrollment in band, a class which met only during recess. This confusion caused Marcus to miss most of the band sessions that first year and he failed to have a good start on his instrument. He therefore decided to start fresh on the clarinet

in middle school the next year. Marcus ended up feeling satisfied with his band experience and progress on the clarinet throughout his three years in middle school.

Family Support

Not surprisingly, Marcus' dad also provided excellent family support for his son's instrumental music journey. Marcus fondly remembered their family ritual of going to a favorite barbeque restaurant after each band concert to proudly celebrate Marcus' progress at each performance milestone. When it came to signing up for high school band, however, Marcus was confused, and so his father's guidance was essential to the enrollment process. Marcus' father appeared to know his son better than Marcus knew himself:

I knew I loved band and it was like a part of me. But I don't know why my mind was just, like, "Should I take it then?" It was a very interesting time because I was confused as to why I didn't think I needed band, but I was also confused as to, "Why wouldn't I take band?" I was like, "Should I take band? I'm not sure if I should or not." And he (Dad) was like, "Why aren't you sure?" And I was like, "I have no idea." And he was like, "Isn't band kind of your thing? It's like, you're the clarinet guy." And I was like, "You know what? You're right. Band is my thing. I'm probably just confused." And I decided to stay in band and I'm glad I did.

A Creative Spirit

Marcus obviously had a very creative spirit and he thrived as a musician in high school band. He was also industrious, curious, and driven, qualities that brought success to his natural creativity. Still curious to complete his "saxophone story," Marcus switched back to the alto saxophone at the start of high school and, without any private lessons, taught himself the saxophone fingerings. He said he caught his playing skills up quickly with his peers in high

school band who had already played their same instruments for years. Marcus repeatedly used the word “fun” to describe his high school band experience, the music in band, and music in general. His musical spirit seemed to fairly burst with joy as he spoke about his memories improvising music with friends:

Sometimes, when classes were over, we would just improv a quick song we’d just learned in class. Sometimes we would like stay after school and we would just be in a band together ... and you’re like, “Oh we should play this song.” It’s not even a song that we have for band, but we just want to play (it) for fun. We would listen to a lot of pop culture songs, and we would improvise together. And we were just like goofballs in band. Everybody knew, “When they’re together, they’ll play a random song, and everybody will have fun.”

Marcus’ creativity was also nurtured by his high school band teacher, who, in addition to providing varied large group repertoire, encouraged him to participate in the jazz band, to play with his favorite friends by ear in casual small combos, and to take the lead helping to select and arrange favorite popular music for the full band to perform. His band teacher’s style apparently mirrored Marcus’s fun and creative spirit beautifully. Words Marcus used to describe his relationship with his high school band teacher included these:

I think my relationship with Mr. Gooddude (pseudonym), was bordering on the “playful-friend-but-still-a-teacher” level because we were very playful with each other, but he was also my teacher.... He was a very kind and playful mentor who was always there to guide you and put you on the right path. But he felt more like a friend than a teacher.

An Unexpected Pandemic Benefit

Marcus recounted how frustrating online band rehearsal was during the Covid 19

Pandemic, with the sound delay, inability to listen while playing, and technical freezes; but he also described an unexpected musical benefit of online school. During that period of the pandemic, his band director arranged for him to have afterschool online saxophone lessons. Almost completely self-taught on the saxophone up until that point, Marcus said, “It was very eye-opening.” His private instructor, a retired band teacher, helped him correct many embouchure issues and to ease his approach to the high and low ranges of his instrument, while also helping to increase his general musical knowledge. Marcus said the whole experience was “very fun.”

Marcus’s joyful instrumental music story included themes of a family tradition of instrumental music, family support, a creative spirit, and unexpected private saxophone lessons during a pandemic. At the time of the interview, his creative spirit was still looking for new ways to express the passion and curiosity Marcus held for music making; he was in the process of deciding which music instrument he might explore next.

Meng’s Story

Meng, a twenty-two-year-old man of Hmong heritage serving in the National Guard, had short hair, expressive eyes, and a clear gentle way of describing his enduring relationship with music. Important themes in Meng’s story included his varied passion for music, the therapeutic value of IMP, his experiences with joyous musical collaboration, and leadership recognition.

Varied Passion for Music

Meng’s journey of exploring IM revealed his flexible and varied passion for music. After playing the flute in middle school band, Meng signed up for the high school orchestra at the end of eighth grade with plans to continue playing the flute as a high school freshman. In the fall, however, he reluctantly switched to the string bass after realizing that only string instruments

were offered in the high school orchestra class. Meng's flexibility paid off in the end as he eventually enjoyed and excelled on the bass violin.

At the end of his sophomore year, Meng was again forced to be flexible in order to continue pursuing his musical passion when the orchestra class was no longer offered his junior or senior years due to low enrollment. With the encouragement of his former orchestra teacher (who was also the high school choir teacher), Meng decided to try choir and remained in the vocal music course for two years through high school graduation. He enjoyed developing his singing voice and, at the time of the interview for this study, three years after high school, Meng had established an electronic music studio in his home and was composing, singing, playing, producing, and recording his own music. Clearly, Meng revealed a creative soul meant to make music, and he had the flexibility, ambition, and intelligence to pursue his passion in many forms.

The Therapeutic Value of Music

Part of Meng's love of making music was the therapeutic value of music. During high school, Meng lost his father to cancer, virtually becoming the "man of the house" as he was the oldest child in a large family. Making music became balm for Meng during those painful years:

Music was the only topic or place that I can find peace when I am struggling in school or, you know, having stress in my own life. And back in high school, it was really stressful, so that kind of kept me going with music and orchestra. That kept me going.

Joy of Musical Collaboration

Meng also stressed the joy of musical collaboration repeatedly in the interview. His high school orchestra class was a safe "community" where the relationships were warm, helpful, and supportive. Regarding orchestra class, Meng said, "I feel like I belong in there." Of his relationships with orchestra classmates, Meng described, "We were always really supportive of

each other, and we would not blame someone if we played the wrong note or messed up during our rehearsal. We would use--what is it?--positive reinforcement.” He also described the collaborative constructive process of creating music in an orchestra class with wise insight:

So, we’d play a piece and see who’s struggling the most and we would all help each other, but then we would put more time on those really struggling. We basically supported each other, and everyone felt welcome. That created a big bond between every player. That’s how our relationship went in our music class, so everyone knew how to play. We’d always help the person struggling and that’s how I prefer my music class to be. We’re only as good as the person that’s struggling.

Leadership Recognition

Not surprisingly, leadership recognition also became a big part of Meng’s high school orchestra career. He was active as the bass section leader and was eventually chosen to perform in an honors orchestra concert at a professional theater in the center of the city. Another highlight was when his orchestra teacher chose him to lead a small ensemble student performance using a piece of his choosing. It was clearly a special memory. Meng expressed that it was “a very pleasant experience.” He said excitedly, “I had a chance to lead my own group of musicians. And I really appreciated my teacher for letting me ... that’s got to be my highest point in orchestra or band.”

Meng’s music story included themes of varied passion for music, the therapeutic value of music, joyous musical collaboration, and leadership recognition. Through many different instruments, groups, and configurations thereof, Meng continued his musical passion. He was still expanding his world musically with his voice and electronic music studio at the time of the interview.

CHAPTER FIVE: FINDINGS

To answer my research question, How do teenage band students of diverse backgrounds experience, and make meaning of, their public school, instrumental music journey?, I found main themes by coding the data with NVivo based on my three research sub-questions. The sub-questions included: Who helped students to stay on their path of instrumental music study? At what points in their journey did they make decisions to endure in IM and why? What are the personal meanings students have found within their musical experience that kept them bonded to instrumental music participation? In this chapter I summarize the themes and sub-themes found in the data from the 12 interviews that answered these three sub-questions. Table 2 gives a preview of the themes sorted by question, followed by definitions and sample quotes coded for each corresponding theme.

Table 2*Themes*

1. Who supports?	Definition of theme	Text example
-Family (10*)	Includes supporting characteristics and behaviors from the student's family, such as family musical and cultural traditions, emotional support, and physical support.	My grandfather—he has always been very in love with the idea of a trumpet player. He definitely encouraged me. And my family often came to visit any events that I had, and I think that helped me stay encouraged through my education. --Isaiah
-Peers (12)	Supportive behaviors from band peers including through having or making friends in band, through peer coaching/mentoring, and through shared goals and experiences.	Something I looked forward to was just hanging out with my friends. I had a couple of band friends in that circle, and it was fun sometimes because we would practice together when we had

		performances, and we would unite our instruments. --Izzy
-IM Teacher (12)	Supportive teacher attitudes and behaviors including the ways the instrumental music (IM) teacher facilitated a supportive classroom climate, and the qualities and behaviors of the IM teacher that supported their relationship with the student.	Mr. Gooddude was very much like a teacher-dad type relationship where it's like, definitely my teacher but, out of all my teachers, he seemed to care the most.... it was easy to always have him be aware of what was going on in my life because I had him all four years (of band). --Ava
2. Decision points?		
-Middle school to high school transition (12)	This major educational transition includes the decision-making and enrollment process for the appropriate high school IM class in the spring of eighth grade or the summer before ninth grade, which is when high school began for these participants. Influences included family musical traditions, musical confidence, IM identity, and summer band camp. Challenges included guidance confusion and cultural confusion.	The music camp was really what gave me confirmation that I wanted to keep going. It definitely was a hard decision, because even as starting as a freshman in high school, I still had it in my mind like, "Okay, am I gonna do it?" And being a freshman in high school is very intimidating already. So, it's like, "Okay, do I want to do instruments this year? So, it was definitely a hard choice, but I made the right choice. --Danielle
-Structural crises/issues (8)	The crisis points in a student's school IM career when a decision to leave or stay in band feels forced because of structural issues, such as a lack of an appropriate IM program, high school class conflicts with IM, and/or a lack of private lessons.	When I transitioned, it felt like I still belonged in orchestra, but it, you know, it's just vocals now. So, the transition was hard but there was nothing I could do because we did not have enough people to sustain the class. --Meng
-Feelings of exclusion (5)	Hurt feelings and lack of feelings of belonging in IM	I walked into class and everybody just stared at me

	caused by skill sorting, racism, and/or sexism.	with this, like, ugly eye. It was just the fact that I was like the only Latin person walking in the class so ... I just felt really uncomfortable. --Lele
3. Personal meanings/bonds?		
-Mood (11)	Meaning or fulfillment of student needs met by the ways a student's school IM participation can affect their emotional moods. Mood sub-themes included the therapeutic value of IM, adrenaline/excitement, and joy.	I was really in a hard place. And being a teen, everyone gets anxious.... You get so anxious! And I noticed whenever I was in band my anxiety would go down for a bit.... I feel like it really helped me gain a bit more stability in my mental health. --Emelia
-Social (12)	Meaning or fulfillment of student needs met by the ways a student's school IM participation can meet social needs. Sub-themes included shared goals/being part of something bigger, shared experiences, democratic experiences, and friendships.	The best part was making my good friends. When someone was missing in band, we came together to help them to catch up. --Adriana
-Self-esteem/challenge (12)	Meaning or fulfillment found by the ways a student's school IM participation can affect self-esteem or provide opportunity to conquer challenges. Sub-themes included mastery, leadership development, and pride in performance through music study.	I'll say, "I'm a leader." I like to take that role in things. I think I was kind of iffy about that before but being in band helped me show that in other ways. For example, that year I became captain of the basketball team.... I was taking roles in other places. I know that I like to be a leader now. --Hasina
-Aesthetic (12)	Meaning or fulfillment found by the ways a student's school IM participation can meet aesthetic needs. Sub-themes included beauty, instrument affinity, cultural	What generally kept me going was that I just have a thing for music. So, I have ADHD and music just kind of calms me. Honestly, I just love the music. I love the sounds; I love making

	connections, popular music, and creative expressiveness.	noises.... I just like the way the different sounds come out.... It's just really nice. --Dominique
-Agency (12)	Meaning or fulfillment found by the ways a student's IM participation can meet the longing for personal freedom or empowerment. Agency is found in parts of all the above main themes of personal meanings/bonds listed in number three.	I felt like my opinion really mattered. Not just as an individual, but like, as a group--or even as an individual too because he really took everyone's opinion into consideration. So, for sure, I did feel a little empowered. --Mai

*Number in parenthesis following the theme indicates number of total participants who contributed to the theme.

Sub-Question One: Who helped them?

My first research sub-question was: Who helped students to stay on their path of instrumental music study? Based on both the number and strength of responses from the participants, I found three major providers of supports for these students in their journey of instrumental music study and participation: family support, peer support, and the support of an instrumental music teacher or teachers.

Family Support

Family support includes all of the supports participants described experiencing from their parents and other family members. These myriad family contributions included the musical and cultural background or traditions that contributed to the student starting or continuing in IM; the emotional support from family such as help with problem-solving, guidance, encouragement, and the availability to provide these assets when needed; and the various physical supports provided by family such as rides to performances, instrument purchases, concert attendance, and family celebrations of musical achievement.

Family Musical and Cultural Background

Nine participants, Isaiah, Dominique, Danielle, Hasina, Adriana, Izzy, Marcus, Ava, and Lele, all said that music was part of their family tradition or background and was part of why they originally began learning to play an instrument at school. This occurred in various degrees, from exposure to listening to music in the home to having role models in the family who played instruments, either as amateurs or professionals.

Isaiah remembered that there was music playing in the home when he was young, and the family considered music “very important.” He described how the idea of starting a band instrument got him excited about the creative process: “I grew up listening to music on the radio with my siblings.... Once I was able to partake in creating music—in and of myself, it became so much more important to me and involved in my life.”

Some interviewees had family members who were amateur musicians, acting as role models in the students’ lives. Both Dominique and Danielle, who were sisters, had an older sister who had participated in school band before they joined. Hasina said her stepfather was an amateur, play-by-ear, keyboard blues musician and gospel-style church musician. And, of her choice to start band as a freshman, Adriana said, “It was because of my family. My dad played guitar and my grampa played violin. Musicianship was in me, passed down in my family.” Izzy, likewise, had several family members who played instruments in her family, and she wanted to be a part of that tradition. As examples, her father played piano when he was young, and her brother played guitar. Izzy said, “I always wanted to play something that would connect myself with them. Playing an instrument, you know, it’s something we can all talk about.”

Two of the participants, Marcus and Ava, each had a parent who was a music professional. Ava’s mother had been a music major at college and taught music lessons

professionally, so music was in the home from Ava's birth. She, therefore, started music lessons with her mother at a very young age. Therefore, it was not really a question of if Ava would study music, but upon which instrument she would finally settle. In Ava's words, "It seemed like a natural progression; it was just a matter of finding what instrument to play."

Marcus' father worked as a music producer when Marcus was a little boy and he accompanied his dad to the music studio while his dad was working creatively, which began his passion for music. Like Adriana, Marcus described his decision to participate in school band as almost fated: "It was inevitable, like it's almost like the choice was made for me, before I could even make the choice." Inspired by his father, Marcus thought, "The idea of creating and making my own music sounded absolutely amazing ... and that's why I decided to join band."

Two of the Mexican American participants, Adriana and Lele, mentioned the cultural background of their families as an influence on their interest in IMP. Specifically, they both said the Mariachi tradition was something that formed each of their decisions to participate in instrumental music. Lele explained that her connection to the trumpet was partly from being drawn to her cultural roots and is what also helped pull her toward continued band study. She said, "One of the things that made me want to stay in there longer was the fact that a lot of Mexican music has trumpets in it, you know? I thought that was cool ... getting closer to my culture."

In contrast, it is worth mentioning here that the two Hmong American participants, Mai and Meng, participated in band despite their families' cultural unfamiliarity with school instrumental music. Cultural confusion caused both Mai and Meng to be required to choose an instrument not of their original preference. This issue of cultural confusion is addressed later in more detail within the decision points theme regarding the second research question.

Family Emotional Support

Eight participants also gave credit to their families for emotional support of their IM participation, including Ava, Izzy, Mai, Hasina, Marcus, Isaiah, Dominique, and Adriana. Emotional support was expressed in various forms: through encouragement, in help with problem-solving, and for being generally available when family was needed for help.

Interviewees described various times family gave encouragement with IMP. The forms of encouragement ranged from the very active or direct to the more attitudinal. Ava's mother was one of the most active encouragers of IMP described; she often oversaw Ava's practice at home. Ava said her mother "pushed" her to "just keep at it," teaching her "the ways" of a musician, at an "I'm-watching-you-and-making-sure-you-practice level."

Izzy described her mother as actively emotionally supportive of her daughter and of her choice to study music for a well-rounded education. When Izzy was having difficulty in high school band and her grades were starting to drop, her mother encouraged her to make time for her musical passion, but to also avoid an unhealthy amount of stress. Izzy remembered, "She was really really supportive about that. She told me to do whatever I wanted as long as I don't feel too pressured."

Participants described less-direct encouragement, revealed more as an attitude of supportiveness. Ava explained that, while her father was not as actively encouraging of her IMP as her musician mother was, he nevertheless had an encouraging attitude toward her music study. "Even though my dad's like a science man, he always made sure we have time for the arts." Mai also talked about a more indirect kind of encouragement from her parents. Although band study was culturally foreign to her parents, Mai said they would encourage her indirectly by making suggestions about what she might learn to play and she also remembered a moment, as described

in her story, when her dad stopped to watch and listen while she practiced in the living room. Mai said, “He cared and was supporting me in an indirect way.”

Hasina also indicated that her mother’s encouragement for her IMP was less-direct: “My mom was supportive. My mom has nine kids, so ... it was a crazy hour! (laughs) So ... yeah, we didn't get too much individual time with everybody.” Marcus described his dad’s indirect encouragement with, “He wasn’t heavily involved in my participation in band. It was more of his willingness that I was participating.” Encouragement from Isaiah’s family included his extended family. He said, “My grandfather—he has always been very in love with the idea of a trumpet player. He definitely encouraged me.”

Another type of familial emotional support described in interviews was problem-solving assistance or guidance when it was needed by the young musician, such as when Izzy’s mother gave her supportive guidance about her daughter’s decision to stay or not stay in band (see above topic). Marcus’ father’s gentle questioning guidance was essential as well to Marcus’ decision to sign up for band as a high school freshman. Although Marcus loved band in middle school, he felt confused about the choice and, as described in his individual story, Marcus’ dad helped him realize clarinet was his “thing.” Marcus said, “I decided to stay in band and I’m glad I did.”

Dominique described how her mother helped her when she coached her daughter on solving smaller band problems, such as when Dominique needed to stay after school for extra band practice. She said her mother was helpful in arranging for her to stay after school, and also realistic and pragmatic about promises to make it work in their situation. Dominique quoted her mother, “Well, if you really wanna stay, I’ll try to find a way. And if not, then you’re just gonna have to come home and try to do it on your own.”

Dominique, Marcus, and Adriana also alluded to the availability or constancy of their parents' form(s) of support. For example, Dominique said of her mother, "She was always there." Marcus glowed about his father's enduring support saying, "He (my dad) does definitely know me very well, for my entire life. My dad is a great guy." Adriana said simply, "Mom and Dad were always there."

Family Physical Support

Like emotional support, family physical support was a sub-theme of family support. Eight participants, Dominique, Izzy, Mai, Adriana, Lele, Ava, Isaiah, and Marcus, mentioned family physical supports for IMP during their interviews. This category of family support included rides to performances, instrument purchases, concert attendance by family, and family celebrations to honor music milestones.

Just as Dominique alluded to her mother arranging rides for her home from after school practice (within the previous sub-theme), Izzy mentioned rides to and from concerts when asked what could have improved her IMP experience: "I think my parents did enough of like taking me to events when I had to perform and picking me up ... stuff like that." Others in the study did not mention rides, which may have been required at times. They were perhaps not mentioned because rides were either taken for granted or not needed, due to their ability to find transportation themselves, or because they lived near the school.

Izzy was the one participant who directly discussed the family's purchase of her own instrument. She said that after she graduated from eighth grade, her mom "saw how excited band made" her, and Izzy's mother "gifted" her a flute for high school. Izzy remembered, "We went to pick it out and everything because she thought I was going to continue through high school." Since Izzy qualified for free and reduced lunch at school, buying a flute may have felt like an

extravagance for the family's budget, which may have contributed to Izzy's strong memory of gratitude.

Mai and Adriana, whose families also qualified for free and reduced lunch, said that they each still owned their flutes as well. The majority of the students in this study qualified for free and reduced lunch and it is likely that several of this contingency used school instruments. Even Marcus, who was not eligible for free and reduced lunch, used a school saxophone. Of course, saxophones are notoriously more expensive than flutes. Ava, who was not eligible for free and reduced lunch, owned her flute and took it with her to college to play in the band there.

Several participants mentioned family physical support through their attendance at concerts and school music events. Lele's family qualified for free and reduced lunch and her parents found concert attendance and other school events to be difficult sometimes because of their work schedules. The first time her parents attended her performance in the seventh grade was memorable for Lele. She played a solo on "The Star Spangled Banner" for the eighth-grade graduation. Lele said, "That was special to me because they saw me play and I played a solo for everybody in the room."

About his family's concert attendance, Isaiah stated, "My family often came to visit any events that I had, and I think that helped me stay encouraged through my education." While Ava did not bring up concert attendance, she did say her mother was "one of the band moms" who was at school actively working on fund raisers for the music department. Marcus' father consistently attended his son's school concerts through middle school and high school and he also provided a beautiful family ritual for the two of them after each concert. A description of their concert celebration ritual follows in the next paragraphs.

During middle school, Marcus and his father established a tradition to celebrate at a favorite restaurant after each of his concerts. This supportive tradition at these musical milestones had a solidifying effect on Marcus' identity in IMP:

Whenever I got my dad's recognition from a concert, I would feel really proud. And then, every time we finished a concert, we would drive to Famous Dave's. It was a ritual, to the point where, it's a fact, that every single time I finished a concert, we celebrate at Famous Dave's in a suit and tie.... And that's when band felt like part of my identity.

And Marcus did not outgrow the tradition when he joined high school band and switched from clarinet to saxophone. His first concert in high school was a particular milestone because he had taught himself the new fingerings on the saxophone and felt he had successfully "caught up" his skills with his classmates. Marcus appeared to cherish the memory of the continuing celebration ritual with his father and felt that it continued to confirm his identity as a band student: "And, once I had gone to Famous Dave's again with my father that winter in high school (because it was our winter band concert) that's when I realized that 'Yeah, it's again a part of my identity.'"

Family Support Theme Summary

Family supports of these young people's IMP journeys included the family musical and cultural traditions they often followed, emotional support from parents and extended family in various forms, and physical supports, such providing rides, attendance at concerts, purchasing instruments, and family celebrations of music milestones. A survey of the findings related to IM peer supports follows next.

Peer Support

A second theme for the question of who helped participants stay on their IM paths was peer support. All participants found peer support to be a helpful factor in their persistence as IM students. As Meng summed it up: “I felt like my classmates were the most supportive because we’ve been through so many rehearsals and concerts and shows together.” Interviewees remembered several specific forms of peer support: through having friends in their ensemble, through peer coaching or mentoring, through shared goals with IM peers, and through the sharing of myriad other experiences within their IMP journey.

Band Friend Support

Eight participants, Marcus, Adriana, Izzy, Hasina, Dominique, Isaiah, Mai, and Lele, all remembered that having friends in band was an important source of encouragement for them. Marcus said that his friends, “were definitely my biggest supporters in band class.” Adriana remembered, “The best part (of band) was making my good friends.” Izzy, a flautist in her band, said she, “had friends who played the clarinet.... They would encourage me to continue so we could perform together and just stay with each other.” Hasina, who was unable to practice at home, remembered going to practice in the middle school band room during recess frequently with her best friend. She said, “My friend Lorenzo (a pseudonym) and I would go down there together and challenge each other.”

Dominique spent time after school practicing with her friends in the clarinet section and Isaiah reported that some of his most cherished memories were of spending time with supportive band friends on the way to concerts. Mai continued to keep in touch with her friends in the flute section years after she graduated. Even Lele, who had difficulty making friends in freshman band

said that making just one friend later in that year made the uncomfortable trumpet section situation somewhat better for her.

Peer Coaching/Mentoring Support

All participants indicated that peer coaching or mentoring was helpful during their IMP experiences. Peer help took several forms including collaborative help at school and/or at home, competitive role models, section work/competition, and section leader help. Several interviewees reported collaborative help with IM peers at their schools. Dominique remembered a helpful and collaborative overall experience during her IMP (as also outlined in her story). She said, “we were always there helping each other right off the bat. If the music teacher wasn’t there, we’d do our own little research to try to help each other.” Mai likewise reported a helpful sense of collaboration in her smaller high school band class. “Peers in the classroom ... they also helped a lot. They’d walk you through how to play each piece, giving tips about what would make it easier, and things like that.”

Mai also explained that learning together in her band classroom was caring and, necessarily, socially oriented--in contrast to her other classes consisting more of lectures and note-taking: “But for band, it was more like you had to talk to other people because they wanted to make sure that you're playing right notes, playing what you're actually supposed to play.” Adriana also reported a caring kind of collaboration in her high school band class. She remembered, “When someone was missing in band, we came together to help them to catch up.”

Danielle pointed out that the collaborative peer help in her trombone section did not just help, but it was essential:

It has to happen, because we all have to come together to play one song. So, if everyone wants to make sure we get the song, we all try and work together. You know—listen to

those instruments and make sure everyone is in a good spot (with their slide). Or, if they needed help, one person can help the next.

Meng detailed the combined process of collaboration, caring, and community in his high school orchestra with appreciation (as described in Chapter Four). He remembered that the welcoming and supportive collaboration “created a big bond” and was necessary because, as Meng said, “We’re only as good as the person that’s struggling.”

In contrast, the two participants who dropped band class after their freshmen years, Lele and Izzy, did not remember the same caring collaboration in their high school bands. Lele said that there was a collaborative helpfulness with peers in her middle school band, that the atmosphere “was really good.” She said of middle school, “I liked playing around with everybody. They liked playing with me. We all got along, you know? If they needed help or anything, I would help them.” Of high school band, however, Lele said, “I didn’t really talk to any of my classmates, just that one friend I ended up making.”

Izzy reported an atmosphere in her large high school band class that was less collaborative and more teacher directed. The climate was, therefore, also sometimes meanly critical within her flute section. She found band class as a freshman difficult to endure despite a few personal friends she had made in the clarinet section of the band. The feelings of isolation experienced in band by Izzy and Lele will be detailed later in this paper under the theme of feelings of exclusion found within research sub-question two.

