Radical Musicking:
Challenging Dominant Paradigms in
Elementary Music Education

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Humanities, Social Sciences and Social Justice Education
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
University of Toronto

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Abstract

This project examines the work of four elementary music educators who strive to challenge the dominant paradigm of music education. I employed the methodology of a multiple case study (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2009) to consider the discourses, practices, and philosophies of these four educators. I observed in each school for an eight-week period for two full days each week, conducting semi-structured interviews at the beginning, middle, and end of each observation process. At each school, I followed an observation protocol, in addition to completing three interviews, and keeping a journal. In this work, I mobilize a tri-faceted lens that combines the theoretical frameworks of anti-colonialism, anti-racism, and anti-racist feminism toward counterhegemonic goals.

The teachers’ diverse practices include critically engaging with issues of social justice, studying a broad range of musics, introducing multiple musical epistemologies, creating space for students to own the means of cultural production, contextualizing musics, considering differential privilege, and subverting hegemonic practices. In many ways, these four individuals interrupt the traditional Eurocentric focus on Western classical music to explore different possibilities with their students. However, within this work to subvert, there were moments in
each classroom where the dominant paradigm was reinscribed. These subversions and reinscriptions are instructive to music education and carry broader implications for the discipline.

Ultimately, this thesis argues that a truly radical music education involves shifting from a liberal to a critical paradigm. Many values and strategies traditionally found in liberal education can be reread radically, and doing so puts forward tenets of a radical music education. Within these four classrooms, there were myriad examples of this shift from a liberal to a critical orientation. However, this work also raises questions of positionality and asks explicitly which bodies are able to do radical anti-oppressive work in music education, acknowledging that it is possible to unintentionally reinscribe dominant power relations while working to subvert them.
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An unofficial committee also provided crucial support and feedback along the way. There are no words to describe what Deb Bradley has meant in my life and in this process. Friend and mentor, she has shaped my work and the very core of my being. Her work and her life have inspired me to move in this direction and I am grateful for her unlimited support. Teri Dobbs has been on the other end of the phone so many times in this process, helping me through crises and providing so many insights along the way. I remember that phone conversation when my utter bewilderment at the data that was literally all over the walls of my
apartment suddenly yielded I finally understood how to make sense of it all. I am so grateful to have Teri as a friend and colleague. Lise Vaugeois has been there since the beginning of my master’s, and I am truly not sure I would have made it through without her support. She has read more papers for me than I can count and I write more effectively now because of her. I truly value her friendship. Finally, Pat Shand is an inspiring teacher. I have appreciated the coffee dates and the opportunities to share my work with her along this journey. When I wrote my conclusion, her feedback reassured me that I was on the right track.

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CHAPTER 1

Crossroads: Reenvisioning Music Education in the 21st Century

Now firmly grounded in the twenty-first century, it seems in many ways music education has reached a crossroads where in order to move forward, we, as music educators, must re-envision all that music education is and has been. As Elliott and Veblen (2006) note, against the backdrop of violence, poverty, and disease, music education as it currently stands “seem[s] quaint, if not largely irrelevant.” Many music education scholars are thus working to reconceptualize music education in such a way that it is relevant indeed. They actively seek ways to engage in music education toward social justice to explore how music could, in fact, matter.¹ Formerly excluded from the study of music education, the question of the social impact of music education now emerges at the forefront of research in the discipline.

However, within all of the theorizing on social justice and music education, there appears to be little research on how different teachers take up these ideas in classroom settings. What kinds of discourses do teachers mobilize in music classrooms to do this work? Do teachers align themselves with principles of any particular framework either in theory or in practice? How does their professional and personal background and education shape their work in the classroom and the choices they make? What are the tenets of their philosophies? In the prevalent discussion of the gap between theory and practice, what is the practical reflection of this current push to re-envision music education? This dissertation attempts to address some of these questions through exploring the discourses, practices, and philosophies of four music

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¹ Conferences such as the First International Conference on Equity and Social Justice in Music Education at Teachers College, Columbia University in 2006, musica ficta/Lived Realities: Engagements and Exclusions in Music, Education, and the Arts at the University of Toronto in 2008, Race, Erasure, and Equity in Music Education Conference at the University of Wisconsin, Madison in 2010, and the 2nd Symposium on LGBT Studies and Music Education at the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign in 2012 bring issues of social justice and music education to the table, as do special issues in journals such as Music Education Research (MER), Gender, Education, Music, Society (GEMS), and Action, Theory, and Criticism for Music Education (ACT).
educators—Amanda, Anne, Sarah, and Susan²—who profess to challenge the dominant paradigm of music education in their classrooms in order to put forward what I term a pedagogy for social change.

In this introductory chapter, I define precisely what I mean by the dominant paradigm in music education. I draw on the Canadian Music Educators’ Association publication Questioning the Music Education Paradigm (Bartel, 2004b) among other works to help elucidate the different facets of the ensemble conception of music education. Subsequently, I connect this paradigm to a liberal understanding of the world to explore the hegemonic potential of music education. I then suggest that truly socially just change involves moving from a liberal to a critical paradigm. Such a shift requires a critical anti-oppression lens, which I then introduce as the theoretical lens for this dissertation. Following the theoretical discussion, I introduce the current project—an examination of four music educators who are leading the way toward change—and identify my research questions which explore the discourses, practices, and philosophies of these four educators. I consider my own interest in these questions as I examine my positionality as an elementary music educator myself. I then draw on Elliott’s (1995) work and Small’s (1998) book to explain my use of the term “musicking” in the title of this work. Finally, I provide a thorough map of the dissertation at the end of chapter one. First, however, in order to consider how Amanda, Anne, Sarah, and Susan challenge the dominant paradigm, I must define what it is I mean by the dominant paradigm.

**Music Education: The Dominant Paradigm**

In order to delineate this concept of the dominant paradigm in music education, I draw on a number of key music education scholars along with the Canadian Music Educators’ Association publication Questioning the Music Education Paradigm (Bartel, 2004b). Set in the

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² These names are pseudonyms.
Canadian context, Bartel’s edited collection questions the dominant paradigm in music education and clearly highlights the different facets of “traditional” music education in Canada and beyond.

It is important to remember in any conceptualization of the dominant paradigm of music education that music education itself is traditionally understood as a frill in the neoliberal context of society. The Global Education Reform Movement (GERM) that has proliferated since the 1980s has resulted in some major changes to the arts. Sahlberg (2011) identifies a number of features of this education movement that comprise the key elements of neoliberal schooling. These elements form the current backdrop for arts education. He cites a number of factors including the standardization of teaching and learning, a focus on literacy and numeracy, the teaching of prescribed curriculum where outcomes are predictable and uniform, borrowing market-oriented reform ideas from the corporate world and applying them to education, and high stakes accountability through standardized testing (p. 103). This movement directly affects the arts. The focus on standardized curriculum limits possibilities in the music classroom, and the emphasis on literacy and numeracy with high stakes testing accountability continually reinscribes the marginal status of the arts within schools.

In situating music education in this wider context, cuts to the subject are pervasive. Music education programs are consistently dismantled and labeled superfluous or external to what are understood as “core” subjects (Bray, Green, & Vogan, 2012). Historically in Canada, there has always been a strong utilitarian approach to schooling—an approach consistent with the corporate emphasis of the Global Education Reform Movement. As a result of the emphasis on utility, music educators continually find themselves in the position of having to justify their programs, which often results in instrumentalist arguments for music education. Past justifications for music as a subject in school included citing the contributions of music to physical health, social skills, citizenship training, and its role in aesthetic education (Bray, et al.,
Because of the basic conceptualization of music as lacking utility, advocacy arguments often worked to attach music to one of the so-called “core” subjects (arguing, for example, why music makes students better at math). The need to continually defend the place of music in schools has led to the proliferation of any number of arts advocacy groups. The Coalition for Music Education in Canada was founded in 1992 to serve as an advocacy organization in Canada for music education. Much of the research and “quick facts and quotes” on their website\(^3\) relate to what music does for other areas of curriculum and life skills. However, arts advocacy is often unsuccessful in the face of budget cuts. In May 2013, the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) announced major cuts to the itinerant music programs in the schools. The proposal included a loss of 23 itinerant music instructors who teach vocal music, recorder, and Orff in the schools to students in grades one to six. Strings, band, and steel pan programs geared toward students in grade five to eight were also slated to be reduced (Brown, 2013). Ultimately, the proposal was defeated, but what this proposal reveals is that the place of music in schools is indeed precarious. In thinking about the dominant paradigm of music education, it is important to recognize the wider context in which music is perpetually expendable.

Situated within this precarious context, there is a paradigm of music education that has become dominant in schools across North America. This dominant paradigm of music education usually follows a rehearsal model. It is typically teacher-directed and the teacher controls the activities, repertoire, and pedagogy, generally within a Western classical sensibility (Bartel, 2004a, pp. xii-xiii). These teachers/directors often privilege technique over expressivity or musicality (Bartel & Cameron, 2004, pp. 42-43) and the cognitive over the playful (Kennedy, 2004, p. 67).

Further, Gustafson (2009) contends that traditional music education in many respects historically acted to “fabricate the ideal citizen” (Chapter 1). Gustafson begins her historical

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\(^3\) The website for the Coalition for Music Education in Canada is [http://www.musicmakesus.ca/](http://www.musicmakesus.ca/).
study in the 1830s with Mason and Mann and the original songbooks used in school vocal music instruction. She examines the ways in which the lyrics and the accompanying illustrations in these songs sought to produce the “civilized” singing subject—the white subject. Lyrics of a bucolic, pastoral, and patriotic nature taught students to behave “appropriately”—to work hard in school, be physically active, but not too physically active (i.e. not sexually active), and to mind their teachers and parents. In 1890, the curriculum shifted from public vocal music instruction to an emphasis on listening and music appreciation. The ideal listener had the comportment of Rodin’s The Thinker and listened to music without moving his or her body. He or she “paid attention to rhythmic detail but made no indication of it” (p. 153). Vestiges of this music education remain in aspects of current practices, perhaps most visible in the expected still comportment required by many music classes.

Much of the content of the curriculum is the “replication of existing music prescriptions”—i.e. learning to read and perform music created by someone else” (Bartel, p. xii-xiv). The traditional method of replication often disallows possibilities of improvising or composing. Creating is frequently a neglected aspect of the curriculum (Kennedy, 2004, p. 69), in comparison to the emphasis on replication through performance traditions. Within this pattern of replication, Bartel and Cameron (2004) argue that teachers often choose artistic exemplars over culturally-familiar repertoire (pp. 46-47) as a result of their own Western classical education. Elliott (1995) puts forward a model for self-growth and musical enjoyment where the identified musical “challenge,” whether it be performing, composing, improvising, etc., must equal the student’s level of musicianship. However, as Allsup (in press) critiques, this “challenge” in many ways actually potentially limits what is possible. In traditional music

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4 By “culturally familiar” repertoire, they mean music familiar to the students. However, the music transmitted in music class is “culturally familiar” to the teacher. Perhaps the terms “contemporary” or “socially relevant” may better describe the music to which they refer. The value language is interesting here: the authors assume that artistic exemplars and culturally-familiar (vernacular) musics are mutually exclusive.
education, the teacher usually sets the challenges. Students cannot necessarily easily move beyond the deficit model created by this kind of approach.

The challenges set by teachers often align with Western classical aspirations. The repertoire of music education is largely classical and this privileging is tethered to a “hierarchy of ‘taste’” (Bartel, 2004a, p. xiv), situating Western classical music at the top. Because of the emphasis placed on classical music, Western standard notation is privileged as a means of transmission over aural transmission or oral tradition. “Other” music—music beyond Western classical music—when included in the curriculum, is often incorporated on an additive or touristic basis (Hess, in press; Morton, 1994). This conceptual model of multiculturalism which effectively reinscribes Western music at the centre is fairly prevalent within traditional music education although many music educators seek another way forward (Morton, 2003).

Within the classroom, students in the ensemble paradigm are sometimes assigned a largely monolithic identity through which teachers relate to the whole group. How often, after all, are students expected to leave their identities at the door? In this model, the director is usually dominant and there is often a lack of “community” in what nonetheless are group activities (Cameron & Carlisle, 2004). When the individual is considered, that consideration is often tied to the notion of “talent,” and teaching to the “talented” is a prevalent theme in this music education model (Bartel, 2004a, p. xii; Gaztambide-Fernández, 2008). General music students sometimes receive less attention as music educators aim their teaching toward educating the “talented” for either a professional career or the students’ continuation in future music programs (Bartel, 2004a, p. xiv). Lifelong learning goals appear to be largely missing from music education philosophy, focusing instead on yielding a particular standard of performance.

Traditional music education also often assumes that students are “blank slates” or “blank scores” (Peters, 2004). It is frequently taken for granted that students require instruction in
certain skill sequences upon entering school. There is sometimes little recognition that students already have rich musical knowledge when they cross the threshold of the music classroom (Bartel, 2004a; Chen-Hafteck, 2010; Peters, 2004). There is often a chronic disconnect between in-school and out-of-school musical activities. Smithrim and Upitis (2004) and Shehan Campbell (1998) point to the fact that students generally have very active musical lives outside of school, but these lives do not necessarily carry into the classroom; in fact, Smithrim and Upitis suggest, they rarely do. Further to this disconnect, despite the often rich listening lives of students beyond school walls, the traditional music education paradigm “does not legitimize listening for pleasure” (Bartel, 2004a, p. xiv). Instead, the familiar ‘guided listening activity’ requires students to “listen for” specific aspects of music, often identified by the teacher in advance. The social and the sociopolitical largely do not explicitly enter into the music room, although implicit social hierarchies are continually reinforced. Traditional music education is rarely democratic; the interpersonal and intrapersonal aspects of participating in music often remain outside the classroom. The sociopolitical is frequently also officially absent; there are no social justice initiatives in this music education and critical pedagogy is generally beyond the scope of the ensemble paradigm. However, the sociopolitical is in fact present in how the elites are privileged in this music classroom. Perhaps most troubling is the fact that teachers are often expected to conform to the prescribed paradigm, replicating it by teaching how they were taught (Bartel, 2004a, p. xv) without shifting over time.

**Paradigm Shift: From a Liberal to Critical Framework**

The dominant paradigm conforms to a liberal framework for understanding the world. For the purposes of this dissertation, I take a moment now to define succinctly what I mean by liberal humanism or liberalism. For critical race scholars Bonilla-Silva (2006) and Goldberg (1993), liberalism is at the core of modernity. Goldberg and Bonilla-Silva concur that while
there is no stable “essence” of liberalism, there are a number of principles that define it—individualism (the belief in the individual over the collective), universalism (the belief in universal principles such as freedom and equality for all humans based on humans’ intrinsic rationality), the belief in the rationality of humans, and meliorism (the belief that social institutions, society, and all people can be improved), which leads to the notion of progress.\(^5\)

There are several exclusions to the category of “human.” As Bonilla-Silva (2006) points out “European humanism (and liberalism) usually meant that only Europeans were human” (p. 27, emphasis in original). Poststructuralist Belsey (1985) also points to the omission of women from the human category (p. 9). A liberal paradigm, then, fosters individualistic competition and notions of meritocracy without recognition that students (and all humans) are situated differently in relation to power based on factors that include gender, race, class, disability, immigrant and refugee status, religion, age, marital status, language, and sexual orientation. A person’s position relative to others then limits what a liberal paradigm sees as his or her “ability” or “talent” within the competition set up in the context of liberal schooling.

Further, within the realm of the arts, music is valued for music’s sake,\(^6\) generally devoid of its social context. The ensemble paradigm aligns nicely with the principles of liberalism, where “talent” and competition are important features and curricula are Eurocentric, reinforcing the Enlightenment notion of Europeans as hierarchically superior. So-called “Other” musics may be incorporated into the curriculum, but this integration often occurs in an additive manner, reinforcing the dominant (European) centre. Additionally, the rational is privileged over the emotional; technique comes before musicality and expression while music as an entity unto itself displaces the social. This liberal framework is meritocratic without an understanding of equity; rather teachers often believe that students are situated on a level playing field where they

\(^5\) For discussion, see in particular Goldberg (1993, pp. 4-5) and Bonilla-Silva (2006, pp. 26-28).
\(^6\) See Kurtz (2001) and Gaztambide-Fernández (2008) for further discussion
all have an equal chance of achievement in music class. The elements of the dominant ensemble paradigm described above can be understood comfortably through a liberal framework.

However, amidst the prevalence of the dominant ensemble paradigm, many music educators are calling for reform and a new conception of music education. These calls for change date back at least as far as the 1967 Tanglewood Symposium which urged music educators to incorporate popular music and world music into their “traditional” programs. The calls have continued right through to the present—a more critical push toward social justice through music education, largely led by the critical feminists and critical race theorists in the discipline (see for example Bradley, 2006a, 2007b; Gould, 2004; Koza, 1994a, 1994c, 2008; Lamb, 1994a, 1994b; Lamb, Dolloff, & Howe, 2002). With this critical gaze, we arrive at the current re-envisioning on which this dissertation focuses. As music education struggles with a meaning that goes beyond making music for music’s sake to looking perhaps toward a more socially-minded goal—one rooted in social justice and equity work that advocates for meaningful change—we are indeed left at a crossroads.

Up until this point, much of the scholarship supporting this call for change has been theoretical. With the call for reform, music educators expanded the musics they used in their programs and shifted from an aesthetic focus of music appreciation (see Reimer, 1972, 1989; 2003 for discussion) to a more praxial orientation that privileged performance and creativity (see Elliott, 1995 for discussion).7 However, despite the desire to shift the nature of the discipline, music education remained largely within a liberal framework. Educators added musics beyond Western classical music to their programs, but classical music often maintained its place at the centre and was frequently presented devoid of context, effectively naturalizing

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7 Neither the aesthetic or the praxial approach in their original conceptions stray outside of liberal humanist discourse (see Vaugeois, 2007 for discussion).
and reinscribing its dominant status. Composition and creativity appeared within the context of individualistic “talent,” and the global and social implications of music stayed on the periphery. Music programs also usually favoured equality over equity, treating all students the same rather than understanding the implications of privilege and differentiating accordingly. Beyond the liberal problematics in music education which are already classed and raced, music education historically also reinscribed hegemony in more overt ways.

**Music Education and Hegemony: Race and Class in Music Education**

In many ways, “traditional” music education reinscribes hierarchical relations of class and race and supports the dominant ruling ideology of white supremacy, which I define relying on the work of Mills (1997). Mills (1997) contends that society is actually predicated on a racial contract—an “invisible” contract upheld by white people both consciously and unconsciously for the perpetual subjugation of non-white “subhumans” or “subpersons” and the consequent privileging of the white body. The racial contract upholds what Mills (1997) identifies as the unnamed political structure present in the world today—global white supremacy.

Smith (2006) further complicates the workings of white supremacy, putting forward what she calls the three pillars of white supremacy: slavery/capitalism, genocide/capitalism, and orientalism/war. The logic of slavery/capitalism renders Black people inherently “slaveable” or commodifiable, although slavery now includes mechanisms such as the prison industrial complex (Davis, 2000) which legalizes slavery and criminalizes Black people. The logic of genocide in the genocide/capitalism pillar holds that Indigenous people must disappear to facilitate the colonization/new ownership of land (and production of the land). The third pillar, orientalism/war, follows the logic that deems Others (i.e. immigrants) as foreign threats to

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8 In more recent years, scholars (Hess, in press; Morton, 1994; Snell, 2009; Vaugeois, 2009) have problematized the manner in which diverse musics have been included in the curriculum historically and currently—arguing that perhaps the most predominant approach to multicultural curriculum has been additive.
empire, thereby justifying a continual U.S. state of war. Smith (2006) argues that these three pillars alternate in a way that enables white supremacy to function perpetually.

The connections to music here are indeed complex. Music education historian Gustafson (2009) traces the history of music education from its genesis in American schools in the mid-1800s through to the present day. She describes a curricular endeavour that is quite explicit in its intent at hegemony. Importantly, the traditional music education approach of vocal music instruction shifted focus to a music appreciation method in the 1890s (Gustafson, 2009, p. 104). At first, “Black” music and Aboriginal music were simply absent from this music appreciation curriculum, but by the 1920s, their new designated place affirmed their subjugated status; they were to play the role of “primitive” music for the young grades following the Eurocentric curriculum on the path to developing the sophisticated (white) listener capable of listening to more “complex” music. Naturally, the so-called “primitive” music did not make up the whole of the young curriculum; an entire curriculum of “primitive” musics may have produced an effect quite opposite to the one desired. According to Gustafson, the curriculum positioned these musics on the margin in the younger grades, but by deeming them “simple” and “primitive” musics, notions of white supremacy tied to the more “sophisticated” Western classical music maintained a Darwinian hierarchy all by itself.

Additionally, within that idea of “simple” lies an essentialist approach to music education that implies these musics could be “known” in their entirety within a short period of time. The music is thus understood as contained, static, and inherently knowable. This view encourages an essentialist perception of the culture and the music in opposition to the fluid and ever-changing realities of both cultures and musics. The educator, in this case, maintains the status quo through literally inscribing notions of “good” and “bad” music attached explicitly to racial notions. There is no question which musics, and by extension which peoples, this discourse privileges. It effectively functions to reinforce the dominant European elite class,
widen the gap between the elite and the so-called “Other” classes of society, and perpetuate the cycle that maintains this Gramscian (1971) hegemonic system. These discourses work to reinscribe white supremacy through legitimating claims of the sophistication of Western classical music while simultaneously reducing “Other” musics to simplistic and “primitive.” The rhetoric that began in the 1920s serves to reinscribe Western European music (and people) as elite and undermine racial “Others” as unsophisticated, relegating them to a lesser place on the hierarchy of civilizations.

To further complicate this racial analysis, Western classical music is also distinctly classed. People who take part in activities such as symphony concerts are largely white, and middle or upper class (Small, 1998, p. 134). As Small (1998) contends in his now famous work *Musicking: The Meanings of Performing and Listening*, when people come together to participate in events such as symphony concerts, they do so to “take part in a ceremony in which their values, which is to say, their feelings about what are right and proper relationships, are affirmed, explored, and celebrated” (p. 185). The type of metanarrative that many works of classical music put forward not only depicts the struggle and overcoming of one force by another and the ensuing celebration (Small, 1998, p. 188), but also valourizes the Enlightenment values of that victorious force—logic, clarity, rationality (p. 188). This metanarrative and its inherent values resonates with some contemporary middle and upper class people who appreciate seeing their values celebrated in music. Because the current demographic of white, middle class music teachers largely find their musical home in this classical music tradition which reflects these Enlightenment values, dominant paradigms of music education effectively come to be organized by the interests of the ruling elite. Within such a system, as Small (1998) contends, if students are found lacking in the available program of classical music, they often believe themselves to be unmusical (p. 212).
Gender adds an additional complication, as in classical music, the musical genius is understood to be both white and male. Within the school system, there are ripple effects to this conception. Girls do not see themselves represented in “genius” of the past, nor often in any role but the singer in the bands of today. To look at the media representation of music past and present, it is easy to believe that girls cannot play instruments or compose music in a “serious” (classical) way—points I take up further in the literature review in chapter two. A liberal music education is thus raced, classed, and gendered at minimum. If heteronormative plots of operas and musicals are also taken into consideration and the often utter exclusion of people with disabilities from musicking, heterosexism and ableism also participate in defining who can do music and what counts as music in the schools.

Acknowledging the hegemonic potential within music education, mobilizing a critical perspective makes visible the power relations embedded in music education and schooling. It seems then, that a truly socially just change may take place through a critical framework supported by deliberate action. Considering the work of four music educators from a critical perspective may provide an opportunity to view an alternative to the discourse, perhaps enabling us as music educators to shift from a liberal to a more critical paradigm—potentially even a radical paradigm.

**A Counterhegemonic Music Education: Formulating a Critical Perspective**

Given that the dominant paradigm of music education that often effectively reproduces hegemonic relations, mobilizing a critical perspective is crucial to this study. A critical gaze helps to ensure that music education discourses intending social change do not, in fact, reinforce dominant paradigms. The participants in this study all felt they challenged dominant paradigms in music education in some way in their classroom practice. Examining their practices, their philosophies, and the discourses that circulate in their classrooms critically allows us, as music
educators, to determine ways in which we can successfully interrupt hegemonic relations in our own classrooms.

The lens we employ then privileges the equity that social justice education purports to foster. It also works against the backdrop of violence, poverty, and disease that Elliott and Veblen (2006) identified. It should first reveal and then counter systemic violence such as colonialism and structural racism, sexism, ableism, classism, and heterosexism. Vaugeois (2009) writes, social justice is “the work of undoing structures that produce raced and gendered oppressions and systemic poverty as well as the work of challenging discourses that rationalize these structures” (p. 3). To engage in social justice in this way, we require a gaze that understands these structures in relation to social ordering and production.

As the previous discussion of the dominant paradigm in music education suggests, there is much potential to reinscribe hegemony in music education as it is usually practiced. The emphasis of Western music over different ways of knowing music, of Western standard notation over aural transmission, of the replication of “classics” largely composed by white men over creativity, of teacher-centred models over student-centred models, and of the privileging of performance ensembles and notions of teaching to the “talented” above all else necessitates the use of a critical lens—a lens that reveals hegemony. I propose three lenses for this theoretical perspective. The first lens is anti-colonialism—an approach to this world that may work to directly address the Eurocentric dominance in the Ontario music curriculum and programs across the province. The second lens, anti-racism, speaks to the need for an action-oriented anti-oppression framework within education. Finally, an anti-racist feminist approach with an emphasis on feminist scholars of colour allows a focus on the intersecting oppressions and the way students, parents, teachers, and administrators are positioned in the matrix of domination (Collins, 2000). I take a few moments now to explicate the decision to utilize these three lenses to produce a theoretical perspective that I term an “anti-oppression discursive lens” through
which to view both the literature and the study in general. The teachers included in this study do not necessarily subscribe to the lenses as such. However, many of the principles of this anti-oppressive perspective operated in their classroom practices and were sometimes articulated in their teaching philosophies.

**Anti-colonialism.** The centring of Western classical music in the Ontario curriculum and the dominant paradigm of music education points to lingering sustained colonialism within the system. The theoretical lens, therefore, needs to be one that addresses (and resists) colonialism and its inherent power relations explicitly. I begin, consequently, with anti-colonialism.

According to Dei (2006), the anti-colonial perspective

is defined as an approach to theorizing colonial and re-colonial relations and the implications of imperial structures on the processes of knowledge production and validation, the understanding of indigeneity, and the pursuit of agency, resistance and subjective politics. (p. 2)

This direct approach to colonial relations is both relevant and important in the education system in Canada although I question what he means by “re-colonial” in a world where the effects and presence of colonialism have never been absent. “Re-colonial” implies absence and recurrence. However, he points to the effects of imperial structures on knowledge production and understanding in a way that is useful when considering an education system predicated on colonialism. He also offers an expanded definition of colonialism. For Dei (2006), colonial “refers to anything imposed and dominating rather than that which is simply foreign and alien” (Dei, 2006, p. 3). This expanded meaning of colonialism past the traditional imperial understanding greatly increases its applicability across a broad range of situations.

Given that the Eurocentric nature of the dominant paradigms in music education and the imposition of Western classical music and Western musical epistemologies on systems around the world is a direct effect of colonialism, an anti-colonial approach is crucial here. An anti-colonial lens allows us to consider alternative epistemologies—other ways of knowing music
and resisting the imposition of dominant paradigms. For key anti-colonial thinkers Fanon (1963), Gandhi (Gandhi & Dalton, 1996), Césaire (1972/2000), and Memmi (1965), resistance was a vital component of anti-colonialism. Memmi (1965) concludes that given the choice between assimilation and revolt, the colonized must revolt and “cease defining himself (sic.) through the categories of the colonizers” (p. 152) thus opening up space to reclaim both Indigenous religion, culture, and language (pp. 133-134) and alternative ways of knowing. Although the context here is quite different, I mobilize this lens in order to address the hegemonic nature of the Eurocentrism that dominates music education.

Significantly, colonialism is embedded in dominant paradigms of music education; we see it through the dominance of Western classical forms and Western standard notation. Because of this Western privileging, placing issues of power and of race at the forefront of the discussion is helpful. Assuming then that race and colonialism will remain central to the analysis of this context, one may wonder why I have chosen to utilize an anticolonial rather than postcolonial lens. Why choose anti-colonialism over postcolonialism? Anti-colonialism and anti-racism both draw on critical race theory (CRT) and postcolonial theory, and they both actively oppose oppression. Angod (2006) argues that postcolonialism takes an analysis-based approach to colonialism, whereas “anti-colonialism seeks to resist it [colonialism], change it, and build something new” (p. 165). Anti-racist scholars Rebollo-Gil and Moras (2006) encourage readers to breach racist coded language and mobilize counternarratives to discourses currently circulating. Taking an “anti-” stance, then, allows us to actively work against hegemony, as defined by Gramsci (1971, p. 12),9 and work toward breaches as suggested by Rebollo-Gil and Moras (2006). It is the breaches after all that help us move into a new place.

9 Gramsci (1971) identifies two functions through which the dominant group sustains hegemony or remains dominant in society: “(1) The “spontaneous” consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group; this consent is “historically” caused by the prestige (and consequent confidence) which the dominant group enjoys because of its position and function in the world of production, and (2) The apparatus of state coercive power which “legally” enforces discipline on those
**Anti-racism.** A second and vital lens to this anti-oppression perspective is that of anti-racism. Anti-racism is an action-oriented educational strategy for institutional, systemic change to address racism and interlocking systems of social oppression. It is a critical discourse of race and racism in society that challenges the continuance of racializing social groups for differential and unequal treatment. Anti-racism explicitly names the issues of race and social difference as issues of power and equity, rather than as matters of cultural and ethnic variety. (Dei, 2000, p. 27)

This focus on power and dominance allows for a powerful critique of whiteness and dominant positionality with an orientation toward change—an orientation particularly relevant to a white, female, middle-class researcher like myself who benefits from these systems of dominance.

Anti-racist scholar Bonilla-Silva (2006) mobilizes what he terms an “abstract liberalism frame” (pp. 26-28) in order to critique notions of colourblind racism. This abstract liberalism frame includes aspects of political liberalism (i.e. equal opportunity) and economic liberalism (i.e. choice, individualism) to explain racial matters that include naturalization (where whites may explain examples of systemic racism as “natural” occurrences), cultural racism (racism that relies on culturally-based arguments to explain racism), and finally, minimization of racism (minimalizing the effect of racism in minorities’ lives) (pp. 28-29). Critiquing the frames that operate to “form an impregnable yet elastic wall that barricades whites from the United States’ racial reality” (Bonilla-Silva, 2006, p. 47) is intrinsic to anti-racism and anti-racist education. The critique of liberalism is fundamental to this project as many of the discourses mobilized in music education have their roots in liberalism.

It seems difficult in the literature to separate anti-racism from discussion of anti-racism education. By examining anti-racism within the educational context, I hope to find some salient points to generalize to the larger discussion. Significantly, Thomas (1987) argued that “the groups who do not “consent” either actively or passively. This apparatus is, however, constituted for the whole of society in anticipation of moments of crisis of command and direction when spontaneous consent has failed” (p. 12).

I note here Mills’ (1997) distinction between Whiteness as a political commitment to sustaining white supremacy and whiteness as phenotype/genealogy.
recognition of unequal power between groups is the salient feature of anti-racist education” (as noted in Ng, 1995, p. 131). Unmasking power relations is a crucial part of anti-racism and anti-racist education. Hesch (1995) finds that anti-racist education potentially “serve[s] as a counterhegemonic strategy or set of strategies in which the effects of racist education are challenged, struggled against, and at least partially changed” (p.106). He continues on to say:

Instead of developing programs and curricula to change children so that they adjust to the school, anti-racist educators are concerned with changing institutions, through such measures as the politicization of the formal curriculum, attention to the “hidden” curriculum, changes in the ways children are streamed and assessed, the hiring of more minority staff, and the promotion of those already hired. (Hesch, 1995, p. 106)

However, Hesch (1995) does not provide a method or approach to challenge these institutions. Although Rezai-Rashti (1995) provides several caveats, she urges those participating in anti-racist education to look at critical pedagogy as a tool to enact these challenges to the system, as it potentially allows teachers to educate students\(^{11}\) “in the language of possibility and critique” (p. 17).\(^ {12}\) Although many scholars critique critical pedagogy (Dei & Sheth, 1997; Ellsworth, 1989; hooks, 1994; Ladson-Billings, 1997), for now, I allow this suggestion to stand, as I take it up later in chapter three. To generalize a broad definition of anti-racism then places us back at Dei’s (2000, p. 27) definition cited above, with several anti-racist scholars supporting his notion of anti-racism as systematically critiquing liberalism, colourblindness, and systemic racism, as well as challenging institutions that facilitate unequal power relations. An action-oriented approach that intrinsically critiques liberalism, colourblindness, and systemic inequities speaks directly to the hegemonic nature of traditional music education and is useful for finding alternatives.

I also have a number of reasons for selecting anti-racism over critical race theory (CRT).

Noting the CRT principles outlined by Delgado and Stefancic (2001), they share many of the

\(^{11}\) I note here that students also educate teachers. (See, for example, hooks, 1994.)
\(^{12}\) The abstract nature of this language is a point critiqued by Ellsworth (1989) that I address later.
same tenets—a staunch critique of liberalism and Eurocentrism, a focus on intersectionality and counternarratives, among other principles. What is perhaps most significant in anti-racism is its action orientation. While it is a critical framework, it is oppositional in nature and it pushes toward change.

**Anti-racist feminist thought.** I originally named this lens “black feminist thought” because of the heavy influence of the work of Collins (2000), hooks (1984, 1992, 1994), and Crenshaw (1995). I reconsidered this name upon reading Dua’s (1999) rationale for choosing “anti-racist feminist thought” over “Black feminist thought” to indicate work within this body of literature. For Dua, this choice is important because

[n]ot all of those who write on the interconnections of race, class, and gender are women of colour. I want to be inclusive of these writers. I also want to reflect the historical specificity of naming. The term “Black feminist thought” comes out of the United States or Britain, where such naming reflects very different histories. In Canada, for a variety of reasons, the term has much less resonance. Most importantly, I did not apply the label “Black feminist thought” in order to avoid essentialist assumptions while examining this literature. Too often, both sympathetic and critical views of such bodies of work assume that writers put forward their ideas because they are racialized and gendered beings...Given these concerns, I have defined anti-racist feminist thought as the body of writing that attempts to integrate the way race and gender function together in structuring social inequality. (p. 9)

By invoking the terminology “anti-racist feminism,” I do not wish to imply that other feminism is racist. Rather, I use the term to indicate the heavy influence of scholars of colour on my work and the privileging of the intersections of gender with race these scholars bring to their work. An anti-racist feminist orientation that brings forward the work of women such as Collins (2000), hooks (1984, 1994), Lorde (Byrd, Cole, & Guy-Sheftall, 2009; Lorde, 1984/2007), Anzaldúa (Anzaldúa & Keating, 2002, 2009; Moraga & Anzaldúa, 1984), Minh-ha (1991, 2009), and Crenshaw (1995) reveals the myriad of positionalities on the margin that are often erased in favour of presenting one position. Anti-racist feminist thought provides us with Collins’ (2000) matrix of domination—a system of understanding the multiple subjectivities for
bodies marked as Other. This system helps us to understand the way overlapping oppressions intersect. According to McCarthy’s (1988) argument for nonsynchrony, the matrix of domination is nonsynchronous in nature, as opposed to some of the earlier additive models for understanding multiple intersecting forms of oppression. Oppression here is understood relationally and leaves room for “contradictory effects even in similar institutional settings” (p. 275). The variables of which McCarthy (1988) writes—race, class, and gender, in addition to sexual orientation, immigrant and refugee status, age, marital status, religion, and disability—are not static or monolithic in nature, but rather in flux and occur differently in different people in both similar and varying situations.

Also inherent in anti-racist feminism is the notion of resistance. According to Calliste and Dei (2000a), anti-racist feminism involves “not only a process of exposing or naming the master’s structures and strategies as they construct frames for viewing and naming difference, but also a viewing and a suggesting of resistances and transformative possibilities beyond the frame” (pp. 12-13)—in other words, taking a counterhegemonic approach. An anti-racist feminist lens is useful in that it addresses intersecting oppressions in a manner that is crucial given the diverse student populations of Toronto.

I choose to focus on the work of anti-racist feminist writers instead of work originating from Western (white) feminism for a number of reasons. As Dei and Asgharzadeh (2001) note, mainstream western feminism is critiqued for its insensitivity to the needs and experiences of non-white, non-western women. It is also interrogated for its relegation of the female sex to a universally singular monolithic subject modeled and shaped after the experience and needs of an opulent minority group in western countries. (p. 315)

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13 See, for example, discussion of parallelism in McCarthy (1988, p. 274).
Many feminists of colour have critiqued the notion of the “universal woman,” including Mohanty (2003), Razack (1998), and hooks (1990, 1994). Mobilizing this critique of the “monolithic” or “universal” woman from the perspective of anti-racist feminism allows for all of the interrogation of power relations implicit in Western feminism while ensuring that we also account for the way oppressions intersect across various subjectivities, thus providing solid grounds for utilizing the work of anti-racist feminist scholars.

**Anti-colonial, anti-racist, anti-racist feminist lenses: triangulating lenses toward a critical perspective.** Through the above definitions, it is clear that these lenses intersect; they do become a complex perspective through which one can view the world. All three lenses centre power and dominance and make race salient in the discussion and analysis. They all focus on intersectionality (Collins, 2000; Crenshaw, 1995), mapping the ways that different oppressions intersect along with their corresponding effects. All three frames also centre power and dominance, and work against hegemony and the privileging of certain bodies over Others, and, as Dei (2006) notes, focus “the gaze on the bodies ‘racializing’ the subjects” (p. 10)—something particularly relevant for me as a dominant body and especially one in the powerful position of “researcher.”

However, from there, the components of each lens refract slightly differently. Anti-colonialism, as noted above, opens up the question of Indigenous alternative epistemologies. It also actively seeks out agency and resistance. Anti-racism’s action-oriented approach toward education makes it useful for this particular context with its specific emphasis on race and racism. Anti-racist feminism, as mentioned previously, allows for the interrogation of power and

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14 Razack’s (1998) work argues for an interlocking analysis. Her work originated as part of critical race theory in the United States but became very Canadian.
15 See in particular Chapter 2 of *Yearning*. hooks (1990) critiques static notions of black subjectivity, calling for “complexity and variety” in the constructions of black subjectivity (p. 20).
oppression and analysis of the stratification of bodies within the matrix of domination (Collins, 2000).

In thinking about what this triangulation of theory brings to a situation, I realize I have a number of reasons for mobilizing this anti-colonial, anti-racist, anti-racist feminist lens in my work. *Questioning the Music Education Paradigm* (Bartel, 2004b) reveals a music education context that is relatively colonial in nature. In choosing a lens, therefore, there must be potential to both illuminate structural inequities within music education and to offer something different. It must, therefore, incorporate possibilities of agency and resistance, which these three frames provide. Taking an “anti-” stance also becomes quite important in doing work that pushes against hegemonic paradigms.

In addition to the importance of taking an “anti-” stance, this triangulated lens is particularly useful because of the applicability of the notions of intersectionality and the matrix of domination. The placement of intersectionality at the forefront of all three lenses allows us to understand where different positionalities are situated in the matrix of domination (Collins, 2000) in varying situations. This understanding of the way that different oppressions intersect provides a rich knowledge of the struggles faced by different people—an idea that is beneficial in colonial situations where a multiplicity of oppressions intersect and come together in myriad ways.

There is potential within anti-colonialism, anti-racism, and anti-racist feminism to saliently formulate counterhegemonic education with a focus on agency, resistance, and action. When we centre power and domination as all three frames facilitate, we may see the possibilities for counterhegemonic music education. If subaltern classes in society sustain hegemony through giving their consent “to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group”, and the state upholds the dominant group’s authority by enforcing said direction on those who do not consent (Gramsci, 1971, p. 12), counterhegemonic education may
function in the Freirian (Freire, 1970) tradition of asking students to “name the world” and work to change it—to actively identify hegemonic systems around them and resist them.

Ultimately, this lens will reveal relations of power and dominance at the centre of analysis where the ultimate goal is decolonization. It will also allow observation of a range of positionalities and their interrelationships through Collins’ (2000) matrix of domination. Anti-colonialism modeled on Dei’s (2006, p. 4) definition cited above will reveal the importance of Indigeneity and alternative epistemologies and ways of knowing, and therefore alternative possibilities. Finally, it will reveal the individual bodies or subjectivities within the research. Consequently, this prism allows a unique perspective of the world.

In order not to be cumbersome, I will refer to this lens as a tri-faceted “anti-oppression lens,” with each theory representing one of the three sides: anti-colonialism, anti-racism, and anti-racist feminist thought. This anti-oppression lens is an action-oriented prism, fostered through agency and resistance of participants. It places power and domination at the centre of analysis and also considers all positionalities involved in the research. Because of my own positionality as a white, middle-class, Western woman, placing whiteness specifically within that focus of power and domination is essential. In thinking about whiteness, I specifically consider Mills’ (1997) definition of Whiteness as a political commitment to sustaining white supremacy (as opposed to whiteness as phenotype/genealogy) (p. 106). This lens also provides us with the means to perform an intersectional analysis, considering the stratification of bodies over the matrix of domination. Collectively, these tenets are the central components of the anti-oppression lens.

An anti-oppression orientation helps to shift the discussion from the liberal paradigm to a critical understanding of music education. It centres power relations and privileges the social dynamics over the musical aspect of music education. This perspective is not the “art for art’s

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16 I note here that the word “alternative” reinscribes a dominant centre.
sake” (Kurtz, 2001) approach of liberal humanism. Rather, it follows the direction suggested by critical feminist and anti-racist scholars in music education. However, in order to envision change in music education, we must look at people who are leading the way within their teaching practices.

**General Research Goals**

Moving the discourse from theoretical to practical, the current study empirically explores the work of four music educators who are actively creating change in music education. This dissertation uses the methodology of a multiple case study to examine the practices, discourses, and philosophies of four music teachers who self-identify as critical educators working to interrupt the dominant paradigm in their classrooms. Amanda, Anne, Sarah, and Susan teach in the diverse city of Toronto, Ontario, Canada, in four very different schools. Their programs are distinct; what they shared was a common identification with the goal of challenging dominant paradigms in their classrooms.

This multiple case study emerges from my own interest, as an elementary music educator, in finding ways to interrupt the dominant, hegemonic music education paradigm in the classroom. In my experience, it can be difficult to move beyond a liberal discursive framework in the music classroom. I am, therefore, extremely interested in seeing how teachers interrupt dominant understandings of what music education is and its purpose in the world. The teacher participants in this project share my interest in this type of disruption. Although there were certainly aspects of their practices that could be understood within a liberal framework, a radical reading is also possible. Their four perspectives offer a diversity of approaches and philosophies that provide a rich resource for teachers seeking to initiate a similar agenda.

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17 Practice here is understood in terms of what teachers actually do in the classroom, whereas I define discourse using a Foucauldian lens. Discourse is not synonymous with language, but rather a series of texts or statements that circulate in the broader community that construct how we think about a subject (Foucault, 1994). Examples in music education may include discourses about creativity or liberal discourses in line with meritocratic thinking.
The Research Questions

With these ideas in mind, this study aims to answer the following research questions:

1. a) What is the scope of the musical knowledge and teaching practices of four elementary music teachers who self-identify as educators who aim to challenge dominant paradigms?
   b) How do these educators define “challenging dominant paradigms?”
2. a) What discourses circulate in the classrooms of four elementary music teachers who self-identify as educators who aim to challenge dominant paradigms?
   b) How do the discourses reinscribe or challenge dominant paradigms?
3. a) How does music teacher practice reinscribe or challenge dominant paradigms?
   b) How do music teachers take up the idea of multiculturalism in their classrooms?
4. a) What are the tenets of the teaching philosophies of these four music teachers?
   b) What are the implications of these tenets for music education philosophy in general?

Answering these research questions addresses the goals of the study by providing a comprehensive resource that can be used by practitioners to formulate their music teaching philosophies. The research questions address both discourses and teacher practices, allowing a conversation to take place on both levels. Addressing the research questions also fills a gap in the literature. While music education literature currently includes much theorizing on challenging different paradigms in music education, the practical parallel of this work has not been explored as extensively. This study offers a detailed examination of the practices of four elementary music educators.

The Importance of Positionality: My Body in The Research

My interest in these questions is multifaceted. As anti-racist scholar Dei (2000, 2006) notes in his work on both anti-racism and anti-colonialism, locating the researcher within the research is essential as all knowledges are socially situated. Understanding the so-called knowledge “producer” is consequently important to understanding the nature and applicability of the knowledge. Sociologists Simon and Dippo (1986) contend in their early work on critical ethnography that “most ethnographic data is ‘produced’ and not ‘found.’ We need to recognize our own implication in the production of data and thus must include ourselves (our own
practices and their social and historical roots) in our analyses of the situations we study” (p. 200). I therefore turn the gaze on myself to consider my interest in these matters.

As a white, middle-class woman, demographically I am a fairly typical music educator. In her discussion of the elitism of music institutions themselves, Koza (2008) cites whiteness as a covertly operating criterion in university music education admission policies. Koza notes that audition requirements for voice studies in music education at the University of Wisconsin typically demand Western classical repertoire and Western classical technique. The notion of auditions always already fosters both the idea of the meritocracy and of the related colourblind selection process, but, as Koza notes, audition criteria operate in a manner that is neither colourblind nor based on anything other than a very narrow definition of merit. University music education admissions requirements and the programs they support thus cultivate a specific type of subject—a white woman who can afford private lessons. The “talented few” deemed worthy, therefore, to receive this education thus belong to a very specific demographic—white, often female, and middle or upper class.

I fit this demographic well and learned to problematize it almost coincidentally. I spent my early life and my teenage years embedded in Western classical music between formal study and listening choices. I went to university to study music education—specifically a music education that taught me to replicate that Western classical emphasis in my own life into the

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18 This repertoire specifically does not belong to popular, musical, or “world” genres.
19 See Bonilla-Silva (2006) for a detailed description of the operation of colourblindness.
20 Gould (2005) found that so-called “lesser” positions, such as elementary music educators are largely left to women, while positions with more acclaim such as university band directors go to mostly male musicians. See her work for a discussion of gender dynamics in music education specifically. It is important to note also that it is within music education, a feminized discourse, that a female subject is cultivated. This cultivation does not occur in other music disciplines.
21 Further studies may replicate Koza’s (2008) findings for music education in performance programs, musicology, composition, or ethnomusicology, finding indeed that those “talented few” she identified in music education are largely white, middle class, and, as Gould (2005) notes, vary between male and female depending on the power dynamics of the role of the musician or teacher. A cursory glance at the admission requirements for the Faculty of Music at the University of Toronto (see http://www.music.utoronto.ca/students/prospective/undergrad/BMus_ArtD/Requirements.htm) affirm that the requirements are indeed similar across programs, most likely reinforcing the dynamics Koza (2008) identifies in music education.
education I would later provide. Critical theory was not part of my undergraduate education, nor was any particular emphasis on social justice education. In my second year, however, I became involved with the Ghanaian drum and dance ensemble at that Faculty of Music at the University of Toronto. Led by Ewe master drummer Kwasi Dunyo, this ensemble literally shifted my world. The Western standard notation that was comfortable and all-too-familiar was displaced by oral tradition. Learning music aurally was beyond my capabilities when I began, but as I continued in the ensemble, I learned how to learn and understand music in this manner. My undergraduate education thus consisted of a predominantly Western classical agenda and Western teaching methods in juxtaposition with the Ghanaian drum and dance ensemble. I finished my degree with the notion that there was much more out there than theory, history, and so-called foundations courses (Bowman, 2003), but beyond this almost coincidental education in Ghanaian music, I really did not have the tools to address these issues beyond my own narrow scope.

I completed my Bachelor of Education immediately after my undergraduate degree and landed a contract position to teach in the Greater Toronto Area immediately following graduation. I taught as I had been taught and as I had been prepared to teach, while also running an extensive drumming program at my school. My first two years of teaching were essentially about survival—producing lessons, finding things that would appeal to students, and keeping up with the administration that is the life of a public school elementary teacher. By my third year, I was dissatisfied with the day-to-day focus that my first two years had been and began thinking more conceptually about what I was trying to accomplish beyond the mandated curriculum, which was and is largely Eurocentric in nature. It was at that point that I applied for my Master’s degree. For the next two years, I restructured my teaching to parallel what I was learning about critical theory and critical pedagogy. I began to problematize my education and the manner in which it replicated dominant relations and continually reproduced the status
quo—in music and beyond. I recognized that cycle that Bowman (2007a) elucidates in which classically trained students enter the university to receive training from classically trained professors to teach in public schools thus perpetuating a Western classical music education which the system continually validates.

Having studied Ghanaian music since 1999, the fact that there was little recognition of music beyond Western classical and the immeasurable value it offers music education troubled me. The curriculum and preservice teacher education did not acknowledge oral tradition and the plethora of ways it is possible to know music. The irrelevance of the Ontario music curriculum, the self-perpetuating cycle that Bowman (2007a) identifies, and the injustice of the ongoing erasure of multiple bodies and musics became apparent, and I wondered where the critical theory that I had come to know entered the classroom. I no longer saw the point of teaching “music for music’s sake;” it seemed highly irrelevant. That was the crossroads for me. It seemed as though I could either teach music for music or I could teach through music for another, larger goal—a goal that countered the violence, poverty, and disease identified by Elliott and Veblen (2006) and pushed toward a way that “music education might [actually] matter” (Gould, Countryman, Morton, & Stewart Rose, 2009). I see the quandary that emerged from the classroom reflected in the music education literature. What I do not see in the literature is an exploration of how teachers who, in fact, want to teach through music toward equity engage these questions in their classrooms.

Further, this desire to teach toward equity is complicated in a number of ways: first, as discussed earlier, music education historically and presently has hegemonic tendencies; second, as elucidated by Koza (2008) and Bowman (2007a) above, the cycle that privileges whiteness and classism as ruling ideologies self-perpetuates through mechanisms such as auditions and accreditation; and third, it is possible to deliver a liberal adaptation of equity education that does nothing to shift dominant ruling ideologies. The nature of these issues requires what Lather
terms a “doubled” logic. Lather argues that a “doubled practice must disable itself in some way, unmastering both itself and the pure identity it offers against” (p. 13). She continues, invoking Derrida’s (1988) concept of “under erasure” to contend that a double gesture “intervenes in what it critiques by not only overturning the classical opposition but by a general displacement of the system” (Lather, 2007, p. 13). This study not only works to explore the music programs of four active music teachers, but given our collective positioning in the dominant white, middle-class demographic of the majority of elementary music teachers, I also aim to employ the critical perspective cited above to unpack whiteness and class while simultaneously exploring musicking.

**Radical Musicking: A Word on the Title**


By invoking their work in the title of this dissertation, it is my intention to both understand music as a verb and encompass a broad range of actions within that verb—actions that have not necessarily been associated with what traditionally comprises “music-making” in music class. I wish to expand upon their definitions toward a conceptualization of what radical

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22 She cites Nealon (1993a, 1993b) here.
musicking may include. In order to move beyond their definitions to a new and potentially radical place, I first briefly explore the elements of their philosophies.

I begin with Elliott (1995). Elliott advocates for reflective practice (“praxis”) in his work. Music, by his definition, is not a collection of products, but rather something that people do (p. 39). Performing, therefore, is at the root of Elliott’s philosophy. According to Elliott, people develop musical knowledge through performance. The creative aspect of music for Elliott is a fundamental aspect of musicking. Music, in this philosophy, is inherently multicultural—a point that Elliott believes will foster tolerance across difference (p. 293). Verbal knowledge within this framework is displaced in favour of musical or procedural knowledge (p. 96). For Elliott, verbal knowledge is supplemental. Instead, he supports learning music from “inside musical practices” (p. 102). While context appears in his general schema, situating music in a cultural/ideological context is the final dimension in understanding a musical work (a concept which is, in itself, Western). Elliott’s lack of attention to context and verbal knowledge is a concern, as much of what situates a music cannot be found in the music itself. What is lost, after all, when Indigenous musics of Canada are studied without the framework of colonialism? A radical music education would therefore not only take context into account, but would also consider the underlying power dynamics of a given context. We can also transcend the focus on tolerance of difference in the quest for a truly radical music education. As Vaugeois (2007) argues, this particular view of multiculturalism considers actions at the level of the individual and ignores systemic inequities. To engage in radical musicking, we must address structural inequity.

Small (1998) provides a sociological account of musical events and one event in particular—the Western classical symphony concert. Like Elliott, he believes that music is an activity. In chapter one, he states that Western classical music is an ethnic music like any other (p. 4), immediately challenging the long-standing music education practice of clothing classical
music in neutrality. For Small, musical meaning is derived relationally. Fundamental to his investigation of both the nature of music and of humans, he argues that people come together in music to affirm, explore, and celebrate their values (p. 185).