Mai had one criticism of the collaborative process in her high school band; she sometimes wished the collaboration was less about sectionals, to possibly expand her social circle. Mai said, “I wish we had more time to like practice with other instruments, rather than just

our own—flute with flutes and clarinets with clarinets. I wish we had more times to like mingle around and play with different instruments.”

Several interviewees remembered times also working on their playing skills and band music with their friends away from band class. Izzy, who played flute, recalled working on band music with her friends from the clarinet section. She said, “I had a couple of band friends in that circle, and it was fun sometimes because we would practice together when we had performances, and we would unite our instruments.”

Marcus said he had “lots” of friends in band that he sometimes played with after school. As described in his Chapter Four story, Marcus and his friends would sometimes work on band music but would also improvise and “just be in a band together.” Dominique said that she and her clarinet band mates would meet at homes or in the band room after school: “If they were good at it, they would help me. I would help them on what they weren’t good at, kind of like tutoring and studying together.... It brought us closer in friendship.”

Ava explained how her IM friendships and the out of school practice together at each other’s homes intensified as she and her friends took on elite leadership roles in advanced ensembles:

You need to have those kinds of friends in band, I believe, to keep you motivated to do well because your success is their success ... especially when you start hitting first and second chairs, top three chairs with your friends. It really matters because you have more of the solos ... soli’s and duets and stuff and it’s like, you gotta do it!... When you know those people it’s a lot easier to get things done. Senior year, Susie (pseudonym) and I, we were doing duets together and competitions and it’s like ... we’d just show up at each other’s houses and spend four hours there, play for maybe two.”

Some participants reported that peer competition or competitive peer role models could be a helpful part of band. Isaiah remembered that, as a beginner, his peers served as helpful role models of accomplishment to each other: “I would say ... definitely my peers (were supportive). I think there was almost like a healthy sort of competition to see who could provide the most excellent performances.” Hasina also described what she found to be a “friendly” competition as a beginning band student, “The teacher had a chart where we had to pass on songs, and she would test us. So that was very motivating--to want to be the winning student, but we also worked together.”

Marcus had a different experience consisting of unfriendly competition with another saxophone student he sat near in high school band class. He explained that, although the relationship and competition were not friendly in nature, the experiences ultimately helped him to develop both as a musician and as a human:

At first ... I made him a villain in my mind, and it made me compete with him. But, as I grew, I learned that he’s just a normal person.... He’s rude, at best, but humanizing him made me realize that he’s just someone that I’m rivaling with; he’s not evil or anything. And that honestly helped me grow, not just as a band player ... but also as a person..... We always ended up trying to one-up each other, which really made us better players in general. Because the only way to beat each other was by becoming a better band player. Clearly, competition is not for everyone, and not all the time. Ava told a story about trying out for band and doing somewhat poorly at the audition on purpose so her friend Susie would be the first chair flute that year. Ava said she received “second chair on purpose.... I didn’t want to be first ... too much responsibility. I’ll fudge my scales once.” Perhaps she played

her scales poorly to avoid some pressure, and to give her good friend a turn at the solos. Ava remembered fondly, “It was always Susie and I in the first two (chairs) in the flute section.”

Competition can also be unpleasant when students are suffering in confidence or feel inadequate in their playing skills. Both Lele and Izzy had experiences wherein they found the competition off-putting, even mean spirited at times, causing them each feelings of isolation and hurt. While Lele toughed it out in a competitive, male dominated trumpet section her freshman year, it wore on her, and she felt more behind after a summer without private lessons. She was also turned off by the idea of another competitive climate for her sophomore year.

As described in her story, Izzy’s teacher actively created a pressured, competitive atmosphere with her spot check technique. Being put on the spot and being judged by her peers when she already believed she was not as advanced as the others in her section was humiliating, discouraging, and miserable for Izzy.

Participants also described a kind of friendly competition between band sections. Marcus spoke with humor and at length about the friendly competitions in band between sections. It appears these competitions and the accompanying within-section camaraderie incited some of the members to work harder as “sub-teams” while also having fun. Marcus described the friendly jousting:

There were definitely instruments that thought they were superior to others. Like the saxophone section always has the kids who are like, “The saxophone is the best instrument.” And the percussion is always like, “Yeah? Well, we lead the band because we lead the flow and if we change the tempo—everybody else fails....” I find the flutes to be very interesting because they are kind of like the “we-look-from-the-outside-in” amongst the band because they’d always just watch as chaos ensued. The clarinets were

either very chill or very loud and there was no in-between. It was almost like each instrument had their own personality of members.

Marcus believed that the biggest section contest, “was definitely about the saxophones ... versus the trumpets competing for who had more attention.”

Emelia also spoke about competition between the sections and indicated that it could be friendly and helpful to collaborating on sectional work during band class. She smiled as she remembered, “We would have these group sessions and would compete which group would get more things done.... It was competitive, but ... I don’t know how to explain it. It was also very (laughs quietly) —we were all very close.”

Peer Support Theme Summary

Peer supports in IMP were found through having or making friends in band, through peer coaching/mentoring, with support from band peers, and through collaboration on shared goals, such as working on music together after school, and friendly, motivating informal competitions. Sometimes band experiences lacked a collaborative spirit when the classroom was very teacher-directed, when the teacher set up an unfriendly kind of competitive classroom atmosphere. Descriptions of supports provided by IM teachers are described next.

IM Teacher Support

The last theme of support for an IM student under sub-question one, but certainly not least important, is the highly influential supportiveness of the band or orchestra teacher for an IM student. The sub-themes related to IM teacher support are organized into two important areas: teacher facilitation of a supportive classroom climate, and the qualities and behaviors of the IM teacher affecting the supportiveness of the relationship with the student.

Supportive Classroom Climate.

Ten participants remembered their teachers helping to create supportive classroom atmospheres for their music study. Adriana, Danielle, Dominique, Ava, Meng, Mai, Marcus, Emelia, Lele, and Isaiah said that they felt emotionally safe in IM class, at least for parts their journey. When asked, Adriana simply said, “It felt like a safe space” and, as reported previously, students who missed class were supportively helped to “catch up.” When Danielle was asked about classroom climate safety, she responded, “Definitely safe. Definitely safe. It was a lot of kids, and it was, of course, loud, but I feel everyone was happy with the instrument they had and was eager to learn more about it.” Her older sister, Dominique, concurred, “Yeah, (band class was) a very safe space. It felt like we were very much a family; everybody was close and everybody’s always there helping each other.” Ava responded likewise, and additionally noted that she sensed her teacher cared, “I personally felt safe in band just because I knew how much Mr. Gooddude cared, and I and the peers that I surrounded myself with also cared a lot too.”

To these expressions of safety, Mai and Meng also added that the climate of safety in their IM classes created an environment wherein musical risk-taking and mistakes were okay. Mai remembered:

It wasn't like anyone would have blamed you if you made a mistake because.... In band it's really easily accepted that you can't always play it correctly: Sometimes it's the instruments, sometimes you just can't produce that sound right off the bat, sometimes it takes a lot more practice because everyone has different instruments, and they wouldn't know what we struggled with. And we wouldn't know what they struggled with, and it was kind of a unanimous understanding that not everyone's going to be perfect. So, it felt really safe to make mistakes.

Meng said, “We were always really supportive of each other, and we would not blame someone if we played the wrong note or messed up during our rehearsal.” It may be worth mentioning here that both Mai and Meng played in relatively smaller IM ensembles than most of the others in this study. Even in his large high school band, however, Marcus felt band class was safe and helped set him up well to grow as a musician. He summed it up, “Yeah, my band class was definitely a very safe environment.... It very much fostered growth, fun, competitiveness, learning, but also discipline.”

Marcus also remarked that his band teacher had a nice balance in his classroom management: “The teacher himself was very relaxed and laid back, but he was also very stern. And so, it kind of fostered a very comfortable environment.” Marcus felt secure in the relaxed-but-authoritative IM classroom climate.

Dominique indicated that the level of emotional safety was greater in her band class when compared to other classes at her high school:

I stayed in music a lot more than I was trying to stay in my general ed. classes. Knowing that he (her band teacher) was in his room was a safe haven place and English was just English (laughs). I definitely noticed a difference between them.

Emelia said that the atmosphere in band class was “energetic” and that the teacher sometimes struggled to convince the class to settle down and focus. She felt the classroom was, however, safe overall: “It was honestly pretty safe. My band teacher was—he trusted us with the instruments and we kind of didn’t want to lose this trust. It just wasn’t worth it.”

In contrast, four students, Hasina, Lele, Izzy, and Isaiah, reported issues in their band classes that diminished safe feelings. As detailed in her story (in Chapter Four), Hasina explained how being the only one of two BIPOC students, in a majority White private school band, caused

her feelings of culture shock and unease during her freshman year. Coupled with her band teacher's apparently impersonal style, Hasina endured in IM but found the year uncomfortable. Compounded by her mother's poor health, Hasina said she often physically fidgeted from the stress during band class that first year of high school.

Also mentioned previously, Lele found a macho kind of competitiveness in the male-dominated trumpet section of her large high school band class, and she sometimes had feelings of invisibility in her band classroom. She recalled, "In middle school I was so used to Ms. _____. She was nice and supportive. And going into high school I didn't get that.... I was uncomfortable.... Sometimes I would wonder, 'Does it even matter if I'm in the class or not?'"

Similar to Lele's experience in her trumpet section, Izzy did not feel emotionally safe in her flute section. She felt humiliated by having to play difficult passages on her flute during the down-the-row, solo spot checks in front of the rest of the class (described in her story). She remembered other, more experienced flute players speaking critically about her playing. Even after talking to her band teacher privately about the rude classroom behavior, Izzy remembered that nothing was changed, "Towards the end, the atmosphere was just the same. I did not feel confident going out there and playing. It just didn't change at all." Unlike the other ten study participants who participated in high school music at least three years, Lele and Izzy dropped band from their schedules after their freshman year. Their unhappy experiences are covered in more detail within the sub-theme of feelings of exclusion under the sub-question two section.

While Isaiah felt "mostly-safe" in band class, he found segregation to be a problem in his high school and the problem spilled over into the classroom climate of his band class, as described in his Chapter Four story. The ensemble at Isaiah's school was disproportionately White compared to the overall school population and he was one of only a handful of BIPOC

students in band who stuck together for support. As described previously, these students of color formed a sub-culture because of the racist attitudes of some of the outspoken band members of the dominant culture. So, like Hasina, Lele, and Izzy, Isaiah experienced feelings of alienation but, unlike them, he had the support of his BIPOC band friends, as well as a strong supportive rapport with his band teacher, Mr. Gooddude.

Isaiah explained that Mr. Gooddude worked hard to offset the segregated racist culture of the school and of the band by doing “the most work” teaching about BIPOC struggles, cultures, and race issues. Mr. Gooddude also taught about the cultural and historical context of the varied repertoire he and the class chose to learn in band class. Isaiah said his teacher also created a climate of enthusiasm for learning. He recalled, “with my teacher, Mr. Gooddude, there’s always something he was very excited to show us, to teach us, and that excitement kind of transferred over to me. I liked seeing him excited.” While Isaiah’s teacher was not totally able to prevent racist behavior in some students of the band, it appeared that Isaiah’s relationship with his teacher, and Mr. Gooddude’s efforts to ameliorate the classroom climate, both helped to offset his discomfort. Isaiah was therefore able to successfully complete all four years of band. More about the importance of teacher rapport follows.

Supportive Teacher Relationship

The rapport between the IM student and their director was consistently important to all the participants in this study. In a clear logical manner, Meng summarized the importance of a trusting relationship with his IM teacher which enabled his classmates and him to feel relaxed, uninhibited, and expressive as student musicians:

My relationship with her was really close and personal. She would try to get close with her students and I feel like that it is a necessary relationship that every music teacher

should have with their students because it makes them feel comfortable around them.

And we wouldn't have been able to play our pieces if we were not comfortable with our teacher.

Participants described many additional IM teacher attitudes and behaviors that enhanced their rapport, supporting students along their IMP journeys. Of her band teacher Adriana said simply, "He was nice and kind. And he was helpful to find the right note." Marcus said his band teachers were his "biggest benefactors ... always." Along with these general statements, the data related to teacher supportiveness also revealed the following enhancing relationship characteristics: a shared musical interest, relationship length, extra help, clarity, guidance, humor, teacher as coach, teacher as friend, teacher as family, belief, and curiosity. One non-enhancing relationship characteristic found in the data is discussed at the end of this section: inflexibility.

Mai and Danielle both remarked that it was the shared interest in music they had with their IM teacher that helped form and enhanced the bond. Mai said, "I felt like it was a really nice connection to have with a teacher.... (It was) based on my interests." Danielle said, that because of her passion for playing the trombone, she felt, "like my band teacher got me, like understood me more because it was music-wise."

Ava said that the long length of the relationship with her IM teacher also affected the closeness of her bond with Mr. Gooddude. She believed her band teacher knew her well, "It was probably my best relationship, mostly because I had him for all four years, so it was easy to always have him be aware of what was going on in my life."

Marcus, Daniel, and Meng appreciated their teachers going the extra mile to spend time with them on skills or to work out musical problems after school. Marcus said both of his band

teachers, “helped me when I stayed after class, if I was confused, or how to learn something.” Danielle said that the extra help from her high school band teacher enhanced their relationship and her trombone skills: “We spent more time together than the rest of my teachers and me because I wanted to practice. One-on-one time definitely helped.” Meng concurred on this point regarding his high school orchestra teacher’s helpfulness:

She would always go out of her way to make sure that we were ready for our concerts and make sure that each section is doing everything correctly--to see if we need extra practice after school. If we needed to, she personally took her time from after school and put it all into her students.

After a difficult freshman year at a suburban private school, Hasina appreciated the directness and clarity of her band teacher at a Hmong charter high school in the city during her sophomore year. She believed his communication style enhanced their relationship. Hasina remembered, “He really liked me as a student, and I liked him as a teacher. He was very straightforward, clear on what he wanted me to do, and I appreciate that.”

Isaiah and Marcus remarked on the specific guidance they received from their band teachers. When Isaiah had a class scheduling conflict with band, it was Mr. Gooddude the band teacher, and not the school guidance counselor, who came up with a creative alternative (as detailed previously in Isaiah’s story). Marcus said, of his band teachers, “I always talked to them, and they always helped me to make decisions.” His concert band teacher “was always there to guide you and put you on the right path.”

IM Teachers also guided various participants into additional opportunities to help meet their students’ individual needs for creativity, challenge, and/or recognition. Marcus said, “They helped me decide to join jazz band, and I had a lot of fun in jazz band.” Others variously

mentioned special opportunities arranged by their IM teachers such as band camps, honors ensembles, smaller special collaborations, and performances at special events

Marcus and Lele both reported that a sense of humor mixed with kindness was as an appreciated trait in an IM teacher. Of his band director, Marcus remembered, “He was a very kind and playful mentor.” Lele said her middle school band teacher, “was nice and she was always joking around like, ‘Leave the boys! Practice your trumpet!’ (laughs).”

Hasina and Meng felt that their relationships with their IM teachers were closer and more personal because their IM teachers functioned as coaches. Hasina felt like the role of coach helped slow the pace of the interaction together, so the rapport became stronger. She expressed:

I think the extracurricular, the elective teachers, are always very special ones you can actually know. The people I had like the best bonds with as an adult were probably all coaches or elective teachers.... I feel like they have a special bond with their students versus regular teachers, which--I love teachers, but they're just usually very high pace and like, (elective) teachers take the time because they get you--you choose them. It takes time to do that so--it's more about relationships.

Meng had a similar view of his orchestra (and choir) teacher functioning as a coach: “She’s not really a teacher but more like a coach. I’m just closer and more personal with my music teacher than any other teachers.”

Marcus and Mai felt like their favorite IM directors served as both teacher and friend. Marcus stated, “For me it was on the level of truly being friends. So, he was a very nice teacher.” Mai experienced two different styles of band teachers, one who acted simply as a teacher and one who was also like a friend to her, who made efforts to get to know her. She described the contrast:

I had two (band teachers). The first one ... it was strictly teacher and student; he will teach you and you will learn.... But my second band teacher, it was more.... He tried to connect to you as a student in a really personal sense too; he really tried to take interest in how you were doing in school, in general, where you originate from, your culture, and your beliefs. He tried to incorporate band into everything, but he also really took an interest in aspects other than band.

Ava and Dominique each described their relationship with their IM teacher as familial. Ava said that her high school band teacher “was very much like a dad.” Dominique felt like the band room was a “safe haven” and “second home” for her, and she, “appreciated having the space available to me when I wanted to go and play during free time.... They (the teacher) were always available to me. They were always there.”

Ava, Lele, Dominique, and Meng each expressed appreciation for the times when their IM teacher applied some pressure or motivation in a timely manner. Ava said her band teacher, “was always in my business, not in a bad way, but like, ‘Why didn’t you show up today?’ kind-of-way. Yeah, he was a great motivator.” Lele described being pushed by her middle school teacher, “She would always push me. Even if it was something really simple, she would explain it until I would get it.”

Dominique also described how her high school band teacher would persistently press or motivate her to “keep going.” She said her IM teacher was:

helpful, strong-willed, and determined because he was always there. Like when you would keep messing up and be like, “Okay, I’ve had enough,” and you just kind of quit trying to keep going, he was like, “Keep doing it.” He’s like, “Keep going.” He’s like, “Don’t stop because if you stop, you think about it too much.” He was like, “You’re

gonna mess up; just breathe, take a walk if you need to take a walk, relax your fingers,” but he’s like, “Keep going at it. It’s okay to mess up but it’s not okay to quit.” So, it was really nice to have him there ... trying to get us not to quit.

Meng likewise appreciated when his orchestra teacher would sometimes push. He remembered, “She’d push us a little bit. I felt like I appreciate that because she’s just trying to make us better instrument players. I felt like that was really supportive of her.”

Isaiah talked about the concept of belief. His teacher’s relationship with him and his teacher’s belief in him personally were primary to his band experience. Isaiah said, “The best part of band was probably forming that relationship with my teacher and having someone who really believed in my ability to create and achieve.” To add icing onto the cake of their relationship, Isaiah’s teacher also showed a genuine concern and consistent interest and curiosity in Isaiah and what he, as his band teacher, might do to make the experience better for Isaiah:

top tier, hands down, the most encouraging liberating thing in high school, for me, that helped me feel better about my experience was being asked, “What are you looking for? What do you want to add to this experience?” You know, those are things that Mr. Gooddude has asked ... many times.... “What can we change about this? What can we do? What can we add?” And I was involved in that, and I think that that’s a really big thing for me.

Mr. Gooddude clearly showed that he believed Isaiah was important as a person, important to the ensemble, and that Isaiah’s ideas were deeply respected, and needed contributions to the program.

In contrast, Hasina and Izzy remembered some teacher behaviors that did not enhance their relationship with their IM directors, and the topic of inflexibility stood out. Hasina felt that

her band teacher at the private school she attended during her ninth-grade year was inflexible and stingy about loaning out school instruments when Hasina sometimes forgot her clarinet. She had hoped for some slack from her teacher because Hasina's mother was suffering from heart failure and was waiting for a donor transplant. In contrast to Isaiah's relationship with, and curiosity from, his IM teacher, Hasina's band teacher did not appear to find the time to get to know her:

My freshman year, she was really hard on me, which was kind of hard, because I had my mom's situation--my mom has heart failure, so it was really hard. I like forgot my instrument at home sometimes and I'd try to have my mom bring it to me and stuff. I mean the school is full of instruments and she would just be kind of rude about loaning out one if I forgot it. I'm like, 'I get on the city bus every day for an hour and a half to go to school, every morning.' It was a hard time for me freshman year. I felt like she was kind of rude about all of that--I didn't really want to tell her all my business.... I felt like she had some knowledge (of Hasina's mom's health problems) because I was just like always antsy at the time. So, my freshman year I don't think I had a good experience with her because of that.

Izzy, likewise, viewed her high school band teacher's inflexibility as a problem. As described in Chapter Four, her teacher's intransigence about changing the humiliating spot check rehearsal technique resulted in Izzy remaining miserable in band class during her freshman year; she dropped band at the end of the year.

As a postscript to this topic of teacher relationships it is worth noting that, during difficult times, small kindnesses can be memorable. While Lele did not complain about her high school teachers' styles, neither did she feel like she got to know her directors very well at her large high

school. Although these teacher relationships were not especially strong for her, Lele did remember small kindnesses from one of her band teachers:

That one teacher, the one who would fix my trumpet, he would acknowledge me. Or he would ask, “Oh do you need help?” Stuff like that. That felt good, especially when you have that mind set of “oh, why am I here?” You know? It kind of feels good that they even acknowledge that you’re even there.

Teacher Support Theme Summary

Teacher supports described by the participants included the teacher’s facilitation of a supportive classroom climate, and the qualities and behaviors of the IM teacher affecting the relationship with the student. A classroom where students felt safe and supported helped students to feel free to make mistakes and learn their music. Students whose classroom was more teacher-centered or rigid felt less safe. And young people who experienced unchecked culture shock/segregation, racism, and sexism with their peers naturally felt unsafe as well. A special teacher relationship could, however, sometimes help offset negative racialized experiences. Enhancing teacher relationship characteristics found in the data included a shared musical interest, relationship duration, extra help, clarity in communication, guidance, humor, teacher as coach, teacher as friend, teacher as family, teacher’s belief about the student, and the teacher’s curiosity about the student. Rigidity in a teacher was especially unhelpful to facilitating a relationship with the student.

Sub-Question Two: Decision Points

The second research sub-question was: At what points in their journey did they make decisions to endure in band and why? Coding, sorting, and analyzing the data revealed three main decision points among the various interviewees during their band and orchestra careers: the

transition from middle school into high school, the crisis points in an IM student's path when structural issues forced a difficult decision about whether to stay in IM, and, lastly, when feelings of exclusion in the music classroom caused a student to experience hurt or misery and to, therefore, reconsider IM enrollment.

Middle to High School Transition

The transition from middle school to high school is a crucial time of change for students. For the IM participants in this study, the process included decision-making and finding an appropriate IM class during the spring of their eighth-grade year or during the summer before ninth grade, which is when high school began for all these students. There were four factors that helped these participants to choose high school band. The middle school to high school transition included sub-themes of family musical traditions, musical confidence, IM identity, and summer band camp. Areas of challenge during this transitional process into high school included sub-themes of guidance confusion and cultural confusion regarding IM classes.

Family Musical Traditions

As highlighted in the portion of this paper on family support under question one, nine participants were influenced to start instruments because of family traditions, and this was true in Adriana's case as she transitioned to high school. Adriana not only had the courage and ambition to begin an instrument as a freshman, but she eagerly signed up for band. She stated, "Musicianship was in me, passed down in my family.... I always felt like it is part of who I am because of family heritage."

Musical Confidence

While Adriana was undaunted by a lack of IM experience in her transition to high school, Hasina seemed motivated by confidence in her IM ability and experience (Hoffman, 2008). She reported that her strength as a clarinetist made band feel like a sure thing for success:

It was just like a comfort, like it was something I knew I could do. Most people don't like to step out of their comfort zones. Sometimes I'm one of those people. You know, you don't want to pick something where you're going to be like, "Oh I don't know what this is" or "I don't know if I'm going to fail this class." Of course, I had to pick other electives that I was unsure about, but band was always one I knew I could succeed in."

IM Identity

Five interviewees, Lele, Emelia, Adriana, Mai, Hasina, and Marcus, all made references to their personal identity as an IM student, which helped make the choice to sign up for IMP easier going into their freshmen years (Hoffman, 2008). Lele remembered, "when every year would end, it was like, 'do I still want to be in band?' In seventh or eighth grade, I felt like not being in band wasn't 'me.'" Emelia's musical identity sounded spiritual in nature when she said, "I feel like I was meant to play the bass guitar and the flute," as did Adriana's musical identity when she said, "Musicianship was in me."

Mai expressed that she felt similarly spiritual about her band identity, and additionally, she enjoyed the uniqueness she felt as a musician:

And I felt like band really made me feel like it was something that was meant for me, that I really enjoyed, because it made me feel unique in that way. And because of that, I guess it made me really want to continue playing band and making sure that it was always with me.

Hasina's band identity also felt certain for her, "I was just like, 'This is where I am, like right here.' So, yeah, it wasn't really ever difficult to choose, and it was like, 'Yeah, this is what I'm going to do each quarter.'"

When Marcus became confused about band sign up going into his freshman year, all his dad (who knew his son well) needed to do was remind his son of his musical identity. Marcus remembered his father's words: "Isn't band kind of your thing? It's like, you're the clarinet guy." His dad's reminder caused Marcus to respond with, "You're right. Band is my thing.... And I decided to stay in band and I'm glad I did."

Summer Band Camp

For two participants, Dominique and Danielle, their musical and social experiences at band camp were crucial to their decisions to enroll in high school band as freshmen. Although attending a camp of mostly White campers and teachers in the Midwest as a young BIPOC woman, for Dominique, it was almost as if she had found her people: a culture of band-lovers. She remembered, "That first day of camp, feeling nervous but then a couple of hours later, here you are—you're all standing like you've known each other for a very, very long time." She summed up the connection, "Everybody there was just super happy because we were there for the music."

Dominique's younger sister, Danielle, likewise attended band camp and seemed to have found a smaller sub-culture of her own people in the trombone section, thus propelling her to join the high school band the following fall of her freshman year. She recalled:

As I went to the music camp, I saw all these people that played the same instrument as me. I'm like, "Well--they love it as much as me!" So, it definitely made me feel like that (trombone) was the instrument that I needed to play.

Band camp helped both Danielle and Dominique establish relationships with other music aficionados, affirming and confirming their decisions to join their high school bands.

Guidance Confusion

Guidance is an important part of registration for freshman classes during the transition from middle school to high school, and a lack of understanding of guidance information can cause confusion (Allegood, 2016). Marcus was confused during the lead up to ninth grade as to whether band was possible for him, or if band was a good choice academically to have on his school record. He said, “I didn’t know if it (band) fit in my schedule” and “I didn’t know if band was something that’s going to look good on my transcripts for colleges.” Luckily for Marcus, as described previously, his father knew the value of music education as well as his son’s musical passion and identity; he stepped in to guide Marcus.

Cultural Confusion

Cultural confusion (and lack of guidance) caused Meng an unintended class choice during the transition from middle school to high school (Allegood, 2016). Meng, whose Hmong parents were immigrants from Laos, intended to sign up for an IM class to continue playing flute, the instrument he started in middle school band. Having observed that flutes were a part of professional orchestras, Meng quite reasonably added orchestra to his schedule for his freshman year. He did not realize that wind instruments were not a regular part of his high school orchestra and that he needed to have signed up for band instead to continue playing flute:

I actually wanted to do flute in high school, but then, when I applied for orchestra, which I thought was a mixture of band instruments and violins; it was just orchestra strings. And I was thrown in there by accident.

Meng, quite flexibly, went with the flow and eventually experienced joy and success

learning the bass violin in high school orchestra class, due to his general passion for music. He remembered, “I was like, ‘Why not? Why not just play it?’ It’s pretty easy and I actually started to like it. It was actually a great experience.”

Similarly, another Hmong American participant, Mai, also reported cultural confusion with IM sign up in the sixth grade. Although her sign up for the high school band was seamless because she attended a 6-12 public charter school, Mai remembered confusion when she first signed up for middle school band. She said, “Originally, I didn't really know what the band was-- I just kind of signed up for it.... I had to join a class and I chose band.” She intended to play the violin in band but did not realize violins were not part of band class. Mai remembered, “originally when I joined band, I didn't really want to play the flute. I originally wanted to play the violin.” Luckily, Mai, like Meng, handled the confusion flexibly, and she ended up enjoying the flute. Mai said, “As I continued (the flute), I was like, ‘This is kind of fun.’ It was fun.”

Middle School to High School Transition Theme Summary

During the crucial transition from middle school to high school, participants’ decisions to enroll in band as freshmen were supported by family musical traditions, musical confidence, IM identity, guidance from a parent, and summer band camp. Guidance confusion about the value of band and cultural confusion about which instruments were available in band or orchestra were two problems encountered during the transition into high school. The theme of structural issues causing young people crises about whether to re-enroll in IM class is next.

Structural Crises/Issues

Structural issues in an education system or school curriculum caused, or contributed to, forced choices or crises for eight of these IM students at points their journeys, including for Emelia, Dominique, Isaiah, Adriana, Izzy, Meng, Lele, and Marcus. These problems included

class scheduling that caused conflicts with the student's chosen IM class, the complete lack of an appropriate IM class, a lack of private IM lessons for students who could not afford them, and a failure of school communication or support structures. A discussion of these sub-themes follows.

IM Class Conflicts

Class conflicts threw three loyal band students, Emelia, Dominique, and Isaiah, each into sudden forced decisions, causing them to become torn about whether to continue band (Allegood, 2016). Emelia experienced a difficult decision due to a band class conflict with a tuition free, college literature class during her senior year. Coming from a family qualified for free or reduced lunch, Emelia felt like it would be financially irresponsible to turn down the free college credit. Of her difficult decision, she remembered:

For my senior year of high school, I had to choose.... I had to decide in taking that college class ... or I had to choose band. And that, for me, was just terrifying because I loved both of the classes. But I just knew that I had to choose literature, even though it broke my heart--not being--in band.... Yeah, it's just a very hard decision because you notice right away, you're just used to playing your instrument, and once you just stop-- it's just like you lost part of yourself.

Because Emelia believed band was important for her mood regulation, she said the consequences of eliminating band from her schedule for her senior year were unhappy:

I noticed when I stopped playing band—my mood did switch up a lot. I was more-- grumpier. I was just more sleepy. It just wasn't the same.... I regret not joining band (her senior year) because it just brought a little bit of the worst in me and I didn't really like that for my senior year.

Dominique likewise was unable to take four complete years of band during high school

because of a schedule conflict one semester with physical education, which she needed for graduation. She rejoined band after the semester when the scheduling conflict was over.

Dominique said, “So, we kind of made it work. The decision was kind of tough because I didn’t really want to do PE. I’d rather do music.”

Isaiah encountered a scheduling conflict with band during his sophomore year when he wanted to go on into an advanced band class which was scheduled the same hour as African American Literature, (as told in his Chapter Four story). The special English credit class not only fulfilled an important graduation requirement but was, understandably, very popular with Black students at the school. It was a course Isaiah was much looking forward to taking. Solving the scheduling conflict was a struggle, but Isaiah’s band teacher convinced Isaiah to keep up his skills in band by re-enrolling in the less-advanced band course, with the assurance that Isaiah would be able to hold his seniority in band for the following year.

Lack of IM Class

There existed a lack of consistency of IM offerings in the main public school district of the city where all of these participants were enrolled (for at least part of each of their journeys) (Allegood, 2016). Marcus was the only interviewee (except for Ava, who attended private elementary school on the east coast) who was able to take band in the fifth grade, and it was offered only during his recess time. Some middle schools offered band only one or two of the three middle school years, and Adriana’s middle school did not offer band at all. She therefore waited until she was a freshman in high school to start flute as a beginner. Izzy reported that the lack of preparation in middle school due to her later start caused her difficulty in high school band as she felt unready for the pressured environment she found there as a freshman.

Even at the high school level, IM classes could suddenly be dropped completely from the schedule due to a lack of enrollment, as was experienced by Meng. At the end of his sophomore year, Meng was forced to give up the string bass when his orchestra class was canceled. He was very disappointed, and Meng did not believe he would be able to catch up with his band peers if he switched back to playing the flute (and playing string bass in concert band was evidently not presented as an option). Meng enjoyed music so much, however, he decided to try choir instead and remained in the vocal music course for two years until high school graduation. Meng recalled his letdown:

When I transitioned, it felt like I still belonged in orchestra, but it, you know, it's just vocals now. So, the transition was hard but there was nothing I could do because we did not have enough people to sustain the class.

Lack of Private Lessons

Two participants, Lele and Dominique, wished they had been able to receive private instruction. For them, individual help was not available through the high school band program, and they were not able to afford private lessons (Mazzocchi, 2019; Stewart, 2005). Lele felt like her lack of private lessons caused her to feel “less than” the other band students since the school families were generally expected to provide lessons for the band members at her large suburban high school. She said her school was a “big public high school where everyone had lessons, could pay for private lessons.”

Located in a first-ring suburb, the free and reduced lunch population of students at Lele's school was about 33%, a lower rate of poverty than the other high schools within the city proper where this group of participants enrolled in IMP at some point. The other public high schools where these interviewees attended ranged from a 44% to 89% rate of students eligible for free

and reduced lunches. <https://www.usnews.com/> Lele expressed that her family's inability to provide private trumpet lessons outside of school, in addition her experiences of racism and sexism in class (as described within the topic of feelings of exclusion), was a variable that caused her to decide to drop band at the beginning of her sophomore year (Mazzocchi, 2019; Stewart, 2005).

Although Dominique said she would have benefitted from more individual coaching during high school, she, however, did not feel forced into a decision point because of the lack of private lessons at her high school band inside the city. Dominique remembered experiencing small group lessons in middle school and private lessons at middle school band camp and, of high school, she said, "I wasn't able to get the one on one that I used to get in middle school. Because there were a lot more kids, twice as many.... So, you don't always get one on one." Participants who attended high school inside the city proper gave no indication that private lessons provided by the family were the typical expectation. (Although it is clear private lessons were very beneficial for Ava and Marcus, and might have proved helpful for Izzy as well.)

Although some students said they had individual or small group lessons as part of their middle school band programs, only one participant, Ava, mentioned having actual private lessons regularly. Ava, in her own words, lived "a middle-class lifestyle." On this point Ava varied from the majority of the participants. It is no surprise then, that Ava reported playing as one of the "top two" chairs of the flute section in the more advanced ensembles at her large high school. Consequently, Ava was so successful that she won a band scholarship at her private college which helped ease the high tuition costs there.

Failure of School Communication/Support Structures

Marcus told of an interesting failure(s) of the school system very early in his IM experience. As background to his story: shortly before Marcus was in the fifth grade, the large school district, where most of the participants in this study attended school, dropped the school-day, elementary level IM programs due to budget shortfalls and a back-to-basics mentality. At some of the elementary schools, like Marcus' school, parents with the time and resources organized and fund-raised to provide more beginning band and orchestra opportunities for fifth graders, taking place either after-school or during recess. In Marcus' case the opportunity to take band took place during his recess time.

Marcus said, however, he was almost never able to attend band where he was a beginning saxophone student in the fifth grade. He remembered, "Recess was mandatory; I couldn't opt out of it. So, I was literally not allowed to attend band because I was not allowed out of recess." Marcus' instruction on the saxophone that year was, therefore, very scant. He said he would go talk to the band teacher after recess on band days to get a few tips on saxophone playing but his start on the instrument of his choice felt like "a bust." Marcus therefore dropped saxophone when he signed up for middle school band in sixth grade in favor of the clarinet, to get a "fresh start."

Of course, it is likely that Marcus' bewildered fifth grade memories of mixed messages do not tell the entire story. Did he forget to go to band when recess started, perhaps forgetting about band, and following the crowd to recess? And due to strict hallway rules, was Marcus then disallowed by school policy to walk to band by himself after recess started? Did the (possibly part-time itinerate) band teacher neglect to communicate with the fifth-grade teachers and recess supervisors about the band schedule? Was the recess supervisor simply lacking in flexibility? The scenario is a mystery but, what is likely, is that still other students were as confused by

recess band attendance as Marcus was, and they may have been even more discouraged by the experience. Admittedly, this is conjecture, but it seems likely. Marcus' passion for music kept him going, and he signed up for sixth grade band (albeit on the clarinet) despite discouragement from poor progress. It would not, however, be surprising if other children gave up on the idea of band entirely after such a lack of progress.

Structural Issues/Crises Theme Summary

The second theme under the sub-question about decision points was structural issues within the school or district which caused, or contributed to, disruptions in students' plans to sign up for, or attend, band. These disruptions included class conflicts with postsecondary enrollment options (PSEO), physical education class, and literature class. In one of these cases, a band teacher intervened in the crisis to find an alternative IM class so that a student with a year-long conflict was still able to complete four full years of band. Availability of programming, and entrance in an IM program was wide ranging and inconsistent (Allegood, 2016; Fitzpatrick, 2011; Wheelhouse, 2009). One student could not start band until she was a freshman while another experienced his orchestra program being canceled altogether at the end of his sophomore year in high school. A lack of private lessons was also discouraging in at least one case. The last structural issue found in this study was regarding a lack of communication within a school to adequately facilitate band attendance in beginning band. Another disruptive problem for IMP journeys was the theme of feelings of exclusion, which is covered next.

Feelings of Exclusion

Painful feelings of exclusion caused five study participants, Izzy, Adriana, Hasina, Isaiah, and Lele, to reconsider their choice of high school IM, sometimes pushing them into a new

decision point. This study found three factors that caused hurt feelings of exclusion: skill sorting, racism, and sexism.

Skill Sorting

While it is a common practice in large high schools to sort ensemble participants into class periods according to skill level or grade, this study found three examples of students who felt sorted within their regular ensemble: Izzy, Adriana, and Lele. Izzy had bad memories of her high school teacher's technique of doing spot testing on short difficult passages "down the row" in front of the entire band. Less experienced than others in her flute section, Izzy felt inadequate and was humiliated by the experience when she heard other flute students murmur or make negative comments about her playing (as described in more detail within the sections on competition and on teacher support). Izzy sagely asserted, "nobody likes to be talked about."

Despite the blow to her confidence, Izzy tried to explain to her band teacher privately how alienated the spot-check experience made her feel. The teacher, however, declined to change the process. Apparently, she also did little to change the criticizing culture of the flute section and Izzy felt set apart from the more advanced students. She became so miserable in band that the beginning of each of the remaining quarters of her freshman year became a new decision point for her, since the decision to drop band at the quarter was both available and tempting. Izzy viewed the memory with some ambivalence, remembering both pride in her persistence, and puzzlement about why she put herself through the misery:

I could have easily just been like, "Oh no, I want to quit this quarter," but "No, I'm going to continue. I started this; I want to finish it." Or when I heard people talking (meanly) about me, I would have been like, "I know a lot of people who did get out of band before the year ended" ... but I stuck around and was like, "Nope, I want to continue...." And I

continued and that's something I always look back at because I was like, "Man, I should have quit too." Because I was stressing myself. But I was also like, "I'm happy I did. It just means that I'm really persistent; I always follow what I want."

Izzy stuck the year out with determination but, as told in her story, dropped band at the end of her freshman year. She said, "I just felt really small ... and it didn't work out for me anymore."

Another story of skill sorting came from Adriana when she was excluded from an important performance during her junior year of high school (as also described in her Chapter Four story). Although her teacher sought her out when she dropped band for her senior year, and her strength brought Adriana through the adversity, the skill sorting incident was a heartbreaking memory for her. Lele's experience with a lack of private lessons was also a form of skill sorting, but because the private lesson issue is covered elsewhere in detail, it is merely mentioned here.

Racism

Racism is an extremely hurtful and discouraging behavior and attitude. Three participants, Hasina, Isaiah, and Lele, specifically remembered and shared racialized experiences in their high school bands (Nussbaum, 2021). Hasina experienced isolation due to racially segregated band classes, which she felt as culture shock. Isaiah found segregation and racism to be a problem in both his high school and within his band class. He reported that advanced placement and band classes were disproportionately White compared to his high school's general population. As noted in the section above on classroom climate, Isaiah explained that he was one of a handful of BIPOC students in band who stuck together for support and that this sub-culture formed because of the racist attitudes of some of the outspoken band members of the dominant White culture. He described the situation:

I knew people with many different backgrounds. I think the only requirement for me was that you led a respectful, kind, open-minded life and, unfortunately, there were a lot of people that were found, especially in like the arts department ... who did not fit those requirements for me.... (There was) some insensitivity ... and willful ignorance to the experiences of BIPOC individuals.

Students also made blatantly racist remarks during band class (as related in Isaiah's story previously), despite Isaiah's band teacher doing an evidently exemplary job of providing teacher mediation to ameliorate the painful racial and cultural issues in band and in the school. Isaiah said his band teacher regularly "did the most work" teaching about BIPOC struggles, culture, and race issues, and about the cultural and historical contexts within the varied repertoire learned in band class. While Isaiah's teacher was not totally able to prevent racist behavior in some students of the band, it appeared that Isaiah's relationship with his teacher helped to offset his discomfort. Isaiah was able to continue in band all four years of high school.

Lele, in contrast, did not experience the same individual support from her band teacher as Isaiah when she felt alienated in her band due to perceptions of racialization. The combination of a lack of closeness with a teacher in a large band, feeling inferior because of her lack of private trumpet lessons over the summer, and the culture shock of entering the mostly-White band class her sophomore year caused her to immediately drop out of band. Lele remembered, as described previously in her story, walking into band class, and perceiving an "ugly eye" from the others because she "was the only Latin person." Lele's feelings of isolation had been compounded by her experiences of sexism carried over from freshman year. Those memories follow next in the last topic under the sub-theme of feelings of exclusion: sexism.

Sexism

Both female brass students in this study, Lele and Danielle, revealed the topic of sexism in their band memories related to their instrument selection (Edgar et al., 2017; Eros, 2008). One of the struggles during Lele's freshman year was the realization that, unlike her middle school experience, Lele's high school trumpet section was culturally male-dominated and very competitive. She found it difficult to make friends and did not feel the support she had in middle school band. As described in Lele's Chapter Four story, the male chauvinistic microaggressions, and the "she can't hit that note" comments wore on her. Although the experience of sexism did not initially cause Lele to make the decision to drop band, it appeared the cumulative experiences of male chauvinism, culture shock/racism, and feelings of inadequacy due to a lack of private lessons eventually took a toll; as mentioned previously, Lele dropped band at the beginning of her sophomore year.

Danielle also reported sexism regarding her choice to play a brass instrument. Despite experiencing some brass male chauvinism from others about playing her trombone (as Lele did about playing trumpet) Danielle felt confident as a female brass student. While Lele felt little camaraderie in her trumpet section, the other trombone students in Danielle's section appeared to support her confidence in a female brass identity:

The other students that had trombones, we had a better relationship than anyone else, only because everyone else was like, "Eewe! You play trombone?" And they're like, "You're a girl!" And I'm like, "What does that mean?! (with raised eyebrows and chin tipped down)" So, I definitely had a closer relationship with the other students that played trombone because they got me. They knew exactly the reason why I chose the trombone and why I wanted to continue to play it.

Feelings of Exclusion Theme Summary

Feelings of exclusion caused some of these participants to reconsider enrollment in band. Such experiences came as a result of skill sorting, racialized issues (segregation, culture shock, racist remarks, and micro aggressions), and issues of sexism for a female brass student. Feelings of exclusion is the last of the three themes found under sub-question two, decision points/crises for IM enrollment. The two other themes covered under sub-question two were the transition into high school and structural issues. Sub-question three and the themes of IMP bonds found therein follow in the next section.

Sub-Question Three: Meanings/Bonds

My third research sub-question was: What are the personal meanings students have found within their musical experience that kept them bonded to instrumental music participation? IMP bonds, or remembered areas of personal fulfillment in IMP for these study participants, included themes of mood bonds, social bonds, self-esteem/challenge bonds, aesthetic bonds, and agency.

Mood IMP Bonds

Mood bonds are the ways an IM student finds meaning or fulfillment when IMP positively affects their emotional states. Three salient mood sub-themes found in the study include the therapeutic value of IM, adrenaline or excitement, and joy.

The Therapeutic Value of IM

Seven of the participants, Dominique, Emelia, Marcus, Mai, Emelia, Adriana, and Meng, found the therapeutic value of instrumental music to be a strong theme in their journeys (Henderson et al., 2017; Varner, 2017; Webster, 2015). Dominique, Emelia, and Marcus all used forms of the word “soothe” to describe why they were continually drawn to musical experiences. Dominique, who was diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), found the

soothing quality of music to be therapeutic. She said, “So, I have ADHD and music just kind of calms me. Honestly, I just love the music.... I don’t know—it’s just really nice. It’s really soothing for me.” Similarly, Mai used the word “calming” to describe her solitary practice at home that she found so satisfying.

Emelia repeatedly described music as something that helped her feel emotional balance and better mental health throughout her adolescence. As described in Emelia’s Chapter Four story, she found that when she was in band, her “anxiety would go down” and band was “therapeutic” giving her mental health more “stability.” Emelia also described playing her instrument as “so soothing. It’s just so calming!” The act of entering the band threshold each day of high school IMP marked a relieving emotional transition for Emelia. She remembered, “I could just calm down and let my worries flow by.” Likewise, Marcus reported that he found participating in band soothing and the feeling caused him to look forward to band class:

It was a very calm experience for me because band helped me root myself down if everything else was going crazy. Or if finals was going to kick my butt, at least I could rely on band to calm me down for a bit, to even my nerves. And so, I always looked forward to going to band to soothe me mentally.

Adriana and Meng gave indications that their therapeutic high school IM experiences were a degree more than soothing; IMP was perhaps a redeeming mercy for each of them in the face of pain from trauma. Adriana intimated that she suffered some private trauma before and/or during high school and she said in her succinct manner, “Music was a nice distraction and got me through the hard times.” Although her words were economical, the phrase “got me through” seemed heavy with meaning. Adriana also said, “Music inspired me to do my best and keep going.”

For Meng, who suffered the trauma of losing his father during high school, music became balm during those painful years. As described in his Chapter Four story, music was “the only” place he found “peace” and he said, “that kept me going with music and orchestra. That kept me going.” Meng’s repeated phrase “kept me going” was poignantly similar to Adriana’s words, “got me through.”

Both Mai and Emelia felt that music was not only “calming” but that it was a healthy way to express sentimental emotions. Mai talked about channeling sentimentality during her solitary practice sessions at home. Emelia remembered that she felt a strong connection to the composer of a sad melody during a performance. She found some comfort in her feeling that the composer must have understood, in some way, a loss she had herself experienced, since the piece expressed sadness so well and evoked her own grief and empathy.

Adrenaline/Excitement

Adrenaline and feelings of excitement created a strong mood bond to IMP for six participants: Emilia, Ava, Adrenaline, Danielle, Mai, and Marcus. Emelia described her high school band class as very “energetic” and indicated that it was perhaps because of the characteristics of students who chose band, or their camaraderie therein:

Only the nerdiest people are doing band. So ... it was very energetic. You could feel the energy in the room. My band teacher had a really hard time actually calming the kids down because we would just burst through the room. It was just so energetic.

Ava remembered the pressure of playing difficult exposed parts in advanced ensembles during high school as something that was thrilling for her:

My senior year, as much as I hated playing Romeo and Juliet in orchestra, it was fun because of how difficult it was.... It was always stressful though; Mr. Gooddude ... will

call you out in front of the band. So, I would always be so nervous. But I'd practice it so I'm ready. So that was always exciting.

The band concerts were the highlight of Danielle's school music experience and she described the concert adrenaline from the pressure and exhilaration of public performance. Danielle remembered that she would excitedly tell herself at the concert, "Don't mess up. Don't mess up. You got this." Mai, likewise, experienced performances as especially stimulating. She used the words "exciting," "exhilarating," and "really thrilling" to describe playing in front of audiences.

Marcus was a passionate band student and the enjoyment he had with many kinds of music seemed to make him generally happy and excited. He explained that he was perhaps less in tune with the emotions music made him feel, but more in tune with how the music depicted what it was meant to project. In his words, "I think I am probably a little bit emotionally detached from my music and I'm more attached to it in the sense of I'm in tune with how it's meant to be. So, I enjoy the music as music, not necessarily emotionally."

When it came to excitement and adrenaline, however, Marcus experienced powerful sensations. He gave a vivid description of his pep band learning a popular rap song to "herald" their football team. Marcus remembered, "The first time our teacher mentioned the song, my entire band class was jumping and screaming, and we were really excited." The sections of his band then figured out their parts mostly by ear, or through improvisation, because there was no sheet music available. This made the performance that was planned not just popular with the young people at a football game, but it was unexpected as well. Marcus described the band's performance of the special music at a ball game:

When Mr. Gooddude cued it the first time and ... the bass drums would knock very loud.... It was kind of like our warning signal to the other school because it was like, “Watch out: our school is coming and we’re going to win.” And then everybody started playing. Everybody in the school, and even our rivals, started cheering toward our section.... Everybody started jumping up and down and listening to the music. I was like, “Yeah, this is definitely going to be a moment that I remember forever,” because it was just quite amazing.

Marcus said he was “shaking” from excitement during the interview “just remembering” how thrilling that band performance of that popular rap song felt. Closely related to adrenaline and excitement is joy, a strong mood sub-theme that follows next.

Joy

Participants used the word “fun” when referring to IM participation more than any other adjective during interviews (Devroop, 2012; Jutras, 2011; Stewart, 2005). Participants variously described their IMP joy coming from two main sources: within the music itself, and through the social connections during IMP with others about, and aside from, the music. Because many social kinds of joy are covered in other sections, the following paragraphs describe joy or fun within the music-making itself as told by Mai, Hasina, and Marcus.

Mai explained that, although band had its challenges, it used a different kind of thinking than her core classes, giving her a pleasant and needed change of pace during her rigorous day. She said, “It was more fun compared to the work in other classes. I thought, ‘this is most definitely for me’ because I needed that break during high school and middle school.” Mai also said the joy she found in band made the choice to sign up again for band easy each spring: “It was a really easy choice for me. Band? Mark number one, my top of my choice.”

Hasina, like Mai, said band was fun and gave her day a change of pace, thus giving her a feeling of balance: “It was fun ... you're getting a break, but also learning at the same time.... I liked the pace of band, to take our time a little bit. It gave my day some balance.” Marcus described making music as “fun” in several aforementioned examples, especially in learning music that was appealing and with improvising or “sounding out” pop music. All participants mentioned joy or “fun” related to IMP at some point in their stories.

Mood Theme Summary

Participants reported positive effects IMP had on their emotional states. Three strong mood sub-themes included the therapeutic value of IM, adrenaline/excitement, and joy. Therapeutic descriptions of IMP often included the words “calming” or “soothing” and IMP was described as a helping a student to find “peace” during an especially grievous time. Adrenalin and excitement were found during thrilling and stimulating musical moments, especially during performances. Joy was expressed by all participants at some point with the oft-used word, “fun,” in describing IMP. Participants remarked on how the enjoyment of IM class gave them a “change of pace,” helping their high school days to have more “balance” and less stress.

Social IMP Bonds

Social IMP bonds are the ways participants remembered finding meaning or fulfillment regarding their social connections through IMP. Sub-themes of social bonds included being a part of something bigger/shared goals with peers, shared experiences, democratic qualities, and friendships.

Part of Something Bigger/Shared Goals with Peers

Feelings of belonging in IMP are sometimes described as being a part of something bigger than oneself or feeling included in a group creating something meaningful. Four

participants, Dominique, Meng, Mai, and Lele gave descriptions about important feelings of belonging in high school IM classes through accomplishing shared goals. Dominique said that participation in the shared goals of band made her feel like she was a part of something bigger than herself:

One of the high points for me was just like being a part of something that I felt like was bigger than myself because it was like a band. I wasn't really one of those kids that did group work. I tried to stay to myself.... And (in band) I felt like I was doing something a lot bigger.

Meng said that the process of working out parts in sectionals and putting the pieces together in the full ensemble gave him intrinsic pleasure as well as a sense of accomplishment. As Meng said, "We practiced with our separate groups of instruments and when we put it all together, it sounds amazing!" Mai similarly expressed her positive feelings about working out a piece as part of an ensemble:

It goes back to being able to play as a group. It felt really really good to be able to play a piece as a whole and complete it with like little-to-no mistakes. And it really shows that everyone's hard work really paid off. For me, that's something specific that I really enjoyed about band.

Lele felt the struggle of reaching a goal together in middle school band made the accomplishment of the group goal that much sweeter, creating a bonding experience:

When we would play a song and we would all get frustrated because it just wouldn't go together, and then when we finally got it right, we would all just be so happy and relieved, and so happy toward each other!

Shared Experiences with Peers

The completion of even one year in high school IM is an accomplishment, and students who successfully complete a year or more of IM in high school are likely to share numerous other varied experiences in addition to classroom work on skills and IM literature. All 12 former high school IM students recounted various milestone events that often enhanced those feelings of shared experiences and being a part of something bigger than themselves alone, especially during performances. The mixture of the aesthetic power of the music, the culmination of hours of effort and rehearsal, and the fact that the event, such as a concert, is publicly witnessed by a supportive audience often gave members of the ensemble strong, memorable feelings of togetherness. Participants' shared remembrances of IM ensemble experiences ranged from performances/celebrations and field trips to a performance memorializing a lost band member. Descriptions of various experiences they shared with peers follow.