While both Elliott and Small expand the notion of music to encompass a broad range of actions, neither conception of music(k)ing looks in particular to use music to challenge the status quo. Small gives a brilliant account for why people participate in music—as affirmation, exploration, and celebration of their values—but the reasons given actually imply stasis. The participants or musickers he cites do not look to move forward, but rather to maintain what is. A radical music education is not one that remains static. Rather, there is room within it for all participants to challenge systemic inequities and the status quo. If music is social, then a radical music education is social at its core. Working within a radical framework, a music educator works toward interrupting hegemony.

Many scholars have pointed to this moment as a time for change in music education—a point where we have the opportunity to re-envision and push toward new possibilities. This study investigates the work of four teachers—Amanda, Anne, Sarah, and Susan—and explores the ways in which they work every day to challenge and shift the dominant paradigm of music education. The teachers in this study taught with a diversity of strategies and commitment to the education of their students. Within their practices, discourses, and philosophies, they sometimes conformed to dominant, liberal notions of music education and education more generally, but the aim of this dissertation is to explore the radical potential in their everyday professional lives as teachers, in order to put forward a pedagogy of social change. Within their teaching practices, there is, therefore, the profound potential for a radical understanding of all that music education is and could be. Multiple scholars have theorized a way ahead for music educators. This dissertation offers insight into possibilities for the profession from on the ground.
Mapping the Dissertation

I now consider the dissertation as a whole. Following this introductory chapter, chapters two and three provide a review of the literature that considers the ways in which music educators currently discuss and practice challenging dominant paradigms in music education. Chapter two examines the shift in content while chapter three looks at the literature on pedagogy. Chapter four describes the methodology for the project and introduces the four participants and also reflects on how each participant believes she challenges dominant paradigms in music education. Chapters five to eight provide comprehensive analysis of this multiple case study that took place over six months. Chapters five and six discuss the ways in which these four teachers ruptured “traditional” music education, with a focus on content in chapter five and on pedagogy in chapter six. Chapter seven focuses on ways in which teachers sometimes reinscribed the dominant paradigm, while chapter eight considers ways in which Amanda, Anne, Sarah, and Susan actively subverted it. In some ways, the pedagogy and curriculum of the teachers in this study fit comfortably within a liberal paradigm, however it is possible to reread these practices radically. In the final chapter (nine), I draw some conclusions, putting forward what I term a radical music education based on the work of these four music educators and the scholarly work of Russian philosopher and literary scholar Mikhail Bakhtin, French philosopher Gilles Deleuze and French psychoanalyst Félix Guattari, and Deleuzian feminist music education scholar Elizabeth Gould who I read through a critical anti-oppressive perspective relying on the work of a number of anti-racist and anti-colonial scholars (Calliste & Dei, 2000b; Dei, 2003; Dua & Robertson, 1999; C. I. Harris, 1995; Razack, 1998).
CHAPTER 2

Challenging Dominant Paradigms in Music Education: A Review of the Literature on Curriculum and Program Content

What, exactly, do educators mean when they talk about challenging dominant paradigms in music education? This topic is nebulous at best, as few scholars explicitly name this phenomenon in their research or discussion. To address the question, I review the literature from two viewpoints—curricular or program content (Chapter 2), and pedagogies related to challenging the dominant paradigm (Chapter 3). I employ a systematic approach in this review. Rather than searching solely by keywords, I use the definition of the dominant paradigm in music education (see Chapter 1) to look for work that countered the elements outlined in that discussion. Rather than look at teacher-centered pedagogy, for example, I look at the different ways music educators talk about student-centered pedagogy.

I organize this review into three broad categories, which are then subdivided into smaller themes. Until fairly recently, Western classical music and the band/orchestra/choir paradigm were prevalent in music education; chapter two explores recent shifts in content emphasis in school programs across Canada and the United States. Chapter three examines changes in pedagogy, looking in particular at critical pedagogy and the ways in which teachers and scholars employ it in their classrooms. The second section of chapter three looks explicitly at scholars and teachers who work against systemic inequities, examining the discourses they use to talk about these issues. Within these three broad categories and the subcategories, there is some overlap, as separating curriculum from pedagogy is often a difficult task. I place the literature under the category that I feel best represents the essence of the work cited and make reference to other categories where appropriate.
This review includes both the theoretical and the empirical, although the balance is on the theoretical side. I largely restrict this discussion to music education scholars, although because of the anti-oppression focus of this dissertation, I also examine some key works by critical race and anti-racist scholars and their application and relevance to music education, particularly in the section on pedagogy. Unless I cite a different discipline, the field of all scholars mentioned is that of music education. Overall, this review works to illuminate many of the discourses currently circulating in music education. My goal is to provide a basis for understanding some of the discursive influences on the practices and philosophies of Amanda, Anne, Sarah, and Susan.

Notably, within the Canadian landscape, a radical decolonizing approach to musicking is already taking place in the sphere of Indigenous schooling, particularly in those schools controlled by Aboriginal communities. Music, which includes drumming, dancing, and singing inseparably, is organic to the organization of life, spirituality, and community building. This musicking becomes radical when the entire curriculum is decolonizing and tied directly to the needs of the community. Some radical intervention is already occurring generally within Canadian music education, but particularly when curriculum reflects the community it serves in this manner. This decolonizing approach to education is important to consider throughout the following discussion.

Content

A general expansion of content. The Tanglewood Symposium of 1967 encouraged educators to include music of “all periods, styles, forms and cultures” in the curriculum, including “currently popular teenage music, avant-garde music, American folk music, and the music of other cultures” (Murphy & Sullivan, 1968, p. 56). Up until the Tanglewood Symposium, the focus of music education was largely Western classical music, and it still
permeates in many places and programs, evidenced by curriculum documents across Canada and by the national standards in the United States. However, since 1967, many music educators have broadened their notions of what their program content should include—the “what” of music education. In recent years, many music educators reconceptualized what began as a mostly Western European classical focus. This section of the literature review examines the recent expansion of curriculum content to include a wider range of musics and ways of engaging in musicking activities. From this initial look at the preliminary expansion, I explore some of the different curricular choices made to facilitate this broadening of content, specifically focusing on the use of vernacular or popular music, “world” music, students’ self-selected music, the emphasis on social justice, the mobilization of an approach that is not ethnocentric, and multiple forms of transmission.

I look first to music education scholars who aim to re-envision curriculum content. These scholars raise questions focusing on issues of inclusion and exclusion within music education curricula. Questions of exclusion and music education curricular content in many ways began with the feminist movement within music education. Scholars including Lamb (1987), Citron (1993), and Matthews (as cited in Gould, 2007a, p. 204) interrogated the absence of women composers from the long list of (predominantly dead) male composers considered as “the greats” (e.g. Johann Sebastian Bach and Ludwig van Beethoven). Koza (1994b) found that females were underrepresented in grade six, seven, and eight music textbooks from three different publishers in 1988. Females comprised only 31.1% of the music-related figures. Substantially fewer females than males were represented in every musical activity (i.e. scholarship, composing, conducting, etc.) except the category of performing on the body (i.e. singing). Traditional male/female instrumental stereotypes also prevailed. Women were not represented as composers or even as musicians, outside the scope of singing. What began as a push toward gender equity led largely by white women querying what essentially amounted to
their own lack of representation expanded to the interrogation of other conspicuous absences in the traditional Western European canon.

Scholars first addressed this lack of representation through a reimagining of the “canon”—the collection of music generally naturalized as what “should” be taught both in music history or appreciation classes and as music “worthy” of performance. As Citron (1993) points out, “[c]anons embody the value systems of a dominant cultural group that is creating or perpetuating the repertoire” (p. 199-200) and consist generally of a body of repertoire that is “deracinated, noncontextual, reproduction-bound performance traditions” (Solís, 2004a, p. 5). A number of scholars problematize the Eurocentric canon as it currently exists. Music education scholar Howe (1998) challenges the traditional focus of music education history by arguing for the representation of multiple perspectives within the curriculum. She advances four alternative perspectives to the Eurocentric and patriarchal canon in music education: (1) an African-American perspective; (2) a female perspective; (3) the perspective of African-American women; and (4) a perspective emerging from oral traditions in music. She advocates for the redefinition of “history” in music education to include stories of students in all age groups and musics of all types from varied community settings (p. 96). She also argues for the importance of oral histories, sociology, and ethnomusicology within music study—in other words, bringing the social context to content perhaps previously detached in some way. While she suggests a meaningful expansion to a restricted and tired, long-standing collection of repertoire and urges embedding this expansion in the context from which it emerges, she does not address the exclusions potentially produced by this newly formed “canon,” and only hints at the complex contexts and histories from which many of the musics from these “alternative” perspectives stem. A deep contextual understanding of musics from, for example, oral traditions requires more than an additive discourse can offer. Thinking about oral traditions with integrity warrants
a critical understanding of Indigenous knowledge, including the realization that music is not separate from context, but rather is integral to many Indigenous cultures from around the world.

Musicologist Detels (2000) also critiques both the relevance and the uncontextualized nature of the canon. She wonders at the lack of connection between life and the musical canon as well as the privileging of form, style, and technique over the cultural context, function, and meaning of various pieces\(^1\) of music. She ultimately calls for a culturally relevant context to engage the students when considering the canon. Detels (2000) also questions the exclusions inherent in any canon. Her query addresses the problematic nature of a canon. The call for an expanded canon may have served as a hopeful first step, but canons inherently exclude. The canon traditionally present in music education consistently excludes women and people of colour. Music education scholar Bergonzi (2009) challenges exclusions in both content and pedagogy on the basis of sexual orientation—exclusions created by the privileging of heteronormativity in music education. He pointedly questions,

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Isn’t it time for us to acknowledge the ways we reinforce heterosexuality and the heterosexual lifestyle, and to examine how homophobia and heterocentrism bias our curricular content and the lives and work of LGBT music teachers? Isn’t it time we eliminate heterosexuality’s privileged place in our profession? (Bergonzi, 2009, p. 25)
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The expansion of curriculum content began with a call to expand the canon; however, by their very nature, canons exclude. They also naturalize, as Davis (2005) notes in his discussion of music education and cultural identity. According to Davis (2005), music education’s additive approach to world music firmly establishes the Self-Other dichotomy with the West at the centre. He argues for the denaturalizing of Western music and calls for music educators to place all musics on the same plane.

\(^1\) I use the word “pieces” explicitly as music that is included in the canon indeed consists of individual pieces—not musics as in forms of social engagement as they are often viewed in various traditions.
The call to expand the canon seemed to occur largely in the 1990s (Citron, 1993; Howe, 1998; Wilkinson, 1996). However, conceptually the canon still stands. Moving into this millennium, scholars seem to forgo the canon in favour of an expansion of what constitutes “music” in music education (see Sands, 2007 for example). Sands (2007) writes that an important aspect of teacher education is helping teacher candidates learn to see the exclusions in the curriculum so that they can work to remedy them within their classrooms. Bladh and Heimonen (2007), for example, feel that students have a cultural right to learn about multiple musics. They cite classical music as a large but essentially minority influence on music education. Mantie (2008) examines what he terms as an “alternative” program in an inner city school in Toronto, Canada called the “One World Youth Arts Project.” I return to this study later in my discussions of both social justice and Afrocentricity in this chapter, but I mention it here because Mantie found that the program involved students who largely disengaged from programs offered in the traditional band/orchestra/choir paradigm. His study implies the utter necessity of moving beyond that paradigm in music class.

Rather than taking an “either/or” approach to different musics and Western classical music, Allsup (2004a) and Dyndahl (2008) offer more of a “both/and” approach. Allsup (2004a), for example, observes in his work on democratic composition projects in instrumental music education that students in his study loved a range of disparate musics and that these musics co-existed on the same plane—not within the hierarchy constructed by formal music education. Similarly, Dyndahl (2008) advocates for the use of deconstruction as a tool to break down binaries and dualisms to move toward “both/and” thinking. Dyndahl suggests that one should be to move beyond simple constructs of content to also address pedagogical binaries such as the formal/informal binary, a point to which I return later.

Small (1998, 1999) argues famously that the act of musicking is essential to our humanity; its meaning lies in the relationships between all participants in given musical events,
which he broadly defines as anything from a symphonic concert to muzak in the elevator. Small contends that all styles of music are equally serious and important; however, meanings of different styles of music are known only by its participants. According to Small (1998, 1999), only participants in a specific music will know what the “ideal” set of relationships are for that particular music.

The theoretical literature largely advocates for an expansion of music classroom content. Whereas in the 1990s, that expansion largely relied on the canon as a basis, scholars since 2000 seem to argue for the validity of all musics and, for the most part, do not reify the notion of the canon either through validating it or disputing it. Elsewhere (Hess, in press), I argue for a more rhizomatic approach to musics. I suggest a decentring of Western classical music and a focus on the interconnections between different musics situated on the same plane non-hierarchically. This thinking emerges from literature that similarly places value on all musics. However, despite the contextual emphasis in much of the literature (a point to which I return later in this chapter and in chapter 3), a relational approach to musics is largely absent.

As I explore the expansion of curricular content in this section, I examine the inclusion of popular and “world” musics in the curriculum. I also look at social justice issues as curriculum content. I then consider the possibility of finding different lenses to view different musics instead of viewing the world and all music through a Western ethnocentric lens. Finally, I briefly examine oral and written music transmission practices.

**Vernacular or popular music.** The inclusion of popular or vernacular music in the curriculum comprises a large part of the literature on the expansion of curriculum content. I begin by defining vernacular and popular music. Small (1987) defines vernacular music simply as music made for *use* distinct from the Western art tradition of music (p. 7). However, in this discussion, I refer mainly to popular music using the following definition. Snell (2009) draws on Bowman’s (2004) work and Middleton and Manuel’s (2008) definition to create a working
definition of popular music. Middleton and Manuel (2008) define popular music according to (1) consumption (e.g. sales); (2) links to mass production and distribution; and (3) connections with various social groups (Middleton and Manuel, 2008 as cited in Snell, 2009, pp. 167-168). For Bowman (2004), popular music is characterized by: “(a) breadth of intended appeal, (b) mass mediation in commodity character, (c) amateur engagement, (d) continuity with everyday concerns, (e) informality, (f) here-and-now pragmatic use and utility, (g) appeal to embodied experience, and (h) emphasis upon process” (Bowman, 2004, pp. 34-35, as cited in Snell, 2009, p. 168). These elements comprise Snell’s definition and make up the working definition of popular music for this part of the literature review.

The next section looks first at popular or vernacular music as the content in the curriculum, followed by an examination of informal pedagogy—a category that I place here instead of under “pedagogy” because of its intrinsic connection to popular music in the literature. Next I look at the discrepancy between students’ formal and informal music backgrounds. Another common theme in the literature on popular music points to a reduced emphasis on Western standard notation. I conclude the section with an examination of the ways popular music can potentially work toward social justice.

**Vernacular or popular content.** Green (2001), arguably the most renowned scholar in popular music education, makes a number of powerful arguments for the inclusion of popular or vernacular music in the curriculum. In her important work *How Popular Musicians Learn: A Way Ahead for Music Education*, she examines some of the informal approaches to music learning as observed in the practices and personal accounts of fourteen popular musicians, and makes implications for using these predominantly aural and informal approaches in music education. She bases many of her suggestions on the musicians’ views of their largely informal music education. She found the popular musicians in her study were “largely alienated by having to study music or engage in musical practices [mostly in schooling] to which they could
not relate and through which they felt unable to progress” (p. 177). According to Green, all of
the musicians in her study “vigorously supported popular music as a practical classroom
subject” (p. 173). Looking at the literature generally since then, music educators appear to be
listening. The thirteen authors in Rodriguez’ (2004) edited collection on popular music in music
education published through the Music Educators’ National Conference (MENC)² strongly
advocated for its presence in the classroom. The various chapters in the book examine a range of
methods for and benefits of the inclusion of popular music into music education practices and
also raise issues that occur with its integration in the classroom, including questions of teacher
education and repertoire. The book also explores the historical trajectory of popular music in
music education and looks at the curricula in a few different countries. In an earlier article,
Dunbar-Hall and Wemyss (2000a) identify pedagogy, technology, and the influence of
multicultural teaching to be the important aspects to consider in teaching popular music. The
authors in Rodriguez’ (2004) volume address these issues and move to questions of informal
pedagogy (Green, 2004) and democracy in popular music education (Allsup, 2004b)—points to
which I return later in this review.

In an empirical study of students in Year 10 in Wales (14 years old), Wright’s (2008)
ethnographic case study examines a program that drew 25% of students to enroll in music as an
optional class—a statistic 17% above the national average of 8% school music enrollment.
According to Wright (2008), the music teacher in this study worked hard to “kick” her Western
classical music habitus to create a program more congruent with her students’ realities. Amidst
the success of the program, Wright raises issues of power dynamics within the class. Ultimately,
she points to questions of who is suited to becoming a music teacher and the implications for
shifting demographics in teacher education. Given the significantly increased enrollment above

² MENC is the professional organization in the United States for music educators. The name has been recently changed to National Association for Music Education (NAfME).
the national average in a program placing students’ music at the centre, it becomes clear that the profession needs to reconsider how it teaches future educators.

With the emphasis on the teaching of diverse musics including popular music since the Tanglewood Symposium of 1966, Wang and Humphreys (2009) sought to determine whether the course material in initial teacher education at a large university music school in the southwestern United States reflected this stated goal of music education. Wang and Humphreys (2009) found that despite this identified goal, course material still heavily emphasized Western art music. The eighty students in the program spent 92.83% of their time on Western art music, 6.94% on Western non-art music compared to 0.23% of their time on non-Western traditions and 0.54% on popular music. Overwhelmingly, they found that collectively, non-Western and popular musics made up less than 1% of the curriculum content. Avery (2002) identified the same lack in inservice professional development for music teachers. Among her recommendations was a suggestion to increase the professional development offerings in popular music education for active music teachers.

Finally, amidst the clamour to include or centre popular music within music programs, Snell (2009) argues against the “add and stir” approach to popular music, where popular musics are simply added to classroom content without changing any existing power structures (p. 167). However, she contends that what happens inside the institution of school should connect to what happens outside the institution. For Snell (2009), teachers must make clear connections between musics to which the students listen and the musics of the classroom (p. 167). She notes that popular music is sometimes marginalized unintentionally when it is relegated to lunch or recess—outside of the large ensemble time or the “real music” time (p. 170).

This othering of the music which shapes and defines a large portion of the personal time and space, peer group/subcultural affiliation, sense of style, and overall identity for many students is the clear message. The music of European white males is more important than the music of people of color, the music of women, and the
The implications of such a statement are clear. The students’ music must be present in the classroom; to not acknowledge its presence effectively marginalizes the music and, more importantly, the student.

**Informal Pedagogy.** Coupled with the emphasis on the inclusion of popular music in the classroom content is the focus on shifting from the formal pedagogy of the band/orchestra/choir paradigm to the more informal approaches taken by popular musicians. Many scholars observe that in bringing popular music into the classroom, the pedagogy also needs to shift (Dunbar-Hall & Wemyss, 2000a, 2000b; Green, 2001, 2004, 2006, 2008; Lebler 2008; Snell, 2009).

In many ways, musical genres can determine the approach to learning. Allsup’s (2002) ethnographic study sought more opportunities for creativity, self-expression, and cultural relevance in the music curriculum, noting the “dichotomy between the music we teach in school and the music our students enjoy at home” (p. 1). His study involved nine high school instrumentalists creating original music. The students formed two ensembles and chose a musical genre within which they worked collaboratively. One group selected to work with traditional band instruments while the other group chose rock instruments. Allsup’s (2002) dissertation looked at informal learning settings or what he terms “mutual learning communities,” and he explores the ways in which music making developed within the groups. The group that focused on rock worked collaboratively and democratically as a garage/jam type of ensemble. The second group chose to create within the classical and jazz genres. According to Allsup (2002), the classical composition process was very isolated and the students did not collaborate until they moved into jazz. What is particularly relevant here is the fact that the nature of the music itself guided the style of learning. Where the rock group took a fairly informal approach to learning, the group that decided to compose “classical” music became
more collaborative in nature only when they shifted away from the classical genre. Allsup also found the use of notation was ultimately restrictive.

In his examination of a popular music education course he constructed in Australia, Lebler (2008) is quite critical of the fact that although popular music often comprises an aspect of music education and in practical terms is largely learned informally, it is taught within the same style of pedagogy as the more traditional band/orchestra/choir paradigm, a point with which Snell (2009) concurs. Lebler (2008) created a course in music education to determine the outcomes of an informal pedagogy in which the teacher takes a decentralized role in the course. He surveyed students to see what kind of strategies they drew from in their musicking when they arrived in the program, finding that students generally entered the program with both informal and more formal education—a point that has implications for the importance of the inclusion of informal music strategies in the classroom. Dunbar-Hall and Wemyss’ (2000a, 2000b) discussion of their Australian teacher education course in popular music also pushes educators to conceive teaching popular music differently than the typical classroom approach to classical music. The course exposes students to popular music by exploring aural skills, and creating, analyzing, understanding, and performing popular music. They also advocate for the use of the lead sheet to push students to conceive their musicking activities differently, instead of solely in terms of Western standard notation (Dunbar-Hall & Wemyss, 2000a).

In thinking about informal learning strategies in the music classroom, Green’s work is again at the forefront of this discussion. Besides advocating for popular music as a practical classroom subject, Green (2001) examines how popular musicians acquire their musical skills. She finds that popular musicians tend to engage in a range of listening strategies that she identifies as purposive (i.e. copying recording), attentive, and distracted listening. The musicians she interviewed rely upon “solitary close attention to recordings of music that they like and identify with” and “interacting with their friends and peers” (p. 185) to develop their musical
skills. Toward the end of the book, she asks whether some of these informal strategies can operate in formal institutional settings and offers a range of suggestions to that effect. Like Wright (2008), Green makes implications for teacher education, particularly in terms of its assessment of the skill level of applicants:

> If universities and other post-compulsory institutions aim to provide popular music courses and modules, they must surely develop admissions procedures that involve valid and reliable ways of assessing the suitability of applicants according to the knowledge and skills which popular musicians are likely to have gained through informal learning practices, rather than…asking them to undertake tasks which they had already declared themselves unable to perform. (Green, 2001, p. 213)

Green’s (2006) later work continues to explore the importance of utilizing informal pedagogy in the study of popular music in the classroom citing that educators often include popular content in their programs but present the material using formal teaching strategies—something she finds to be quite disingenuous and inappropriate to the style. She describes a project that instead utilized informal strategies in an institutional setting where students self-selected groups and learned to play both popular music of their choice and classical music aurally without teacher interference.

Green (2008) describes this project in detail and its application in twenty-one schools in the London, UK area. For Green (2008), learning popular music consists of the following elements: 1) learners choose curriculum content (i.e. repertoire); 2) they use informal learning strategies (i.e. copying by listening); 3) students learn with friends (i.e. assemble their own working groups); 4) students acquire knowledge and skills haphazardly while learning; and 5) informal learning includes deep integration of listening, performing, composing, and improvising (Green, 2008, Chapter 1). Her 2008 project investigates what happens when this type of learning and these five tenets of informal learning are incorporated into the high school classroom. The project involved first asking students to choose a recording and copy it through listening to it. The second stage was diagnosing and modeling; rather than impose their own
agendas, teachers offered assistance based on students’ needs. Stage three was a return to the first stage—another opportunity to copy a recording with the application of new skills. The next stage was an attempt at informal composing in groups, followed by modeled composing through bringing in a local band or local peer group from the community. The final two stages involved applying the same informal skills to unfamiliar musics. Green provides a thorough description of how students approached informal learning practices through aural copying of first rhythm and then pitch, and ensemble skills that developed. There was an element of “flow” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990) in their music-making. Chapter three, for example, explored how students engaged in musicking—from the process itself to themes that arose such as “flow,” “feel,” and musicking at a more advanced level. Green (2008) also examines the listening development of the students and notes that the changes in habits and the improvement of the listening skills of the students was perhaps the most remarkable aspect of the project. Through this project, Green essentially outlines a successful method for employing informal strategies in the classroom—an approach called Musical Futures. Wright is currently replicating this research project in Canadian schools. The thick description of this project and its informal learning strategies provide a clear blueprint to think about the ways that the four teachers involved in the current study implemented informal learning strategies in their classrooms.

In addition to Green’s work, Campbell (1995) and Westerlund (2006) both examine garage bands as a source of insight into pedagogy for music education. Campbell (1995) considers systems of music transmission, teaching, and learning as evidenced within the setting of two adolescent rock bands. She describes techniques used for “song-getting”—an expression she uses for lifting music off recordings. Six of the nine musicians in this study began their instrument study in school band settings, but found that their general music classes consisted “of content and activities remote from their current musical needs and interests” (p. 16). In her

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conclusions, Campbell (1995) finds that skills honed in music class could transfer to the rock band setting, particularly aural skills. More than ten years later, Westerlund (2006) examines the inverse of Campbell’s conclusions to explore the informal learning that takes place in garage rock bands for possible extensions to music education. She looks at music education in Finland and examines the extensive popular music program at the Sibelius Academy. She finds that in Finnish schools, the most common types of instruments are microphones, drums, electric basses, and guitars. Westerlund (2006) challenges the “apprenticeship” model of traditional music education where the teacher is considered the expert and encourages the possibility for an increased number of informal learning strategies. Unlike North America, however, music teacher education in Finland includes instruction in popular music—a point that carries implications for teacher education in Canada and the United States.

In many ways Söderman and Folkestad (2004) provide a practical application of Green’s (2001) work. Their study gave two hip-hop groups a composition task. Both were given the same beat, made by a “beatmaker.” The study traces each group’s informal composition process as they cut away aspects of their prepared lyrics to “fit” the beat, added ad-libs, recorded the music, and reflected on their process. This work reveals the inner workings of a complex informal composition process. Quite tellingly, a student who declined the opportunity to join one of the groups and regretted it was relieved, upon seeing the working process video, that he did not join, as the process was quite chaotic in relation to the final product. His observation reveals the “messy” nature of informal learning.