All participants shared that concerts were high points in their IMP journeys (Hewitt & Allan, 2013; Stewart, 2005). Danielle recalled that concerts were enjoyable for her because of the excitement in sharing the band's work with the audience. She relayed, in her individual story, how excited she was to see so many people in the audience, "a lot of parents, teachers," at the concert who enjoyed the band music. Danielle also loved it when the band rose to soak in the crowd's applause.

Mai had a particular memory of shared togetherness, pride, and empowerment when her band performed a popular and majestic John Williams piece:

I was able to connect to everyone while playing the theme song from *Jurassic Park*. I absolutely loved that movie and, at the time, playing it made me feel as if everyone else also really enjoyed it and it felt like we were all able to bond over that one piece. Not

only that, but when we finished playing the piece, you could feel a sort of empowerment from everyone; it was a sort of like a unanimous feeling of accomplishment that we all did together.

Hasina, likewise, described a uniting high point during a middle school concert at music camp. She experienced pageantry and being a part of an event that was personally expanding for her:

It just all felt really magical because all these kids are like very experienced--the music sounded really good.... It was very sensational.... We had to dress up and then everybody came out. There were families everywhere. It was my first time being in such a big crowd and having to actually be a part of something bigger, where your notes actually do matter.... It felt super dramatic! Everybody knows the song has to be at the same pace.

Meng said after-concert celebrations were memorable in IM too. He remembered the joy and pride of celebrating after orchestra concerts:

And the best time is when we celebrate after each recital or concert, because I felt accomplishing that, we just had our performance, and our audience liked it. Yeah, I felt like that's got to be the best time: After every concert we'd always celebrate.

All participants reported that ensemble performances at larger school, community, or even multi-state events (at band camp) were meaningful and important to them, enhancing their individual and collective feelings of significance as "part of something bigger" (Dominique). In addition to the school sporting events (Marcus, Izzy) and honors ensembles (Meng) described in other parts of this research, examples of additional, larger, school celebration performances

given in the interviews ranged from graduations to a retirement celebration for a beloved administrator.

Graduation ceremonies were not just important to the graduates and their families themselves, but four participants, Mai, Lele, Izzy, and Adriana, found that performing as underclassmen at graduations was very meaningful for them, both for the significance of the event in the community and for the feelings of service to others they felt in contributing to the event. Mai described her memory of a graduation performance:

I remember a specific event: We had the chance to play “Pomp and Circumstance” at the graduation. And that was a really fun and rewarding experience because you know there's a lot of students graduating and we were able to congratulate them, even though not through words, and even though we didn't know them--it was really nice supporting strangers ... for their graduation.... It was kind of like volunteer work.... It feels really nice and really good.

Lele remembered that her solo performance at a graduation was the first time her parents attended one of her band performances, both because of the importance of the event and because she performed a solo (recounted in more detail in Lele's individual story). Izzy, too, fondly remembered playing for the older graduates during middle school:

I would always get excited when there will be performances. I remember when I was in seventh grade and the eighth-grade class graduated. We played at their graduation, and it was really, really cool because we'd get to play to the walk of graduation.

A graduation performance for the seniors was extremely important to Adriana,

who dropped band because she felt so hurt after being excluded from the graduation performance her junior year. Adriana very much wanted to be included with her band friends at the momentous event (described previously in Chapter Four and in the skill sorting theme).

Marcus affectionately recalled performing with his band at a beloved administrator's retirement, and the joy and satisfaction Marcus experienced when the band played her favorite funky hit from the 1970s:

We played ... her favorite song. It's already an amazing song but it was kind of like our goodbye song to her, which made me incredibly happy to wish her goodbye, and also to play this majestic song. It's like she's thrown a kind of giant parade ... and it was sad, but it was also very joyous. She ... spent more than 40 years in the school industry in general, an amazing person. So, I don't think there's anything I could have done that made me more happy for (her).

Six interviewees said that band field trips created important shared IMP experiences (Stewart, 2005). Emelia, Dominique, Danielle, Hasina, Lele, and Ava remembered that various trips away from the school functioned both as social occasions and as opportunities for performance. Field trips were also expanding in other ways, as when students were exposed to new places or cultures. Some of the band trips remembered fondly by the interviewees included parades, summer band camp, and a senior band trip.

Emelia relayed enjoyable memories of two parades she performed in during high school. One was a Cinco de Mayo parade (previously mentioned) and the other was an all-city parade. For the all-city parade, high school bands from the city were invited to march to the baseball stadium to attend a ballgame:

It's basically all band geeks just marching downtown and to the baseball stadium....

That's when we got the most excited because you know you would march in the middle of the city. And then when that was done, you get a free baseball game, and you could just walk around and buy food with your friends. We always got so hyped up for that.

Four of the participants in the study, Danielle, Dominique, Hasina, and Lele, remembered attending week-long, out of state, summer band camps during their middle school years. The camps created new shared experiences with their band friends from their home school, as well as expanding their bonds to peers from a larger music community. The bonding was intense because camp was the first time each of these four participants was away from their family for a week. Danielle remembered, "It was music camp and I was scared to go. There were all these different people and I'm staying out here without my parents!... It definitely opened me up."

Hasina described her feelings of being part of a larger community of student musicians from other states, as well as sharing these new experiences with her band friend from her school: my first year at band camp, probably because that was my first time playing in such a huge band. As you know, my middle school was really small.... So band camp was my first time playing with the big older kids. It just all felt really magical because all these kids are like very experienced--the music sounded really good.... And then I was placed right next to Lorenzo who is now one of my best friends.

Dominique said her bonding with the larger community at camp happened very soon after she arrived with an initially disoriented feeling: "I didn't know where I was, I don't know any of these people but everyone just kind of comes up to you, introduces themselves, and you feel this warm welcoming." The fast bonds that formed, Dominique believed, were due to the

united goal of making music. She said, “A lot of the kids were out of state kids.... But everybody there was just super happy because we were there for the music.”

Ava said that her favorite band memories were of her senior band trip. The band seniors went to the East coast, close to where Ava grew up prior to high school. The experience created memories performing at other schools and touring with her band friends. She was especially effusive about attending a professional performance during the tour. Ava recalled, “Being there with my friends and performing was a lot of fun. And we went to a symphony on our last day there and ... overall, it was like, ‘Mwah (French chef fingertips-kiss)! They’re great, awesome!’”

Dominique likewise felt that band field trips were the favorite part of her high school band experience, although her band’s trips were more modest than Ava’s experience. Dominique said, “I’d say the best part was that we got to travel a little when we played, around the city.” In contrast, Adriana reported feeling disappointment about not having field trips with her high school band. She revealed, “They could have more events like field trips and fundraisers for field trips such as at (the local amusement park) at end of year. Everyone wanted more but it didn’t work out often and kids were let down.”

Shared performance experiences were not always joyful. Ava and her band community shared a devastating tragedy when one of their fellow band students died from suicide. Understandably, it was a terrible experience, but Ava said that coping with the loss was eased somewhat by the camaraderie of the band:

My worst experience of band was ... after a classmate killed themselves. That was really hard. It was intense on the students, as well as our director. He was our (specific instrument) player.... So, it was really hard but it was a great community to be with when it happened because we all knew him. So, it was easier to find support.

The shared mourning of the community continued, and Ava's school band performed a piece in memoriam for their lost band friend the following year. Ava said the selected piece was, "Sad-as-fuck!" but also "really beautiful" and "comforting."

Democratic Qualities

Various democratic qualities of IMP (and, sometimes, a lack thereof) were described within all of the interviews. Democracy is closely related to feelings of belonging but merits its own sub-theme under the umbrella of social IMP bonds because of the special power that perceptions of democracy give in helping each person to feel heard, valued, and free to express themselves as a part of society. Collaboration and interactive social learning are democratic cooperative processes but because these topics were covered under the theme of peer support, those topics will not be discussed here to avoid redundancy. Descriptions of additional democratic actions found in participants' high school IMP experiences include voting/choice and freedom of expression. These are discussed next.

Eight participants, Ava, Isaiah, Meng, Danielle, Emelia, Adriana, Marcus, and Lele, remembered helping to choose ensemble pieces during IMP. Within larger programs, sometimes the voting was formal. Ava said her high school band director "would send out letters for us to recommend music for the next season." There was also an established tradition of seniors getting to choose special music for performance, "such as their final piece that they play at graduation." Ava described the process as "a whole voting system." Isaiah also remembered that choosing music for his senior year was one of the "decisions that we ended up being able to make."

Meng's orchestra director appeared to use a variation of Robert's Rules with his smaller ensemble wherein students would verbally nominate and then vote on pieces during class time. He said, "We all just named out separate pieces and she would have us vote" so that the class

was “more student-run.” Danielle likewise remembered having input on band literature: “We always got to vote on what songs we wanted to play on the concerts.”

In an example of a more-impromptu manner of choice, Emelia’s band director would sometimes run her “favorite” kind of band class wherein he “would write down on the board, ‘What song shall we play next?’” and, to give ideas, she and her classmates would “just shout out songs” that they wanted to play. Emelia said they would then enjoy sight reading new pieces for the class period.

In another less-formal method of choice, Adriana remembered feeling like there was, “a little bit of student influence” when it came to student choice of band literature. She said, “We had some choices of music based on group feedback.” Lele remembered that the students helped choose popular music in middle school, which she found “cool,” but did not remember any choice as a high school freshman. She said, of high school band, “I didn’t get to choose anything. I didn’t influence anything.”

Emelia, Mai, and Isaiah said that they felt like they could sometimes help choose where to perform. Emelia’s band teacher gave her band class choices about which performances to do. For example, when her band was invited to play for a Cinco de Mayo event, her band director consulted the band. Emelia said, “Some of us did want to play that gig, but others were busy with other stuff, since that gig would be in the weekend. I believe we had a lot of choice.” Emelia was impressed by the way her teacher reached out and communicated with the students as partners. She remarked, “I’ve never met a band teacher that gave us that much right to choosing what to do, and what’s the next step for us.”

Mai said her band teacher also asked for student input on where to play. She remembered, “He would ask us if we had any places where we would like to play at ... I felt like

my opinion really mattered.” Isaiah said there was also some choice about which events to participate in regarding his band’s calendar. While some pep band events were required, some social events and fundraisers were optional. He said students could be involved the planning of those events as well. Isaiah remembered, “I think we had a lot of choice in those aspects.”

In addition to the musical freedom of expression generally afforded to finding a unique voice on their band instrument, Mai and Emelia both talked about their verbal opinions being heard and respected when it came to musical interpretation. Mai remembered that her band director listened and responded to students’ ideas about musical interpretation. She recalled, “He really took everyone's opinion into consideration.”

Emelia remembered that when they started a new piece in band class, her teacher would play a recording of the piece twice and then draw students’ ideas out. She recalled, “He would ask us, ‘What do you think of it? What do you think the composer is trying to tell you?’” Emelia believed the questioning technique not only encouraged them to express their ideas freely, but also taught them to listen and understand with more open minds, an essential skill for democratic processes. She said, “It did open our minds a bit more on the opinions of what everyone thinks. Because not everyone can hear what you hear.”

Friendships

All participants remembered friendships as important to their IMP experience (Adderley et al., 2003; Hewitt & Allan, 2013; Jutras, 2011; Stewart, 2005). The theme of having the support of IM friends was previously described within the section on sub-question one, the topic of support. Friendships were also an important and ongoing social IMP bond sub-theme for participants, and this part details some qualities of IMP friendships. Interviewees remembered

salient qualities of friendships: expanding friendships, culture-bridging friendships, deepening friendships, and enduring friendships.

As mentioned in the section on peer support, making new friendships in band, thereby expanding social spheres, appeared to be an aspect of band that helped students' decisions to continue in band. All the participants of this study remarked on having or making friends in band. Marcus said, "I made a lot of friends in band" and, he also waxed poetically, "bonding over passions ... is how the brightest friendships sprout." Adriana recalled that "making good friends" was the highlight of band for her. Isaiah remembered, "I always did have friends that I liked in every (band) class. And that was always exciting for me to see."

For both Dominique and Ava, band expanded their social lives in important ways during their freshman years, assisting in the sometimes-awkward transition into high school. Although Dominique came from a large close family of sisters, she said that she tended to be more socially solitary at school until she figured out that the band kids were sympathetic with her. She recalled, that before she went to band camp the summer after eighth grade, "I wasn't really one of those kids that did group work. I tried to stay to myself." But she found that quick bonds formed in band because of the common interest in music. Dominique said, "I think the most exciting parts (of IMP) were meeting new people, especially in high school band."

Ava, who had newly moved to the Midwest before beginning high school said she initially "had issues making friends." Band, however, helped her find a community and to develop her social commitment to her band peers who depended on her to be there. Ava also felt like band helped her friends be more accessible to her, aiding in her social life. She explained, "It wasn't like I was always in band hanging out with my friends, but there, we at least see each other, make plans, and see each other later in the day."

Lele and Izzy, in contrast, and as mentioned previously, did not find the comfortable sense of belonging through friends that most other participants appear to have found in band, and they each only participated in one year of high school band. Although Lele enjoyed her band social life with her middle school band friends, she had a slow start socially in the mostly-boy trumpet section at high school: “The first year was kind of hard because I got stares and I didn’t have friends. But then, halfway through, I did make one friend, and after I made friends with her, it got more comfortable for me.” Izzy had some friends in the clarinet section, but experienced hostility in her mostly White flute section and, as discussed in previous parts of this paper, was miserable during her freshman year. She said, “I don’t think I had a big connection with my band members at all.”

As previously described in Hasina’s story, she found culture-bridging friendships within her middle school band experience at her very diverse, and sometimes racially segregated, middle school. She said band “helped me connect with a lot of people who I probably would have never really talked to outside of band.” Hasina said it was the nature of collaborative band processes that caused the bonding. She remembered, “You had no choice but to work together.”

And as previously described, Hasina felt like her middle school experiences developed her cultural competence and helped her have the confidence to take risks as a high school student, causing her social circle to greatly expand. During those high school years, Hasina’s family moved frequently, and so her cultural competence came in handy. As a young African American woman, she successfully completed high school through attendance at four differing situations: a predominantly White private school in an inner suburb, a culturally Hmong public charter school, a large public high school, and an online public charter school. As recounted earlier in this paper, her four years were completed while her mother was seriously ill and

waiting for a heart donor. Hasina's diploma was clearly an impressive feat of flexibility and determination, and she partly credits her middle school band experience for her cultural competence and for her success during high school.

Seven interviewees, Marcus, Mai, Meng, Danielle, Dominique, Ava, and Isaiah, perceived music making as a bonding experience that caused a deepening quality in their IM friendships (Tarr et al., 2014). In addition to having many band friends, Marcus said, "There are also a lot of friends I already had that I grew closer with over band. We bonded over making music. We learned each other's taste of music." Mai likewise felt that the music "enhanced" her band relationships in a "non-verbal" manner, allowing peers to be together "in the moment" or "'in the zone,' as compared to being alone." Meng likewise felt that working hard on the music together "enhanced" friendships within his small high school orchestra class. As he said, "We basically supported each other, and everyone felt welcome. That created a big bond between every player."

Danielle believed the common love of playing trombone deepened ties within her trombone section because they understood her: "I definitely had a closer relationship with the other students that played trombone because they got me." Dominique also felt like band brought her closer to the friends in her clarinet section because she recalled they would often "meet up after school or at someone's house and we'd go over notes." Ava's band "home relationships" were very important to her and provided opportunity to deepen her band friendships as well. She said, "We'd just show up at each other's houses and spend four hours there, play for maybe two."

When he found segregation and racism to be hostile forces within band class, Isaiah said that he and his BIPOC band friends had a "kind of experience of almost holding each other up"

which helped offset some of the negative classroom experiences. Isaiah fondly remembered meeting up with his band friends “before the concert, maybe to get something to eat, and just walk to school.” He said, “Those are the moments that I still cherish to this day.”

Mai, Hasina, and Lele revealed that some of their band friendships have also been enduring in nature. Mai said she has stayed in close with her friends in the flute section of her high school band: “We're all really close. I still talk to all my band friends, even today.” Hasina did not mention much about friendships in her various high school bands, but some of her cross-cultural middle school band friendships have been meaningful and enduring for her, including one with her best friend Lorenzo, who was her roommate at the time of the interview. Hasina’s friendship with Lele, the same Lele who participated in this study, has also endured. In addition to traveling to and attending music camp together, Hasina explained the bonding with her middle school bandmates happened because, “All of us being there and being like vulnerable middle schoolers ... just made it like we could ... get a bond.”

Hasina also said of her band friends from middle school, “Everybody who I was constantly connecting with then--I still have a bond with today.... We can hang out or we can have a conversation, and it wouldn't be awkward.” Hasina said she recently ran into her Hmong American eighth grade clarinet stand partner, Pa (a pseudonym), whom Hasina remembered as generally “shy” back in middle school. Hasina said, “She (Pa) wasn't shy, anymore. She was like, “Oh my gosh, Hasina! It’s been so long!”” and Hasina described the two enjoying a catch up as though years had not passed. If not for middle school band, Hasina does not believe she would have interacted with students of other races or ethnicities as much during or after middle school.

Social Theme Summary

Participants remembered finding meaning or fulfillment through their social connections in IMP. Sub-themes of social bonds included being a part of something bigger/shared goals with peers, shared experiences, democratic qualities, and friendships. Being a part of something bigger could help students blossom socially. Concerts were an important shared goal due to factors such as collaborative hard work and important musical moments during performances, along with joyful celebrations after performances. Several students also remembered sharing important performances with the larger community: graduations, a retirement celebration for a beloved administrator, and a memorial for the tragic death of a band mate. IM trips were mentioned as favorite shared memories for some. Parades, honor ensembles, band camps, and other band trips expanded students' circles as they connected with other players in their band, from around the metro, or with musicians from neighboring states.

Democratic processes fit under the social theme as well. Some participants reported examples of democratic actions such as voting on music and/or events (both formally and informally), collaborating with the learning and interpreting of music, and through classroom discussions about music and other issues. Many students felt like their voices and opinions mattered in IMP. Friends were also a big social draw in IMP as new friends were made there, cultural bridges were formed through friendship, friendships deepened through the sharing of musical and travel experiences, and some found their IM friendships to be especially enduring over the years. The second theme under sub-question three, self-esteem and challenge, follows.

Self-Esteem/Challenge IMP Bonds

All participants gave descriptions of the ways IMP enhanced their self-esteem, especially regarding their ability to conquer the many challenges presented within IM. Sub-themes of the

theme of self-esteem/challenge IMP bonds included mastery, leadership development, pride in performance, and growth through IMP.

Mastery

Not surprisingly, mastery was a unanimous topic in this study. Mastery was one of the first IMP bonds in these musicians' beginning band memories. Starting an instrument was often frustrating, as Mai said of being a beginner on flute. Not able to produce a sound initially, she said a high point "was most definitely being able to produce a sound after taking it home for practice." Dominique also remembered frustration as a beginner on the clarinet because of, "All these fingerings!" Also not surprising, is that this group of young people interviewed had strong work ethic (Edstrand, 2015). Dominique remembered that she was in the band room every day in middle school practicing during recess. She said, "I never went to recess. I was just down there trying to focus and.... I finally got it!"

"I finally got it" moments were rather addictive for young IM students, with success building more success. Mastering difficult or favorite melodies was often a formative beginning IM memory. When Meng was a beginning flute student in middle school, he remembered a highpoint was mastering challenging tunes. He recalled, "And after learning how to play those pieces it felt like I accomplished something great in music." Similarly for Danielle, the best part of being a beginner was, "learning a new song."

The combination of a favorite melody coupled with a difficult challenge brought out ambition in both Marcus and Hasina. For Marcus as a beginner, a strong memory was his "favorite song," "Labyrinth." He said he decided, "There's no way I'm not going to do something fun and fail; I have to succeed, especially because it's fun—no matter how hard it was." And when his middle school band played "Labyrinth" at a concert and Marcus succeeded,

he remembered he was, “Extremely happy because it was my favorite song.” For Hasina as a beginner, a memorable, *fun piece + difficult piece = motivating piece*, equation was a simplified version of “Eine Kleine Nachtmusik” for solo clarinet. Hasina said it was “really fun” in seventh grade and she “liked the way it went from low to the high notes.” Of the favorite piece, Hasina remembered, “For middle school, that was hard for me.”

Strong work ethic and motivation were common without exception in this group of interviewees. Lele said it was about her “perfectionism.” She recalled, “When I would learn a piece, I would keep playing it over and over and over to get it right.” And, like Marcus and Hasina, Lele was motivated by challenging tasks. Lele said that if there “was a part for me that was a little too tricky for me, I was just so eager to get it right, you know?” Similarly, Isaiah was motivated by challenge. He emphasized, “I hate it when I’m not good at something and I work on something until I can do it well. And it is the one thing that keeps me going.” Isaiah also explained that the added attraction of band study was that there was no end to the levels of challenge and complexity. He explained:

There was consistently new material to work on. There are consistently new things to learn, new things to work on, right? So, there was never a chance for me to get complacent with the level that I was; it was always something to improve upon and learn. And I think that band gave me the ability to kind of exert that quality of mine in which I like to be good at things, admittedly continuously, in band.

Dominique believed that band study taught her that she possessed a “willpower to be a more motivated person.” She added, “I didn’t think that I could do it. I think the determination and motivation that I personally had for my instrument was what I learned about myself.”

In contrast, Ava, with her many years of private flute study, experienced little challenge in her band programs until high school where she finally found the level of difficulty in the ensemble pieces to be “exciting.” The new high school literature challenged her, and Ava said she finally had some pressure to work to prepare for class. She recalled, “I’d practice it so I’m ready. So that was always exciting.”

Isaiah, Adriana, and Izzy each talked about the pride they felt in the idea of just sticking with band enrollment despite some of the hardships. Isaiah, whose band journey included a difficult scheduling conflict and feelings of exclusion due to racism, found immense pride in completing four full years of band. The fact that he “continued to put in the work” was, for him, what he called “a shining achievement” created with his “own hands.” Adriana, who dropped band at one point due to hurt feelings when her teacher excluded her from a performance, was likewise proud of her four-year band award. She remembered wearing, with pride, a symbol of the award as part of her high school graduation regalia. And Izzy, who participated in only one year of high school band, and who felt tempted to drop each quarter of her freshman year due to the misery she felt (as described previously), was no less proud that she stuck out one entire year of freshman band. Of her tenure, Izzy ultimately concluded, “I’m happy I did. It just means that I’m really persistent. I always follow what I want.”

Leadership Development

Pride in leadership through band participation was another common sub-theme found within the theme of self-esteem IMP bonds (Edstrand, 2015). Seven participants, Hasina, Meng, Lele, Ava, Danielle, Isaiah, and Marcus all detailed stories of leadership experiences in IMP. Hasina’s and Meng’s stories (in Chapter Four) both told of the pride in their leadership qualities and behaviors discovered through IMP. Lele likewise served as a section leader during middle

school and Ava took turns serving as section leader in high school with her friend, Susie. Danielle, a trombone player who typically sat in the back of the band, was proud of displaying her charismatic verbal leadership talents at the front of the stage when she was asked “to be one of the hosts for the concert.” She remembered that it, “was a big deal.... I was put up front, you know?” In contrast, but no less importantly, Isaiah served as a leader behind the scenes when his teacher consulted him about how to make class better or what to add to improve band class for students of color.

While Marcus was hesitant to take credit for being a leader in his large high school band, he appeared, nevertheless, to take a strong lead in strategically selecting and promoting his thoughtful suggestions for relevant, playable, and appropriate popular music to be purchased or arranged for the band. Somewhat aware of his own charisma, Marcus said:

Because I was a very, very, very, very vocal band member, the teacher always knew what I was thinking or wanted. And also, because I wouldn't say that I was popular necessarily, but I was one of the kids who spoke out the most and, because of that, people kind of rallied behind me when it came to certain decisions. And, if I was very passionate about it, I would always find a way to get other people passionate about it.

It seems apparent that Marcus was not just vocal about his musical ideas, but that his classmates also recognized his good taste and acumen about which popular music would show well as pep band arrangements.

Pride in Performance

Pride in performance was a unanimous sub-theme within the theme of self-esteem. All participants indicated that performance enhanced their sense of accomplishment. Even Izzy, who was mostly unhappy in high school band, said that performing in concerts and with pep band in

high school was when she felt “happy.” Of his most favorite and difficult song in middle school, “Labyrinth,” Marcus remembered that he was “absolutely amazed and happy when we played it at our winter concert.” The fact that Marcus’ moment of mastery was marked “in front of a crowd of 500 people or more” made the performance all the more “amazing.” Dominique recalled, “Yes, we finally got it!” moments, as she described her pride after mastering difficult pieces and performing them at concerts. In particular, she remembered a piece with a G-flat at music camp, a pattern she found difficult and which she mastered during a concert after many mistakes during rehearsal.

Mai likewise recounted a “Yes, we finally got it!” moment after the cut-off of the final chord of a majestic John Williams piece during a band concert (previously recounted in more detail), which she remembered as a “unanimous feeling of accomplishment.” Isaiah similarly remembered a school band performance of “one of the hardest” pieces. He named the moment as “one of my highest achievements when it came to music making” recalling that the performance all came “together in a homogenized-something-beautiful.” Isaiah’s experience is another example of Marcus’ equation, *favorite + difficult = motivating*, which, in turn, also led to a proud performance.

Self-Esteem/Challenge Theme Summary

Participants gave descriptions of the ways IMP enhanced their self-esteem, especially regarding their ability to conquer the many challenges presented within IM. Sub-themes of the theme of self-esteem/challenge IMP bonds included mastery, leadership development, and pride in performance in IMP. Mastery was an IMP draw starting in beginning band when beloved melodies that were initially difficult inspired students to work hard. Students found their personal strength in mastery and pride and, also, within their endurance, sticking with their tenure in IMP.

Pride in leadership was another sub-theme of the self-esteem/challenge theme and was found in varied examples such as within section leader service, in a student who served as concert master of ceremonies, and with a creative student finding and promoting favorite popular music for his pep band.

A third sub-theme of self-esteem/challenge was pride in performance, including the communal feelings of accomplishment, intensified by many rehearsals and a public audience, and often enhanced with remembered musical excitement or beauty. Obviously, aesthetics also played an important role in these various pride-in-performance experiences, but the concept of aesthetic IMP bonds also merits its own category because of the primary and salient pull of aesthetics within IMP. Descriptions of participants' experiences with aesthetic IMP bonds follow next.

Aesthetic IMP Bonds

The term aesthetic IMP bonds describes the meaning or fulfillment found through personally experiencing the sounds of the music itself during the IM experience. Descriptions of the following aesthetic sub-themes were found in the personal musical memories of the interviewees: beauty, instrument affinity, cultural connection, popular music, drama, and creative expressiveness.

Beauty

While beauty can be considered basic to meeting aesthetic fulfillment, it is not always easy to put into words. Nine participants, Danielle, Dominique, Meng, Emelia, Lele, Ava, Izzy, Isaiah, and Hasina, attempted to express their version of beauty with words. Descriptions often combined the word "love" with adjectives related to "beauty" along with other powerful

descriptors. Danielle described her connection to music in her no-nonsense way, “The sound.... I really love to hear it. It speaks to me.”

Dominique said, “I just love the music. I love the sounds.... I just like the way the different sounds come out of it.... It’s just really nice. It’s really soothing for me.” Meng remembered, “When we put it all together; it sounds amazing!” Emelia said, “I just don’t know how to explain it. It’s just something that’s so unique!” and she went on to use adjectives such as “beautiful,” “peaceful,” and “astounding” to describe the immersive experiences she has felt with the sounds of music.

Lele also sounded astounded when she asked the rhetorical question, “who invented these kinds of things?!?... They’re all just notes but then you play them and they just sound so pretty!” Of a favorite piece, Ava said, “I love it so much” and she then went on to describe the beauty with words and gesture, “a gentle ambiance, (and) beyond that, it is mournful but still comforting and I just--Mwah (French chef fingertips-kiss)!” Izzy said, of her special affinity for performing music on the flute, that it was “something really beautiful ... it’s just really, really sweet. Well, it made me, in particular, really really happy.” She also used the term “nostalgic” for a memorable feeling evoked by a musical performance.

With his analytical mind, Isaiah found meaning in thinking about how the difficulty, complexity, and intricacy, or the “musical machinations,” of a piece contributed to aesthetics. When describing an especially “poignant” musical experience, Isaiah recalled:

I could hear those things and I could be a part of those things, right? Where you can hear every single thing, like flute coming in the background adding different notes and each trumpet adding to a chord; then it all comes together in a homogenized-something-beautiful.

Isaiah's words, "I could hear those things and I could be a part of those things," suggested an almost ethereal connection to the music, hinting at a heady, possibly out-of-body type of experience, or a spiritual feeling of the music entering his body or soul. Somewhat related to Isaiah's words in spirit, Hasina used the adjectives "magical" and "sensational" to describe a memorable aesthetic experience at middle school music camp. She also believed the higher level of difficulty and the advanced playing skills of the older students at band camp contributed to her awe. Both entrainment and challenge also increased Hasina's "magical" sensations during the same experience as she stressed, "the song has to be at the same pace."

Instrument Affinity

Five interviewees, Ava, Dominique, Danielle, Lele, and Marcus, remembered that their love of IM sound was connected to their affinity with the instrument of their choice, and that their choice of instrument was related to their sense of satisfaction and motivation in their music study. Some participants could not quite find the words to explain the reason they were drawn to their particular instruments. After trying the piano and violin as a young child, Ava found she immediately "loved" the flute when she heard it. She said, "I don't know why (the flute spoke to me) but I was, like, 'Yeah, that one. That's what I want.'" Dominique likewise said, "I don't know what it was about the clarinet, but it kept saying, 'Dominique.' (laughs) ... I really enjoyed it out of all the other music instruments.... It just kind of stuck with me."

Danielle was clearer on why she connected with the trombone, "I'm kind of a loud, energetic person and.... I love the trombone because it's loud and it's energetic." Marcus analyzed several specific attributes he appreciated about the clarinet: "It had a series of ranges that I really liked, and I really love the sound and the melodies of a clarinet, and just the way it can affect the band."

Danielle not only connected with the timbre and power of her trombone, she said she also had a special connection with instrumental music in general, and with jazz instrumental music specifically:

I always loved music, but it was something about instrumental music to me. I loved hearing all the different sounds. I for sure love jazz music. Just hearing all of the different instruments and being able to go through and listen to which instruments I can hear—I love that.

Similarly, the trumpet, with its prominence in mariachi music, connected Lele to her Mexican cultural roots, as described in her Chapter Four story.

Marcus said his motivation to learn a piece was sometimes connected to the instrument of his choice. For example, one of the reasons he stuck with learning “The Pink Panther Theme,” which was difficult to learn because of the many flats in the key signature, was the traditional connection of the saxophone timbre to the “iconic” melody.

Cultural Connection

A cultural connection could add to the overall aesthetic experience of the music. Participants were questioned about feeling culturally connected to the music and playing the music of other cultures during their IMP experiences. Apart from Emelia remembering Mexican American pride as her band played a Mexican march during a Cinco de Mayo parade, few interviewees remembered if the music of their own heritage was part of their high school IMP. Isaiah was another exception.

Isaiah was very aware of his Black American roots on his mother’s side. He remembered, growing up, his maternal grandfather introduced him to jazz and funk, so older standards, such as “The Girl from Ipanema” and “September” played in Isaiah’s school band, resonated with his

culture at home. He also remembered playing and appreciating a melody that his mother knew growing up. Of the experiences playing music of his own heritage, Isaiah said, “to be a part of recreating the things that were, like, important in your childhood is a liberating and very bright experience.” He also remembered that performances of those pieces gave him satisfying feelings of Black pride. Isaiah’s favorite contemporary arrangements in band were also songs originally written or performed by Black artists, such as by Beyoncé or Nicki Minaj.

Marcus, whose parents both grew up in Tanzania, did not remember playing any music that was “Afro beat-centered” or “related to African music.” He said that it “would have been awesome” if his band had played music of his cultural roots. Marcus went on:

They wouldn’t even have to be Tanzanian, just African alone, and I would have felt very acknowledged.... I definitely say like my band career would have been complete ... as long as it was played by a musician from Africa or was ... relevant to African culture--I would have been very happy and excited!

Ava mentioned a piece that was ostensibly Indigenous in character, but she found it somewhat inauthentic. She understood that it was written by a White composer.

When it came to experiencing the music of other cultures in high school IMP, five interviewees, Dominique, Mai, Lele, Ava, and Isaiah, remembered getting that opportunity and found it enhanced their musical experience (Campbell, 2018). Dominique and Mai both found playing a piece based on a Chinese folk song touching because of its unique cultural characteristics, such as its tonality and timbre. Lele remembered feeling happy for her friends in band when they recognized a melody of their culture. She said, “It was nice seeing other people’s music from their countries.... Some band mates were like, ‘Oh yeah, that’s the song we played all the time over there where my parents are from,’ or ‘we play that at our house.’” Ava said one

of her classmates of Chinese heritage was able to select a piece from Chinese culture for an orchestra recital and Ava felt glad for her. Of the performance experience, Ava said she appreciated, “the opportunity of seeing other people thrive.”

Isaiah said that his director programmed “a lot of music from different cultures” and taught racial and ethnic history and context related to the various pieces. He said his teacher also kept a poster on the wall “showcasing almost like a family tree of different musical sites and structures that led us down to the music we have now.” From Isaiah’s experiences in high school band, he expressed fascination for the “different grooves, rhythms, and different methods of creating the music” found around the world. Lele summarized, “It’s fun not only when you learn your own culture but when you learn other cultures. Other cultures are just so beautiful!”

Popular Music

Not surprisingly, participants listed popular music as unanimously enjoyed, memorable, and/or relevant. Seven participants, Danielle, Izzy, Mai, Meng, Lele, Marcus, and Hasina, all remembered enjoying famous music from popular movies, musical plays, or anime shows. Mai said appreciatively, that because of playing music from her favorite movies and shows, she was able go deeper into her “other interests that were not even related to band.” She was also motivated by the popular movie music to develop her flute playing skills.

Lele’s favorite music in concert band was popular music. She said, “I liked when they turned the modern music into sheet music, like ‘Thriller.’ I liked that.” Adriana likewise mentioned Michael Jackson’s “Thriller,” with pop and rock music as her favorite genres. Marcus, Isaiah, and Izzy all talked about popular favorites from pep band. Marcus and Izzy were both moved by rock or rap music that caused the teams and fans to become excited. Isaiah especially enjoyed playing the “older stuff” in pep band, including Motown and Funk music

from the 1970's that has become more popular with young people in recent years. Marcus also remembered enjoying retro music in pep band, including instrumental rock from the 1950's and 1960's, as well as being thrilled by arrangements of other current popular genres, such as rap.

Marcus described a relationship with popular music that was unparalleled in this study regarding variety and passion. As briefly covered in the section on leadership, Marcus took a leading role with great interest in helping to select popular music for his band to play. He had an impressive knowledge of the process of finding appropriate popular pieces, pieces that had the right instrumentation to sound authentic when played by the band, music that was relevant to youth, music that was playable, and that was published or could be successfully improvised or arranged.

Marcus was uniquely qualified for his leadership role in popular music selection because he had his finger on the pulse of current music. He said he listened "to soundtracks on a daily basis" and he kept "an entire playlist of soundtracks" on his phone. Marcus also developed knowledge about licensing and the legal rights (or a lack thereof) to play music not yet published during his process of helping to find music for the band. He remembered feeling disappointed when the most current and popular soundtracks were sometimes unavailable. Marcus' passion for imagining popular music for his school band was an important way he expressed his own musical creativity. Descriptions of the aesthetic sub-theme, creative expressiveness, follow next.

Creative Expressiveness

Eight interviewees, Adriana, Lele, Mai, Emelia, Danielle, Marcus, Meng, and Isaiah, described aesthetic experiences in IMP through expressing their creativity and imagination (Edstrand, 2015). As examples, in addition to Michael Jackson's "Thriller" (mentioned above by Adriana and Lele), Mai and Emelia both listed darker, more dramatic pieces of band music

that touched them musically. Mai felt pulled into the horror-themed novelty of playing “The Haunted Tara” at an honor band performance. Emelia appreciated the tragic storytelling quality of “Shipwreck,” depicting a storm, growing waves, and finally, drownings.

Two participants also revealed the varying ways they processed music creatively in their minds. Both Danielle and Marcus felt like music was a keyway they each communicated.

Danielle said that “music speaks to” her and that it is the way she communicates, that it’s an important part of her everyday life. She also said that when she hears any kind of music, she has visual images in her head as her mind creates a story, “like a video.”

Marcus said music was always running through his mind and revealed that he thinks “in tunes and rhythm.” He said his friends knew that his catch phrase was “I rhyme all the time, and I do it on a dime.” Ever improvisatory, some of Marcus’ favorite memories of high school IMP were when he and a few of his friends had the freedom in the classroom leave their seats to “form a band” with their various instruments and jam. He recalled, “We would listen to a lot of pop culture songs and we would improvise together.... Everybody knew, ‘when they’re together, they’ll play a random song and everybody will have fun.’”

In contrast to Marcus’ outgoing creative style, Mai appreciated her time alone practicing flute at home. There she liked to use her creativity to make slight changes in the music to express her feelings. She said that she liked the “choice to kind of change things up and play how I’m feeling.” For example, Mai felt more comfortable expressing and channeling her own sentimentality at home in privacy, playing certain sad pieces at slower tempos than they might be played with the full band.

For both Meng and Isaiah, the creative musical process felt expansive, and IM was expressed as a part of their broad musical interests, with the particular instrument they ended up playing at any given time as one of many vehicles of their expressions of creativity. Isaiah said:

I think the interest in the ability to really change the tiniest things to change an entire message of the song or composition is what led me to my interest in band specifically. I like to say the instrument was really an add-on to my process of learning these different levels of music.

Isaiah, as a continuously creative being was, at the time of the interview, considering a career or side career in sound engineering or a related field. Meng said he viewed music as “very broad,” and, at the time of his interview, was performing and electronically producing his own music in his home studio. He was creatively composing music and lyrics himself as a hobby, with plans to expand his avocation in the future.

Aesthetic Theme Summary

Aesthetic IMP bonds were revealed by participants as they described their connections to the sounds of the music itself during the IM experience. Sub-themes found within the aesthetic theme were beauty, instrument affinity, cultural connection, popular music, and creative expressiveness. Some of the words participants used to describe the beauty of music were “love,” “astounding,” and “poignant.” Technical difficulty, intricacy, and the melding and coordination of diverse musical lines increased the awe of beauty for some, and for others, these characteristics added to the “magic” and sensory entrainment experienced. Affinity to their particular instruments could add to students’ aesthetic enjoyment, with the instrument timbre, volume, or various associations often fitting their mode of expression, cultural background, or personality. Aesthetic feelings were also enhanced when music from a student’s cultural

background was included. There were, however, few examples of this in the data. Participants also expressed appreciation of playing music from other various cultures as well.

Popular music was a unanimous sub-theme of aesthetics, with all students listing pop musics as part of their repertoire of favorites. The last sub-theme under aesthetics, creative expression and imagination was found in the data with themes of drama or horror in pieces, with music as a creative style of everyday communication or thinking for two students, in the joy of improvisation, and in the expansive creativity with other technical mediums. The freedom to express creativity is a vital part of agency in life; the theme of agency, an overarching bond to and within IMP, follows in the next section and serves to highlight and tie together the proceeding themes under sub-question three.

Agency IMP Bonds

The theme of agency can be found within each of the other IMP bonds, as a kind of overarching energy that helped drive or buoy students throughout their IM careers. This section describes some of the many ways participants found agency in IMP, starting with their instrument choice, in gradually building competency and facility with their instruments, through developing and expressing leadership talents, through experiencing democratic processes, and through the empowerment found in mood management.

Agency in Instrument Choice

Agency was strong from their first encounters with band when participants in this study were allowed to choose their instruments, one of few real curricular choices for the students in this study during their middle school years. The aesthetic affinity to their particular instrument proved important to freely expressing their unique selves in several cases, as exemplified by Danielle, Lele, Mai and Marcus. For Danielle, it meant expressing her loud-and-proud self on her

large trombone, as well as connecting with her favorite jazz instrumental sounds. In Lele's case, the trumpet helped both her and her mother to gain courage to explore, express, and share their Mexican American identity.

Although it was not initially Mai's first choice of instruments, the quieter-flute turned out to be an ideal choice, as it worked well to reveal her affinity for private, contemplative solo expression at home in her room. Mai thought the flute might turn out to be a convenient and creative lifetime hobby. And, for Marcus, the saxophone's versatility and association within the various modern pop music styles he loved proved to suit him perfectly as well.

Agency in Competency/Self-esteem

Moving on from the initial instrument selection, young band students felt empowered as they successfully met the initial playing challenges, such as when Mai said she was finally "able to produce a sound." From there, they continued to develop their fundamental playing skills and feelings of competence, empowered by the "I finally got it!" moments (coined by Dominique).

When band students had a special feeling or familiarity for the melodies they mastered, motivation and feelings of mastery continued to increase their perceptions of agency. Marcus' equation of *fun + difficult = motivating* demonstrated the gathering momentum of being bonded to IMP through his developing skills. *Motivating* in the equation not only equaled pride in performance but, additionally, was commensurate with more facility and empowerment. Along the way, the relevancy of the music that was mastered increased feelings of freedom in the expression. As Isaiah said about recreating the traditionally Black American music heard in the home with his grandfather and mother (and it bears repeating): "to be a part of recreating the things that were, like, important in your childhood is a liberating and very bright experience."

Agency in Leadership

The young people in this study reflected the freedom mixed with responsibility of taking on leadership opportunities related to their IM journeys, revealing their own strength, and providing further agency and empowerment as they actively influenced the collective successes of their ensembles. All participants found various leadership roles, such as Ava's first and second chair roles in advanced ensembles; section leader roles for Meng, Lele, and Hasina; Danielle's role as a concert Master of Ceremony; the satin-gowned Emelia's bold "theft" of, and performance on, the bass at her quinceañera; and Marcus' campaigns to promote the most relevant and playable music for his high school pep band.

Just as important as these up-front leadership roles were the quiet styles of leadership revealed by students, such as the times Isaiah advised Mr. Gooddude behind the scenes on what changes might help make the band program better for BIPOC students. Dominique's diligent discovery of her personal mettle on the clarinet not only contributed to her high school band, but was no doubt later reflected in her leadership roles serving as both an assistant educator and as a soldier as a young adult. And the quiet perseverance of Izzy and Lele during their feelings of isolation in freshman band, of Isaiah doing an extra year of beginning band, and of Adriana through her disappointment about the graduation skill sorting experience, all reflect impressive personal strength and power, and were forms of diligent responsible leadership in IMP, however painfully achieved.

Agency in Democratic Processes

Participants with very successful high school experiences, participating in music electives for three or more years during high school, also described various democratic processes within their IMP experiences, processes that enhanced feelings of esteem and empowerment (as

democracy can). These processes included collaboration working on parts during rehearsal, especially in sections but also informally with others during and after school; formal or informal input on music selection, music interpretation, and field trip/performance choices; and learning to listen to and understand varying opinions of classmates or to appreciate the diverse voices of various musics, such as during the classroom discussion exercise described by Emelia in the section on democratic social IMP bonds.

Agency with Mood Management

Agency is also an undercurrent regarding IMP mood bonds. When young people were able to use IMP as a tool to regulate their mood, either by “soothing” themselves through playing when stressed or by experiencing fun, enthusiasm, or socialization with band friends when down, they surely felt more in control of their moods and more empowered. Emelia described what seemed like a lack of agency over her mood when she had to drop band for her senior year and hence felt “more grumpier” and “more sleepy.” She described feelings of being more depressed and less happy and energetic; energy certainly seems akin to agency. Closely related to the agency in mood regulation were the examples of expressions of sad feelings, such as the healthy and comforting communal expression of grief Ava felt during the memorial for her classmate’s tragic death, the expressions of melancholy described by Emelia during a particular band piece, and the sentimentality expressed by Mai she played her flute alone at home.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the study findings were summarized according to the themes found within each of three sub-questions of the study. Under question one, the question of who supported students during their IMP journey, the three main themes discovered included family, such as family musical and cultural traditions, family emotional support, and family physical support;

peers, when participants were supported by having or making friends in band and through peer coaching/mentoring; and teachers, who supported through facilitation of the classroom climate and through behaviors that enhanced their relationship with the student. Within question two, concerning the main decision points along the IMP journey, three themes were also discovered: the transition from middle school to high school, structural crises, and experiences of exclusion. Question three, the question about what kept students bonded to IMP included five themes of bonds regarding mood, social fulfillment, challenge/self-esteem, aesthetics, and agency. In the next chapter, the findings are analyzed using the lenses of Maslow's Pyramid and Freire's critical pedagogy.

CHAPTER SIX: THEORETICAL ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

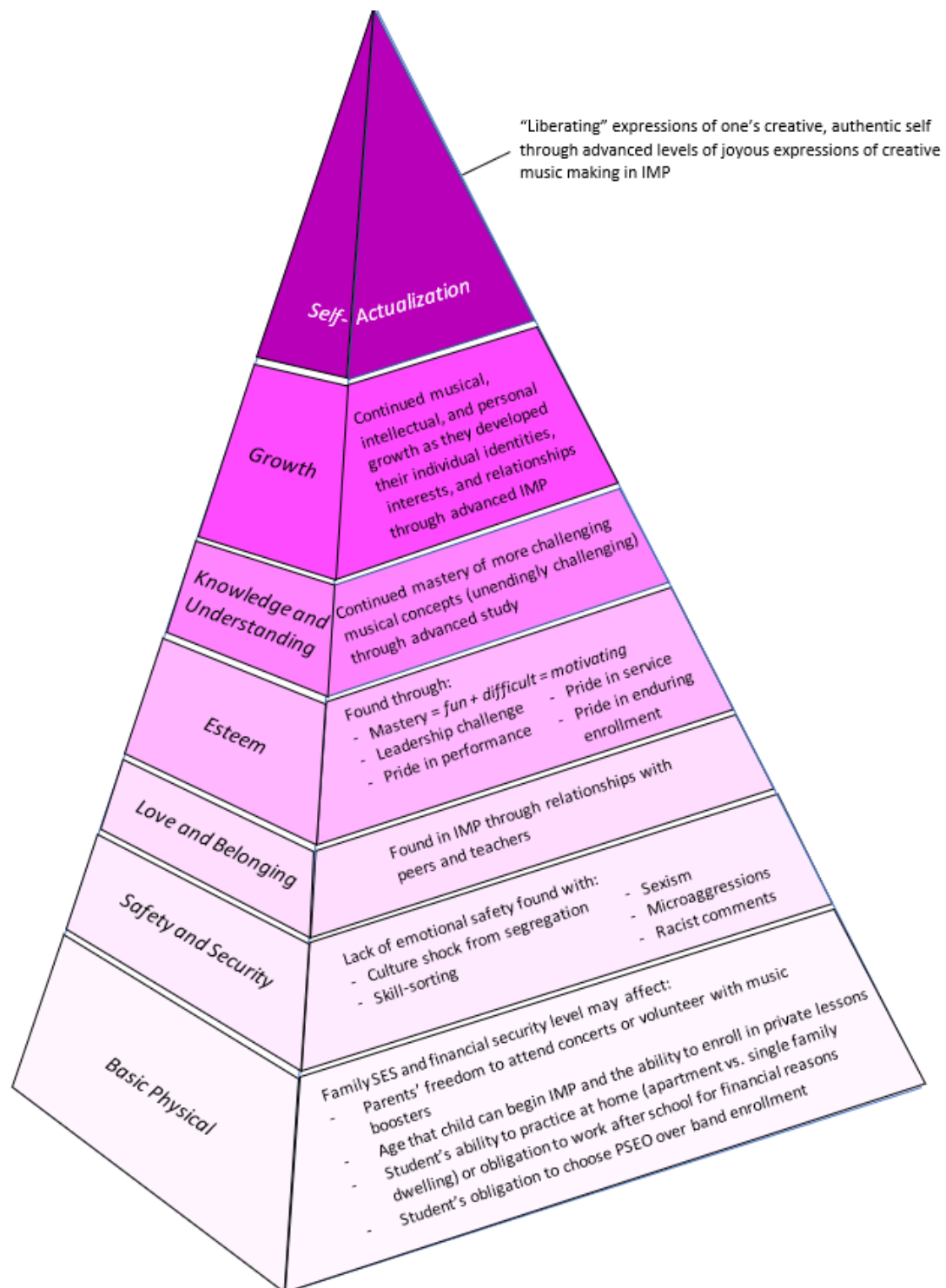
In this chapter the results of this study are examined through the lenses of two humanistic theories: Maslow's (2015) hierarchy of needs and Freire's (2013) critical pedagogy. Maslow's hierarchy of needs helps to analyze the prioritization of innate human physiological and psychological drives and, thus, aptly explains the needs and motivations band students may have for continuing in band study (or not). The body of this chapter begins with an analytical discussion of the study data related to Maslow's pyramidal model of a hierarchy of human needs.

Analysis through Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow's model of a hierarchy of needs begins with the most basic of human needs at the bottom of a virtual pyramid, with each more advanced level of need fulfillment becoming a priority as humans rise a step higher on the needs ladder of the pyramid. At the very point of the pyramid is the idea of self-actualization, a level at which a person becomes their most authentic and creative fulfilled self. The findings of this study are correlated in this section with each of the specific levels of needs presented in Chapter Three, outlined in this order: physical needs, safety needs, love and belonging needs, esteem needs, knowledge and understanding needs, growth needs, and the need for self-actualization. Figure 2 previews the analysis with findings correlating within each level of the pyramid adapted from the seven levels of the Maslow model found in Hodges and Sebald (2011, p. 261).

Figure 2

Analysis Points Aligned with Maslow's Pyramid



(Adapted from Hodges & Sebald, 2011, p. 261)

Physical Needs

At the bottom of Maslow's pyramid, are the most basic human physical needs, those for air, water, food, and shelter (Maslow, 2015). According to Maslow, the other human needs cannot be adequately prioritized until these basic needs are secured. It is easy to see the stark contrast of needs priorities when comparing the family background of Ava, who admitted she was of a "typical middle-class background" and Lele, who qualified for free or reduced lunch at school.

Because the family's basic physical needs were more secure in Ava's situation, she freely explored her instrumental music interests as a young child and was provided with private IM lessons starting from age eight and continuing until high school graduation. Private music lessons were provided on basically any instrument of her choice. In contrast, Lele could afford instrumental music study only through the public school system (for her, starting half-way through the sixth grade), and only when it was offered during the school day. And when it came to the essential home practice of skills on the instrument, Ava was not just able to practice at home, she was actively "pushed" by her mother to make it happen. Lele, on the other hand, who lived in an apartment complex, found practicing her trumpet at home to be a struggle due to acoustical issues (Eros, 2009).

The contrasting socioeconomic situations of the same two families also affected parent involvement in IM, and each girl's personal freedom to advance on their instruments. To meet their family's basic physical needs with hourly wages, Lele's parents often worked evening or night shifts, and were, therefore, seldom able to attend their daughter's performances at school. In contrast, Ava's mother was free to volunteer at the school with music booster projects, allowing for more active support and involvement with Ava's IMP.

Another area of contrast was Ava's apparent freedom as an upperclassman. Ava described "showing up" at Susie's home "for four hours to play for maybe two" while Lele was expected to spend her time after school at a part-time job when she turned 16. Despite her apparent affinity for the trumpet, Lele did not feel like home practice or private lessons fit into her reality and, partly due to feeling behind on her skill development as a result, she dropped band at the beginning of her sophomore year (Mazzocchi, 2019; Stewart, 2005). Meanwhile, Ava, in contrast to Lele, went on to excel in IMP throughout high school and college.

In another example of the influence of financial priorities, Emelia felt she needed to drop band for her senior year in order to take a class for no-cost college credit that conflicted with IMP (Allegood, 2016). Although she described the choice as "heartbreaking," Emelia felt duty-bound to save her family the future tuition money, which took priority over IMP. In families who struggle more for the basics, IMP may seem like too much of a luxury when faced with an alternative that saves the family financially.

Safety Needs

If basic physical needs are adequately met, Maslow's pyramid model poses that humans can next seek to meet their needs for safety. If the safety needs are successfully met, needs higher up on the pyramid can then be met. Safety needs in the IMP classroom include both feelings of physical and emotional safety for students and their families.