Snell (2009) cites a number of scholars including Green (2001, 2006) in looking at approaches to popular music learning in largely informal contexts. Like Green, Snell (2009) finds that popular musicians learn primarily through working in small groups with other musicians and through listening and copying of recordings (e.g. song lifting). Doing this type of work in school allows students an opportunity to work in smaller groups using music of their
choice, not restricting them to what they are able to express and read in notation, and bringing a process-oriented approach to learning (pp. 175-176). Applying these findings in conjunction with Green’s (2001, 2006, 2008) work, in the ethnographic case study cited in the previous section, Wright (2008) also feels that engaging in informal pedagogy in this manner potentially addresses some of the tensions and power dynamics between teacher and students, as it allows students to choose their curriculum and share knowledge within peer groups.

Finally, with the shift in pedagogy from formal to informal, changing assessment strategies to be congruent with the pedagogy becomes important. In the popular music education course they constructed, Dunbar-Hall and Wemyss (2000b) draw their assessment strategies from popular music practices—asking students to analyse, for example, a video of a performance and engage in self-critique. Similarly, in Lebler’s (2008) study of a Bachelor of Popular Music program, the teacher ultimately stepped aside to have the students peer assess and provide feedback amongst themselves. Assessment strategies here included, among other tools, a reflective journal.

The nature of popular music and its inherent informal learning methods require a shift in pedagogy from the formal to the informal which is certainly a difficult task within institutionalized learning. Schools, by their very character, change the nature of musicking activities that usually occur beyond the institution. However, the group of authors just cited offer many ideas to foster the environment so readily present outside the school within the classrooms. Green’s (2008) Musical Futures project, now underway in Canada as well, seems to hold much promise for bringing informal learning practices into school settings.

**Learning music informally versus music in formal education.** Many researchers point to the discrepancy between students’ musical lives outside of school compared to their musical activities in school (see for example Allsup, 2002, 2003; Campbell, 1995, 1998; Green, 2001, 2008). In Songs in Their Heads, Campbell (1998) interviews students about their musicking,
finding large incongruities between their vibrant musical activities at home and in their social groups and what often amounted to limited activities inside school walls. Scholars including those listed above often attribute this discrepancy to the conspicuous absence of popular music in the classroom.

**Less emphasis on notation.** Another recurring theme in the literature is the diminished emphasis on notation in classes where popular music is at the centre. For the fourteen musicians in Green’s (2001) study “notation reading nonetheless remained secondary to copying by listening,” despite their varying abilities in reading notation (p. 71). In their popular music course, Dunbar-Hall and Wemyss (2000a) also push their students to conceive their musicking activities beyond the possibilities of Western standard notation, preferring jazz idioms such as the lead sheet over fixed notation. Allsup (2002, 2003) contends that notation has a tendency to fix ideas and can inhibit a work’s evolution. Snell (2009) also feels strongly that teachers should not limit students to what they are able to express through notation. Contrary to the central position assumed by notation within the traditional band/orchestra/choir paradigm of music education, notation in popular music education plays a subsidiary role.

**Popular music toward social justice.** Finally—and I return to this point several times later within the literature review in chapters two and three—there is potential within popular music to work toward social justice. This argument perhaps seems obvious given the plethora of songs in the world with profound messages of equity, but I explore the different ways in which this idea is taken up in music education throughout this review. I examine Campbell’s (2009) work in this section, because unlike work that explicitly creates new material, Campbell looks at mixing and remixing materials to create something new as a way to engage in social justice both inside and outside the music classroom. According to Campbell, “[r]emix culture has firmly established itself in popular culture, allowing consumers to become producers and establishing a
more participatory industry” (p. 359). Working with found songs and audio materials is a potentially powerful way to send a message.

**Summary.** This section examined the increase in popular music as curriculum content and the ensuing shift in pedagogy in the classroom toward a more informal approach. This approach, however, is limited by the nature of the institution itself. I also outlined the discrepancy between students’ musical lives inside and outside of school. Many authors in this aspect of the music education literature pointed to the fixed character of notation and its limitations, suggesting a classroom approach with lesser emphasis on Western standard notation. Finally, I briefly introduced a possible way that teachers and students can employ popular music toward social justice.

**“World” music.** The next consideration in thinking about content changes is the increase in the presence of “world” music in the curriculum. In this section, I explore some of the philosophical reasons scholars put forward for its inclusion in music programs. I examine method and consider how “world” music can be included in a more profound manner than simply taking an additive approach—an argument intricately connected to the goal of moving beyond musical tourism. I then consider the implications that performing “world” music has on identity. Like with popular music, it is also important to notice the diminished emphasis on notation. Finally, I explore the evolving understanding of what it has meant and what it currently means to include world music in the curriculum.

**A note on terminology.** I place the term “world” music in quotation marks as it is a problematic term. “World” music ought to encompass all the musics of the world; however, it does not include Western classical or popular music in its scope. The terminology, originally coined in July 1987 by eleven record companies in London as a marketing ploy (Frith, 2000), intentionally refers to and marks music as “Other” if it is beyond the scope of Western music. However, despite the fact that I adamantly believe that, in general, we need to refer to all music
as either “world music” or just “music,” this section is further complicated by the fact that for the sake of this review, when I use the term “world music,” the music I mean is music “Other” than Western music. From this point forward, I dispense with the quotation marks.

**An increase in world music content.** Like popular music, world music content increased significantly in the time since the Tanglewood Symposium in 1967. The proliferation of world music content is evident in the increase of articles in professional journals of the music teaching profession such as the *Music Educators Journal* in the United States⁴ and the *Canadian Music Educators’ Journal* in Canada. There was also a dramatic increase in the content and depth of the content between Quesada and Volk’s (1997) review of the literature and that of Lundquist (2002) for *The New Handbook of Research on Music Teaching and Learning* only five years later. The demand for resources has also grown over the years leading to the existence of publishers such as *World Music Press*⁵—a company exclusively devoted to world music resources and founded by Judith Cook Tucker in 1985. In the introduction to their book exploring cultural diversity in music education, Campbell and Schippers (2005) note the increase of both diverse content and pedagogy in the music classroom. They document what they term a “coming of age” of the teaching of the musics of the world and highlight the growth in music education from the Verlag publication of *Teaching Musics of the World* in 1995 (Lieth-Philipp & Gutzwiller, 1995) to their 2005 work.

**Philosophical reasons for the inclusion of world music.** In the first chapter of *Cultural Diversity in Music Education: Directions and Challenges for the 21st Century* (Campbell et al., 2005), Drummond (2005) wonders about the claim that participation in diverse musical traditions has a positive effect on cultural attitudes and understanding. He cites Traasdahl (1998) who found that

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⁴ See Volk’s (1993) examination of the *Music Educators Journal* for further information of the proliferation and growth and development of “multicultural music education” (her terminology) within the context of that journal.

⁵ See [http://worldmusicpress.com](http://worldmusicpress.com) for further information.
cultural diversity in music education helps to break down existing cultural boundaries, adds social respect and understanding across borders, reduces ethnic tension in schools, builds new social structures of cultural identity, satisfies our human curiosity, and brings joy to the participants. (Traasdahl, 1998, p. 104, as cited in Drummond, 2005, p. 4)

He continues:

Those whose musical perceptions are founded in a single culture tend to favour the notion that aesthetic judgments are universal, and this belief may lead them to give less value to contextual study, which in turn will make it unlikely for them to argue that such study can achieve social goals. On the other hand, those whose musical perceptions have been moulded as a result of exposure to a range of different musics tend to favour the notion that aesthetic judgments are relative, and favour the study of the music in context, accepting the social impact of such study. (Drummond, 2005, p. 5)

The understanding that aesthetic judgments (and perhaps world judgments or perspectives) are relative is a potentially powerful result of studying diverse musics and a point to which I return later in this chapter in the discussion of ethnocentrism. Many of the typical arguments for diverse content in music programs reference the need to reflect diverse societies, although these arguments disintegrate in the face of more homogenous environments. Drummond’s (2005) words, however, provide a strong rationale for a rich and varied curriculum. For Morton (2003) as well, a rationale for diverse content must go far beyond the mere consideration of demographics. Morton feels strongly that our vision for multicultural music education needs to address recognition and acknowledge the damage that misrecognition or nonrecognition can do to a developing identity.

**Teaching methods.** Up until this point, teaching so-called world music often includes three practices, all of which are problematic. The first issue in question is that of the term-end concert. Many authors in Solís’ (2004b) edited collection entitled *Performing Ethnomusicology: Teaching and Representation in World Music Ensembles* address the issue of having to produce an end-of-term concert with their world music ensembles. The mandated nature of the concert contributes to an essentialist and simplistic view of the music studied simply because having a
concert promoted the notion that it was possible to “master” the music in a 12-week term. This concert also forces a product versus process orientation toward the music, which is certainly not congruent with Hood’s original intention when he conceived the idea of the ethnomusicology study group back in the 1960s (e.g., Trimillos & Hood, 2004). The concert approach tends to be fairly consistent with the way world music is taken up in the classroom.

The second approach is a very touristic approach to world music study as opposed to a deeper, more contextualized and thoughtful approach. I return to this discussion under the section about moving beyond musical tourism.

The third approach is to bring someone into the classroom to represent the culture under study. Many music educators advocate for this method when teaching world music and more than twenty years ago, the term “culture bearer” was coined for someone of the same cultural background as the music being examined. The term and the concept are highly problematic and although the practice is still prevalent, many scholars critique the idea. Solís (2004a) himself describes the idea of culture bearers as discriminatory as do Racy, Marcus, and Solís in the same volume (Racy, Marcus, & Solís, 2004). Ethnomusicologist Trimillos (2004) describes culture bearers as Indigenous artists expected to know everything and stand in for their entire cultures. Vaugeois (2009) concurs, noting that one would not expect a concert violinist to know everything about his/her music and people. Instead, she argues that one would most likely want to hear from multiple violinists (pp. 16-17)—a contention certainly applicable to any music under study. It is not the employment of an Indigenous artist to which I object, but rather the manner in which music educators seem rely on these individuals to represent an entire culture—as if one individual could represent a whole culture. These concerns percolated within the profession for a number of years. Even back in 1996 in her doctoral work on culture bearers, Klinger (1996) wondered about the potential of these so-called culture bearers to represent a stereotype within the classroom and contended that “multiple authenticities” were possible—
multiple legitimate versions of the same piece of music from different individuals within an ethnic group.

Overall, although discourse about teaching diverse musics in music education constantly shifts, these three practices remain prominent. The strong presence of critique is encouraging, however, as it speaks to the shift of terrain in the profession.

**Beyond an additive approach to diverse curriculum content.** In thinking about curriculum content critically, it is also important to look at the literature that opposes an additive or tokenistic approach to including musics from a range of traditions into the music curriculum. Abril (2003, 2006), for example, explores sociocultural instruction in a fifth grade multicultural curriculum, instead of what he terms mere “content integration.” Morton (1994), in particular, opposes this “add-and-stir” approach to expanding curricular content. Vaugeois (2009), Sands (1996), and Bradley (2003) also argue for contextualization of all musics. Vaugeois’ (2009) book chapter actually provides a series of questions to teachers for unpacking what she calls the “musical life history” of different musics (pp. 9-10). In my own work, I also explore models which could be used in the classroom to approach musics inclusively in a manner distinct from merely adding-and-stirring (Hess, in press)—a practice which essentially places so-called Other musics around the periphery of a “core” Western classical curriculum.

**Beyond musical tourism.** As mentioned in the “method” subsection of this discussion, world music is often taken up in a touristic manner within current music education practices. Such a liberal approach literally involves a superficial engagement with many different cultures and is often completely decontextualized. In her discussion of world music publications in choral music based on her doctoral work which I discuss a bit later, Bradley (2009) notes that the type of engagement with world music that world music publications can encourage coupled with similarly themed discourses may “produce and reiterate romanticized notions of people and cultures, reiterate stereotypes, and leave prejudices unchallenged” (p. 106). Wasiak (2009)
examines this phenomenon in his study of a cross-cultural collaboration that took place between the University of Lethbridge and the Blackfoot community. It was a project that involved the telling of the *Napi* stories of the Blackfoot community through a number of different artists including the voices of the Blackfoot, the *Kainai* Grassland Singers, the Lethbridge Symphony, a children’s chorus, and modern dancers. Wasiak reflects in this chapter on the problems and pitfalls of doing this kind of cross-cultural collaboration. Ultimately he believes that entering into this kind of project is a way to counter musical tourism and dilettantism and foster deeper musical and cultural understanding, ultimately enacting social justice. In his critique however, he pointedly remarks,

> thus far, the multicultural music education movement has been more about diversity and *musical tourism* than understanding the musical and cultural practices of another on any more than the most superficial of levels (Campbell, 2002). This is true for a variety of reasons: the facile appeal of exotic repertoire, the ease of pre-packaged instructional packages rather than the more difficult task of engaging *culture-bearers* in the transmission of musical and cultural knowledge, mistaken notions about the universality of music, limited training of music educators regarding the musical practices and traditions of cultures outside Western Traditions, and the transposition of Western values on to what constitutes *good music*. (Wasiak, 2009, pp. 213-214)

Wasiak’s concerns with the prepackaged nature of many world music education practices are quite insightful. Dunbar-Hall (2001) actually takes the discussion further, exploring the actual phenomenon of cultural tourism in its social and discursive complexity. Unlike much of the discussion about cultural tourism, Dunbar-Hall (2001) considers the roles of *all* the players within a touristic situation, drawing on Balinese Gamelan practices as an example. He reveals that during performances by this ensemble for audiences that

> the participation of tourists as the audiences at these events is a superficial interaction, a sampling of music and dance in condensed representations and bounded by momentariness. Often, the sample is presented as a museum exhibit, ‘frozen’ in a traditional past, which is emphasised by contrast with the surrounding day-to-day business of ongoing contemporary culture. (Dunbar-Hall, 2001, p. 175)

Despite the very different contexts these three scholars offer, they all underscore the importance
of moving past the superficial engagement toward a more profound encounter.\(^6\)

**Identity formation in world music education.** The question of identity in world music education is a theme that is comparatively absent from the literature. One remarkable exception here is the work of Bradley (2006b). Employing a methodology of critical ethnography, Bradley investigated whether twenty students in her own diverse youth choir developed what she calls “multicultural human subjectivity” in response to engagement with world music. For her, multicultural human subjectivity is a

processual, emergent category of practice characterized by acknowledged feelings of connectedness to people in other places and cultures, in open-mindedness toward previously unfamiliar cultures, and through concern for social justice. (Bradley, 2006a, p. 17)

In many ways, Bradley examined whether participation in a choir that performed what she termed “global song” affected students’ humanity, finding almost unequivocally that involvement in the choir changed the students in the manner she defined.

Identity based on participation in world music is a topic of great interest to me. In my master’s work, I investigated the nature of a Ghanaian drum and dance ensemble I founded at the elementary school where I taught in order to explore how membership in the ensemble affected students musically, psychologically, socially, and politically (Hess, 2008, 2010b). Students exhibited profound shifts in all four areas, but perhaps most significant were the questions raised about a problematic notion of sameness across all peoples coupled with the beginnings of a deep recognition of differences (Hess, 2013a).

My more recent work often focuses on how participating in world music allows people to perform themselves as “tolerant” subjects—tolerant of differences, but unwilling to engage on anything more than a superficial level. I argue that this type of engagement and ensuing “tolerance” enables students of world music to congratulate themselves on their willingness to

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\(^6\) Elsewhere (Hess, 2013b) I trouble the nature of that encounter.
“accept Others” and is more about the egocentric performance of the self than any move toward shifting any material or hierarchical relations (Hess, 2013b). In another paper (Hess, 2010a), I explore the possibilities for constructing creole subjects through world music education contending that when creolization—or the fusing and mixing that occurs when cultures cohabit—takes place, that our identity shifts and we become creole subjects through the encounters we experience. I see the lack of exploration of identity and the performance of identity as read through engagement in world music as a gap in the literature and given my theoretical anti-oppression lens, I consider these ideas throughout all of my work.

**Diminished emphasis on notation.** As discussed in the section on popular music, in recent years music education shifted its focus away from the maintenance of Western standard notation as the privileged transmission form. It remains central in many places, but there is no question that there is a diminished emphasis on it as the sole approach to learning music (Campbell & Schippers, 2005). The literature generally reflects this receding emphasis, particularly in the informal learning methods explored earlier in this review.

**The evolving understanding of what it means to include world music in music education.** Probably the most significant shift in the literature on the ways in which music educators realize world music in the classroom connects to the notion of authenticity. Early literature emphasized authenticity above all else—a flawed concept at best. Authenticity often involved engaging with a so-called “culture bearer” as discussed earlier, the use of instruments that were true to the music, and so on. Music education historian Volk (1998) raised the question of authenticity within multicultural music in her 1998 book. At the time, she worried that music textbooks sometimes contained “Westernized” versions of the songs represented in the text. The “Westernized” versions could include rhythmic, melodic or textual adjustments without any editorial notes that these adjustments have been made. She stated that inauthenticity may lead “at best to inaccuracy and at worst to advancing stereotypical ideas” (p. 177). Volk
(1998) pointed readers toward Tucker’s (1992) guidelines for evaluating unfamiliar materials for school use. She suggested checking whether the creator of materials was from the culture represented and whether the resource contained contextual information. She also suggested verifying that the materials contain adequate instructions, and examining whether the resource adapted the language. Finally, she advised looking at whether or not the lyrics are in the original language, as well as the accuracy of the translation. She also recommended choosing resources with a recording available (p. 177 from the guidelines of Tucker, 1992). Volk continued on to cite an earlier article co-written with Spector (Volk & Spector, 1995) in which they provided four categories for determining the authenticity of multicultural materials (p. 178). Category 1 consists of pieces whose only multicultural connection is their title. They do not incorporate musical elements from the culture they are representing. Category 2 is essentially Western art music forms that incorporate melodies from a selected culture. The text is often an English translation or is newly composed to fit the melody. Category 3 pieces make a conscious effort to incorporate melodic and rhythmic elements from the music of another culture. These compositions often include the use of traditional percussion instruments or accurate instrumental substitutions, and sometimes include the harmonic structure and timbres from that culture. They are often arrangements of folk songs or dances. Choral works in this category use the original language. (Volk, 1998, p. 178)

Category 4 consists of pieces that are either original compositions by composers from the culture, or arrangements that are a close approximation of the original music of the culture. These pieces include the use of authentic timbres, instrumentation, form, harmony and accompaniment. Choral literature frequently presents transcriptions that are close to the original folk musics. (Volk, 1998, p. 178)

The critical concern at that point in time was to ensure that the music in question was not Anglicized. However, the notion of “the authentic” is quite problematic in its implication that there is somehow one essentialized means of performing specific musics rather than recognizing the multiplicity and fluidity of all musics not fixed by notation. (Even musics fixed by notation
shift, given changes in performance practice and different notational traditions.) There is also the possibility of Klinger’s (1996) “multiple authenticities” cited earlier. However, since the publication of Volk’s book, Anglicization of music is less of a concern in the literature as the practice fell from favour. Additionally, as Campbell and Schippers (2005) note in the introduction to *Cultural Diversity in Music Education*, the fact that no music exists out of time and space is generally accepted knowledge. While music educators for the most part seek to present music with integrity, the search for the one “authentic” way to do so seems to have faded.

**Summary.** Like popular music, the representation of world music in music education significantly increased after the Tanglewood Symposium of 1967. Philosophical reasons for its inclusion presently move far beyond a simple justification based on the diversity of society. However, the methods employed in world music education often have the potential to present a stereotypical and essentialized image of the music and its associated culture based on limited and widely used practices including the end-of-term concert, a superficial and touristic approach to diverse musics, and engagement with so-called “culture bearers.” At the same time, many critical music educators work to push world music education beyond a merely additive or touristic approach. Other scholars, including myself, wonder about the effect of participation in world music on identity. Like popular music, the emphasis on notation with world music has greatly diminished in recent years. Finally, the understanding of what it means to include world music in music education shifted as of late from a drive toward the so-called and ever-problematic notion of the “authentic” toward an understanding that cultures are fluid and shift over time and space.

*Their music.* In the last ten years, the importance placed on using the students’ own music in the classroom significantly increased. Whether the music is deemed the “students’ music” through affinity or cultural identity or a combination of the two seems to depend largely
on the situation. To return to Allsup’s (2002) work, the two groups of students engaged in creating their own original music chose their own genre in this classroom situation. In Green’s (2008) recent book, she lists having students choose their own music with which to work as a crucial tenet of the practices of popular musicians and informal pedagogy. All of the students in the twenty-one schools in her study made their own repertoire choices. For both Allsup and Green, the musics the students chose were affinity musics—musics to which they were drawn.

It is also possible to make the musics of students’ cultural identities the centre of the classroom curriculum. Teachers must exercise caution here so as not to make assumptions about students’ cultural background based on simple demographics or parents’ birthplaces. However, that said, Peters (2009) created an interesting ethnographic project for students in her high school classroom. She examines how a selected group of thirteen students in grade eleven and twelve explore the local Italian music culture in their Montreal community using ethnographic techniques. For this project, students effectively worked as cultural ethnographers and ethnomusicologists. This particular paper looks at insider and outsider perspectives that the students constructed based on their own ethnicity and their feelings about their ethnicity. While there is potential for issues to arise when creating constructions such as insider/outsider relations, it seems as though there is value in making students’ cultural identities the curricular material. For my own purposes, I would shift this activity in a class to make sure there is an element of choice on the part of the students of the subject material in order to avoid assumptions. However, Peters tentatively concluded that the findings of the study indicated that “students as ethnographers” is a worthwhile pedagogical approach with a positive outcome that “may help many students to deconstruct and reconstruct their identities in relation to their own race and culture and in relation to others” (p. 210). What is evident in these three studies (Allsup, 2002; Green, 2008; Peters, 2009) is the importance of placing value on the students’ own musics in the classroom curriculum. It is also important to note that there are perils
associated with this type of incorporation. Racialized students, for example, may be identified as those students with the “peculiar” music. Attending to the conditions of communication in classes where students hold diverse racial and class positionalities will help to ensure students are not marginalized through the inclusion of “their” music.

**Social justice as curriculum.** In my own work, I spend a great deal of time wondering about the “why” of music education. In a world where systemic oppression structures the lives of the majority of people, why associate with a discipline that merely teaches music to children? That question often provokes me to wonder what we might teach through music that perhaps might be more valuable than music itself. In the last ten years or so, scholars began to explore how music education might further social justice. Whereas traditional paradigms of music education tend to privilege a discourse of “art for art’s sake”—a discourse that problematically does not necessarily include everyone’s art—or the omnipresent “music makes you smarter,” critical music educators work to find ways to challenge the status quo through music education.

In this section, I examine some of the ways in which critical music educators choose to use music as a tool toward social justice. Music now functions on multiple levels. It is possible to have music simply for music’s sake, as the *Coalition for Music Education in Canada* so adamantly argued, but it is also possible that music may do other work. It is that “other work” I examine here. First I work to define social justice drawing on a number of different scholars. Then I examine the status quo, followed by an exploration of how critical race theory (CRT), postcolonial, and anti-colonial theory can help. I then consider social justice through an anti-oppression lens, as opposed to the charity and empathic lens that many well-meaning (privileged) people mobilize. Then I consider ways to challenge assumptions, consider spaces in which activities occur, and shift classroom power dynamics. I then examine decentring Western

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7 “Music makes you smarter” was an intense music advocacy campaign created by the Coalition for Music Education. (See Pineo, 2004 for details.) The Coalition website is [http://musicmakesus.ca/](http://musicmakesus.ca/).

8 See above footnote.
Europe in the curriculum and the potential offered by Afrocentric thinking. Finally I explore possibilities for engaging in creative activities that incorporate social justice issues.

**Defining Social Justice.** Before I begin this section, it is important to define what I mean when I use the term social justice. For the purposes of this dissertation, I draw on the definition offered by Vaugeois (2009). For Vaugeois, social justice is “the work of undoing structures that produce raced and gendered oppressions and systemic poverty as well as the work of challenging discourses that rationalize these structures” (p. 3). She continues:

I conceptualize this work as a practice of social justice because it suggests a set of complementary goals and strategies as well as the sense of trying things out, of keeping open the possibility that goals will change as understandings develop and social relations respond to the effects of tactics, strategies, and changing discourses. Most importantly, because we are implicated in systems that produce injustice, whether we want to be or not, we need to understand how structures and discourses, inside and outside music education, normalize oppressive social relations. (Vaugeois, 2009, p. 3)

I rely on this definition as it is consistent with my anti-oppression orientation in that it challenges dominant structures of oppression and recognizes the importance of taking an anti-stance, as discussed in chapter one. I do, however, intend to expand Vaugeois’ (2009) understanding of oppression beyond race, class, and gender to include oppressions based on language, sexual orientation, age, marital status, disability, religion, and immigrant and refugee status.

I wish to add to this definition employing the work of three additional scholars. Critical music education scholars Benedict and Schmidt (2007) wonder what it might mean to use a concept of social justice that is a Deleuzian “becoming.” They believe that if social justice is an end or goal, then it is lacking; rather, it needs to be striving in its very nature—always pushing toward something more. Mantie (2009) concurs with this action-orientation of social justice:

Rather than conceiving of social justice as a finite ideal that, almost inevitably, is said to hold for all times and places, I am suggesting that social justice be thought of as a verb. It is, in other words, action; it is something we do. Social justice is not simply a utopian goal nor is it a product of just one person given that social justice
is a social. Just action is, in two senses, the product of individuals working together. In the first sense, any appeal to a singular conception of social justice should be understood as a political maneuver intended to mask vested interests under the cloak of universality. (Mantie, 2009, p. 98)

While the emphasis on a liberal notion of individualism misses some of the systemic and structural implications, the manner in which he highlights the impossibility of a singular (and effectively privileged) conception of social justice is quite valuable. For the purposes of this dissertation, therefore, I conceptualize social justice drawing on these four scholars and consider social justice as action-oriented, continually striving in nature, and the concentrated work of undoing systemic and structural oppression.