The students in this study did not express difficulty with physical safety in their IM classes. Most also expressed a feeling of emotional safety in their ensembles in middle school, a condition vital to student growth (Edgar et al., 2017). Five of the participants, however, felt unable to feel totally emotionally safe in high school IMP at times due to issues related to culture shock, skill sorting (Koza, 2008; Nussbaum, 2021), racism (Nussbaum, 2021), and sexism

(Cramer et al. 2002; Eros, 2008; Koza, 1993-1994; Edgar et al., 2017; Teichman, 2020; Wrape et al., 2016).

Hasina described the culture shock and alienation she often experienced in being the only, only one of two, or one of only a handful of, BIPOC students in a large band otherwise composed of all-White students during middle school band camp and during various high school experiences. (She also reported being the only African American student in an otherwise all-Hmong American student band during her sophomore year.) Her experiences were consistent with the underrepresentation of students of color and students of low SES in high school ensembles found previously (Albert, 2006a; Bradley, 2007; Elpus & Abril, 2011; Salvador & Allegood, 2014). Hasina's discomfort may have been offset considerably by an apparently courageous nature, as she appeared to boldly take on these culturally unfamiliar experiences. Her success in completing high school within these varied situations also speaks to her precocious cultural competence. Given the "fight, flight, or freeze" instinct common to the brain during the experience of culture shock (Hammond, 2015, p. 76), it is easy to imagine that others, without the strength of Hasina's musical and cultural confidence competence, might not be willing to play in a band with the same racial odds and the resulting experiences of culture shock.

Adriana's alienating experience with skill sorting was brief, but apparently traumatic at the time. As a young flute student who said, "music was in me," and who was also courageous enough to begin flute study as a freshman in high school, Adriana was suddenly devastated the spring of her junior year when she was not chosen to play with her band at the high school graduation ceremony. She had felt safety and belonging in her high school band community, however, when she was excluded from the special performance, feelings of emotional safety and belonging appeared suddenly erased for her, as if a rug had been pulled out from underneath her.

Although (as outlined in Adriana's story), her skill sorting difficulty was eventually overcome, her experience is an important example of how fragile a young person's feelings of emotional safety can be, and how damage to those feelings of safety might easily preclude any further progress within the ensemble, or worse, could deepen a previous trauma for a vulnerable young person in unforeseen significant ways. Skill-sorting, gatekeeping or binning is an issue that has been previously found to create racial and SES inequities in various ways up into post-secondary education and beyond (Koza, 2008).

Izzy struggled with a more ongoing form of skill-sorting during her freshman year when she was regularly called out in class during the down-the-row spot checks conducted by her band teacher. The technique caused an atmosphere of competition, not collaboration and emotional safety (Mixon, 2005). Izzy said could hear other flute students judging and criticizing her and comparing her playing to others. Most of the others in Izzy's flute section were White, and so there were also likely undercurrents of alienation due to socioeconomic class and race (Nussbaum, 2021). Her teacher's inflexibility about changing the classroom strategies maintained a perception of hostility within the flute section, with the accompanying feelings of exclusion and misery for Izzy; her need for emotional safety in band continued to be unmet. Teacher-centered rehearsal techniques have previously been reported as unpleasant for students (Hoffman & Carter, 2013) and collaborative, unison rehearsal strategies have been recommended for students with less confidence or skill (Martignetti, 2017; Mixon, 2006).

Lele, likewise, sometimes did not feel emotionally safe in high school band. Her feelings of alienation were due to perceptions at the intersection of both sexism and racism (Crenshaw, 1995; Crenshaw & Adewunmi, 2016). The trumpet section in Lele's freshman band had a competitive atmosphere, not necessarily led that way by the teacher, but probably due to the

chauvinistic dominance of the mostly-boy personnel of the section. Like Izzy, Lele remembered hearing others in her section say discouraging things behind her back, such as “she can’t hit that,” thus creating feelings of alienation. It appears Lele was somewhat encouraged by her teachers during her freshman year; she was awarded a solo at one of the concerts. She enrolled in band for her sophomore year, however, as reported in the data, her previous experience with sexism felt compounded by perceptions of racialized microaggressions her first day of band sophomore year. Lele said that when she walked into the larger, mostly-White band class, “everybody just stared” because she was “the only Latin person,” indicating culture shock as well. With her feelings and experiences of exclusion, along with her playing confidence low from a lack of private lessons (Martignetti, 2017; Stewart, 2005), any hope of emotional safety and belonging was erased for Lele, and she dropped band class that day.

Isaiah also said racism was a specific problem with his band experience and within his high school in general (Nussbaum, 2021). As outlined in the data, band members of a dominant White social group made insensitive racist comments about, as examples, African American mannerisms and East Asian dialects, causing an atmosphere of hostility in band class. Although Isaiah’s band teacher “did the most work” to offset racism and cultural discrimination in band class, a pervasive, normalized racialized culture is difficult to change (Kendi, 2019). When comments are made quietly under the breath or out of the teacher’s earshot, when the dominant majority culture might consider them commonplace or normal, or students feel unsure of standing up to such comments, then racist remarks can often be made with impunity (Eros, 2009; Kendi, 2019; Nussbaum, 2021).

Love and Belonging Needs

Love and belonging needs were well met for each of the study's participants through IMP (Adderley et al., 2003; Varner, 2017) at some point in their journey, and it appears to have been part of what encouraged all these interviewees to successfully enroll in and complete at least one year of high school IMP. While it became untenable for both Izzy and Lele to continue into their sophomore years of band due to lack of feelings of emotional safety, the rest of the students continued to experience enough emotional safety to stay in band, and their love and belonging needs continued to be met as well.

Unlike Izzy and Lele, Isaiah appeared to have his emotional safety needs met “well enough” in band despite the issues of racism in the ensemble and he moved up Maslow's hierarchy to feel love and belonging in band. His BIPOC band friends' efforts to hold “each other up,” his band director's public work on racism and BIPOC issues with the band, as well as Isaiah's respectful, interested, and caring relationship with his band teacher provided him with enough love and belonging/emotional safety to keep him going for all four years of high school band.

Several other participants talked about their feelings of love and belonging in high school IMP. For example, Dominique felt that her high school band teacher who “was always there” provided a “safe haven” for her. She said her classmates also supported each other and she considered the band room her “second home” (Adderley et al., 2003). Ava, likewise, felt love and belonging in her high school band from her teacher, Mr. Gooddude, who “seemed to care the most,” as well as from her caring classmates. Love and belonging were also obvious in the many data examples of friendship and support within the theme of social IMP bonds (Adderley et al., 2003; Varner, 2017).

Hasina's diligent pursuit of high school band in the various situations containing culture shock is not neatly explained with Maslow's theory. Culture shock was described as the "worst" part of high school band for her. When Hasina said, "My feet are gonna walk toward this African American kid" regarding her description of how she felt more comfortable with her own race/culture, it sounded almost like a gravitational pull. It is quite impressive that her love of band pulled her even more strongly than the racial gravity, despite the apparent social discomfort. While the safety level was unsure initially for Hasina in those situations, it may well be that increased belonging due to her confidence and esteem as a musical leader helped to counterbalance the issue.

These two inextricably linked stages of Maslow's theory, of emotional safety and of love and belonging, are also backed up by newer scientific knowledge about brain. The lack of emotional safety due to both blatant and micro aggressive racism, sexism, and other types of exclusion, causes higher levels cortisol in the body negatively affecting not just feelings of well-being and esteem, but also the brain's capacity for learning. For example, as cortisol and adrenalin increase, "working memory" shrinks and rapport decreases, causing a negative cycle for learning and lower perceptions of belonging and safety (Hammond, 2015, p. 46). According to Hammond (2015), "Cortisol stops all learning for about 20 minutes and stays in the body for up to 3 hours" while trust, however, can powerfully deactivate "the amygdala and blocks the release of cortisol" (p. 76). This perhaps helps explain how Isaiah's trusting and caring relationship with Mr. Gooddude was such an effective mediating experience for Isaiah. Only if students experience emotional safety and love/belonging in the classroom, are they therefore able to function their best at the higher levels of Maslow's pyramid.

Esteem Needs

As the data demonstrated within sub-question three, under the theme of IMP esteem/challenge bonds, self-esteem needs in band were met for these participants, at least for some of their years in IMP (Devroop, 2012; Henderson et al., 2017). Some of their best beginning band memories were of mastering melodies or, for Mai, just finally producing a tone on the flute after a difficult start. The more difficult the task was, often the more memorable, satisfying, and addictive (likely endorphin-activating) the accomplishment would be, with success then building more success. Thus, in a circular manner, more esteem was built too as skills increased.

As melodies became more complex, the students felt their feelings of competency and esteem increase. Marcus revealed a kind of equation, wherein *fun + difficult = motivating*. When the melody was fun, relevant, and attractive to the student, the difficulty in combination with the special feeling toward the melody caused the motivation to increase as well. Marcus' equation represents an amalgamation the student's initiative in the upward stretching of Vygotsky's zone of proximal development (ZPD) (in Bigge & Shermis, 2004), the self-selected or self-directed independent projects recommended by scholars of learning (Jackson, 2011; Rogers & Freiberg, 1994; Rogers, 2002), and the pursuit of ever-increasing challenge and skill within flow experiences (Csikszentmihalyi, 2008).

It stands to reason too, that as the harder work ensued, so did success and feelings of competency, with the "I finally got it!" (Dominique) moments of pride and esteem. For Dominique, as an example, learning to play the clarinet helped her discover her general capacity to commit to something difficult and to master the challenge, as well as to do her "own little research" when the teacher was not available. This was a source of pride, satisfaction, and self-

esteem for her as she grew from a school-dependent learner into a more mature independent learner (Hammond, 2015).

The hard-working participants in this study also enjoyed the fact that the challenges of mastering their musical tasks were unending, representing a kind of programmed or, sometimes, compacted or enriched learning, curriculum options that may be offered to learners who are hungry for more challenge (Rogers, 2002). Isaiah said that there was “always something to improve upon and learn,” whereas other classes may have felt more finite regarding the curriculum students were encouraged to cover. There was always a new challenge to keep IM participants interested and to, in turn, continue building pride and esteem through IMP.

Leadership service in IMP, as revealed under sub-question three in the data, was also a strong builder of self-esteem (Lautzenheiser, 2005), and several participants served as leaders during their IM tenures. For example, Meng, Hasina, and Lele, all served as section leaders at various points, and experienced self-esteem in their roles as they helped others in their section with various difficulties. Ava, who spent her younger years somewhat bored in her school band, also found excitement and pride as a section leader in high school playing challenging solo and soli parts in band and orchestra.

And this study evidenced IMP leadership esteem in more varied ways as well, as the experience helped individuals shine based on their unique talents. Danielle was proud to have been recruited for the role of master of ceremonies at an important concert, a chance to share her undeniable charisma “in front” of the band. Marcus led outward politically to promote the music he liked best for pep band repertoire, as well as behind the scenes, when he researched to help his teacher find pep music that was also the most relevant, playable, and obtainable.

Small group performances also provided important and remembered experiences of self-esteem-building. Emelia reveled in the spotlight when, during a memorable impromptu performance, she climbed onto the stage in her quinceañera gown to “steal” an electric bass and sit in with the hired band. Marcus’ charisma shone with his band friends in their spontaneous, improvised pop music performances during or just after band class. Meng’s proudest IMP memory was leading a chamber group playing selected music of his choosing.

As outlined in the sub-theme of shared experiences, concert performances were also an important source of pride and esteem, enhanced by the camaraderie and power of the full band. Dominique’s “I finally got it!” moments became “We finally got it!” (Lele) moments as the esteem of accomplishment was shared, further snowballing feelings of belonging as well. An example of such a moment in the data included the seconds after a final, reverberating chord cut-off caused Mai to experience a “unanimous feeling of accomplishment” within her band. Danielle recounted the esteem of sharing with the audience during a concert as the band stood up to listen to the crowd “clap and enjoy the music.”

The act of service through band participation was recognized as esteem-building as well (Lautzenheiser, 2005). In addition to serving individually as section leaders and mentors, several participants recounted the significance of service with the full band when playing at graduation ceremonies. Mai remembered, for example, that, “it was really nice supporting strangers ... for their graduation.” Marcus felt the importance and pride of service when playing his principal’s favorite song with his band at her retirement celebration. Ava felt the heavy contribution of her band’s service to the entire community at her bandmate’s memorial performance, a year after his tragic death.

Just being in band was an esteem-building accomplishment for the participants of this study. Mai realized during a high school guidance session, that just having band on her resume helped her feel unique and accomplished. Adriana and Isaiah were especially proud of their four-year high school band participation awards, which both attained despite considerable adversity. Izzy was proud of her personal persistence for having stuck through the misery of her unhappy freshman year of band. She said, for her, it meant, “I always follow what I want.”

Through many challenges and accomplishments, these students found various forms of enhanced pride and esteem through IMP (Devroop, 2012; Henderson et al., 2017). Often inseparable and intertwined with circular patterns of challenge and esteem, are the increases in the pursuit of knowledge and understanding, the next level of Maslow’s pyramid.

Knowledge and Understanding Needs

IMP can meet needs for knowledge and understanding (Varner, 2017) in a continuous manner when students are in an IM environment where they feel safety, support, belonging, and esteem. The participants in this study found ways to develop their knowledge and skills in satisfying ways beginning with their earliest experiences in band. It was those successes built on successes that appeared to be part of what kept them coming back for more IMP. Isaiah, for example, felt intellectually challenged from the beginning of band as he remembered his first trumpet teacher encouraging him to “learn a lot of different levels to music.” And Isaiah, as well, remarked on the continuous intellectual challenges he found satisfying throughout his high school band journey.

It is when students lost their sense of emotional safety, belonging, and esteem through perceived exclusion and/or hostility in band; as in the cases of Adriana, Lele, and Izzy; that they decided to drop band class at some point. Feeling emotionally left in the cold and brought down

in feelings of esteem by their IMP experiences, their needs to avoid the discomfort of IM class overpowered their needs to learn and make further progress in IM, despite their apparent passions for music. While Adriana re-enrolled in band for her senior year after her teacher reached out to her (Mixon, 2005), Lele's and Izzy's IM educations mostly ended, and further knowledge growth in band class therefore halted for each when they dropped band.

Growth Needs

For those students who continued on with IMP (and for Meng, in choir) continuous musical, intellectual, and personal growth was demonstrated by the data. Students developed their individual identities and interests through music study, and then could apply the lessons learned therein to other parts of their lives as well (Savage, 2021). Hasina went on to use the cultural competency she gained during middle school IMP to attempt, and experience, varied high school and social situations with more ease and success. While Danielle, for example, shone as the master of ceremonies at a concert, Marcus developed his creative talents as he researched pop music arrangements for pep band. Marcus said he grew personally as well, working out his angry feelings toward his band "nemesis" by developing a more philosophical view.

Teachers who skillfully questioned their IM students helped facilitate the young person's growth. Emelia believed that her teacher's questions and classroom discussions about music helped her to listen to and understand others' ideas better. Isaiah's teacher's questions not only built on his knowledge but deepened his relationship with his teacher, as the process built his esteem and feelings of empowerment. Additionally, the data in this study showed example after example of continuous learning and personal growth with the development of individual interests through challenging honor ensembles, special performances (Stewart, 2005), field trips (Stewart,

2005), college auditions, and deep and lasting IMP relationships (Hewitt & Allen, 2013; Jutras, 2011; Stewart, 2005).

Even during times of adversity and disappointment, students grew by discovering their own personal resilience. Dominique learned early on in beginning band, as well as throughout high school, to accept mistakes and to “keep going,” instead of giving in to frustration. Adriana learned she had the capacity to forgive her teacher and earn her four-year band award despite the hurt from being excluded from a performance her junior year. By sticking through the misery of a perceived hostile climate in her freshman band flute section, Izzy showed herself that she was persistent.

Self-actualization

Self-actualization is a pinnacle of growth, the top point on Maslow’s pyramid, and the ideal of reaching a feeling of truly being one’s authentic and creative self within the world. These participants reported feelings of self-actualization in the creativity and self-expression of making music, finding their unique truth and beauty each in their own ways. Self-actualization is a very personal, subjective, and not a completely attainable or static concept; its existence can be determined only by the individual attempting to obtain a kind of transcendence within self-fulfillment (Maslow, 1976).

While not asked directly about levels of attainment of self-actualization, there were many indications that all these participants were finding degrees of self-actualization in their IMP journeys at various points. Adriana, like others, joined IM because, as she said, “The music was in me.” Danielle proudly proclaimed that she was “loud,” and the trombone helped her to express her true, joyously loud self. For Marcus, who said he constantly thinks “in music,” IMP was an unmistakable extension of his true creative self. These 12 participants had multiple moments of

approaching self-actualization in the creative joy of mastering and expressing themselves through their instruments.

Isaiah specifically said he found playing the music of his family's cultural roots to be "liberating." Clearly, expressions of liberation must be at (or at least very close to) the pinnacle of self-actualization. The concept of liberation makes a perfect segue into further analysis of the data, next through the lens of Freire's theory of critical pedagogy, coined as a "pedagogy of freedom" (Freire, 1998).

Analysis through Freire's Theory of Critical Pedagogy

Analysis of the data through Freire's (2013) theory of critical pedagogy helps reveal how these BIPOC young people experienced their place in society, in their instrumental music classrooms, and as part of their education processes. The following paragraphs view the collected data using the main tenets of Freire's theory, that education: should be dialogical and democratic, should develop an awareness of the student's social power, should be built on student knowledge, should cause a collaborative cultural transformation for both student and teacher, and, lastly, that education should be viewed as political.

Dialogical and Democratic

According to Freire's theory of critical pedagogy, education happens best in a dialogical, democratic manner wherein teacher and students propose and solve problems together as equals (Freire, 2013). The data of this study contains many examples of dialogical and democratic learning within IMP and the participants appear to have benefited from those experiences, as Freire predicted.

Mr. Gooddude actively demonstrated the power of dialogical teaching when he questioned Isaiah frequently on his ideas for improving the school band experience, especially

for BIPOC students. In a Freirean manner, Isaiah's band teacher invited him to pose problems with "What can we change about this?" and then to solve problems by asking, "What can we do? What can we add?" The process left Isaiah considering his thoughts deeply, and feeling valued as a young man, as well as feeling important to the direction of his school's ensemble (Hoffman & Carter, 2013). Emelia remembered her teacher's use of dialogue in class discussion, helping students to consider and communicate their own ideas and to open Emelia's mind up to better understand others' ideas.

Other democratic processes in high school IMP abound in the data of this study. It is most apparent in the involvement of students in helping to select music, either through formal nomination and voting procedures, or through less formal variations thereof. Examples of student collaboration are also plentiful in the data. The beauty of collaboration is that it is deeply democratic because it helps students work together toward goals while they learn in a socially constructive manner. According to Mai, band was significantly more collaborative than other classes during her school day. While her math and science classes were often dominated by lecture and notetaking, Mai found said that band was a place where students could talk with each other for mutual learning. When a dialogic, democratic, and collaborative atmosphere was achieved in IM class, it appeared to help students in this study thrive in IMP (Albert, 2006b; Hawkinson, 2015; Martignetti, 2017).

In contrast, those students who did not feel included in the direction of their ensembles, Lele and Izzy, eventually felt failure to thrive as members of their high school bands and each dropped the course for their sophomore year (Hawkinson, 2015). Izzy made an admirable and precocious attempt to dialogue with her teacher about her humiliating spot check issue, but

genuine change failed to take place because the teacher did not respond in a democratic Freirean manner.

Awareness of Social Power

According to Freire, as students become conscious about the reality of their place in society, they become more responsible for change and for solving the problems of their society, including that of massification. Massification is the oppression of the masses by the ruling class, wherein an oppressed class is manipulated and dehumanized for the benefit of those in power (Freire, 2013). Mr. Gooddude bravely addressed these issues of oppression in class discussions and spoke directly about them with Isaiah in their private discussions as well. The strategies Mr. Gooddude used were similar to the brave discussions of race recommended by Ladson-Billings (2009). Isaiah appeared to have a heightened awareness, or conscientization, of his place in society and of the systemic forces affecting society and his school. As examples, Isaiah astutely discussed the issues of segregation within the tracking and scheduling of classes in his high school, and the social stratification and racist comments within the band class itself.

In contrast to Isaiah's band director, Izzy's director used the teacher-directed technique of band spot checks, a technique which is a relic of White Euro competitive band culture, and which also carries a vestige of the military role call style. The spot checks set up a toxic environment for Izzy who already felt behind on her skills and needed a more cooperative environment. When she talked to her band director in private about her unhappiness, the teacher was sympathetic but rigid about her classroom approach. Izzy was also a BIPOC flute player in a mostly White flute section so, in essence, freshman year for Izzy meant a forced assimilation into a culture that she experienced as negative and harsh (Ladson-Billings, 2009). This type of calling out technique was also addressed as unhelpful by Mixon (2006) who recommended rehearsing

parts in unison and by using more collaborative processes to avoid embarrassment for those with less confidence.

While Izzy may not have fully analyzed the social dynamics of her misery at the time during high school band, she was certainly conscious enough to know that her feelings were not adequately valued, and the spot-check practice left her feeling on the margins of the classroom (Gellerstein, 2021). Lele, likewise, came to wonder if she “mattered” in her freshman band class, thus revealing her feelings of objectification or massification rather than feeling valued and integral to the direction of the ensemble as an individual. Massification will be addressed with more depth within the analysis of education as political, the last Freirean tenet covered in this chapter.

Learning Based on Student Knowledge

According to Freire, learning happens best when students generate learning based on their familiar culture, extending and linking learning to what they already know. Hammond (2015) similarly said that a teacher can use cultural knowledge of the student to help effectively “scaffold” their learning (p. 15). The data of this study supported this idea in the importance of cultural relevance for learning. For several students, such as with Lele, who chose trumpet because of its prominence in mariachi music, cultural relevance was important to instrument choice. Emelia’s band director and her band honored the relevance of her culture by choosing a Mexican march to perform in the Cinco de Mayo parade.

The relevance and importance of popular music was revealed by all participants in the data. Isaiah specifically described the “liberating” feelings he had related to playing the Motown favorites he enjoyed with his grandfather as a child. Marcus described the motivation he had to learn familiar and “iconic” melodies as a beginner. He also described the adrenaline and

enthusiasm of his band's reveal of a self-arranged rendition of a popular rap song, linking youth (and especially Black youth) culture to a school sporting event and the larger community.

The examples of music honoring individual culture and heritage were otherwise rather scant in this study. Marcus, for example, expressed that anything with an afrobeat honoring the continent of his Tanzanian heritage would have been "amazing" for him. Mai said that her band did not play a Hmong melody until after she graduated, and she thought that would have been "really cool" if that had happened for her. Ava remembered that attempts to play indigenous melodies were well meaning but seemed inauthentic.

Related to this issue is the uncertain ownership of the music of their heritage for some students, especially for Dominique and Danielle, who were unaware that all forms of American music stemmed from, or were deeply influenced by, music from Africa brought to the continent by African people. The two sisters contrasted Isaiah's strong consciousness and identification with African American music forms. His cultural musical identity was strong at home and was also aided by a classroom music history poster and his teacher's intentional classroom lessons on the historical and sociopolitical context of various musics. Teachers who invited student input into literature, who found culturally relevant arrangements, and who helped students to develop their musical and cultural identities, enriched classroom learning in a Freirean manner (Ladson-Billings, 2009; Hoffman & Carter, 2013).

Collaborative Cultural Transformation

According to Freire, by working collaboratively with the teacher, both the educator and the students learn, create culture, and are transformed through the experience. Marcus gave a beautiful example of a high school band creating culture during his IM journey. With the rap song performance (described in the adrenalin/excitement part of the mood IMP bond theme), the

boundaries of what was typical at a school pep band performance were expanded, as “the communal power of musical expression” practically overwhelmed the football stadium (Campbell, 2018, p. XV). Teacher and students together had selected the music based on relevancy to the students, and then played by ear and improvised to create the unique arrangement together, thus creating something new, edgy, and relevant to youth. Further, it was a piece of sound art that highlighted Black rap culture. The work was evidently well-received and perhaps transformed the entire community in some way. Marcus said he was “shaking just remembering” the first performance of that collaborative creation, when even the fans of the opposing team were roused to get up onto their feet.

Less dramatic examples of collaborative cultural transformation are also found in the data of this study, as students contributed to music selection, interpretation, and arranging at school. Many more examples naturally existed but were not all specifically recounted, such as moments of improvisations during jazz band by Marcus and Emelia, or improvisation at home in solitude, as described by Mai and Marcus. While perhaps not strictly collaborative in the moment, Mai’s and Marcus’ home improvisations were facilitated, in a large way, by their IM educations. The same might be true, at least in part, for Meng’s song composition creations in his home studio or within Isaiah’s playlist creations. Who knows how their continued creations and collaborations will touch and transform others?

Education as Political

Education itself “is political,” since those in power decide what will be taught, how resources are allocated, etc., and effective educators using critical pedagogy “resist the constraints” those in power attempt to enforce (Abrahams, 2005, p. 4). This study itself exemplifies the Freirean tenet that education is political. Public music education is supported by

taxpayers, and the underrepresentation of BIPOC students within IMP is a political statement through policies based on political priorities: a large district's subtraction of elementary band programs, inconsistencies of IM offerings in middle schools, band scheduling conflicts such as those experienced by Isaiah, Emelia, and Dominique; canceled ensemble offerings as experienced by Meng; a suburban high school program (Lele's) built on the assumption that families can afford private lessons (or that those children from families who cannot afford them are "not needed" in band); and a lack of guidance clarity for students with cultural unfamiliarity of IM experienced by Meng and Mai; these are all examples of political decisions made with a lack of consideration for BIPOC students and families, especially those of lower SES.

Mr. Gooddude was an example of an educator who actively used his podium to quietly push the traditional boundaries of instrumental music, subtly using his political power for good, or in a "radical" or "rebellious" manner, to "resist constraints" and promote change (Abrahams, 2005, p. 4). For example, he exemplified courage by facilitating the arrangement and performance of a popular rap song with the youth in his band, a song with lyrics and related video containing themes (among many themes) critiquing violently portrayed consumerism, racism, and cultural appropriation, along with a feminist video performance of a fierce and empowered female BIPOC drumline.

With most of the White parents in the stands of the high school ball game likely unaware of the implicit political content of the instrumental-only band performance, Mr. Gooddude not only demonstrated his willingness to bend tradition toward progress, but he ignored expected constraints by somewhat radically (and in effect, clandestinely) facilitating the students' projection a countercultural narrative through the public performance (Ladson-Billings, 2009; McLaren, 2016). The event seemed somewhat reminiscent of descriptions of the ways various

people of the African diaspora cleverly sustained their cultures under colonialism when forced to take their musics and other cultural practices underground (DeJong, 2012; Campbell, 2018), when enslaved people in the United States used hidden messages within their hymns or spirituals (Ladson-Billings, 2015; Raber, 2018), or when Native American children in government boarding school dormitories sang the music of their tribes and clans in secret at night (Parkhurst, 2014; Tapahonso, 2016).

In addition to expanding the chosen repertoire to create culturally relevant band arrangements, Isaiah's teacher addressed BIPOC issues and intentionally discussed historical and social contexts of musics to reveal power relations inherent in various facets of music composition and production with the band (Cooke, 2015). In these ways, a caring and progressive band teacher helped to bring students like Isaiah to greater conscientization, encouraged student agency, supported their expressions of power through music and, perhaps, their general confidence and racial/ethnic identity development (Ladson-Billings, 2009). This represents the opposite action and attitude to the kind of assimilation pushed onto Izzy by her band teacher's classroom spot check techniques (Ladson-Billings, 2009).

Politically speaking on a larger scale, from the results of this study, it appears clearer that high school bands are often run as massified programs, in that children are sorted into more useful or less useful groups (nameless dehumanized masses) for the purpose of having a school band. The politicization of a town's school band has long been understood by band directors; the band has typically been pressured to represent the community through various quality public performances (Hoffman & Carter, 2013). There has naturally increasing recruitment pressure to have numbers of students in the program to represent a good cost-to-benefit value for taxpayers

as budgets tightened due to neoliberal tax policies favoring the wealthiest individuals' so-called freedom (some would call it rapaciousness) over the greater good of society.

Often just as importantly, the school band needed to make a good showing at athletic games to prove its value, since the purpose of the band was seen by some as most valuable as an appendage to athletic teams. The political aspect of directing a school band program was always understood; what seems clearer from this study shown in the light of Freire's theory, is the way children can be massified by their participation (or nonparticipation) in IM through the entrenched school systems of providing, scheduling, and valuing IMP, and, even more starkly, in a lack thereof (Albert, 2006a; Elpus, 2014; Eros, 2009; Kozol, 2005; Salvador & Allegood, 2014).

The high school band ensembles are thus generally viewed as useful by the school community at large, to showcase the school's talent and to provide esprit de corps for sporting events and assemblies (Hoffman & Carter, 2013). The students who possess the family resources to excel in band through private lessons and/or earlier starts in IM are, therefore, "useful" to the program, while those without those resources might become viewed as a "useless" nameless mass, hence massified according to Freire. Both groups of students, the students privileged enough to endure in IMP, and the students who want to participate but who are pushed out through exclusionary actions and policies, are massified by the systems.

Clearly, those who are excluded, predominately BIPOC and lower SES students, are the most-cheated, however, those students convinced they are somehow better-than are rather like the poor southern Whites convinced to accept their poverty by the moneyed in the century following the U.S. Civil War. Poor southern Whites felt the consolation, or social capital, of Whiteness and were therefore convinced they were better-than recently unenslaved people

(Kendi, 2017, 2019). Band students in band programs (and their teachers) can be used by the school community en masse to feel superior as they (often unknowingly) play a part in perpetuating the exclusionary practices. They are, thus, cheapened as a useful population by those who have the power to determine the allocation of resources based on politically popular reasons. Convinced of their function in band based solely on merit, the generally wealthier and more-White members of high school IMP miss out on the richness and beauty of a band population based on the true racial and socioeconomic diversity (as well as the diverse talents) of a multicultural democracy.

The purpose of expressing critical concern is not to diminish the value of IMP: quite the opposite. The point emphasized here is that IMP should be viewed for its many intrinsic values for children and youth, (as this study repeatedly demonstrated), rather than for shallow political reasons. If band is only viewed as an embellishment within the district, then it can be trimmed to the point of heartbreaking exclusion for children and youth who would benefit, as it was in the part of the metro area where this study took place. And, in the somewhat wealthier suburban district where Lele attended high school, the district depended on the financial resources of families to pay for private lessons in order to keep the program strong, thus eventually “weeding out” Lele due to her family’s inability to provide private lessons. The word “public” in the term, public school band program, was therefore virtually removed. And we, as a society, all feel less, feel cheapened, when true democracy suffers through the diminishment of our most prized and democratically intentioned institutions.

Many school districts, like the main metro district where most of these students attended middle school, trimmed back programs as far as they could without losing their larger high school bands’ as showpieces, due to neoliberalism and the back-to-basics view of education as a

business. When this happens, it is as though the purpose of the band is not to enrich students, but merely to function as public relations, or a type of advertisement, for the district. All students (and the larger society) would benefit from the power and enrichment of a truly multicultural/multiethnic/multiracial school ensemble reflecting the population of their school in an authentic manner, as well as the beautiful and unique potentials for individual self-fulfillment and the practice of democratic principles therein (Greene, 2000).

And because strings programs need an even earlier (hence more expensive) start to build adequate skills, orchestras experience a type of double-whammy because they are often also viewed as politically less-useful for public relations (i.e., not useful at sporting events). Hence, it is not surprising that paring back the strings program in the main district of this study resulted in the orchestra at Meng's high school eventually having such a low enrollment that it did not support an orchestra at all. And, if the community's parents of the students (like Meng's and Mai's) are culturally unfamiliar with traditional American school music ensembles, and/or are lower in socioeconomic status, (and are non-English speakers to boot), the consequent lack of political power and pressure from the community can facilitate the inequitable death of programs in more needy areas (Albert, 2006a; Elpus, 2014; Eros, 2009; Kozol, 2005; Salvador & Allegood, 2014). This trend demonstrates a basic lack of distributive justice in our schools (McCarthy, 2015). The message from the larger political community appears to be that school instrumental music programs are for the benefit of the community/public relation/politics, but not so much in areas which are socioeconomically disadvantaged, and not necessarily for the benefit of students, especially "unneeded" students. Education is, indeed, political.

Chapter Summary

This chapter analyzed the data of the study using the theoretical ideas of Maslow and Freire, including Maslow's hierarchy of needs and Freire's theory of critical pedagogy. Maslow's hierarchical model of needs fulfillment made logical sense of the successes young people did or did not experience through IMP. When student needs were well met up through the hierarchical needs levels, students were able to continue to learn, grow, and thrive in their high school ensembles. Not surprisingly, students' IM learning and growth, or their virtual rise on Maslow's pyramid, was interrupted, and sometimes ended, for those who experienced untenable exclusionary attitudes, actions, and encounters, such as skill sorting, racism, and/or sexism; and forced exclusion from IMP caused by systemic issues, such as a lack of curricular offerings, ensemble elimination, class scheduling conflicts, or a lack of private lessons.

Freire's (2013) critical pedagogy helped to explain the deeper meanings represented by school IM practices, the sociopolitical position of IMP in society, and the cruel massification that can occur, predominately affecting BIPOC students and students of lower socioeconomic status most negatively. In a positive vein, excellent Freirean teaching practices were revealed in the intentional teaching of cultural and historical context which aided students in their musical cultural identity development and conscientization, dialogical questioning and discussion, collaborative socially constructed learning based on student knowledge, collaborative democratic practices, and in the beautiful example of the transformative use of student-centered cultural collaboration in the classroom shared with the community (Abrahams, 2005).

Some interviewees reported that teachers, perhaps unintentionally, fell short as well, using exclusionary practices such as needless skill-sorting and other teacher-centered classroom

techniques and strategies (Hawkinson, 2015). The use of culturally relevant ensemble literature in the classroom was reported as somewhat uneven as well (Legette, 2003).

The larger picture gleaned through the Freirean lens revealed a tragically inequitable system of IMP as students were sorted, massified, and included or excluded according to their families' and communities' resources. Several participants in this study also experienced entrenched systemic and/or normalized personal racism, sometimes in combination with sexism, within their high school IMP experiences. The larger political view of high school music ensembles as useful showpieces, and the overriding tax-cutting, back-to-basics/schools-as-cost-to-benefit business models has caused much of society to forget the public part of our public schools. These trends have essentially created predominately more-White, wealthier, partly-privatized music programs within large public high schools. It appears the political massification of children as useful (or not useful) populations has sometimes caused the individual child, a whole precious person with a unique and creative spirit, to be cruelly discounted.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION

Summary of Study and Findings

This study attempted to understand the unique, individual instrumental music participation (IMP) experiences and motivations of each interviewee. Their individual IMP stories were based on the themes that appeared most striking, and NVivo software helped to further sort the data to find common themes for each sub-question. For sub-question one, Who helped students to stay on their path of instrumental music study?, the data revealed that the 12 participants in this study found supports for their IMP journey within three themes: their families, their peers, and through their IM teachers.

Family support came through the traditions into which interviewees were born, through attitudes and actions of encouragement from their family, and through tangible and physical signs of family support. Peers in their ensembles helped by becoming friends, through peer coaching or mentoring, through shared goals with instrumental music (IM) peers, and through the sharing of myriad other experiences within their IMP journey. In addition to teaching and coaching their students on the skill and art of playing an instrument, IM teachers supported by establishing a safe classroom climate and through positive relationships with their students.

Data revealed the following enhancing relationship characteristics and behaviors in IM teachers: a shared musical interest, the relationship length, extra help from the teacher, clarity, helpful guidance, humor, teacher as a coach, teacher as a friend, teacher as family, the teacher's belief in the student, and the teacher's curiosity about and interest in the student. One non-enhancing relationship characteristic found in the data was inflexibility, which could negatively affect the relationship with the teacher as well as the classroom climate. Issues found within IM

classrooms that diminished feelings of classroom safety included segregation, teacher-directed public spot checks, skill sorting, racism, and sexism.

Three themes were also found related to the second sub-question, “At what points in their journey did they make decisions to endure in band and why?”: transitioning from middle school to high school, structural crises, and feelings of exclusion. Issues that arose during the transition into high school revealed in the data were guidance and cultural confusion, such as a student not being sure if band would look good on a transcript during college applications, or students not knowing which instruments were available in a band or an orchestra because of cultural unfamiliarity. Participants reported strong family musical traditions, musical confidence, strong IM identity, summer band camp, and parent guidance as various influences that helped to make enrollment in freshmen band happen.

Structural crises, which forced decisions about whether to stay or leave IMP, included a lack of an appropriate IM program/IM class, high school class conflicts with IM classes, and/or a lack of private lessons. This study found problems with a lack of appropriate IM programming, such as a wide inconsistency with the availability of entrance into an IM program, ranging from fifth grade to ninth grade; and a case where a high school’s orchestra program was suddenly eliminated the summer before a student’s junior year. Semester and year-long class conflicts were found with PE and English credit, as well as with postsecondary enrollment options (PSEO). The expectation of the families in a first-ring suburb to provide private lessons for students in band, resulting in a loss of confidence for a student who could not afford lessons, was also a damaging structural issue.

The theme of feelings of exclusion, marked by hurt and a lack of a sense of belonging in IMP, included three sub-themes: skill sorting, racism, and/or sexism. Skill sorting examples

included the teacher-directed, public spot check technique and the exclusion of a student from an important performance. (Although a lack of private lessons was reported above as a structural issue, the exclusive policy is a form of skill sorting as well.) Segregation, culture shock, and racism were reported where bands were very White dominated in demographics (in contrast to the overall demographics of the school), and both racial microaggressions and racist comments were reported in some of those situations. Experiences of sexism in band related to their choices of instruments were reported by two female brass students in the study. For one interviewee, it was one of the reasons her IMP journey ended prematurely.

The third sub-question, What are the personal meanings students have found within their musical experience that kept them bonded to instrumental music participation?, was answered by the personal fulfillments or bonds within five areas: mood bonds, social bonds, self-esteem/challenge bonds, aesthetic bonds, and agency. Self-fulfillment and self-actualization in IM were satisfying and rich for these young people as revealed through these various IMP bonds. IMP mood bonds included sub-themes of the therapeutic value of IMP, adrenaline or excitement, and joy. Shared goals and feeling part of something bigger, shared experiences, democratic experiences, and friendships were all sub-themes under the theme of IMP social bonds. Within band friendships, participants variously reported sub-themes of expanding their friendship circles, culture-bridging friendships, deepening friendships, and enduring friendships.

Data within IMP self-esteem and challenge bonds revealed sub-themes of mastery, leadership development, and pride in performance through music study. IMP aesthetic bonds included favorite sub-themes of beauty, instrument affinity, cultural connections, popular music, and creative expressiveness. Agency was also included as a theme under IMP bonds because it was an over-arching motivation found within each of the IMP bonds revealed by the data.

Teachers' collaborative, student-centered, democratic practices especially enhanced the feelings of agency for students. Conversely, a lack of such practices in a few cases diminished agency and satisfaction for students and, in one case, caused a student to drop band before her sophomore year.

The themes and sub-themes of this study were analyzed through the lenses of Maslow's hierarchy of needs pyramidal model, and Freire's theory of critical pedagogy. Maslow's theory, based on the way human needs are prioritized according to their immediacy, helped explain why IM students from families of a higher socioeconomic class might be freer to initially explore IM at a younger age. Students from families who had more financial resources also appeared to have more free time for practicing and rehearsing, and financial resources for private lessons, making it easier to excel and continue in IMP.

Some students in this study eventually dropped band due to feelings of exclusion, despite a strong love of music and passion for playing their instruments, as well as the other various satisfactions reported as strong IMP bonds. Maslow's hierarchy also explains this phenomenon, since feelings of love and belonging, if not totally prerequisite to learning, affected the motivation to continue and grow in IMP. Summarized in a succinct way, Maslow's theory supports the saying that "success begets success" (Gay, 2018, p. 31). It contains the caveat, however, that emotional safety and success in belonging must be part of that picture of success.

Freire's (2013) theory of critical pedagogy supports dialogic democratic processes in education so that students become conscious of their position in society, and ultimately feel personal power to change their world; it is a radical process that transforms student and teacher alike. The young people in this study whose high school band teachers used Freirean strategies felt empowered and remembered being a part of successful programs. Instead of feeling like

merely one in a massified group, they felt like they counted, and like they contributed to their ensembles' successes. They felt freedom to learn and grow as musicians and people, regardless of their race, culture, or means. For two students, Izzy and Lele, who did not feel included or valued as high school freshmen, their IMP journeys ended prematurely. Isaiah's case demonstrated the power of a loving teacher, who actively served as his educational ally, to help offset experiences of racism. And Adriana's case demonstrated the importance of a teacher humbly reaching out to apologize and repair rapport at a crucial moment when a teen feels hurt and excluded.

The critical Freirean lens also revealed a larger picture of IMP and its political place in society. The school band appears to function as a public relations jewel for school districts and is therefore supported somewhat for that purpose. The quality, and sometimes the existence at all, of high school IM programs, however, may be dependent on the ability of families to provide private lessons for their children to reasonably participate and succeed in IM. This can create an IM program that does not adequately represent the socioeconomic, racial, and ethnic demographics of the community. The exclusive practice also creates deep inequities within the IM education system, and between socioeconomically stratified districts where programs may not exist at all (Albert, 2006a; Elpus, 2014; Kozol, 2005; Salvador & Allegood, 2014). A back-to-basics political push and shallow political valuing of band as merely a visual for the community appear to overpower what is best for the education and for the equitable development of each individual child in a healthy wholistic way.

Limitations of the Study

This study reveals the perceptions of former high school band and orchestra members expressed by only 12 young people and in a singular Midwest metro area. The learnings

presented here are only a small part of the tip of an iceberg of knowledge about how to make our schools better, especially for BIPOC learners and students of lower SES. There is much more to learn in this area of music education and there are many more voices we need to hear.

In addition to this study being limited by its Midwest perspectives and the number of interviewees, there are also important representatives from other populations who, of course, also need to be heard. This study did not include students of other underrepresented populations of this metro area, such as from the Vietnamese and Somali communities. Additionally, the study did not intentionally include the ideas of students with IEP's or 504 plans (although one interviewee volunteered that she was identified as having ADHD), or students of various LGBTQIA2S+ orientations and identifications. Nor were the 12 participants asked about these aspects during the interview, except to ask each their preferred pronouns.

While the questions asked in this study were open-ended, they were also somewhat limited. In retrospect, the questions could have been braver (Ladson-Billings, 2009), eliciting additional valuable information if interviewees had been asked more directly about the experiences and knowledge of each participant's own culture, their racial and ethnic identity development, and their musical identities related to their race/ethnicity. Participants could have also been asked directly about their general views and individual experiences with racialization, and various intersections thereof, as well as being asked about those same views related to IMP specifically. There is much to explore in more depth about student cultural and racial identity and students' racialized experiences related to IMP.

This study was conducted during a state-wide Covid-19 lock down where this study took place, and so, all interviews were somewhat limited by having been online. In some cases, students preferred audio-only interviews, and so, interviewers were therefore not able to gage

facial expressions or to see gestures, which may have been somewhat limiting to the expressions and understandings.

Only one of the participants in this study participated in a high school strings program, limiting the exploration of IMP experience related to school orchestra. Orchestra has its own set of curricular needs, cultural situatedness, and related challenges and traditions that were less fully explored in this study than was student band participation.

Implications

This study may help future educators, K-12 administrators, and university faculty to continue to find effective ways to support BIPOC learners, helping to improve IMP learning environments, and to continue the advance of research toward those ends. More students from all socioeconomic classes and backgrounds should be enabled to participate more inclusively and successfully in their high school instrumental music programs in the future. These insightful young voices might contribute toward that end. The following section of implications includes the key takeaways from this study: that these young people loved band, that they all signed up for high school IM to continue on playing their band instruments, that high school IMP sometimes lacked emotional safety, that structural issues caused several disruptions to IMP, and that their teachers mattered.

These young people loved band

These 12 BIPOC students loved learning to play their instruments and found multiple benefits therein. As beginners they thrilled at learning to produce tone and play their favorite melodies, they enjoyed peers, and they were proud of mastering complex tasks inherent to playing a band instrument. They felt cognitively challenged (Varner, 2017) and emotionally safe

as beginners. Most mentioned early performances as particularly thrilling (Hewitt & Allen, 2013; Stewart, 2005).

They signed up to continue playing their band instruments

All 11 participants who had IM instruction before high school enjoyed playing their band instruments so much that they took the leap to join high school IM with intentions to continue band through high school. Important influences found in successfully signing up for high school band as freshmen included family musical traditions, musical confidence (Stewart, 2005; Mazzocchi, 2019), an IM identity (Hoffman, 2008), and summer band camp (Dandurand, 2018). Areas of challenge during this transitional process into high school included sub-themes of guidance confusion (Allegood, 2016) and cultural confusion regarding IM classes (Allegood, 2016). Cultural confusion caused one student to switch to string bass when he joined orchestra instead of band, thinking he would be able to continue flute in the high school orchestra. When guidance was confusing for another student, his father successfully intervened to keep his son in band.

High school band sometimes lacked emotional safety

In contrast to middle school, and despite several dopamine and serotonin releasing band bonds outlined in Chapter Five, the high school band room was not always an emotionally safe space for some of these students due to alienating issues such as segregation, racism and/or sexism, and skill sorting. Segregation, a frequent problem when bands are underrepresented by BIPOC students and students of low SES (Albert, 2006a; Bradley, 2007; Elpus & Abril, 2011; Salvador & Allegood, 2014), caused multiple experiences of culture shock and alienation for some students. Sometimes concurrent with the experience of segregation were acts of racism including microaggressions or blatant racist remarks by White students (Nussbaum, 2021).

Sexist comments were a factor for two female brass students (Eros, 2008). In one case, her experience of sexism in the trumpet section intersected with experiences of racism. Skill sorting could be another alienating experience, when a student felt excluded due to playing inexperience caused by public comparisons of playing skill (Koza, 2008; Nussbaum, 2021), or a lack of confidence because of a dearth of family resources for private lessons (Mazzocchi, 2019; Stewart, 2005).

Structural disruptions were damaging to IM study

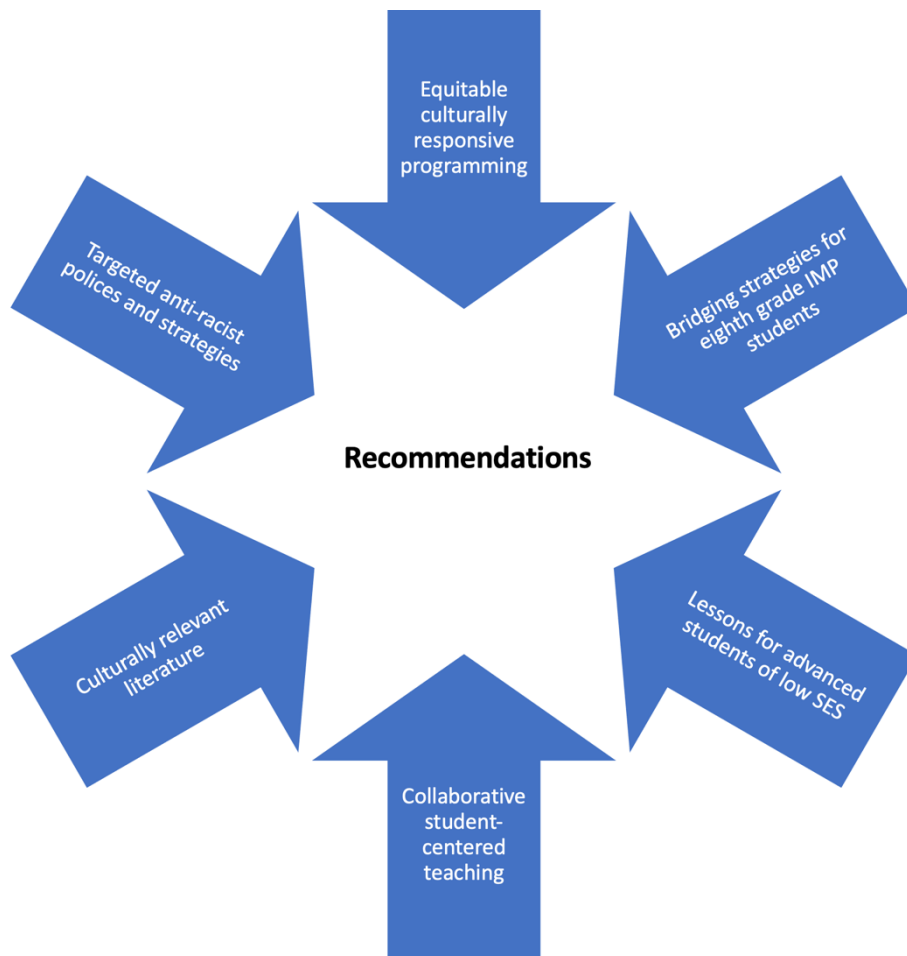
Insidious structural issues caused disruption in, and sometimes ended, students' plans for continued IM enrollment with several participants. Structural issues included inadequacy in guidance (Allegood, 2016), lack of appropriate course offerings (Allegood, 2016; Salvador & Allegood, 2014), class scheduling conflicts (Allegood, 2016), and a lack of private lessons (Mazzocchi, 2019; Stewart, 2005); only six of the 12 students completed four full years of high school band as planned. Offerings in the main district of these students (where all but one student attended middle school) were wildly inconsistent due to multiple charter schools, site-based management, and program cuts in the main school district. IM entrance ranged from fifth to ninth grade and, in one of the schools with an especially large percentage of low SES and BIPOC students, orchestra class was eliminated from the school just as the student (the one who had switched from flute to string bass) was planning to sign up for his junior year of orchestra. Class conflicts interrupted the flow of enrollment for three students, ending band prematurely for one at the start of her senior year. A lack of private lessons was another structural issue (as well as a skill sorting issue) when private lessons were expected (whether in a written or an unwritten policy) during high school.

Teachers mattered

Those students who had high school band and orchestra teachers who established caring, flexible, responsive, interested relationships with their students, who worked hard to make band an emotionally safe place, who sought relevant literature, and who invited collaborative democratic processes and dialogue with students made IMP wonderful for students. And the teacher who went out on a limb to do all these things (and even more) was inspiring to his students and to those who heard his students' stories. In one case of a student's experiences of segregation and racism within the school and in the band, a great band teacher of, and an ally for, a BIPOC student, mediated painful experiences of racism. In doing so, stress hormones were likely "replaced by endorphins" with the power that trust, encouragement, and belief, reflected in a teacher's eyes, can bring (Jackson, 2011, p. 92).

Recommendations

This section on recommendations for policymakers and leaders in the field is based on the data and analysis in this study of 12 former IM students' memories and perceptions, as well as from ideas supported by the research of others. The recommendations proffered include early investment in equitable, culturally responsive programming and recruiting in IMP; targeted guidance and bridging strategies for instrumental music students transitioning into high school, online lessons for advanced students of low SES, the use of collaborative student-centered teaching strategies and culturally relevant literature; and targeted, caring anti-racist policies and strategies toward inclusion. The recommendations are previewed in Figure 3.

Figure 3*Study Recommendations***Early Investment in Equitable, Culturally Responsive Programming and Recruiting**

There has been a tradition of starting band instruments by the end of fourth or the beginning of fifth grade, often with much earlier starting points for string students, especially in wealthier districts. To give all children a real opportunity to express themselves fully and experience the myriad fulfillments of IMP, the tradition of elementary public school IM opportunities should continue. This is essential to also develop talent equitably for future performers and music teachers to represent the diversity of our country. In cases where programs

have been eliminated, legitimate accessible elementary IM programs during the school day should be reinstated.

Working toward the goal of equity in a district's instrumental music program necessitates beginning public school instrumental music programs at an appropriately early age for all students. An appropriate age is a reasonably early age so to support the development of skills and talent equitably and fully. It is not enough to equally offer instrumental music during the school day starting in the sixth grade at every district middle school because it sets up inequity in the availability of offerings. Upper elementary children are developmentally ready (both ripe and eager!) to explore their IM interests. When true opportunities for elementary IMP are eliminated, only some elementary schools, those with more community resources, will provide an elementary IM program, thus stratifying skill development.