**Understanding how discourse constructs the status quo.** Imperative to working toward social justice in music education is the understanding of how discourse works to construct the status quo. For Vaugeois (2009), this understanding is crucial to the work of social justice. According to her (2009), “[d]iscourses establish the status quo by framing some ideas as legitimate or central while framing other ideas as marginal” (p. 4). She highlights four features of Foucault’s concept of discourse:

The first is that discourses shape how we think about certain ideas and invoke material consequences. The second is that examining where competing discourses, or subjugated knowledges, come up against existing regimes of truth is a key strategy for bringing power relations and logic of their supporting structures to light. The third is that institutions, through the development of problem-solving strategies as well as the need to perpetuate their existence, produce new discourses and supporting rationalities; and, the fourth is that access to media networks influences which ideas are widely proliferated. (Vaugeois, 2009, p. 7)

For Vaugeois (2009), understanding the manner in which certain (privileged) discourses become regimes of truth is important to any social justice work. As of yet, in the music education literature, there are not many scholars examining the way discourse constructs realities in this way. Vaugeois (2009) advocates the use of critical race theory (CRT) and postcolonial theory to do this work, while Bradley (2006a) suggests anti-racism as a powerful method of subversion.
Social justice: not charity or empathy. In thinking about discourse and social justice work, it is important to recognize that liberal discourses of social justice are often enmeshed with discourses of charity and empathy. Right before Musica ficta/Lived Realities: A Conference on Engagements and Exclusions in Music Education and the Arts in Toronto in January of 2008, someone in the city spray-painted the words “Charity is not justice” on the wall of a construction site near the conservatory. Elizabeth Gould, the conference chair, noticed the graffiti and photographed it and made it part of the visual conference material. Within the group of music educators intensively involved in that conference, the International Conference on Music Education, Equity, and Social Justice at Teachers’ College in New York City before it, and the Race, Erasure, and Equity in Music Education conference at the University of Wisconsin in Madison after it, there is deep recognition that discourses of charity and empathy are not helpful in the work of social justice. Sotomayor and Kim (2009), for example, examine an outreach project that took place at a conservatory in Canada. The conservatory initiated the program to increase access to music education at lower socioeconomic levels and invoke institutional change by reflection on issues of access and diversity at the conservatory. The authors use Boler’s (1999) pedagogy of discomfort to critique the standard discourse of charity that often accompanies such outreach projects, instead proposing an alternative outreach model based on Lave and Wenger’s (1991) concept of communities of practice (p. 225). According to the authors, “[a]lthough charity models have broadened individual students’ access to music education through certain schools of music, such a conceptualization of social justice does not challenge the many different dimensions of inequity in music education” (Sotomayor & Kim, 2009, p. 227). Rather, they push musicians to think beyond feelings of empathy toward work that has the potential to affect structural change. The literature in music education presently is gradually moving toward a more broad recognition that, as noted by the Toronto graffiti long-since erased, that “charity is not justice.”
Challenging assumptions and responding to group requests. Sotomayor and Kim (2009) also argue for the importance of challenging assumptions and meeting the needs of the group as identified by the group themselves. They outlined several key learnings from the outreach program in their study:

1) not to assume who a community group is and what its members might want; (2) to identify and challenge one’s assumptions about students and teachers; (3) to deliver music programs requested by a given community group while also offering opportunities for students to explore diverse musical styles; and (4) to ensure that outreach programs are developed and carried out with and not for a particular group of students, including formal student consultations through open forums or focus groups and informal opportunities through individual conversations where students’ opinions are less affected by peer pressure. (Sotomayor & Kim, 2009, p. 232)

The recognition that it is the group themselves that must dictate the terms of engagement and the work of challenging any assumptions at play is at the heart of work toward social justice. In my own discussion of performing “tolerance” and the politics of self-congratulation, I also discuss this notion of reciprocity and argue that the party with less privilege must define the terms of the relationship (Hess, 2013b).

Considering space. As discussions of power relations become more prevalent in the literature, many important conversations begin to occur. In his study of cross-cultural performance and communication, Wasiak (2009) notes the importance of considering the spaces in which musicking occurs. According to Wasiak, “Space is rarely neutral. Inevitably, it colors relationships, especially on stage where configurations of space take on symbolic meaning” (p. 220). Particularly in situations like in his study where cultures collide, it takes work to undo hierarchies constructed by privilege and considering the spaces in which collaborations occur is crucial to the construction of equitable collaborations.

Decentring Western Europe and the possibilities of Afrocentricity. I now return to the study by Lashbrook and Mantie (2009) that describes the One World Youth Arts Project—the studio program that took place at an inner city technical school in Toronto. The article discusses
how the subjugated knowledges and experiences of students were valued within the program and also looks at the Afrocentricity as a way to understand the program’s effectiveness in engaging students not traditionally enrolled in high school music. It is the possibilities of Afrocentricity here that are of interest. According to Lashbrook and Mantie (2009), Afrocentricity offers “a window for understanding the world in more pluralistic ways” (p. 294).

For Afrocentric scholar Asante (1991), centricity refers to a perspective that involves locating students within the context of their own cultural references so that they can relate socially and psychologically to other cultural perspectives. Centricity is a concept that can be applied to any culture. The centrist paradigm is supported by research showing that the most productive method of teaching any student is to place his or her group within the center of the context of knowledge. (Asante, 1990 as cited in Asante, 1991, p. 171)

According to a Toronto District School Board research report,

the fundamental principles of African-centered education include (a) an interpretation of reality based on African/Black people’s realities, (b) an emphasis on critical, analytical and creative thought, (c) encouraging African Canadian youth to serve their community and society, (d) promoting a quality, culturally rooted education that emphasizes a positive view of the self, society, and the world, and (e) fostering a respect for human diversity. (Lawson, 2005 as cited in Lashbrook & Mantie, 2009, p. 295)

Lashbrook and Mantie (2009) note, however, that Afrocentricity should not be seen as the opposite of Eurocentricity, for this simply reproduces the problem in a different way, although I contend there are some distinctions here, as the balance of structural power relations supports the Western European worldview. Ultimately, however, Lashbrook and Mantie (2009) feel that

[b]y increasing a respect for multiple definitions of musicality, music educators might begin to reconceptualize the profession as something other than the social reproduction of Western art music practices where the very definition of musical is predicated upon the ability to replicate notation in accordance with the intentions of the composer. (Lashbrook & Mantie, 2009, p. 295)

Connected to tenets of Afrocentricity is the work to decentre Western Europe as the centre of all curricular study in school. Davis (2005) raises a number of philosophical issues related to cultural identity and music. While the first half of the article seems to have an undercurrent of
sarcastic analysis running through it, the second half provides a powerful critique of music education after first establishing how innate music is to our identity through a discussion of infancy. What is important here is his conclusion; he ends with a call to denaturalize Western music and approach all musics with the same eye. In many ways, this push toward change resonates with my call to take a rhizomatic approach to curricular content, considering all musics as centres connected rhizomatically as opposed to hierarchically or arboreally (Hess, in press).

I bring one more reading to this discussion; although it is beyond the scope of music education, I feel it adds much to this conversation. Anti-colonial scholar Kempf (2006) provides a powerful critique of the Eurocentric history curriculum. He surveys Canadian history textbooks used in Ontario from 1860 to 2008 and explores the way that the history of the colonized Indigenous people of Canada has been told by the colonizer. He puts forward an alternative possibility—the anti-colonial historiography. For Kempf (2006), the goal of anti-colonial historiography is to rupture and interrogate dominant history and focus on the achievements, practices, and resistance of the oppressed (p. 134). Applying this thinking to music education, it is clear we, as music educators, must learn to tell other stories. It is not enough to create a dominant narrative of music history as the history of white, male composers of the past. Consistent with the tenets of critical race theory (CRT) and Afrocentricity, counterstories need to be part of the narrative (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001)—a point firmly argued by some of the feminists in music education (Koza, 1992, 1993/1994, 1994a, 1994b, 1994c; Lamb, 1987; O'Toole, 1998, 2000, 2005) who continually illuminate exclusions in music education textbooks, philosophies, and practices.

**Creative activities incorporating issues of social justice.** Finally, I conclude this section with possibilities for structuring creative activities around issues of social justice. Although this article could easily fit elsewhere in this review (under the section on critical pedagogy in chapter
three, for example), I place it here as it strongly connects to the idea of making the work of social justice the curriculum content of classroom programs. Kaschub (2009) describes a classroom project she enacted called the “Critical Pedagogy for Creative Artists” course. In this course, eighteen students who were sophomores and juniors in a music appreciation class essentially designed their own course where they explored music written as a call to action or with social justice in mind, investigated social issues, and ultimately produced their own composition that was a statement or multiple statements on an issue that they identified as important to them. Examples here include child abuse, the situation in Darfur, and being an immigrant. This project powerfully engaged the students in important issues that they selected and according to Kaschub (2009), the work created “a community of socially cognizant artist-composers” (p. 289). At this point in the literature, there is a great deal of theoretical work about enacting social justice through music in the classroom. Kaschub’s (2009) work moves the discussion into the realm of the practical.

**Summary.** In this section on social justice as classroom content in music education, I first offered a working definition of social justice based on the work of a number of scholars. I then examined the production of the status quo and the possibilities offered by various critical theories. I briefly discussed the shift in the literature away from charity and empathy models of social justice and the importance of challenging assumptions and considering the spaces in which musicking activities take place. Subsequently, I explored the decentring of Western Europe and the possibilities offered by Afrocentricity. Finally, I looked at the practical application of this theoretical work through the work of Kaschub (2009).

**Countering ethnocentricity: refusing to look at non-western art musics through a western lens.** A number of scholars contend that teachers and students often view non-Western musics and Western popular musics through a Western lens and suggest instead that teachers work to counter ethnocentricity. In his discussion of ethnomusicology as a discipline, Masolo
(2000) notes that non-Western arts and musics are judged by Western criteria. According to Seddon (2004), when Western classical teachers attempt to expand what they teach, they often do so from a Western classical framework (p. 212). In a self-reflective article, Countryman (2009) interrogates this practice in her own teaching. She finds herself guilty of “othering, by treating our⁹ Eurocentric repertoire from a race neutral perspective, searching for authenticity in other music, and sharing these other musics as though they were bounded and impervious to development, an attitude that reinforces the dominant/primitive paradigm, and using Western European musical concepts to try to describe all musics” (p. 26). Ethnomusicologist Averill (2004) captures the heart of this problem beautifully in the title of his article “Where’s ‘One’?”. *Musical Encounters of the Ensemble Kind* about the nature of representation in the world music ensemble. He identifies a question I hear often in the study of Ghanaian music: “Where’s ‘One’?” “One,” in this case signifies beat one or the first beat in a bar (generally of common time). Students learning non-Western musics for the first time often seem to place them within a Western box so as to better understand them (Hess, in press). One could consider that doing so effectively amounts to cultural imperialism, as Dunbar-Hall and Wemyss (2000a) suggest in their discussion of the analysis of popular music through a Western lens in a popular music education course. However, Dunbar-Hall (2006) offers a more hopeful perspective in his study on strategies developed by music students in cross-cultural learning settings. He suggests that music students adapt strategies from previous musical knowledge and integrate them with new strategies when approaching new music. Perhaps rather than cultural imperialism, beginning with one’s own epistemological framework may in fact be a hopeful first step toward different understandings.

In her article about democratic popular music education, Snell (2009) concurs, stating that North American schools largely offer programs in Western art music tradition. According to

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⁹ Who does she mean here?
Snell (2009), teachers teach music theory in the tradition of Rameau’s *common practice theory* and this theory is applied unilaterally to music that is Western Art music, Western popular music, and world music, creating an Other inherent in the very structure of the learning process by measuring music that does not adhere to Western classical music standards and practices by those very standards (p. 169). She notes that “social, historical, political, and sub-cultural implications [of popular music] are often more important to its artists and fans. These factors are systematically ignored by a traditional music theory” (McClary & Walser, 1990 as cited in Snell, 2009, p. 169).

How do scholars suggest countering ethnocentricity in music education? After her self-reflective critique, Countryman (2009) continues on to discuss the prevalence of the analysis of structural elements in music education practices. After critiquing her own practice however, she wonders if it may be possible to consider music through more universal constructs such as repetition/contrast or tension/release (p. 32). Countryman (2009) considers structural analysis and the terms music educators use to define elements of music, but Dunbar-Hall (2009) examines transmission practices. In his discussion of what he terms “ethnopedagogy,” Dunbar-Hall (2009) explores informal learning pedagogy in the teaching of Balinese Gamelan. For him, “ethnopedagogy” considers transmission practices as opposed to thinking strictly about repertoire and teaching it through Western pedagogy. He thinks of music performatively—as performance—but feels we can learn extensively from the ways in which we learn to perform different styles of music. “Ethnopedagogy” then implies that the learning and teaching of music are culturally contextualized. Countryman (2009) and Dunbar-Hall (2009) both offer ways to begin to think music differently. Within the socially conscious literature in music education, there is general recognition that it is important not to view music through a Western ethnocentric lens. However, other than a caveat against approaching non-Western and popular
musics in this manner, most of this literature does not suggest how to achieve this epistemological shift.

**Transmission practices: notation and oral transmission.** In defining orality, I look to Shehan’s\(^{10}\) (1987) definition drawn from her work with various musics from different countries in Asia:

> Orality in music learning may be generalized to include the following interrelated forms: immediate imitation of teacher demonstration by the student, mnemonic systems of pitch and rhythm, vocalization or recitation of pitches and rhythms, and memorization of phrases and formulaic passages. (p. 2)

While this definition provides a detailed practical description of the activities of oral transmission, it misses the cultural component. For all music, written or oral, context is crucial, but because of the fact that oral transmission necessitates personal contact and contact which is often intergenerational, I expand this definition to include relationships in the discussion.

Unlike oral transmission, written transmission conversely involves a symbolic system representative of sounds and requires a translation process; the performer of written music must decode the symbols and translate them into sound. In a short article based on his doctoral study on oral tradition in Indian tabla drumming, Booth (1986) contends that musical literacy “tends to separate the content from the context, and this separation may easily lead to a lessening in the perception of meaning” (p. 7).

In his discussion of the expansion of music curricula to be more inclusive, Seddon (2004) reminds readers that learning by ear, improvisation, and composition were not generally considered valuable skills in “traditional” music education (p. 224). This privileging of the written system of transmission in the school system is, according to Vaugeois (2009), both classed and raced. In her discussion of music education as a practice of social justice as discussed in the defining of social justice and also later in chapter three under critical pedagogy

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\(^{10}\) She is now Patricia Shehan Campbell. She published this article under “Shehan.”
and the explicit challenging of systemic barriers, she notes that “[a]nother systemic means of ranking and excluding are programs that focus exclusively on notation-based ensemble programs. The curricular significance of literacy versus orality is strongly rooted in class and race divisions” (p. 17).

In my major research paper for my master’s degree, I interviewed nine students in the Ghanaian drum and dance ensemble at my school. One of the questions I asked related to transmission preferences and the degree of comfort students found in oral and written practices. Despite the fact all students read music relatively fluently and played band instruments and some even took private piano lessons, the students overwhelmingly preferred learning orally/aurally to learning through notation. They found oral transmission easier and more enjoyable because of its interactive nature (Hess, 2009).

Although the practical emphasis in music education seems to be shifting away from written notation, there is little literature available on a diminished use of notation in the classroom other than within the context of the inappropriateness of utilizing notation to engage in popular music or “world” music.

Summary

The classroom content of music education has radically changed over the course of the last twenty years. In an effort to be more relevant, teachers now regularly include diverse musics including Western popular musics, Western classical music, cultural musics, and many different fusions of all musics. While the early discussion on the expansion of content was a mere attempt to develop the canon, the canon is now far removed from most conversations. Instead educators discuss ways to bring informal pedagogy into the classroom, to focus less on notation, to discard the ethnocentric lens of the past, and to work toward social justice through their activities. While early conversation about social justice models of music education largely fit into a liberal
paradigm, critical scholars worked hard to shift the work into a paradigm with a truly activist conception of social justice.

However, within this significant move toward what I feel is more relevant curriculum content to students, there is still the paradox of the institution, as Sætre (2011) elucidates in his discussion of creativity and composing in the classroom. The institutional walls limit, for example, the degree of “informal” learning that is possible in the schools. It is important to question what changes when outside musical practices enter institutions and to keep in mind limitations that schools place on these musicking activities. It is impossible to transcend limitations without first articulating them clearly.
CHAPTER 3

Challenging Dominant Paradigms in Music Education: A Review of the Literature on Pedagogy and the Explicit Troubling of Systemic Issues

Pedagogy

Moving now from content to pedagogy, in the last twenty years the terrain of pedagogy in music education also shifted significantly. Many researchers moved beyond the liberal paradigms of “traditional” music education to explore more critical approaches. Given the anti-oppressive theoretical orientation of this dissertation, this review focuses on the critical turn currently taking place in pedagogy as opposed to the liberal framework of the traditional paradigm or liberal notions of multiculturalism. Neither of those conversations challenges the status quo in any way. I begin this section then with a discussion of critical pedagogy. I briefly explore its roots in the work of Freire and later hooks and a few of the main critiques leveled against it. From there, I look at its application to music education including the importance of naming inequity in the world. I then explore critical multiculturalism including work in music education on contextualization, critique, and drawing connections between materials. Finally, I look at the possibilities that emerge when educators work to decentre Europe and perhaps approach the world from a multicentric or Afrocentric sensibility.

Critical pedagogy. In his groundbreaking work, Freire (1970) puts forward a critical pedagogy for the oppressed—one that aims for social change and ultimately liberation. He argues for the absolute necessity of the participation of the oppressed in their liberation. He contrasts what he refers to as the banking concept of education, where students are passive objects waiting for teachers to fill them with knowledge, with what he terms a “problem-posing
education”—a dialogical, critical education where students learn from the teacher and the teacher learns from the students. This problem-posing education views the oppressive situation as a problem. Freire suggests identifying themes that are problematic to learners, codifying them into familiar representations, and re-presenting them to the people as problems. In his conclusion, he moves from critical pedagogy and emancipatory education to revolutionary action. He elucidates both tools used by oppressors in antidialogical action toward the goal of domination and tools used by revolutionaries in their dialogical quest for liberation. Crucial concepts in this work include the idea of conscientization—developing critical awareness of one’s social reality through both reflection and action—and the related concept of “naming the world” (i.e. naming one’s reality). In recent years, music educators have begun to draw on the work of Freire and critical pedagogy in their work in education.

Also fundamental to the implementation of critical pedagogy is the work of black feminist bell hooks. hooks (1994) outlines a possibility for education to engage in transgressive resistance in an exciting collaborative learning environment that values all voices. She puts forward a holistic, critical, transformative pedagogy, with specific discussion of women's studies courses. hooks advocates for forums and places for learning critical pedagogy in order to teach in a multicultural world in a way that moves far beyond simple tokenism. Freire is a major influence on her work and on her pedagogy and she is highly critical of the separation between theory and practice. In particular, she wonders why theory is written in such a way that it is inaccessible to the general population. Like Razack (1998) and Mohanty (2003), hooks raises the problems inherent in not acknowledging intersecting oppressions within gendered oppression. She explores the idea of resistance of the use of the oppressor’s language, but acknowledges that at the same time, this language is needed as a site of resistance. For hooks, “standard” English is “the mask which hides the loss of so many tongues” (p. 168). She traces the evolution of “standard” English for slaves brought from Africa as the state of terror to a site.
of resistance. The suggestion here is that with language comes agency. She questions why only “standard” English is heard in diverse classrooms and encourages her students to use their first language and translate it in her class, concluding with the idea of using words as “counter-hegemonic speech” to liberate ourselves (p. 175). Ultimately she views education as the practice of freedom and sees the power within education and within teachers to change lives. If, as teachers, we invoke a critical, transformative pedagogy, we are teaching to transgress.

Particularly important here are the notions of the impossibility of the universal and the invoking of intersectionality to understand different positionalities (see in particular Collins, 2000 for discussion). Like Freire, the use of language and the “naming the world” (although she does not use this terminology) are absolutely fundamental to learning to “transgress.”

Although critical pedagogy proliferated into many disciplines, scholars leveled a number of critiques against it. Critical pedagogy claims—in the tradition of Freire (1970)—to make space for all voices in the group in the quest to undermine oppression.¹ It invites those who are oppressed to “name the world” and work to change it. However, does it really make space for all voices or does it privilege some over others? Critiques of this discourse come from feminists and critical theorists alike. Feminist scholar Ellsworth (1989), for one, finds the abstract language describing the utopian concepts of critical pedagogy actually masks the way these concepts serve to reinscribe dominant relations. She states that the

key assumptions, goals, and pedagogical practices fundamental to the literature on critical pedagogy—namely, ‘empowerment,’ ‘student voice,’ ‘dialogue,’ and even the term ‘critical’—are repressive myths that perpetuate relations of domination. By this I mean that when participants in our class attempted to put into practice prescriptions offered in the literature concerning empowerment, student voice, and dialogue, we produced results that were not only unhelpful, but actually exacerbated the very conditions we were trying to work against, including

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¹ The discourses of critical pedagogy and of critical reconstructionism share many common elements including a fight against oppression, a work toward ideals, and the staunch belief in education as a tool for change. See Freire (1970), Schubert (1986), and Stanley (1992) for a discussion. Schubert and Stanley both connect the discourse of social reconstructionism with critical pedagogy.
Eurocentrism, racism, sexism, classism, and ‘banking education.’ (Ellsworth, 1989, p. 298)

Acknowledging that the classroom is not a Freirian “ideal” environment due to unequal power relations between students and teacher and varying life experiences and degrees of bias, Ellsworth suggests that rather than work from the repressive concepts proposed by critical pedagogy, classroom experience can begin to work toward the goal of collaboration across difference, not unlike anti-racist scholar George Dei’s (2003) “communities of difference” (p. 37). Her critique raises the question: do the concepts and language of critical pedagogy allow for the participation of all voices in the classroom? In the class she taught that was the focus of her article, “Media and Anti-Racist Pedagogies,” Ellsworth (1989) found that in an environment of asymmetrical power relations among students and teacher (pp. 314-315) in conjunction with the varying life experiences of oppression and privilege of all participants, critical pedagogy did not actually “make room” for all voices. Similarly, hooks (1994) also worries about the submergence of the voices of women of colour within diverse classrooms wondering pointedly whose voices will dominate within mixed classroom spaces. Razack (1998), however, offers an insightful critique of Ellsworth (1989). She argues that people of colour are often asked to tell stories for white people’s edification which serves to reinscribe power dynamics in a different way. Here, making room for all voices involves “eating the Other” (hooks, 1992, Chapter 2). Further, as Razack (1998) notes, critical pedagogy often leaves complicity in oppression uninterrogated (Chapter 2). It is important to consider these issues in thinking about critical pedagogy.

In addition to these feminist critiques, critical race scholar Ladson-Billings (1997) and anti-racist scholars Dei and Sheth (1997) provide critical race and anti-colonial critiques respectively. Ladson-Billings (1997) worries that critical pedagogy fails to “adequately address the question of race” (p. 127). She advocates for critical race theory in place of critical theory in
the educational context and supports what she terms “culturally relevant pedagogy” in the classroom, ultimately calling on educators to explore the ways our “understandings of critical theory and pedagogy [may] be informed by our understandings of race” (p. 137). Dei and Sheth (1997) critique the ways in which the discourse of critical pedagogy appears to be dominated by white men speaking for Others. They worry in particular about critical pedagogy as a silencing pedagogy and call on academics to examine our own complicity in silencing—particularly in the academy. In light of these critiques, I wonder if those who operate within the discourse of critical pedagogy perhaps are not interested in hearing from all voices after all or interested only as far as they reinscribe the dominant subject. At face value, the discourse of critical pedagogy and the connected discourse of social (and critical) reconstructionism are situated at the opposite end of the spectrum from liberal discourse. Critical pedagogy stands in opposition to much of what currently takes place in music education and music educators invoke critical pedagogy in their work to challenge the dominant ensemble paradigm; however, as pointed out by the critiques listed, teachers must work against the possible privileging of certain voices and the desire to consume the Other (Ahmed, 2000; hooks, 1992).

**Critical pedagogy in music education.** Fundamental to any discussion of critical pedagogy in music education is the work of Vaugeois. In her important work on social justice in music education (Vaugeois, 2009), she suggests exploring with students the “life histories” of different musical practices. She explains:

> By life histories, I mean the conditions of production of different musics such as available instruments, technologies, legal and institutional structures, as well as physical, social, and economic conditions. Exploring musical life histories includes asking who is and is not present in different forms of music-making; how different forms of music are represented in various discourses; where race, gender and class reside within musical expressions; what forms of embodied expression are allowable in different musical and social contexts; and how different musics are situated in relation to discourses of respectability, degeneracy, emancipation, and virtuosity. (Vaugeois, 2009, pp. 3-4)
She offers a tool—a list of fifteen questions—to reveal the conditions of productions of music. This list provides students and educators with a powerful means to critically investigate music. Vaugeois strongly advocates for critical consciousness reminiscent of Freire’s (1970) conscientization. She elucidates:

In our current political climate, teachers are mandated more than ever to produce what Foucault calls docile bodies, that is, people who are extremely well trained in terms of skills but poorly equipped understand or enact themselves as political subjects (Foucault, 1977, p. 138 as cited in Vaugeois, 2009, p. 19). Highly disciplined processes work extremely well to produce highly skilled musicians; however, these processes do not advocate for political awareness, political engagement, independent thought, creativity, musical independence, or musical and personal flexibility. (Vaugeois, 2009, p. 19)

Her musical life histories provide a tool to engage critical consciousness in students—a fundamental tenet in Freire’s (1970) critical pedagogy.

In her exploration of incorporating democratic practices into popular music education, Snell (2009) engages the work of Freire (1970) and other critical pedagogues fairly extensively. She worries about the potential for institutions to reinscribe structures of domination. She critiques what Freire (1970) identifies and subsequently problematizes as the banking concept of education as a dominant system in music education. Snell concurs with Freire that “[t]he more students work at storing the deposits entrusted to them, the less they develop the critical consciousness which would result from their intervention in the world as transformers of that world” (Freire, 1970, p. 73, as cited in Snell, 2009, p. 171). She advocates instead a fostering of critical consciousness and a development of the students’ own voices arguing that students need a space where they can safely critique and discuss what they hear (p. 174). For her, recognizing what students bring to the class is fundamental to education.

Other music educators cite the importance of identifying positionality and its intersection with both classroom material and larger social relations of reproduction. To turn once again to the conservatory study of Sotomayor and Kim (2009), they feel that it
is not hard to imagine that social categories like race, gender, and class have an important role in determining who is deemed artistically talented…The prophecy of the white male genius may be as self-fulfilling as the prophecy of failure for the poor and disadvantaged. (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2008, p. 253 as cited in Sotomayor & Kim, 2009, p. 227)

Benedict and Schmidt (2007) take this idea one step further. For them, the recognition of positionality also raises issues of complicity. According to Benedict and Schmidt (2007), “[t]he issue, then, is not simply to challenge reproductive practices, but rather to locate ourselves within them, and in doing so de-naturalize these practices, and ourselves” (p. 32). There is an inherent sense of responsibility attached to critical consciousness. Recognition of social location and complicity with privilege are fundamental for these music educators in enacting critical pedagogy in the music classroom.

**Considering students' histories and experiences.** A crucial tenet of Freire’s (1970) and hooks’ (1994) critical pedagogy is the validation of students’ experiences and histories and the acknowledgment that students enter the classroom not as *tabula rasa* or blank slates, but rather as rich sources of knowledge and experience to bring to the work of the classroom. Peters (2004) brings this thinking into music education in her conceptualization of students as enculturated into music long before they arrive in schools. She criticizes the lack of acknowledgment of the media’s role in children’s lives in her classroom except by a few token selections (p. 3) and argues that music educators must take media into account (p. 4). Musically, she contends, students are not “blank scores.” While this idea of acknowledging students’ musical histories and experiences is important, I feel it misses the larger picture. Students’ everyday experiences, far beyond the musical, as well as their home lives and the ways in which their race, gender, class, sexual orientation, religion, age, immigrant and refugee status, and disability positions affect their lives and world views are far more crucial to the ways they engage in music than the majority of outside musical experiences, with the exception of those experiences they themselves label as fundamental to their identities. Freire (1970) and hooks
(1994) both argue for the importance of recognizing students’ histories and experiences in the classroom in the employment of critical pedagogy. What Peters (2004) adds to the discussion is the idea that they also offer rich musical knowledge to the tapestry that is the music classroom.

**Student voice.** In the push toward democratic work in music education, multiple educators advocate for student voice in the musical decision-making and musicking activities that occur in the classroom (Allsup, 2002, 2003, 2004b; Bladh & Heimonen, 2007; Green, 2008; Snell, 2009; Woodford, 2005) although their advocacy does not always occur within a critical framework. However, the recognition of student voice is fundamental to critical pedagogy and these music educators seek to validate the student in their classroom. In addition to the above scholars, Burnard (2008) conducted a multiple case study examining three teachers’ approaches to inclusive education among disaffected youth. While this article does not engage the systemic causes of such “disaffection” beyond the mention of race and class as factors, the strategies offered by the three teachers all included increased democratic participation to their students. They found ways to enable student voice and to hear what students had to say. They also provided high stakes creative projects where students had the opportunity to collaborate with musicians in the community that resonated with them. Students presented projects publicly and were able to remake themselves through participation, according to Burnard. She found that students appreciated the diverse facets of their programs. Similarly, as previously mentioned in chapter two, Lashbrook and Mantie (2009) also acknowledge the importance of enabling student voice in their discussion of the One World Youth Arts Project. They remark:

As long as the profession considers certain musics as embodying knowledge of superior value, the lives and life experiences of those who possess musical knowledge not endorsed by the profession—the kinds Michel Foucault refers to a subjugated knowledge—will continue to be viewed as inferior. (Lashbrook & Mantie, 2009, pp. 292-293)

Instead they argue for the necessity of validating this subjugated knowledge as both important and valuable.
“Naming the world”: Naming inequities. Freire’s (1970) concept of “naming the world” also made its way into music education. For multiple music educators, this concept translates to naming inequities and working against them. Vaugeois (2007) looks at music education as largely based on Enlightenment ideals of liberal disinterestedness. She argues that music educators often consider music removed from its context and its history without the understanding of the systemic issues and inequalities upon which it is based. According to Vaugeois (2007), this decontextualized understanding often results in discourses of charity. She critiques the work of Reimer (2003), Elliott (1995), and Woodford (2005)—prominent music education philosophers—for their liberal frameworks and lack of consideration of structural inequities. She challenges Reimer’s (2003) work for considering musical works completely devoid of context. She argues that Elliott's (1995) discussion of multiculturalism implies a hopefulness through engaging in the music of the Other, thus privileging notions of individualism and not acknowledging systemic inequities. Similarly, she critiques Woodford (2005) for ahistoricity and claims to innocence. According to Vaugeois, Woodford looks for disinterested reason while refusing to acknowledge systemic inequities. Vaugeois ultimately suggests that as music educators, we need to learn to ask questions that point to systemic injustices alongside striving for social justice, a point with which music educator Bowman (2007b) concurs in his discussion of the difficulties of social justice as the latest “trend” of music education. We need tools to address injustice and locate ourselves historically, which includes acknowledging our own complicity in injustice. Vaugeois (2007) cites Macedo (2003) who suggests that “[o]ne cannot teach conflict as if, all of a sudden, it fell from the sky. The conflict must be anchored in those competing histories and ideologies that generated the conflict in the first place” (Macedo, 2003, p. 24 as cited in Vaugeois, 2007, p. 183). For Vaugeois, naming inequity and recognizing social location is crucial in the work of social justice and undoing structures that sustain oppression.
Bradley is another important scholar in critical pedagogy in music education (e.g. Bradley, 2003, 2006a, 2006b, 2007b). In work based on her dissertation, which I discussed earlier in chapter two, Bradley asserts that race is embedded as coded language in discourse. She argues that silence and discomfort leads to avoidance of direct language (Bradley, 2006a). She wonders how it is possible to create equity when direct vocabulary is avoided, concurring with writer and literature scholar Morrison that “ignoring race is understood to be a graceful, even generous, liberal gesture” (Morrison, 1990, pp. 9-10 as cited in Bradley, 2006a, p. 6). Conversely, she argues for the use of direct language and opposition to hegemonic structures. She challenges music educators to recognize how race is coded into thinking, practice, and language. In a later work, Bradley (2007b) brings Dei and Calliste’s (2000) discursive framework of anti-racism into music education, simultaneously unpacking some of the ways in which white privilege is prevalent in the discipline. Again, she contends that race as oppression remains unnamed in education and in music education specifically, and invokes Pollock’s (2004) terminology of “color-mute” to describe a person who does not or will not speak of race. She argues powerfully that the silence needs to be broken.

Also crucial to this discussion is the work of feminist music education scholar Elizabeth Gould. In her 2008 work, she offers a brilliant critique of liberal democracy and the meritocracy (Gould, 2008). She employs Plumwood’s (1993) work to examine dualistic thinking as hierarchized thinking, where the logical conclusion to dualistic thinking is colonization. She suggests that as opposed to employing so-called democratic principles in the classroom that involve allowing students to make decisions that change nothing about structural and material power relations, that music educators must engage the Other in terms of her anger. Rather than enabling student voice that is effectively disempowered, she suggests opening the floor to what needs to be said—to make room for the marginalized to not only name the world but to name their terms of engagement.
All three scholars work urgently to counter the injustices in the world of which the music classroom is a microcosm. For all three music educators, the act of “naming the world” is crucial. Subjugated voices must speak and be heard and also name their own terms to do the work of social justice.

**Dissensus.** Related to the idea of student voice and “naming the world” is the concept of dissensus—the ability to disagree with or dissent from material or discussion both inside and outside of the classroom. In his critique of Woodford’s (2005) book on democracy in music education, Schmidt (2008) advocates for a music education ripe with conflict and dissensus. He considers the importance of having dissenting voices in any conversation and argues that democracy is realized through dissensus rather than consensus. Significantly, he contends that Harris (1989) promotes the idea of “tense plurality” as a strategy for avoiding the dichotomous assumptions with which conflict is often met—or for dissolving institutionalized notions as illustrated by Hunter (1995). Pre-service teachers, and in turn their future students, learn through the structures of schooling to see conflict as antagonistic: not as a desired space, but as one to be avoided. However, the space and place of conflict may also be seen as democratic ones, where critical pedagogies find—in and through friction (Bohm, 1996) and tension—the movement necessary for personal, responsive, responsible and committed engagement. Without conflict—both internal and in/through interaction—and without an understanding of conflict as potentially constructive, it is not surprising that teaching is seen as a procedural process related more closely to the application of method than the negotiation of pedagogy. (Schmidt, 2008, p. 17)

With the right to speak comes the right to dissent and finding democracy in this manner is different from more liberal conceptions of democracy found in music education. Gould (2007b) explores paternalist Enlightenment concepts of democracy utilizing Jakobsen’s (1998) models of diversity, Deleuze’s (1990) ethics of the event, and Ziarek’s (2001) ethics of dissensus. She proposes a democracy committed to dissensus with a radical commitment to hearing all voices. In such a democracy, exclusions happen only by personal choice.

Persisting in this space even after decisions are reached through majority vote by which some interests are necessarily unfulfilled, reflective solidarity is predicated on continued relationship of all participants involved in decision-making, and not on the outcomes of decisions. It remains committed to dissensus instead of
consensus, as all decisions are contingent, subject to frequent and comprehensive review, leading to continued action toward larger goals, based on the understanding that alliances within reflective solidarity continually and performatively shift. The task of reflective solidarity, then, is finding ways of maintaining relationship in the context of dissensus, excluding only those who would themselves exclude, who would sever relationship. (Gould, 2007b, p. 237)

This complicated democracy not only enables student voice and invites students to “name the world;” it also makes room for dissent and validates it as important.

**Decentring the teacher: student-centred versus teacher-centred classrooms.** Connected to the theme of a complicated democracy is the increasing literature on creating student-centred classrooms. Again, this literature mobilizes both liberal and critical discourses, but the point of interest for this review is the critical work on decentring the teacher in the classroom. To continue with the work of Gould (2007b), she finds that

[t]raditionally, we think social justice in music education by implementing democratic practices, such as sharing power between teachers and students or conductors and musicians, for instance, leaving unexplored assumptions on which discourses of power related to teachers and conductors and concurrent vulnerability of students and musicians are based. In addition, consideration of whether these particular asymmetrical power relations actually constitute domination is almost completely ignored. (Gould, 2007b, pp. 233-234)

Here she identifies an important gap in the literature. While a few scholars interrogate questions of power and domination directly, the majority of the discussion focuses on democratic practices.

The conversation at the moment largely concentrates on decentring the teacher in the classroom. Snell (2009) suggests that the teacher step down from the traditional role of “teacher as expert” into the role of mentor/guide/coach where they work in partnership with their students, learning together as “critical co-investigators” (pp. 176-178). Like Allsup (2002, 2003), Snell (2009) discusses the idea of mutual learning communities as empowering (p. 178). The work of Allsup and Snell aligns well with Ladson-Billings’ (1995, 2009) efforts to put forward what she terms “culturally relevant pedagogy.” Her study of eight teachers who work
successively with African American students discusses varied approaches to fostering students’ perspectives and expertise, as well as methods for teaching students to be critical and interrogate all material presented. Empirically in music education, Kaschub’s (2009) case study of critical pedagogy for creative artists discusses critically conscious compositions that emerged as the balance of power shifted when the teacher stepped away from the leadership (dominant) role in the classroom.

In the discipline of music education, it is the feminist scholars who directly engage the questions of power and domination in traditional classroom environments. In an early work, leading feminist scholar Lamb (1996) explores the discord between feminist pedagogy and music education in its typical conception as relatively authoritarian and focused on the conductor. However, she finds that more student-centred alternatives have actually “unnerved” her students, revealing the need for more work in order to achieve a degree of comfort with democratic classroom environments. O’Toole (1994) also worked to interrupt the director-centred choral classroom. Her doctoral work explored three choral settings that undertook different projects to disrupt the conductor-oriented environment. In questions of shifting power relations in the classroom, it is the work of feminist scholars like Lamb, O’Toole, and Gould that directly address structures of domination.

Summary. Critical pedagogy is fundamental to the ways in which music educators work to counter oppression. Literature in music education in the late 1990s shifted to centre tenets of critical pedagogy as identified largely by Freire (1970) and hooks (1994). Music educators are beginning to acknowledge students’ histories and experiences in the classroom and make room in the institution for students not only to speak, but to “name the world,” and dissent from dominant discourse. Literature also focuses on decentring the teacher. This critical turn in the

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2 I wonder, however, if the relative discomfort may in fact be productive. See for example Boler’s (1999) pedagogy of discomfort.
literature is quite exciting and in reflecting back on the Canadian Music Educators Association publication’s question of how music education might matter (Gould, et al., 2009), this work seems to indicate that it potentially will or even does matter.

**Critical multiculturalism.** Critical pedagogue McLaren (1995) works to delineate the differences between what he terms “conservative multiculturalism,” “liberal multiculturalism,” “left-liberal multiculturalism,” and “critical and resistance multiculturalism.” While the conservative and liberal approaches to multiculturalism seem to be predicated on vague notions of sameness and the left-liberal framework promulgates difference, according to McLaren (1995), all of the conceptions are based on essentialist logic (p. 42). All three notions lack any acknowledgement of structural barriers to “equality.” Reflective of the work on dissensus above, McLaren’s (1995) resistance multiculturalism “refuses to see culture as non-conflictual, harmonious and consensual. Democracy is understood from this perspective as busy—it is not seamless, smooth, or always a harmonious political and cultural state of affairs” (p. 42). He continues:

Resistance multiculturalism does not see diversity itself as a goal but rather argues that diversity must be affirmed within a politics of cultural criticism and a commitment to social justice. It must be attentive to the notion of difference. Difference is always a product of history, culture, power, and ideology. Differences occur between and among groups and must be understood in terms of the specificity of their production. Critical multiculturalism interrogates the construction of difference and identity in relation to a radical politics. It is positioned against the neoimperial romance with monoglot ethnicity grounded in a shared or “common” experience of America that is associated with conservative and liberal strands of multiculturalism. Difference is intimately related to capitalist exploitation. (McLaren, 1995, p. 43)

In music education, critical multiculturalism manifests in a number of different ways. Music education often falls into the trap of conceiving essentialist versions of culture—the monoglot ethnicity of which McLaren (1995) speaks. A critical multiculturalism in music education does not settle for a monolithic identity, but rather understands difference in terms of the conditions of its production. It places musics in a context and does not settle for essentialist notions of
musics. In this section, I explore the literature on two facets valued in music education that contribute to a critical multiculturalism—the contextualization of all musics and the necessity of critique in the study of music.

**The contextualization of all musics.** Embedded in any idea of a critical multiculturalism is the importance of contextualizing all musics in order to avoid naturalizing or normalizing some musics and forcing students to imagine the context for others. Abril (2003) works extensively on the importance of contextualization with students. His 2003 work examined the inclusion of multicultural music in the classroom in a manner that went far beyond content integration. His study looked at three instructional approaches and their effects on the attitudes of fifth grade students toward music sung in various languages. One approach included extensive sociocultural instruction with multicultural material while the second took a concept-based approach to multicultural instruction. The third approach took a concept-based approach to no multicultural content (the control group). While there is a certain reification here of Western music as “non-multicultural,” the general idea here is interesting. The study took place in twelve classes in Columbus, Ohio. Before the study, students were more positive toward English-language songs. However, after the research, students who received sociocultural instruction were more positive toward non-English language songs than students in the other groups. The question then becomes whether there is an aspect of consumption to this particular project. What does enjoying non-English language songs do for students’ identities? Does it become what hooks (1992) refers to as “eating the Other”?

Whereas the statements from the students in the group that received sociocultural instruction in his doctoral study tended to be fairly uncritical and also fall within a liberal framework (Abril, 2003, 2005, 2006), his later work delves deeper into the importance of context. A subsequent case study examines tensions in a Mariachi ensemble that a teacher initiated to represent and give voice to the large Latino community at her school (as well as
involve them in the music program) (Abril, 2010). One of the teacher’s students, Juli, raised concerns about repertoire—both the appropriateness of doing a happy birthday song at the winter concert and performing a piece which has come to stereotypically represent and essentialize Mexican Americans. Juli also took issue with a worksheet she was given which asked questions like “What do Mexicans wear?” and other questions that effectively forced essentialization. This worksheet deeply concerned the student. In his conclusion, Abril (2010) suggests becoming familiar with the context of the repertoire that is unfamiliar before programming it, making sure not to essentialize, and opening the floor for discussion when matters of culture are on the table.

Bradley (2003) also strongly advocates for the contextualization of all musics, but her reasons are somewhat different. In an article inspired by Morrison’s (1990) Playing in the Dark, she worries that within the global choral classroom, if teachers do not provide contextual information for the songs learned that students will actually imagine the context for the song. When they “invent Otherness”—a term Bradley draws from Morrison’s (1990) “inventing Africanness”—students rely on the always already Other often drawn from stereotypes provided by various media. To not contextualize then potentially leads to the reliance on stereotypes and racist ideology.

Conversely, Skelton’s (2004) thinking resulted from the emphasis placed on incorporating world music into choral education at the Phenomenon of Singing International Symposium IV in St. John's, Newfoundland in 2003. He draws on Green's (2001) inherent and delineated meanings to discuss what he terms a tri-partite approach to music education. Inherent meanings, in this case draw on a music for music's sake approach to music education whereas delineated meanings refer to the extramusical. Both meanings look first to musical materials, but in inherent meanings, the musical materials refer to musical meanings and in delineated meanings, they refer to context or extramusical meanings. Skelton’s third approach is music as
praxis—music creation through performance and composition. He proposes that students should learn a system of music. Then he suggests that they should look at delineated meanings of that system and engage in praxis. What I find significant was a brief discussion of his lack of ability to imagine Apartheid when introduced to it in a choral context as a fifteen year old and being shocked when exposed to it years later. What he misses in his discussion here is the question Bradley (2003) raises of what one actually does when not really given context for making music—Green's (2001) delineated meanings. Where she proposes that singers will essentially imagine the Other, he said that despite the fact that he learned music from varied contexts, the music basically stayed at an inherent level for him. He describes himself as being unable to imagine. However, the question remains: When a student sings the music of South African apartheid without context, what is their South Africa?

In my own work, I advocate for considering musics relationally—not only in context, but also in relation to other musics and other contexts. Situating musics in a larger global context decreases the chance that one music, that is, Western classical music, will dominate, as students will study it in relation to other musics and consider instead how each music informs every other music. This type of study allows students to trace influences and their related histories (Hess, in press). In Schippers’ (2010) work to develop a framework to understand the transmission of world music, what he terms an “intercultural approach to cultural diversity,” or viewing music in relation to other musics and comparing it cross-culturally, similarly implies this type of relational understanding and analysis.

Much of the literature on teaching diverse musics highlights the importance of contextualization but Abril and Bradley elucidate important reasons why. The work of Abril (2003) reveals that children exposed to the sociohistorical content of various musics are more likely to be open to it. Bradley (2003) illuminates the other side; if students are not given the context for music studied, they will potentially imagine it—an endeavor with damaging
potential. It is also important that the learner not necessarily be imagined as white with the
mobility that positionality implies. As Ahmed (2000) elucidates, the ability to move is inhered
with privilege. In programs then where students study many musics, it is important to consider
both their differential degrees of privilege or lack of privilege based on positionality and their
differing degrees of personal knowledge and experience. Power related to the privilege of
mobility in relation to subject matter must be analyzed within the classroom.

Critique and critical theory. Examining the place of critique and critical theory in
education in general is beyond the scope of this literature review, but there are a few key
scholars I mention here, as they inform the discipline of music education. The work of Ladson-
Billings and Tate (Ladson-Billings, 1998; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 2008), Apple (2004), and
Dei and Calliste (2000) brings critical theory, critical race theory, and anti-racism firmly into the
field of education. This work is linked to the work of Freire (1970) as it seeks to reveal the
“hidden curriculum” and the related reinscription of the status quo. All of these scholars
illuminate ways to use the tools of critical theories to subvert dominant power relations in both
the classroom and in society in general. I come back to the ways that music educators make use
of these tools in my discussion of direct challenges to systemic and structural barriers.

Making connections to the world beyond the classroom. Also fundamental to the
discussion of pedagogy is the importance of making connections outside the classroom—
something Bradley (2006b) worked to foster in her choristers as “global citizens” as already
discussed in chapter two. Miles (2009) also wonders what teaching for social justice means in
her elementary music classroom. Examining her classroom from a global education perspective,
she describes a major change in her teaching approach upon being made aware of global
education and a realization that she was focusing too much on the subject and not enough on the
students. In her practice, she seeks to “foster ways of thinking that question the world around
us” (p. 262). She employs Pike and Selby’s (1999, 2000) four-dimensional global education
model in examining her classroom practice. For her, there is a real focus on interconnectedness within all four dimensions—the issues dimension, the temporal dimension, the spatial dimension, and the inner dimension. Although elsewhere I contend that notions of sameness can be quite problematic in music education (Hess, 2013a), there is potential within this interconnectedness to foster an environment that operates more along the lines of Dei’s (2003) “communities of difference.”

Gould (2009a) also underscores the importance of making connections that move far beyond the realm of the aesthetic. She identifies four literacies traditionally associated with music education—functional, cultural, progressive, and critical:

In terms of music education, functional literacy focuses on basic skills necessary to function in traditional general, instrumental, and choral school music programs. Typical curricula are based on pre-packaged materials, such as music series books, beginning band, orchestra, and choral method books, and the U.S. National Standards. With a “pedagogical focus [that] is individualistic, behaviourist, and competitive,” students typically learn in structured environments valuing efficiency and time on task. Cultural literacy is based on a moral imperative of teaching the musical canon and aesthetic sensitivity in order to induct students into the world of great music and enhanced awareness. The curriculum is both elitist and restrictive while pedagogy is “authoritarian, humanist, and universalizing,” based on the notion of the power of music to improve human life. Progressive literacy focuses on discovery and development, and is supported by assumptions related to student growth and expressivity through music. With an open and diverse curriculum including musics of many cultures, its pedagogy is centered on students and their active engagement with music. The primary goal of critical literacy is to transform society as it acknowledges the inherently political nature of educational content and context. Students’ and teachers’ everyday (musical) world and its deconstruction comprise the curriculum. Pedagogical approaches associated with it are “situated, interrogative, and counter-hegemonic,” taking into account difference and power. (Gould, 2009, pp. 47-48, embedded citations from Kelly, 1997, p. 10)

Significantly, she notes the absence of critical literacy from many music education programs, noting that only some educators value critical literacy as a priority despite music’s long history as fundamental to resistance and social change (pp. 48-49). The lack of interest demonstrated by some music educators is significant in situating my own work as in this study, I deliberately sought educators who are actively critically engaged. After exploring the four literacies outlined
above, Gould (2009a) puts forward a new literacy for music education—a performative literacy that is rhizomatic, experience-based, and nomadic in nature:

[Performative literacy's] curriculum focuses on local musics and people in social and educational contexts, using pedagogical approaches that not only account for difference but are inhered in and as difference as they elide power relations characteristic of the teacher/student dyad, enabling teaching and learning among people and in places as appropriate and necessary within and (often) without schools and schooling. Pedagogy, then, occurs everywhere and is understood in an expansive materialist, feminist sense as “an activity integral to all learning, all knowledge production” (Gore, 1993, p. xii as cited in Gould, 2009a, p. 49) that because it is material it is neither neutral nor innocent, but always already “enable[s] or constrain[s] literacy practices” (Flannery, 2005, p. 15 as cited in Gould, 2009a, p. 49). (Gould, 2009a, p. 49)

This pedagogy takes critical literacy further, working against hierarchical power relations and breaking open the limitations of the institution to traverse far beyond. In this article, Gould (2009a) has little use for the functional skills-based literacy and the cultural aesthetic literacy she identifies. For her, the connection to the social is fundamental to how music education might matter (Gould, et al., 2009).

**Decentring Europe: multicentric and Afrocentric pedagogy.** In this final section under “pedagogy,” I review the ways that anti-racist, Afrocentric, and music education scholars talk about a multicentric approach to pedagogy. Dei’s work delineates clear principles of anti-racism education (Dei, 2003). For Dei (2003), anti-racism education recognizes the social effects of race and considers all integrated forms of oppression. It challenges white (male) privilege and both its dominance and invisibility. Anti-racism education problematizes the marginalization of certain voices in society. It is also holistic and accounts for all aspects of human experience. Anti-racism education recognizes how the elements of identity affect and are affected by schooling, as well as the need for an inclusive system. Simultaneously, it acknowledges the role of the traditional education system in reproducing inequities and also requires that school problems experienced by youth are understood in context. Finally, it questions pathological explanations that blame the home environment (Dei, 2003, Chapter 2). Dei identifies the
importance of building what he terms “communities of difference” (p. 37). After outlining the elements of anti-racism education, he considers what an inclusive school system might look like and proposes a multicentric curriculum and pedagogy. For Dei (2003), inclusivity means: 1) dealing with equity and justice; 2) having a multiplicity of perspectives; and 3) making instructional practices respond to diversity (p. 78). He emphasizes that inclusivity is not additive or celebratory. Eurocentric education loses its power with the multicentric approach to education, as Europe becomes one of many centres. A multicentric curriculum centres the personal experience of the student and focuses on contextual learning from the subject location of each individual. As a different centre, an Afrocentric approach allows the “African child to see and interpret the world with his or her own eyes, rather than with those of the ‘other’” (Dei, 2003, p. 92). Dei notes that all students should be comfortable in Afrocentric schools as they are based on principles, rather than any kind of “same-race” idea. However, he notes the importance of not merely replacing one hegemonic knowledge system with another.

I cited earlier the definition of centricity that Afrocentric scholar Asante (1991) provides where teachers locate students in the context of their own cultural referents in order to move toward relating to other cultural perspectives (p. 171). To continue with his discussion, according to Asante (1991), a person “educated in a truly centric fashion comes to view all groups’ contributions as significant and useful” (p. 171). He identifies a fundamental problem in hegemonic schooling:

The little African-American child who sits in the classroom and is taught to accept as heroes and heroines individuals who defamed African people is being actively de-centered, dislocated, and made into a nonperson, one whose aim in life might one day be to shed that “badge of inferiority”: his or her Blackness. (Asante, 1991, p. 171)

Instead, to centre each child in their own cultural context allows students to see themselves “not merely as seekers of knowledge but as integral participants in it” (Asante, 1991, p. 171).
In my earlier discussion of content in chapter two, I discussed my own work (Hess, in press) and the work of Lashbrook and Mantie (2009) in reviewing work on decentring Europe and Afrocentricity. Now, under pedagogy, I look at the grounded theory study of Butler, Lind, and McKoy (2007). They set out to explore “educational equity in relationship to music education” (p. 241) and work to develop a conceptual framework to understand how race, culture, and ethnicity affect music teaching and learning. They examine five factors: the teacher, the student, the content, the instruction, and the context of the classroom. Butler, Lind, and McKoy first consider how race, culture, and ethnicity affect the teacher and the student and the interactions between them. The model then connects both students and teacher and their interactions to the way those relationships (which are affected by race, culture, and ethnicity) mediate content, instruction, and context which ultimately influence music learning. The manner in which their conceptual model draws many relationships and interactions between the five factors that influence music learning reveals the necessity of a fluid understanding of content and instruction.\(^3\) In the multicultural framework they consider, the demographics and interactions of both students and teacher heavily mediate content, instruction, and context leaving room to shift away from the Western classical paradigm. The model they create also has interesting implications for shaping the classroom into a more collaborative environment—a point which harks back to Dei’s (2003) multicentric model of education. Their framework is important to consider in any classroom.