There is also a need for culturally responsive recruiting methods to start cohorts of IM beginners who represent the demographics of their school community. In coordination with elementary teachers, and perhaps with the talents of high school performers, recruiting efforts could include school day lyceums or community evening events featuring BIPOC performers and instrument demonstrations. Professional performances featuring BIPOC artists and culturally relevant music could be an especially helpful recruiting strategy.

Working closely with community liaisons of various cultures of the school community to brainstorm communication and recruitment strategies is important too. A community liaison can give suggestions on general and specific cultural knowledge, norms, and traditions, and give feedback on recruitment events, strategies, letters, emails, brochures, and signage, as well as help with any needed translations or clarifications therein. It is important to avoid making

assumptions about student and family knowledge, such as their awareness regarding which instruments will be available for study in a band class, or for orchestra class.

If community liaisons are not available, older siblings and other community members can be helpful with translation and communication with families if the teacher is unfamiliar with the IM recruit's first language (Mixon, 2005, 2006). Even when a family's first language is English, if the teacher becomes familiar with and knowledgeable about various cultural communication styles, the cultural knowledge can be important for avoiding or sorting out any confusion that may arise (Delpit, 2006). Creativity and flexibility in recruiting within a diverse population is important and a one-size-fits-all mentality should be avoided when it comes to communication.

Taking the time to reach out to and check in with uncertain or confused students and/or their families individually, whether they need that extra effort because of cultural norms, cultural unfamiliarity with IMP, because of historical trauma, (or for any reason) can be worth the effort (Albert, 2006b; Mixon, 2005). By keeping an open and eager-to-learn mind to the unique needs and interests of the community and within individuals, and by regularly making flexible individual adjustments to a planned recruiting system, both students' and teachers' lives may be transformed by the cultural exchange and enrichment within IMP relationships and music making.

Targeted Guidance and Bridging Strategies

Good guidance is essential to promote equity when students are deciding whether to enroll in instrumental music. Because there is a stronger tradition of IM enrollment in the dominant White culture, there may be a greater need for BIPOC students to be encouraged to enroll in high school band, to help each clearly understand that IMP is a viable, and in all probability, a valuable part of their education (as it proved for the students in this study).

At transition points, IM teachers should work closely with the guidance counselors and middle school IM teachers during IM registration. When a high school IM teacher, for example, visits a middle school IM class to talk about high school band, written surveys are an efficient tool for gathering information about individual interests and circumstances. When students do not sign up for band during a building or level transition, IM teachers can reach out to follow up with the student and/or their family to find out why, to provide information to students and their parents/guardians, and to clarify any confusion (Mixon, 2005). Armed with survey responses the high school teacher may be able allay individual uncertainties with a caring attitude and good information.

High school IM teachers should reach out to welcome all new students personally with phone calls, and to invite students who did not sign up for high school IM to reconsider (Mixon, 2005). This personal outreach should be accomplished in addition to the other typical forms of organized communication with students and families, such as email and hard copy mailings (Mixon, 2005). Recruitment that is personally welcoming is a form of guidance, especially for students and families who may have cultural unfamiliarity or cultural confusion about IMP. A few minutes of extra personal effort might make all the difference in a student's high school experience, and in the enrichment of demographics and cultural bridging within the ensemble.

Educators should consider IM bridging programs for middle school students transitioning into high school (Dandurand, 2018), either summer lesson programs at the high school for students during the summer before they enter high school (free or deeply discounted for students of low SES), or summer music camps run by area colleges or consortiums of school districts. An on-site school program could be as simple as four weeks of private lessons once per week plus an optional sectional one evening each week. Playable instruments (Allegood, 2016; Mazzocchi,

2019) and lesson literature should be provided, and lessons should be free for students of low SES (Mazzocchi, 2019; Stewart, 2005). Sectional lessons/rehearsals should include team building, cooperative learning, and social-mixer time to build camaraderie, in addition to unison skill building. Competition that puts others down in any way should be actively discouraged, and the director should teach about using, as well as model, positive reinforcement and helping each person to do their personal best, regardless of their starting point. If section leaders are part of the program, they should be specifically coached in leadership skills to serve as helpers (Lautzenheiser, 2005), and to be ensemble members who model striving and encouragement, rather than shaming with comparisons.

Summer lesson time is another good time to survey incoming high school IM students about their previous experiences, their cultural backgrounds, their interests, their favorite musical styles, and their goals, thus opening the communication, comfort, and understanding with their new teacher. Online or paper surveys can help this process during busy times of the year, and teachers need to read the answers with curiosity to get to know their students well. Students with transportation issues should be allowed to participate in lessons via video, and to attend the sectionals playing along with the on-site ensemble with their own track muted--at least until perfectly synchronized video rehearsals become available.

Band camps on college campuses were pivotal for two students in this study for helping them to bridge into high school band and some camps may offer scholarships. A middle school music camp on a university campus conducive to attendance by BIPOC students and students of low SES might be a first step in recruiting a new generation of music teachers who more closely reflect our nation's diverse population.

Private Lessons for Students of Low SES

The norm at the high school level in many schools is private IM lessons out of school time for advanced IM music students, whether the policy is stated or implied. Private lessons are a way to raise the performance level of school music and are historically essential if students want to study music in college (Koza, 2008). Schools in lower socioeconomic areas may let go of this norm, and while it may improve inclusivity within the school, it causes a separate and unequal education for students in lower economic areas, the majority who are often BIPOC. Both strategies cause a type of apartheid in American music education (Kozol, 2005).

Policy change is a vital antiracist strategy to change inequity (Kendi, 2019). The best solution to this private study inequity is, therefore, a policy change at the district level to hire enough IM teachers to teach lessons during the school day at each school (Sanders, 2001). If this policy is not created, a second choice would be for each district to provide opportunities for free private lessons with students of families who qualify for free or reduced lunch. Either solution would help keep the word “public,” in the phrase, public school music ensemble, authentic and where it belongs in a democracy.

In the absence of either of these policy solutions, it is then up to the band and orchestra directors to recruit skilled, background-checked, culturally competent graduates, retired music teachers, and/or area university music majors to volunteer to teach lessons. This might be accomplished in exchange for some form of credit or recognition in coordination with an area university or the district’s music booster group. Lessons could be completed online for the efficiency and convenience of all.

While online lessons may not optimal, especially when it comes to playing duets, they are a reasonably good option. Even a 20-minute online lesson every other week might be sufficient

to teach, mentor, encourage, and motivate a high school student to realize their potential. In this vein, summer online lessons might have been especially convenient for two of the students of Mexican heritage in this study, who spent considerable time with their extended families in Mexico each summer. Likewise for Native American students who might traditionally return to their tribal homelands during certain parts of the year (Dupris, 2021). All interested IM students, not just those from families with the financial resources, deserve the opportunity to pursue fulfillment and their own personal excellence through private IM study.

Collaborative Student-Centered Teaching Strategies

Collaborative learning strategies and culturally responsive attitudes and behaviors need to be not merely encouraged in teacher preparation and in-service programs but need to be a “pedagogical requirement” for educators to be more responsive to students’ various cultural backgrounds (Gay, 2018, p. 279). Teaching in a more multiculturally centered manner must become more normalized (Gay, 2018). Some teachers may find this to be an uncomfortable cultural shift, as the ethos of individualization and competition is steeped in the mindset of late stage, rampant capitalism, and persists as a dominant myth of freedom in our society (McLaren, 2016). Since collaboration and cooperation are essential in a pluralistic democratic society and are currently best teaching/learning practices, however, the strategies are likely to ultimately benefit all learners (Edgar et al., 2017; Gay, 2018; Hammond, 2015; Jackson, 2011; Noddings, 2013). In the words of the late U.S. Senator Paul Wellstone, “We all do better when we all do better” (Kraker, 2017).

Culturally Relevant Literature

It is important for IM directors to get to know their students, and survey them to learn what musics would be culturally relevant for them (Bradley, 2015). In addition to talking to

students to get to know them, written or online surveys are efficient and helpful; surveys are a way to find out what musical experiences they have at home, in their extended family or clan, at their place of worship, and when they listen to music alone or with friends. Teachers can survey about favorite melodies and styles, and ask what students dream of learning or playing, and why. By trying to find ways to incorporate music that is relevant and beloved by students, teachers show they care about and are interested in their students (Albert, 2006b; Mixon, 2005, 2006; Soto, 2015). By selecting literature from a diversity of cultures, various cultures are therefore honored, all are broadened, cultural bridges can be formed, and students are more easily motivated (Ladson-Billings, 2009; Soto, 2015).

Publishers of IM literature, grant-makers, and arts organizations need to take more socially conscious initiatives to expand authenticity and diversity in school band and orchestral literature. While they wait for publishers of school IM literature to broaden the cultural relevancy of published music for young ensembles, band and orchestra teachers need to take the lead in finding creative ways to commission pieces or to bring unpublished music to their ensembles, such as through creative arranging for, or with, their ensembles, as was found in this study. By doing so, classroom learning transforms culture, and all are expanded and transformed: students, teacher, and community.

Targeted, Caring, Anti-Racist Policies and Strategies Toward Inclusion

School district leaders need to examine their districts critically and fix what is broken. The opportunity gaps and the segregation happening in our public schools need repaired. When, for example, a high school band is composed of a population of BIPOC students at eight percent and the larger school population of BIPOC students is at 60 percent, as was in one example of this study, there is an issue of segregation that needs to be repaired (Kozol, 2005). When a school

in a city has more than 1,000 students, with 90% of them BIPOC, but has no orchestra program, that means the music program is both separate and unequal. Such inequities are all too common (Bradley, 2007) and they continue into the university level (Koza, 2008). Policies, cultures, and traditions are difficult to change but caring changes to school and district policies need to be made for the benefit of all.

In addition to the consistency and appropriateness of truly accessible curricular offerings at the elementary, middle, and high school levels; and the provision of instruments, lesson books, and private lessons to students of lower SES; high school classes need to be scheduled with care to avoid segregation. Anti-racist policies to avoid the kinds of exclusionary experiences of class scheduling conflicts, like several of the study participants experienced during one or more semesters of their high school IMP, need to be instated. Segregation is racism.

To build a culturally pluralistic classroom, teachers need to broaden the center of their practices to actively value and include all (Gay, 2018). On an individual and personal level, BIPOC students may need more outreach and focused, intentioned, individual care and attention to their unique needs (Albert, 2006b; Mixon, 2005). A teacher can serve intentionally as an important learning ally or mentor in each BIPOC child's journey to help build their confidence (Jackson, 2011; Torrence, 2005). Teachers need to go above and beyond to build relationships with BIPOC families and communities (Albert, 2006b; Fitzpatrick, 2011; Mixon, 2005; Robison, 2006; Wheelhouse, 2009) while they, as teachers, become familiar with, and enriched by, their students and their students' families' unique and beautiful ways, social orientations, and traditions.

As a general population, a greater percentage of BIPOC students carry trauma and have had more unpleasant experiences in education than the average student (Hammond, 2015),

therefore, building close personal relationships with their teachers is essential (Jackson, 2011; Mixon, 2005, 2006). Frequent teacher check-ins with the student and their family are recommended (Albert, 2006b; Mixon, 2005, 2006), as examples: just before or after rehearsal, later in the school hallway, during study hall, in the evening on the phone, or in person at varied (and perhaps unfamiliar) cultural, community, or school events (Robison, 2006).

Recommendations for Future Studies

There is much to learn in this area of music education and there are many more voices who need to be heard. Future qualitative studies could include voices from other underrepresented BIPOC populations and other oppressed and underrepresented intersections therein, such as BIPOC students of various LGBTQIA2S+ orientations and identifications, and BIPOC students with 504 plans or IEP's. In addition to obtaining the views of various additional populations, it would be beneficial to conduct similar studies in other parts of the country to understand how IM student views differ from this location in the Midwest.

Researchers could form questions to elicit additional valuable information, asking interviewees more directly about the experiences and knowledge of their own culture, their racial and ethnic identity development, and their musical identities related to their race and ethnicity. Participants could also be asked about their general views and individual experiences with racism, and various intersections thereof, such as with sexism and poverty, as well as being asked more directly about those same views related to IMP specifically. There is much to explore in more depth about student cultural and racial identity related to IMP.

Additionally, studies with greater numbers of BIPOC IM students could give more information. If combined with online surveys giving quantitative information, a mixed methods

study could offer valuable detail and understandings of possible important correlations and broad patterns (Hawkinson, 2015).

Author Reflections

It was no doubt my privileged White naivety at work initially, but I did not begin this study with the intention of finding personal exclusion, racism, sexism, microaggression, skill sorting, and various forms of structural segregation and exclusion in young peoples' urban school band experiences. This is partly why I did not ask the braver and more direct questions about racial issues (Ladson-Billings, 2009); my intent was to be generative in process. These findings should not be a total surprise, however, to those who are aware of what is going on in the larger society. For hundreds of years, the presumed innocence of American school music has covertly reflected and perpetuated the racialization of our greater society with the dominance of Whiteness (Gustafson, 2009).

And an historical struggle persists with the claim to ownership of music and culture in the United States (Richardson & Freeman, 2022). This struggle recently played out publicly when Grammy Award-winning pop star and classically trained flautist, Lizzo, was invited by the Library of Congress to perform using James Madison's 200+ year-old crystal flute. The juxtaposition of a "twerking" young Black woman playing the flute of slave-owner and "Founding Father," Madison, an architect of the U.S. Constitution, caused social media backlash (Richardson & Freeman, 2022).

Twerking is a hip-hop dance movement with roots in the Ivory Coast of Africa, and is a traditional, joyful embodied expression of many people of the African diaspora, especially for girls and young woman (Halliday, 2020). Lizzo's physical movements contrasted dramatically with the typical, staid, White Euro classical presentation during performance. For centuries, the

dominant White culture has freely appropriated and profited from African musical culture brought to the Americas by enslaved people (Richardson & Freeman, 2022). Lizzo's expert performance on a European-style flute, however, shocked some, and was followed by vicious public body-shaming of a young woman with the obvious message that she was not worthy of playing the historical flute because of her "caste" (Richardson & Freeman, 2022).

Racialization in this country is not just hegemonic and vicious; it can be deadly. The young people in this study ranged in age from 16-20 years old when George Floyd, an African American man, was murdered by a White police officer within 10 miles of their high schools. In a highly circulated video of the event, the officer looks up defiantly at the protesting witnesses, most of them BIPOC people, and at the camera (bravely held by a Black teenager) as if to say, "Yes, I am doing this; I have the power to do this, and I could do this to any one of you too." All the while, George Floyd begged, gasped for air, and then died under the police officer's knee. Some of the young people in this study joined in protest after the murder. All were no doubt vicariously afraid when they heard of or saw the video of the murder, and when the protests and attempts to control the protesters turned violent as well. The 12 young people in this study live their lives in the context of a racialized society, and all live their lives within non-white skin and/or non-white ancestry.

It has often been asserted that band has serious historical, cultural, and accessibility issues (Allsup, 2012; Allsup & Benedict, 2008; Bates, 2019; Bradley, 2007; Hawkinson, 2015), but so does our democracy. I do not believe it is time to give up on school bands. Yes, the history of band, like our democracy, has a shameful history related to enslavement, colonialism, Jim Crow segregation, cultural genocide using compulsory boarding schools, and macho militaristic traditions; and IMP often remains appallingly resegregated, as is much of education in this

country (Kozol, 2005). This study revealed, however, that there are BIPOC children who truly love band. Some students in this study did not just love band despite the challenges of being BIPOC in a White dominated field, but they loved playing a band instrument because it connected them to their culture: as examples, to the modern and historical music of their Blackness or to the tone colors of their Mexican heritage. And IMP frequently connected these young people to liberating feelings of agency. IMP was an enriching, life-affirming scholarly pursuit for all of these young people, at least during most of their journeys. We do, however, need to make serious efforts toward intentioned adjustments.

I know that there are many other important issues in our society. For example, five million children in the United States were food insecure in 2021 (United States Department of Agriculture, 2022) and 41,000 families with children in this nation experienced homelessness during that same year (United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2022). Further, these food insecure unhoused children were disproportionately BIPOC (United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2021; United States Department of Agriculture, 2022). I will not argue that IMP opportunities are more important than basic needs. I simply believe the children of the United States deserve to have their basic needs met as well as their high-level educational needs equitably met. In a democratic manner. In a democracy. Where education and the pursuit of happiness are so foundational to that democracy. I expand on the often-repeated introductory phrase of U.S. Senator Bernard Sanders (2022): “In the richest country in the history of the world” ... I believe every American child deserves the opportunity for an equitable instrumental music education.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: CITI Certificate

Completion Date 07-Dec-2020

Expiration Date 06-Dec-2024

Record ID 39923464

This is to certify that:

Robin Armstrong

Has completed the following CITI Program course:

Not valid for renewal of certification
through CME.**Human Subjects Research (HSR)**

(Curriculum Group)

Human Subjects Research Training: Social-Behavioral-Educational Researchers

(Course Learner Group)

1 - Basic Course

(Stage)

Under requirements set by:

University of St. Thomas - MinnesotaThe large, stylized "CITI" logo in a light gray font, with the full name "Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative" in a smaller font below it.

CITI
Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative

Verify at www.citiprogram.org/verify/?w2b14ec56-6187-4679-8372-4c251c205acd-39923464

Appendix B: Participant Informed Consent Form

Research Participation Key Information Teen Voices from the City

What you will be asked to do:

We ask participants to give a 45-minute audio recorded video interview about their experience in high school band to assist in a research project.

The time commitment is about 60 minutes total and the study will take place at online.

Participating in this study has risks:

- Participants will share contact information and personal stories with the researcher.
- Your stories will be recorded and transcribed for research.

Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

You are invited to participate in a research study about your learning experiences in high school band. The title of this study is *Teen Voices from the City*. You were selected as a possible participant and are eligible to participate in the study because you are a recent high school graduate from the Twin Cities area who played in high school band. The following information is provided to help you make an informed decision whether you would like to participate or not.

What will you be asked to do?

If you agree to participate in this study, I will ask you to do the following things:

- If you give permission, you will need to sign the bottom of this form and enclose it in the stamped addressed envelope that came in the mail with the form.
- After you send the form back to me, you and I will schedule a video interview time over the phone at a time that works for you within the next few weeks.
- You can be in your own home for the video call and I will call from my office.
- The video interview will take about 45-60 minutes.
- I will ask you questions about your time in high school band. The video interview will be audio recorded.
- If I have questions about something I did not understand, I might call you after the interview in a few weeks.
- I will write about your interview using a pseudonym (a fake name), not your real name, and I will email the writing to you so that you can tell me what you think.
- The writing might be published (using the pseudonym) in my dissertation in a year.

What are the risks of being in the study?

The study has risks:

- Giving your contact information to a stranger may have a risk. I will have your contact information in my locked cabinet in my office. The risk is low that that I will lose the information but you need to know.
- The audio recording and transcript of the interview with your personal stories which will be stored on my computer might get lost or stolen.
- Sharing memories of the past might cause you to remember something sad or traumatic that happened in high school and you could become upset.

Here is more information about why we are doing this study:

This study is being conducted by Robin Armstrong (Thorson), advised by Dr. Chientzu Candace Chou, Department of Educational Leadership, the University of St. Thomas; Dr. Douglas Orzolek, Department of Music, the University of St. Thomas; and Dr. Sarah Noonan, Department of Educational Leadership, the University of St. Thomas. This study was reviewed for risks and approved by the Institutional Review Board at the University of St. Thomas.

The purpose of this study is to find out about the reasons students play in band during the high school years and what it is about band that keeps them interested. I hope to use the information to help band teachers and principals to make band-learning better for future band students.

The direct benefits you will receive for participating are: **There are no direct benefits for participating in this study.**

We believe your privacy and confidentiality is important. Here is how we will protect your personal information:

Your privacy will be protected while you participate in this study. You can do the interview at a convenient time from your own home and I am the only person who will hear the interview or listen to the recorded interview.

The records of this study will be kept confidential. In any reports I publish, I will not include information that will make it possible to identify you. The types of records I will create include:

- I will keep this form and your contact information, along with some written notes, locked in a cabinet in my office. I am the only one who has a key. I will destroy the notes in about a year when my study is published. I will destroy this form in three years.
- I will store the recording of the interview and the transcript on my computer. My computer is always with me and it is password protected. I am the only person allowed to use my computer and I am the only one who knows the password. I will permanently delete the interview the month after the interview. I will permanently delete the transcript from my computer in about a year when my study is published.

Though I will do everything I can to protect your confidentiality, State law and ethical standards require that I report any disclosure of the following to appropriate local or State authorities:

- **Clear and imminent danger or harm to yourself or others, or**
- **Suspected or confirmed abuse or neglect of a child or a vulnerable adult.**

All signed consent forms will be kept for a minimum of three years once the study is completed. Institutional Review Board officials at the University of St. Thomas have the right to inspect all research records for researcher compliance purposes.

This study is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw from the research with no penalties of any kind.

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Your decision whether to participate or not will not affect your current or future relations with me, or your teacher who referred you, or the University of St. Thomas. There are no penalties or consequences if you choose not to participate. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without penalty. Should you decide to withdraw, data collected about you will be destroyed unless it is already de-identified or published and I can no longer delete your data. You can withdraw by saying, "I changed my mind. I do not want to participate." You are also free to skip any questions I may ask at any time.

Incentives:

I will send you a \$25 gift certificate after this signed form is sent to me in the mail.

Who you should contact if you have a question:

My name is Robin Armstrong (Thorson). You may ask any questions you have now and at any time during or after the research procedures. If you have questions before or after we meet, you may contact me at 763.442.2526 (call or text) or arms8753@stthomas.edu or contact my advisor, Dr. Chou at 651.962.4814. Information about study participant rights is available online at <https://www.stthomas.edu/irb/policiesandprocedures/forstudyparticipants/>. You may also contact Sarah Muenster-Blakley with the University of St. Thomas Institutional Review Board at 651-962-6035 or muen0526@stthomas.edu with any questions or concerns.

STATEMENT OF CONSENT:

I have had a conversation with the researcher about this study and have read the above information. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction and I consent to participate in the study. I am at least 18 years of age. I give permission to be audio recorded during this study.

You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

Signature of Study Participant **Date**

Print Name of Study Participant

Signature of Researcher

Date



Printed name of participant

Signature of study participant

date

Appendix C: Interview Questions for Armstrong Study

1. Thank you for your willingness to participate in my study about your journey of band study and what might have helped you to continue on in a school band program into high school. My name is Robin Armstrong. You can call me Robin. I raised three teenagers of my own and I was a teacher for many years, so I hope you feel comfortable and free to share with me during this interview session. This interview is confidential. When I write up my research, I will not identify you in any way. I am required by law and a code of ethics to keep your information confidential. I am recording this interview. Do you consent to have this interview recorded?
2. And, one more piece of business before we start with the questions of my topic: I want to remind you that your participation in this study is one hundred percent optional, and at any point you may decline to answer a question, you can take a break if it feels too intense for any reason, and/or you have a right to quit being in my study at any point and no one will be upset with you. Just because you have signed the consent form doesn't mean that you do not have the power to opt out of the study at any point. Just so I know if you are still okay with being interviewed, can you let me know whether or not you are okay with me starting the interview today?
3. You have control of this interview, so will you feel free to let me know if we come to a point when we need to stop? (It's okay don't worry, we can stop right now or.....)
4. Thank you for going through all of that with me. I look forward to getting to know your thoughts and feelings about being a band student. Would you start by telling me a little about yourself: your age, what you have been doing since high school, the instrument you play(ed) in high school, and when you started playing your instrument?
5. When you look back to your time as a beginner in band, what were the high points and low points of being a beginner in band?
6. What helped you get through the difficult times?
7. What experiences made you think that playing a band instrument might be for you?
8. Do you remember a time when you felt like being in band became a part of who you are? Maybe even a part of your identity? Do you know how that came about or where it came from?
9. What about transitions: Were there times when you had to make a choice, like at the end of the year when you chose electives, or when you moved to a new school and you had to make a decision about whether or not to sign up for band again? And do you remember that choice or those choices being easy or difficult?
10. If a choice of whether or not to continue in band was difficult, what do you think was the thing or things that "tipped the scale" for you on that decision? (Or what made the choice easy?)
11. Playing and practicing an instrument to get better at it can be tough. Who were the people that gave you the most support during those challenges? Feel free to talk about friends, teachers, classmates, parents, administrators, or just any supportive person who comes to your mind. And then, please tell me how that felt supportive?
12. What do you think generally kept you going with band?

13. What was the atmosphere like in band class? Did the classroom feel like a safe space?
14. What did you look forward to about going to band class at your high school?
15. Do you remember playing any favorite music that stands out?
16. Now, this next question might be just a little personal. Feel free to take your time on this one because I know from experience that it can be hard to put musical feelings or thoughts into words. So, here it is: Do you remember any specific musical high points, or moments while you were playing or performing that stand out as special in your memory? Maybe memories of special emotions connected to music or some kind of “good vibrations,” or even physical sensations that you felt because of the music? (Take your time.)
17. Do you know your cultural heritage, such as what countries or regions your family came from, and can you share that part of your identity with me?
18. Did you have the chance to play any music that connected with your own background, your family’s culture, your family traditions, or to your family’s country or region of origin? If yes, what was that like for you? If no, does that sound like something that was perhaps missing from band class?
19. Have you had the chance to play or learn about the music of other any other cultures in band class? And, if so, how was that for you?
20. Can you think of anything that you have discovered about yourself through your experiences in band, through music study, or through the music itself? If so, can you describe? (Feel free to take your time on this one.)
21. How much input, choice, or influence did you have in your band class, such as with music selection, music interpretation, or band event planning?
22. What made you excited about band? Does anything stand out in your memory?
23. What was the best part and the worst part about being in band in high school?
24. How would you describe your relationship with your high school band teacher?
25. What were your relationships like with your classmates in band?
26. How could your school principals, teachers, or your parents have made band a better learning experience for you?
27. You have generously shared some things with me about your band journey. I am curious as to how you envision your future relationship to playing your instrument, or your relationship to music in your life in general. Is there something about your vision of the future that you would like to share?
28. Is there anything you would like to give more detail about concerning this interview? Anything that you left out or anything else about your band journey that you would like to share? Anything all about your life story in general?

Again, thank you for giving me the opportunity to hear your story. It was very nice to meet you and I wish you the best with your future. If you feel like filling in any information that you left out, you can feel free to email me over the next few weeks. May I contact you again if I have follow-up questions in a month or so? Thank you again, and good luck!