In *Legible Bodies in Music Education: Becoming-Matter*, Gould (2007a) uses Butler's (1993, 1999) performativity and Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) becoming to forward the thesis that normative systems such as white privilege and heteronormativity render what is outside their delineated lines (i.e. bodies that do not conform) “illegible” by dominant bodies. However, she advocates not for the inclusion of those people formerly rendered illegible into music

\(^3\) The context in any classroom is always shifting.
education because that simply means different exclusions. Instead she advocates for a becoming that looks to become-minoritarian—to remain outside systems of white privilege and heteronormativity—and move away from the majoritarian perspective. Philosophically, this idea is powerful, although the practical execution seems far from obvious. Later, she furthers this idea and considers nomadic thought as the war machine, existing beyond borders. She contends that in the desert, there are no borders; the desert also constantly shifts. For her, the object of the war machine is “creative responses to material problems” (Gould, 2009b, p. 132). Concepts here exist in difference or relationally; it is the connections between them that are significant. She advocates for a problem-based thinking that allows for many possible solutions rather than simply one. The radical exterior she puts forward seems to be an exciting possibility as the radical exterior challenges the normative—pushing it forward. Both of these articles work to destabilize the centre, but are adamant in their refusal to create new exclusions. Rather, they propose first a “becoming-minoritarian” and a “radical exterior” respectively.

**Summary.** In this section on pedagogy, I focused on critical pedagogy and its many elements including a discussion of student histories and experiences, student voice, dissensus, and taking student-centred approaches in the classroom. I also explored Freire’s (1970) concept of “naming the world” in the context of music education. Related to the idea of critical pedagogy and crucial to music education is the importance of engaging in critical multiculturalism—encouraging contextualization of all musics, connections between them and beyond the classroom, and critique in the classroom. Finally, I examined multicentric and Afrocentric possibilities for pedagogy.

**Troubling the Systemic**

In this final section, I consider the work of music educators who work to directly trouble the systemic. I look at the scholars who discuss addressing systemic barriers, those researchers
who consider the cycle perpetuated by the current state of music education, and those who
directly interrogate whiteness. I already discussed some of this work under content and
pedagogy if I felt it belonged more naturally in one of those categories.

**Addressing systemic barriers.** I begin with the work of Gaztambide-Fernández (2010).
In this article, Gaztambide-Fernández takes three archetypes of the artist—the Cultural
Civilizer, the Border Crosser, and the Representator—from his 2008 article *The Artist in Society*
(Gaztambide-Fernández, 2008) and ties them to musician types—the musical “genius,” the
“radical” and the “entertainer.” The point of interest here is in his conclusion. He contends that
in many senses, music education is frozen. He cites three reasons that music education suffers
from this paralysis. According to Gaztambide-Fernández, music education is centered on the
individual; it is an individualistic approach. Secondly, he notes that music education’s
commitment to the rehearsal model and the performance/audience binary reproduces its current
state. Finally, he cites the problem of the institution—how the school in its present form as the
context for music education delimits what we can begin to imagine (p. 79). In this piece, he
highlights three barriers within music education that we must address as a profession. Within the
body of this literature review, it is clear that many people push beyond both the individualistic
approach to music education and the rehearsal model; however, we still need to address the
constraints placed on music by the nature of schooling.

To return to the work of Vaugeois, her chapter on music education as a *practice* of social
justice involves explicitly challenging injustice and inequity as already discussed. In the third
part of the chapter, she describes terms of musical engagement that can involve “troubling
knowledges, noticing and addressing systemic barriers, and opening spaces for non-hierarchical
relationships that take difference and multiplicity as both given and desirable” (Vaugeois, 2009,
p. 15). For her, the work of music education involves the explicit challenge of injustice and

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4 See Acker (1999) for discussion.
systemic hegemony partially through noticing structural barriers. As previously discussed, she provides a valuable tool toward this end.

Younker and Hickey (2007) also explore how issues of equity inform music teaching and learning and wonder what it might mean to teach music through a lens of social justice. They examine four situations that occurred within their own practices and wrote responses to each other’s experiences. Hickey describes a situation in an urban Chicago school where there were continual power struggles over content until hand drums were introduced at which point the students took over. Younker discusses a creative classroom based on the Orff, Kodaly, and Dalcroze approaches that appears to be “fair” and a classroom in Budapest that is strictly a singing classroom. Finally, Hickey describes an autocratic band program. When they write their own narratives and in their responses to each other, they question whom these situations exclude. They address issues of power and elucidate the unequal playing field of music education that operates by perpetuating the cycle of privately trained, middle-class, white, classical educators. They invoke the work of Delpit (1988) to point to the inequities. More implicitly, they point to the question of “whose social justice”—perhaps a far more interesting question and one that they elucidate using Delpit’s 1988 book. Their questions here resonate with Vaugeois’ (2009) work above. They wonder who is missing or excluded from discourse and practice. Music educators can keep these questions in mind when working against structural hegemony and systemic barriers.

**Interrupting the systemic: the Western classical music cycle.** Related to the idea of explicitly addressing structural barriers is the nature of the reproduction of the classical music cycle and the importance of breaking it. Nettl’s (1994) foundational ethnography of the Big Ten Schools of Music in the United States demonstrates the reinscription of the Western European art canon through both the examination of the physical buildings and of the curricula of the institutions. Little has changed since Nettl’s ethnographic work; in many places, the canon is
still privileged. This ethnographic work reveals the institutionalization of Western art music and set the stage for much disruption of the canon that followed.

Bowman (2007a) offers a clear explanation of what I refer to as the cycle of Western classical music in music education and the ensuing pedagogical reinscription of the status quo. Bowman (2007a) notes that as music educators, we

1. Start with an understanding of music derived from and well-suited to one particular mode of musical engagement and practice.
2. Craft a definition of musicianship derived from its basic tenets and demonstrable primarily on instruments that have evolved in its service.
3. Privilege curricula and pedagogies that serve to nurture that kind of musicianship.
4. Select students for advanced study on the basis of criteria well-suited to these modes of practice.
5. Hire faculty to serve the needs and interests of such students. And
6. assess success in terms of the extent to which the norms and values of that tradition and its conventions are preserved. (Bowman, 2007a, p. 116)

Bowman (2007a) spends significant time problematizing the “we” in music education. He essentially calls on music educators to consider the exclusions across the board—students, teachers, professors, and beyond—and challenge the system that reinscribes the status quo. He questions both hiring and admission practices and wonders what is foundational about philosophical foundations. However, this particular explanation above does not speak explicitly to what occurs at the public school level, although there are, of course, public school implications to this cycle he outlines. It is the faculty in these postsecondary institutions that are responsible for teaching music education majors who then replicate that same system in the public schools. This system then produces students who either leave music class at their first opportunity\(^5\) or thrive within the classical structure that caters to the elite few. Within the call to re-envision music education, there are scholars who speak to gaps in the initial and inservice professional development of music teachers (Avery, 2002; Teicher, 1997; Thiessen & Barrett, 2002; Wang & Humphreys, 2009), as well as those who address hiring practices, admission

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\(^5\) Gustafson (2009), for example, speaks of the nearly 100% attrition rate of African American students from school music.
policies (Bowman, 2007a, 2007b; Koza, 2008), in addition to actual curriculum, curriculum policy, pedagogy, and programs, many of whom I mentioned throughout this review. These scholars engage these issues from a range of critical perspectives that separately illuminate a social reconstructionist agenda.

Bowman’s (2003) earlier work calls for the “re-tooling” of foundations. He argues that as a profession, we, as music educators, need to consider what is foundational about music education foundations. He contends that if we consider foundations from a range of philosophical perspectives, it becomes apparent that we need to be doing something other than what is being done right now. He finds that foundations courses typically uphold the status quo (Bowman, 2003, p. 6) and notes that what he terms a postmodern foundations course must be aware of whose interests are being served. Ultimately, he argues that foundations courses should be concerned less with what is and more with what might be possible (Bowman, 2003, p. 25).

Feminist music educator Koza thinks specifically about the manner in which auditions to music education programs reproduce the cycle of exclusion in music education. In an article called *Listening for Whiteness*, Koza (2008) discusses the way voice auditions for the music education program at the University of Wisconsin in Madison exclude certain bodies from the academy through requirements which are raced, without being explicitly named as such. Exclusion is instead based on “style,” but the notion of style itself and, more specifically, preferences for certain styles are both inherently tied to race. She finds that audition committees actively listen for whiteness through funding a specific narrow definition of Western training deemed worthy of further study, but she ultimately advocates for this listening—not to “fund” or validate it, but “to recognize its institutional presence, understand its technologies, and thereby work toward defunding it” (Koza, 2008, p. 154). Defunding whiteness or privilege is a powerful step away from reinscribing the status quo in music education.

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6 She cites the listener demographics of certain music styles/genres as examples.
In my own work exploring the limited and marginal role that Indigenous musical knowledge plays in the academy, I move from what I term to be its subjugated status in the academy toward a cognitive dissonance where Western and Indigenous knowledge take oppositional positions. I theorize that through opposition, people’s understandings slowly move toward recognition of Indigenous musics through discomfort. I use Boler’s (1999) pedagogy of discomfort to explore how we might move into a new space—what I term recognition. Important for the purposes of this review are the implications I make for the shifts in demographics of both students and faculty members of music departments (Hess, 2011).

**Interrogating whiteness and privilege.** Inherently connected to interrupting the systemic reinscription of the status quo is the active work of interrogating whiteness and privilege. Over the course of this review, I discussed this challenge to hegemony extensively. However, the work of Gould (2007b, 2008, 2009a, 2009b), Vaugeois (2007, 2009), Bradley (2003, 2006a, 2006b, 2007b, 2009; Bradley, Golner, & Hanson, 2007), Benedict, and Schmidt (Benedict & Schmidt, 2007; Schmidt, 2008) among others strives to foster a social justice that interrogates privilege and it is worth noting one additional time.

**Summary.** While I addressed these topics through some of the scholarship throughout, in this section, I looked at explicit challenges to inequity in order to think about music educators who actively challenged systemic barriers and worked to interrupt the status quo in music education. I examined the cycle of music education and its perpetuation of Western classical art music and also considered the work of scholars who directly interrogate privilege in their work.

**Situating my Work in the Literature**

In her discussion of different literacies, Gould (2009a) notes that not many educators engage in critical literacy—a literacy that aims to transform society as it acknowledges the inherently political nature of educational content and context. Students’ and teachers’ everyday (musical) world and its
deconstruction comprise the curriculum. Pedagogical approaches associated with it are “situated, interrogative, and counter-hegemonic,” taking into account difference and power. (Gould, 2009a, pp. 47-48, embedded citations from Kelly, 1997, p. 10)

The lack of engagement by music educators in the work of social transformation that Gould identifies is where I situate my work. In seeking out the four music educators I introduce in the next chapter, I actively looked for participants who self-identified as educators who aim to challenge dominant paradigms of music education with their work. According to music sociologist DeNora (2000), if “music can affect the shape of social agency, then control over music in social settings is a source of social power; it is an opportunity to structure the parameters of actions” (p. 20). To connect thinking about music in this light to Gould’s (2009a) contention of music’s historical and present connection to social activism means the potential for music education is very great indeed. This potential points to the elementary music classroom as a very rich prospective site for a multiple case study.

What is most remarkable about this literature review is the number of theorists and scholars represented and the comparative absence of practical case studies and teachers who are “on the ground” doing this work with the notable exception of Clements’ (2010) edited collection containing case studies from the field. As Stauffer (2012) proposed in her presentation at the 24th annual MAYDAY colloquium, rather than critique teachers doing their best in the classroom, it is time to tell “different stories”—stories of educators who work to challenge dominant paradigms and to examine what that means to them and what that entails practically. This dissertation then looks at the discourse, practice, and philosophy of four music educators who seek to challenge the dominant paradigm and explores how doing so materializes in their classrooms.

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7 However, this book was largely under-theorized. A number of authors firmly grounded their case studies in the context of music education research. Many other chapters, however, were mainly anecdotal in nature.
CHAPTER 4

Methodology: A Multiple Case Study in Elementary Music Education

This multiple case study investigates the practices of four elementary music teachers who self-identify as actively challenging dominant music education paradigms. Through considering their work, I explore the ways in which these teachers challenge (or reinscribe) dominant paradigms in music education through their practices, philosophies, and through the discourses that circulate in their classrooms. I remind the readers of the definitions from chapter one in which practice is defined in terms of what teachers actually do in the classroom, whereas discourse is a series of texts or statements that circulate to construct how we think about a subject (Foucault, 1994). Philosophy, as I employ the term, means the ways that teachers articulate thoughts, opinions, or feelings on a subject. This research has a practical emphasis, actively seeking ways that teachers and discourses in music education interrupt dominant approaches to curriculum and pedagogy and perhaps even disrupt the status quo. Ultimately, I intend this research to be practical and useful to music educators in their own thinking and work in disrupting dominant paradigms.

Multiple Case Study

For this research, I employed a multiple case study methodology, collecting data from four music programs in the Toronto District School Board over the course of a six-month period. Studying a particular program is in keeping with case study research (see Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 1998). Merriam (1988) defines a case study as “an intense, holistic description and analysis of a single instance, phenomenon, or social unit” (p. 21). She goes on to identify the possibility of an innovative program to be investigated through case study methodology (p. 22). Merriam (1998) finds that case studies are “particularistic, descriptive, and heuristic” (p.
29), defining heuristic as an aspect of case studies that “illuminate[s] the reader’s understanding of the phenomenon under study” (p. 30). Further to Merriam’s understanding, Yin (2009) notes that a “case study is an empirical inquiry that:

1) investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident;
2) copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points, and as one result relies on multiple sources of evidence with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion, and as another result benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis. (p. 18)

Coupled with Merriam’s (1998) description, these definitions underscore the importance and relevance of using case study research to investigate innovative programs. They also suggest using multiple sources of data to provide a descriptive analysis of four unique programs that can potentially contribute to the music education profession.

The use of this methodology will provides thick description (Geertz, 1973) of four programs led by music educators who attempt to interrupt dominant paradigms. The level of detailed discursive, practical, and philosophical data provided will reveal aspects of music teacher philosophies and discourses that run counter to typical liberal discourses and philosophies in music education specifically, and in education more generally. Ultimately, I aim to offer insights to beginning and experienced music teachers toward developing or altering an educational philosophy and the related music program.

A “Doubled” Methodology: Employing an Anti-Oppression Perspective

Further to the discussion of Lather’s (2007) “doubled” logic in chapter one, this study not only engages in qualitative methods, but also looks to unpack the logic that governs a liberal conception of music education through challenging the dominant ruling ideologies of whiteness, classism, ableism, and heteropatriarchy. As Lather (2007) suggests, I intend a disruption through this work; it is my hope to deploy the work of these music educators in ways that exemplify
approaches to the interruption of the so-called traditional methods of music education explicated in chapter one. I wish to move past critique in this work toward a productive reconceptualization of music education by examining the work of these four educators.

**Site and Participant Selection and Research Relationships**

The four teacher participants in this study—Amanda, Anne, Sarah, and Susan—self-identify as educators who aim to interrupt dominant paradigms in their classrooms. In the selection process, I employed purposeful sampling to select teachers who tailor their programs toward inclusivity, as well as a maximum variation sampling strategy to maximize the differences between participants at the beginning of the study to increase the “likelihood that the findings will reflect differences or different perspectives” (Creswell, 2007, p. 126). The differences in the cases predominantly lie in the specific approaches taken in the classroom. All four teachers taught rotary music classes in the elementary public school system. Amanda and Sarah taught students from junior kindergarten through grade six, Anne taught students from junior kindergarten through grade five, and Susan taught students from junior kindergarten through grade eight. Unlike high school in Ontario, where teachers generally teach three classes per term plus some additional coverage, at the elementary level, teachers teach between seven and eight periods a day. In music, this translates to seven or eight different classes a day. These four teachers approached music education from diverse perspectives that I discuss a bit later. The selection criteria were simply that the music educator identified as an educator striving to interrupt dominant paradigms in elementary music education in some way. In my initial call, I sought teachers who were interested in multiculturalism—a nebulous term I employed because most teachers have a cursory understanding of its meaning. As a result, the teachers in this study all emphasized diversity in different ways within their programs.
After receiving ethics approval from the Research Ethics Board at the University of Toronto, I applied to the ethics review boards of the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) and York Region District School Board (YRDSB). Both boards are extremely diverse in student population and York Region was additionally my former place of employment, giving me a personal connection. In December 2011, I received ethics approval from the Toronto District School Board and a rejection from the York Region District School Board. The latter rejection cited the large imposition on the time of the four participants as the reason for the refusal. After receiving ethics approval from the TDSB, I began to network to find teacher participants.

Because of my six years of teaching experience, my two degrees in music education, and my experience teaching in the Initial Teacher Education program at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto, I am reasonably well-connected in the community of elementary music teachers. In my ethics proposal, I stated that I intended to use my connections to find teachers who may be interested; I approached both the arts consultants at the school boards and professors involved in music teacher education at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education and the Faculty of Music at the University of Toronto. With the exception of the current consultant at the school board who was explicitly asked by the ethics review board not to recommend specific people or classrooms, all of the people with whom I connected suggested names. Amanda’s name came up through a professor who taught her in the Initial Teacher Education program and was impressed with her work. The Director of Elementary Education at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education recommended that I contact Susan as a source of potential contacts. When I contacted Susan, she suggested Sarah and Anne and a few other teachers. She also indicated that she would also like to participate. I contacted everyone suggested initially—about ten teachers—sending a short e-mail about the project, the consent form describing it in more detail, and a recruitment poster. Four of the ten teachers responded positively; the other teachers did not feel they were “a good fit” for the study. I initially wanted
four teachers, so the positive response from four teachers yielded the four participants. Upon receiving positive responses, I gave each teacher a copy of the informed consent form to review without names attached for both themselves and an additional consent form for the principal of each school. On my first day of observation in each of the four schools, I gave both the teacher and the principal or vice principal the consent forms and took a copy for myself and for each teacher and principal. The consent forms for both the teacher and the principal, as well as the initial recruitment poster may be found in Appendix A, B, and C. I also shared a letter with parents regarding my presence in the school (Appendix D). In two of the schools, this letter appeared in their e-newsletter because of their strong ecological focus on creating as little paper as possible. Amanda was the only participant I knew personally before the study; we performed together at a concert in 2005. Before I met Susan, I attended a number of her workshops around the Toronto area. I met Anne and Sarah for the first time on Susan’s recommendation in her role as a former consultant.

Data Collection

A case study is a bounded system (Creswell, 2007, p. 73) that follows a guideline for length of time spent in the field. This study included four schools as sites of research. I spent approximately two months at each site, observing for two full days a week. I observed at Amanda’s school from the week of January 16, 2012 to the week of March 5, 2012, at Sarah’s school from the week of February 20, 2012 to the week of April 9, 2012, at Susan’s school from the week of March 19, 2012 to the week of May 6, 2012, and at Anne’s school from the week of April 15, 2012 to the week of June 3, 2012. Two days of observation a week at six to seven hours a day, depending on the co-curricular schedule, provided me twelve to fourteen hours a week, for a total of 96 to 112 hours over the eight-week period. I also observed additional

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1 Creswell’s (2007) sample case study was “bounded by time (six months of data collection) and place (situated on a single campus)” (p. 93).
activities such as concerts and field trips. This immersion in the schools—“prolonged engagement” in the class environment (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Wolcott, 1997)—allowed me insight into the philosophy, program, and teaching style of each of the four teachers, as well as time to develop a collaborative research relationship with the teachers (Angrosino & Rosenberg, 2011) and rapport with the students and the teachers at the sites.

In keeping within the tradition of case study, I drew the primary data from interviews with the four teachers and from nonparticipant observation. I used the protocol found in Appendix E to observe in the classroom and in co-curricular activities. In addition, I kept a journal throughout all four cases and kept a file of any documents or materials that teachers shared with me in my time at the school. My observations contained reflections and thoughts in addition to observations, whereas the journal was predominantly reflection-based.

I conducted three formal interviews with each teacher, varying in length from just under forty minutes to just over two-and-a-half hours. The first interview offered initial insight into the program, the demographics and history of the school, and the teaching philosophy of each music teacher, as well as their own professional and personal background. The second interview took place after approximately twenty to thirty hours of observation. At this juncture, we discussed the specifics of the program and the motivations behind them. A culminating interview concluded each period of observation. This interview also focused on program specifics, but concentrated on music and educational philosophy more broadly as well. The interview protocol is attached as Appendix F. Informal conversations also occurred throughout the period of observation and I made notes from those conversations in my research journal.

My research plan approved by the ethics review board indicated that the formal interviews would include semi-structured questions. I developed this plan with the expectation that there would be a collegial relationship that developed between us, based on similar education and interests. As Merriam (1998) notes, “rigidly adhering to predetermined questions
may not allow you to access participants’ perspectives and understandings of the world” (p. 74).

The format of the semi-structured interview instead allowed me to mix more and less structured questions and pursue a line of conversation. In addition, as Shiner and Newburn (1997) argue, using semi-structured interviews minimised the extent to which respondents had to express themselves in terms defined by the interviewers and encouraged them to raise issues that were important to them. It was thus particularly well suited to attempt to discover respondents’ own meanings and interpretations. (Shiner & Newburn, 1997, p. 520, as cited in Rapley, 2001, p. 306)

The ability for the teachers to express educational philosophy in their own terms was a crucial element toward the goal of potentially broadening traditional understandings of music education, as it provided space for new ideas expressed in non-traditional ways.

Data Analysis

The data for the project consisted of the transcriptions of all interviews, fieldnotes based on nonparticipant observation, the journal that I kept throughout the study, and other available documents from each school. I transcribed interviews in the months following each period of observation, ultimately finishing with the transcriptions in July 2012. Each interview was transcribed verbatim but without paralinguistics, thinking sounds, or every minor interjection from the interviewer, echoing the manner in which Burnard (2008) and Green (2008) transcribed the interviews in their respective studies. I provided all four teachers with copies of the transcriptions from their three interviews to change and adapt as they felt was appropriate. None of the participants asked for changes to the transcripts. With the exception of Amanda, the teachers selected their own pseudonyms for the purpose of this study.

I began the process of data analysis in July, reading and rereading all of the data and “pre-coding” (Saldaña, 2009, p. 15, citing Layder, 1998); I bolded sections of the data that

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2 The first interview followed a more rigid structure than the following 2-3 interviews.
seemed important and engaged in a reflective process that included writing notes and analytic memos, as Saldaña (2009) suggests. Between the observations, the transcriptions, the artifacts, and the journals, the amount of written data totaled just less than 1200 pages. Once I finished reading the data, I formulated tentative categories or themes that emerged from the data and created a preliminary coding chart using those themes as a basis. I attach this coding chart as Appendix G. Within the coding, I chose to separate the “parent themes” of discourse, philosophy, and practice, although the majority of the “child themes” of these categories were identical to each other. I felt doing so would clarify the data according to the research questions as suggested in the structural coding strategy (Saldaña, 2009, pp. 66-70). I uploaded the written data to the Qualitative Research Analysis program NVIVO and began the process of reading the data a second time. This time, I coded according to the chart. New categories emerged and the coding chart became much more complex by the end of the coding process (see Appendix H). Because so many new categories emerged within the process, I went back and applied the emergent themes to data I coded toward the beginning of the analysis phase. I continued writing analytic memos throughout and considering relationships between themes and subthemes. The coding process, which largely took place in August and early September 2012, took just under six weeks to complete. After analyzing all four sites, I began to perform a cross-case analysis, looking for patterns, similarities, and differences, as suggested by Creswell (2007, p. 75). Overarching themes emerged and I explore these themes within the data analysis chapters.

Validity

Drawing on the validation strategies of Creswell (2007, pp. 207-209), I take a moment here to address the question of the validity of the study. For this study, the biggest validity concern perhaps lies in the site/participant selection process. I selected participants from a group of those music educators who self-identify as educators who aim to interrupt dominant
paradigms in their classrooms. Although I attempted to take a maximum variation approach to selection, Anne and Susan have similar philosophies and all four teachers share aspects of their music education, as well as their racial and cultural background, which introduces limitations into the study.

In this research, I engaged in triangulation between at least four sources of data—interviews with the teachers, nonparticipant observation, a journal kept throughout, and any documents and audiovisual materials available. Notably, however, Denzin and Lincoln (2011) caution against using triangulation as a tool or strategy of validation, emphasizing instead that it is an alternative to validation that “adds rigor, breadth, complexity, richness, and depth to any inquiry” (Flick, 2002; 2007, as cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 5).

I analyzed narratives and classroom practices discursively through the anti-oppression theoretical framework I outlined in chapter one. An important part of my observation protocol and my daily journal was the observation of power dynamics in every class, particularly pertaining to race, class, and gender. Issues of power remained salient in all of my observations and were a primary focus throughout my time at each school. When it came time for data analysis, multiple themes emerged from this focus in my data collection. I then examined the data in each theme and considered where it converged with and diverged from the principles of anti-colonialism, anti-racism, and anti-racist feminism.

After analyzing the data, I conducted participant check-ins. Teachers received transcripts and had the opportunity to correct any errors. Teachers also received the description about their school and personal background contained later in this chapter as well as the data analysis chapters prior to receiving the final document and I invited them to make comments, corrections or changes.

Additionally, as Creswell (2007) suggests, I clarified my researcher bias from the outset as a former elementary music teacher myself. In order to encourage validity, I engaged in
“prolonged engagement and persistent observation in the field” (Creswell, 2007, p. 207). I report on the study using thick description that allows readers to make decisions about the transferability of the data analysis to their own situations (Creswell, 2007, p. 209), rather than seeking any kind of formal generalizability.

**Compensation and Withdrawal**

Study participants were free to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. No withdrawals occurred during this study, although a number of teachers I contacted initially chose not to participate. In terms of compensation, I offered to do some guest teaching in their programs after the end of the period of observation. I did teach in Anne’s school for two days in June following the end of the observations. At the end of the eight weeks at each school, I bought a gift for each teacher as a token of appreciation for their participation and for their generosity with their time.

**Ethical Considerations**

Ethical considerations in this project largely emerged from the comparatively small nature of the community of music educators in Toronto. I told participants at our initial meeting that because of the size of the music community and the unique nature of their programs that despite changing names and descriptions for purposes of confidentiality, it was likely that they would be identifiable to people within the music education network in the Toronto area. All four teachers still agreed to the project. From my perspective, I feel ethically bound by the trust of the teachers and also a sense of responsibility toward the students and the school board for allowing me to become part of these four school communities. Confidentiality of the students, however, is protected throughout. There are no students who are identifiable in this project. When I refer to a conversation or behaviour of a student, I either do not use a name at all or I assign a pseudonym.
Style and Language Considerations

Finally, the accessibility of style and language in this project is of utmost importance to me. I intend this work for interested music educators and in order for this document to be useful, it cannot be couched in highly theoretical and dense language. Instead, I choose to write clearly in a manner that reads easily.

The Participants: Amanda, Anne, Sarah, and Susan

In the second half of this chapter, I provide detailed descriptions of each of the four participants and their schools.

Amanda Boyd. Amanda is eighth generation Canadian. She was born in a small city in Central Ontario, and grew up in a small town in Southwestern Ontario near Lake Erie. She describes her heritage as Anglo, Welsh, and Scottish. Amanda has lived in a range of places—Canada, the Bahamas, Argentina, and the United States. Her family moved to the Bahamas when she was a child and she attended a local school while her father taught there for a year. In high school, she did an exchange year in Argentina. She did graduate work in the United States and lived there for four years. She speaks Spanish fluently and understands Portuguese well, although she says she is shy to speak it. She understands the French spoken in the French immersion program at the school and also studied Italian and German in university to help her on her path as an opera singer.

Education was important in her family. Her father was a teacher and her mother went to college. Her parents were both the first generation in their families to attend university. Her paternal grandfather had grade six education and her maternal grandparents were farmers. Music was important in her family growing up. It was not institutionalized, but it was nonetheless present. Her mother had three sisters and as they did dishes with their mother, they would sing
in four-part harmony. Her grandmother could pick out any tune by ear in any key. As a farmer's wife, her grandmother was busy, so her music remained in the church where she sang as an alto.

Amanda is also an alto. Unlike the non-institutionalized nature of her family's music, Amanda's music instruction was formal. She began piano studies when she was five, but “didn't love it” although she excelled. When she started classical singing lessons at thirteen, she found she loved singing. She studied with the same teacher until university. Classical music was not a natural fit for her; it was not in Amanda's house. She felt more at home in bluegrass music, country music, folk music, and world music and she performed these musics alongside her classical instruction. She continued her formal music instruction and completed a Bachelor of Music in Ontario, Canada, a Master of Music in the United States, and two years of post-graduate work in the United States. She has always sung many musics, despite pressure from her classical teachers not to perform music other than classical. She sings Spanish and Portuguese music, gospel music, and a range of additional musics. She sings professionally as an alto in a large United church choir and she also teaches singing to adult students.

Amanda is in her mid-thirties and is a first year music teacher at Banks Public School. She worked last year at a Long-Term Occasional (LTO) position at a school in Toronto, having completed her Initial Teacher Education the previous year. With the arrival of Amanda, the grade six students at the school have now had six different music teachers in six years. When I began to observe in January, she was in her fifth month as a contract\textsuperscript{3} music teacher.

Banks Public School is in an upscale neighbourhood in the Toronto District School Board. It looks friendly as you approach. Walking up the street, there are large detached houses as you pass by on both sides valued at approximately two million dollars. The neighbourhood is quite wealthy. As the school comes into view, so does the bright, rainbow-coloured playground. The school is accessible, as you approach the front door, with a ramp up to the front. The office

\textsuperscript{3} In Ontario, the term “contract teacher” actually refers to a permanent position.
is immediately to the right of the entrance, and a mural of vivid green with flowers, sky, and trees reminds everyone who walks by of the hope of spring in this cold January. The mural is painted on both walls. The display case on the right-hand side contains a display of Campbell’s soup cans. There are many classrooms on the first floor of this three-story school and large bulletin boards line the halls. Team sports pictures adorn the walls in the hallways revealing uniforms in what appear to be the school colours—yellow and black. The music room is right across from the main entrance.

Racially, the demographics of the school are predominantly white. Amanda remarked that while the school is largely white, there are some Asian students, some brown students, six or seven African Canadians, three or four Jewish students, three Muslim students, and two First Nations students who are brothers. She also noted that within the white population, there is a large Greek and Russian population. According to Amanda, a “fair number” of students speak multiple languages. She estimates the percentage of students who are bilingual or multilingual is approximately 25%. The school is pro-actively LGBTQ positive. There are three openly gay teachers and many of the students have two dads or two moms. Socioeconomically, there is a great deal of wealth in this school community. Between the value of the houses and the specialty stores down the road, the school population draws students at the upper end of the socioeconomic spectrum. The coats, backpacks, and outdoor gear of the kindergarten class, for example, right down to their umbrellas is high quality; these students are well-dressed for winter. In its largely white community, this school is atypical of Toronto schools, which tend to be more diverse, both racially and socioeconomically. Amanda believes that most of the racism that occurs here is anti-Asian. She attributes this racism to the fact that many of the students have Filipino nannies, revealing an attitude of superiority.

The gender dynamics of the school are also interesting. The school is a dual-stream English and French immersion school and the French program begins in Kindergarten. The
English stream of students consists of more male students than female students. Sometimes classes have as great as a two-to-one ratio of boys to girls and there is one grade two class in particular with only six girls in a class of approximately twenty-five. The French immersion stream, conversely, is largely female and is often a two-to-one ratio in that direction. At the beginning of my time at the school, Amanda mentioned a play for masculinity and sense of competition between boys in the school as a typical dynamic. Over the eight weeks I observed, I witnessed this behaviour.

The school has a number of initiatives in which it engages. The foremost of these initiatives is the push toward environmentally sustainable practices. The school has been identified as an eco-school within the board—a fact which is generally a source of pride among staff and students. The student eco-team is very active. When I began observing, they were running a “Boomerang Lunch Program” that encouraged students to take their lunch waste home so their parents would know exactly which parts of their lunch they were eating. For example, if the student brought an apple home with one bite out of it, the parents or guardians would then realize that their child was not likely to eat an apple if it was in their lunch. The motivating idea behind this initiative was to reduce food waste. Besides the eco-team, there were many other programs and co-curricular activities. Other clubs include the folk dance club, volleyball, the knitting club, and the art club, among others. There is an active athletics program that includes a hockey program in January. The school is wealthy and regularly fundraises successfully. School Council gave Amanda money to spend for the coming year—enough money for Amanda to consider fully outfitting her class with iPads for creating music.

The music room is an ordinary classroom converted into a music room. The door is papered with a “Let it Snow” poster complete with musical notes. Entering the room, one sees a

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big open space with a carpet in the centre and Orff instruments on shelves. The side of the room displays a bulletin board with a “contract” signed colourfully by all the students. It asks students to “listen,” “try,” “be respectful,” “cooperate,” and “have patience.” The rewards and consequences related to behaviour are written there. The rewards include space for their ideas. She had all of the students decorate a name sticker with the exception of the kindergarten students at the beginning of the year if they felt the contract “was fair.” Many students remark on it when they enter the room and it has become a regular activity to try to find their friends’ names or their siblings’ signatures on the bulletin board.

Above the music contract is a poster of Satchmo, a poster that has been around since perhaps the 80s, showing a group of (white) adults, the majority of whom are men (only three are women), holding instruments. The man on the end of the first row of three rows is in a wheelchair. The caption reads “Success in music. Success in life. It’s no coincidence.” To the left on the same wall, a poster says “I am a musician.” It is a picture of a child with the violin. Amanda says that these posters were left over from last year. Both of us remember the second of the three posters from past music classrooms in our lives. On the side bookshelf, there are many picture books and books about music, and behind Amanda’s desk there are class pictures with names written underneath. The board has lyrics charts for three songs: Puff the Magic Dragon, Imagine, and Let There be Peace on Earth. There is a chalked-in schedule on the board that reminds the students of the music ensemble commitments for the week. A poster asks students to “Open up—let the sound out” that shows cartoons of three children—two white children and one black child. There is an empty staff above. To the left of the poster, the blackboard says, “Check out books about music” with a quote from the book Celia Cruz, Queen of Salsa by Chambers and Maren: “I sing because when I lift my voice up high I feel like the first pajarito of

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5 Orff instruments are barred pitched percussion instruments that include xylophones, metallophones, and glockenspiels of various sizes. The bars on Orff instruments are inscribed with letter names of each note.
the day whistling buenas dias to anyone who will listen.” The Spanish words are highlighted in yellow and the rest of the text is blue. The book sits below the quote. The top of the board of the front of the room features Western posters of music players, instrument groups, and musical notes. The bulletin board beside the chalkboard contains posters of symbols from Western standard notation.

On the far side of the room is the piano and a bulletin board that says: “Welcome. Music is a Universal Language” with names of many types of music from around the world. The bottom of the board has notation for “It’s a small world after all.” At the back of the room is a sink and a shelf for coats. There is also a table at the back of the room with three chairs. My observations took place at that table.

Students regularly enter the room voluntarily before school and during recesses and lunchtime. There is a grade two student who comes in every day and two budding songwriters who come in to collaborate on their song routinely. Amanda has an open-door policy and there is a culture of comfort in this room. She has developed a quintessentially “safe” classroom environment. The students know that she likes them and respects them and what amounts to mutual caring permeates the majority of interactions in the music room.

Amanda brings a breadth of musical knowledge to the music room. She has diverse musical tastes and abilities, including a rich knowledge of many musics with African roots based on her experience singing in a choir that specializes in Afrocentric repertoire. She is a trained opera singer and sings professionally in different capacities and styles. She is also an amateur bluegrass mandolin player. She has piano background and is generally comfortable learning music both through notation and aurally.

She applies this wide scope of musical knowledge to the classroom, teaching a broad range of musics. This year, her program is structured around a complex theme—diasporic musics beginning with music from Ghana and following the paths of the transatlantic crossing to
their various points of landing in the Americas. In the time I observed, students studied Afro-Brazilian maculelé, Afro-Cuban music, code songs from plantations in the United States, Jamaican mento, and the Blues. She constantly elaborates on context and has students engage in collaborative group work fairly consistently. She provides integrated lessons; her classes regularly involve critical thinking, visual art, movement, language, and social studies—both history and geography. She encourages students to think critically about material including having them interrogate power dynamics in both the world around them and historically. Amanda uses many contemporary examples in her teaching that relate to their worlds and connecting to students’ musics and to musical and non-musical happenings in Toronto is an important aspect of the program. She provides exposure to musics from around the world with equal emphasis on all musics and fosters critical listening in students. Above all, her pedagogy is supportive and she fosters a safe space for the students. In addition to her in-class curriculum, she also directs several co-curricular activities—a primary choir of grade twos and threes and a junior choir of grades four, five, and six. Additionally, in the eight weeks I observed, she ran a four-week program she called “grade 1 choir” to prepare any interested grade ones to be in choir next year.

When I asked Amanda how she felt she challenged dominant paradigms in her classroom, she responded that most aspects of her program challenged “traditional” music education. She referred to her privileging of aural learning over notation and teaching students “through telling stories” and bringing a cultural context to the music. She was adamant throughout her work that all musics studied would be performed using musical practices appropriate for each individual music. Her practice also regularly addressed power dynamics and equity issues far beyond the scope of the dominant paradigm in music education, which often serves to reinscribe structural inequities.
I first met Amanda in 2004. She was singing with an Afrocentric choir at the time and I was drumming and dancing semi-professionally with a Ghanaian drum and dance troupe. In February 2004, the groups came together for a joint concert featuring Ghanaian music. We had a few more encounters over the course of the next several years. For five of the years I taught elementary students, I brought my Ghanaian drum and dance ensemble to a local teacher education program to perform as an aspect of the initial teacher education arts requirement. On one of those occasions, Amanda was in the audience, as she was pursuing her Bachelor of Education. When I began to think about my dissertation research, I thought of her and wondered where she was teaching. Then, when I e-mailed my contacts in local Initial Teacher Education programs and faculties of music, her name was one of the three that came up immediately. I contacted her and we met soon after that to discuss the possibility. We did not know each other well at the beginning of the project, but she was the only educator of the four who participated in this project with whom I had a personal connection. I observed in her classroom from the second week in January until March break.

Anne Matthews. Anne’s heritage is Irish, English, and Scottish and she has lived in the Toronto area her whole life with the exception of her undergraduate degree in Eastern Ontario. She received both a Bachelor of Arts with honours in music and sociology and a Bachelor of Education.

Anne grew up in a musical family. She began piano lessons when she was five years old, but quit six months later. She learned enough in those six months of lessons to teach herself to read music. She would play around on the piano on her own. Formal school music for Anne began in grade six, which gave her an opportunity to play an instrument. She started on French horn, which she describes as “not a good experience,” and then switched to flute, which she loved. She always loved to sing and joined the choir in middle school and took flute lessons for six months in lieu of grade nine music. After that, she participated in the regular school music
program in high school and continued to sing on the side, but never in front of people. She also learned guitar informally when she was in high school. She taught herself to play in order to accompany her singing.

After finishing high school, she enrolled in the sociology program at university. After first year, she found she missed music and she ultimately took a double major in sociology and music. She took vocal music for the first time in her last year of university. She loved it and regretted not having taken it sooner. After years of singing when no one could hear, she sang for the first time, at the age of twenty-one, in front of her parents.

She describes her musical listening tastes as eclectic. Her favourite genre is female acoustic folk, which she loves to hear live. She feels that it is perhaps her favourite genre because it is a style with which she identifies, and she also enjoys playing acoustic folk music. Her listening choices are broad, ranging from Pink Floyd to classical music and much of what is in between. She writes music as well, although she does not see herself as a songwriter or composer. Her personal performance experience has largely been in the ensemble context—choir in middle school, band in high school, and opera in university. However, most of her performance experience is as a conductor through teaching. Despite her years of informal learning, she describes herself as dependent on musical notation when performing music.

Anne has taught for twelve years at Mills Road Junior Public School. She began her teaching career as a grade one teacher. She did not know at the time that teaching music to elementary school students was a possibility, but music was a large part of her grade one program. There were four grade one classrooms in the school at the time and she taught music to all of the grade one students, initially within an arts rotation. Anne taught the music, another teacher taught the drama, and a third teacher taught the visual arts. Upon seeing the program that Anne provided, the principal asked if she would like to be the music teacher. She accepted, with the condition that she have her own classroom. She took maternity leave the year after her first
year as a music teacher and when she returned, the principal placed her back in a regular classroom. When she returned from the second leave, the new principal placed her back into music and this year is her fifth year doing full-time music.

Mills Road Junior Public School is considered an inner-city school, part of the board-wide *Model Schools for Inner Cities* initiative. This school is at the lower end of the board’s *Learning Opportunities Index* (a complex ranking scale), indicating that the school population has a high level of socioeconomic need. This low ranking provides the school with extra teaching staff and additional funding. With the extra staffing, the school has chosen to create small classes of grade fours and fives that meet in the morning. The morning classes are made up of five groups of sixteen or seventeen students. These groups then become three classes of approximately thirty students in the afternoon. The community in which the school is situated is relatively new, but there is little infrastructure to support the community. There is no community center or central area where people might gather, so the school has taken up that role in the neighbourhood. The school has now been open for twelve years and the staff has worked hard to involve parents.

Anne describes the school population as a large number of newcomers to Canada who mainly consist of low-income families. According to Anne, there is much migration within the student body. The majority of students in the school are of African descent. Asian, brown, and white students are in the minority. Anne cites the parenting family center as a source of roots within the school and the community. There is now a core group of parents who are beginning to form the Parent Council. Fundraising is a difficult task for the school and does not generate a significant amount of revenue. Twelve years ago when the school first opened, there were no specialty programs. Anne and many of the homeroom teachers held concerts throughout the years that were usually well-attended by the parents. Two years ago, the school started an end-
of-the-year celebration and a beginning of school barbecue, which have attracted an increasing number of families from the community.

A hub of the community, Mills Road welcomes those who walk in. It is a combined junior school and a middle school in one large building. The junior school office is to the right of the main entrance. There is a huge spring scene mural on the walls of the kindergarten hallway, and the display case around the corner from the office contains a number of music picture books, instruments from a number of different cultures, and captions explaining the diverse contexts of music. Outside the grade one room next door, there is a collage of hands together, clearly traced and coloured with a sign that says, “All the colours we are” in a veritable rainbow of colours.

Anne describes social expectations as an important part of explicit teaching at the school to address how students behave in different environments both within and outside of school. Over the years, the physical education program and the music program have developed into strong programs. Anne partially attributes the increase in student interest and participation in school to the strength of these programs. Fighting is an issue within the school. Next year, the school is piloting a project for the school board called Positive School Behaviour Support that aims to reinforce positive behaviour rather than focusing on negative behaviour. The project will involve having the students and staff create expectations together about appropriate ways to behave in different environments. Presently, the school prefers not to suspend students. Actions that would cause suspensions in other schools such as serious fights, hitting teachers, and vandalizing bathrooms do not result in suspensions at this school.

The music program began with one class per cycle for the primary division classes. The junior teachers receive their preparation time through the French program, so if they also receive preparation time through music, then they have to pay it back—usually by covering another class. Because the staff as a whole did not consider preparation time payback desirable, adding
the junior classes to the music timetable was a battle. Anne advocated both for the importance of a music program and its positive effects on students, and her own worth as a music teacher. The school no longer fights about whether or not to have a music program. Every class in the school has two music classes a week, and staff assignments include a designated music teacher. The program also began without a single instrument. Anne built the resources in the program including instruments through various means, including the Canadian Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences (CARAS) Band Aid grant.

The program itself is quite diverse. It features songs from around the world and often incorporates Afrocentric repertoire, reflecting the school population. Many of the songs students sing in classes are songs that children sing in various places around the world. Movement is large component of the program, particularly in the primary classes, but also in the junior classes; there are rarely classes in the younger grades where there is no movement. The Orff approach is foundational within the program. The students create, improvise, and explore music. The classroom has approximately fifteen djembes and a full complement of Orff instruments. Anne runs a vibrant recorder program in grades four and five. It is a Recorder Karate program where the students work to achieve their “belts” in recorder. It is not uncommon for her to have ten students before the bell in the morning trying to earn a belt. In terms of co-curricular activities, Anne has a primary and a junior choir, a recorder ensemble, an Orff ensemble, and has done drumming ensembles in the past as well.

The music room is beautiful—a big open space overflowing with resources. In the front of the room, there is much information. At the top of the board, there are charts entitled “Instrument Playing for Success,” “Listening for Success,” “Singing for Success,” and

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6 The timetable operated in this manner the year of the study, but the following year, Anne’s time with each junior class was cut in half.
7 See http://musicounts.ca/band-aid-grants/ for further information on this program.
8 Djembes are hand drums from West Africa.
“Recorder for Success” that the students created from Anne’s outline of expectations for each aspect of music class. The public address system is at the front of the room with the clock and there is a world map and the words for O Canada at the front as well, with a picture of an Inukshuk at the top of the lyrics. A chart at the front asks students, “Do you know? 1) What we are learning today? 2) Why we are learning it? 3) How I will know if you have learned it?” There is also a xylophone chart at the front and a sign that announces “fair does not equal same.” There is a rhythm of the day and posters for the musical elements with key words. A large chart at the front outlines recorder belts for level two and cartoons of elements such as dynamics and tempo. The theme for the spring concert is the four elements: fire, air, water, and earth. There are bins of instruments at the front of the room separated by type into different labeled drawers. A box of hand drums sits on top of the drawers. Another bulletin board at the front has posters of the staff and various notation symbols. Anne’s desk is quite neat and there are shelves with music picture books beside it. Additional picture books are in bins at the back. Behind Anne’s desk are shelves with binders, a Tupperware container of boomwhackers, and a box of rainsticks. In front of her desk is a stereo with a shelf full of CDs underneath. At the side of the room, there are three drums with legs on the bottom—an accommodation for students with mobility issues who are not able to tip them off the floor. Orff instruments are set up around the perimeter of half the carpet. The piano is at the back of the room, but a keyboard is set up at the front. There is a log drum at the back with several axatses⁹ and the djembes. The back bulletin board has some posters about how we hear sounds. At the back of the classroom, there are bins containing miscellaneous things, both musical and non-musical including shakers, crayons, cups, scrap paper, rulers, markers, headphones, and books. There are two computers in the room, one at the back, and one at the front. There are cupboards and a sink at the side with

⁹ Axatses are gourd shakers from West Africa with shells attached to netting around the outside of the gourd to create sound.
recorder bins next to it on the counter for clean and used recorders. This program also has a contract with the students; there are chart paper contracts for each class clipped together on the back bulletin board. The contracts say: “We will be kind to each other, to the teacher, to the instruments. We will listen to each other, to the teacher, to the music. We will move safely in the music room.” All the students in each class have signed it.

When I asked Anne how she felt she challenged dominant paradigms, she pointed to the constant battle to maintain the arts in schools and noted that simply having a program in the face of this type of adversity challenged dominant understandings of what is and what should be considered “important” in schools. Beyond merely having a program, however, Anne also centred Afrocentric repertoire in her program and worked explicitly to make sure students had what they needed in a world where “fair does not equal same.”

I contacted Anne initially on the recommendation of Susan. As a former consultant, Susan saw a wide range of programs in her previous work with the school board and suggested that Anne’s program might fit well within the study. We met to talk initially early in 2012 and I was in her school from the middle of April to the beginning of June.

**Sarah Miller.** Sarah grew up in a small French, Swiss, German town in Nova Scotia. The town is a UNESCO world heritage site because of its unique architecture and the town’s history—a history of which her mother’s family was very much a part. Sarah’s father was from Cape Breton. Her heritage is French on her mother’s side and English on her father’s side, but English is her sole fluent language, although she has sung in many different languages over the years. Her family was very musical. Her father’s family boasted many musicians and composers. Her paternal grandfather was a church organist and school principal and his brother was a cellist. Although her father did not play an instrument himself, he had a large, eclectic record collection. As she grew up, Sarah was surrounded by music ranging from Cape Breton fiddle playing, to Gospel hour, to Sousa marches, to Haydn string quartets, to the Carter family,
and Johnny Cash. Her mother played the piano and the organ and worked as a substitute church organist. Her brother played the bass guitar and the classical guitar, while her sister sang and played the flute. Sarah played the flute and piano, and also sang. She took piano lessons from an early age.

Sarah moved from Nova Scotia to New Brunswick to attend music school. Her degree is in music and included courses in theory, performance, and music education. She spent her summers in Toronto while she was in school, moving permanently shortly after graduation to join her sister and complete her education degree in Ontario. Her main instrument was piano; she accompanied in school and in musical theatre before she reached university. In addition to her main instrument, she sang and played the flute. She had an extensive background in choral music, singing for fourteen years with a professional choir in Toronto. After she began teaching, she learned to play the Hurdy Gurdy and became a part of the medieval music scene. Sarah’s listening tastes are eclectic. She loves Gamelan music, Celtic music, Baroque music, and medieval music. She listens to Scandinavian traditional music, the nickel harp, Italian accordion players, and the music of Quebec. She also spent time performing back-up vocals in a rock band.

Sarah is intensively involved in Javanese Gamelan music in Toronto. She became aware of Balinese Gamelan in her university days in the early 1980s through a record exchange with a friend. When she moved to Toronto, she met the founder of a Gamelan Ensemble who was in the process of importing some instruments from Indonesia. Sarah attended early performances of the ensemble. In 2000, the school board started a world music initiative. Part of that initiative was the purchase of two full Gamelan sets for the board to circulate within schools and an expert musician to teach several half days in the schools. Her school was the first to get one of the Gamelan sets and they played at the official blessing ceremony for the instruments. This event introduced her to people at the Indonesian Consulate—an introduction that became
important later. At that point, she became involved with two Gamelan ensembles in Toronto. A few years into the world music program, the school board wanted to replace the Gamelan workshop leader in the schools. In the interim, Sarah took over the teaching component of the program, spending nine half days per term teaching in other schools while maintaining her full-time teaching position. Over the years, she continued to run a Gamelan Ensemble at the school. She built a complete Gamelan set in her classroom from of pots and pans, and some parts of Orff instruments with altered tunings.

One of Sarah’s music teachers—her teacher from grade three through grade nine—had a significant effect on Sarah. She taught Sarah to play the flute beginning in grade three, and Sarah regularly performed in a small group with her circle of friends who were also engaged in music. Out of the group of five friends who sang together, four of them majored in music at university. Sarah took leadership roles in music early on, acting as a flute teacher at music camps and as an accompanist in a range of other venues. After completing her music degree and receiving her teaching certification, she found a teaching position at Brownstone Junior Public School and has stayed for the past twenty-four years. A few years into the position, she took over the music consultant role in the board for someone on maternity leave and supervised forty-seven schools in the east end of the city, which reaffirmed her desire to remain at her current school.

Brownstone Junior Public School is an old school with a friendly environment. Student work greets those who walk through the front door. The surrounding neighbourhood of attached houses appear, from the number of doorbells and mailboxes, to house multiple families. Upon entering, the office is immediately to the left. The principal greeted me on the first day and was consistently a presence in the school. According to Sarah, there is not a great deal of turnover amongst the staff. When Sarah joined the staff twenty-four years ago, the majority of the staff had been there more than ten years. There were a large number of retirements with the election
of the Conservative Mike Harris government in 1995, and now Sarah is one of the three longest-term teachers on the staff.

Sarah describes the school demographics as predominantly Chinese—many Mandarin and Cantonese-speaking students and parents. The school houses a large number of new immigrants and a significant number of students who are learning English. At one point in the school’s history, there was an “ESL reception room” (English as a Second Language) run for six years by an assistant for students who were at the beginning stages of learning English. At that time, they hired translators for school concerts. The population has shifted somewhat over the years and the language needs are slightly lower than they once were. At the beginning of her time at the school, Sarah’s teaching schedule included teaching English Language Learners (ELL) as well as music classes. There are a number of Muslim students at the school, some of whom wear the hijab. There are generally between three to five white students in every class of approximately twenty-five. Black and brown students are in the extreme minority with not more than one or two black or brown students in any class. The population is largely students of East Asian descent.

The camaraderie among the staff is evident. The staff room is often bustling and in the eight weeks I was there, there was a surprise party during recess for someone’s sixtieth birthday, as well as a spring celebration featuring all green foods. Sarah initiated both of these celebrations in cooperation with one of her colleagues. Student art adorns the walls and there are posters everywhere about school events with the community. There is an emphasis on anti-bullying policies within the school. The physical education program is vibrant at Brownstone. The sports teams are excellent and often compete on a city-wide scale. This school is also an eco-school committed to reducing waste and conserving electricity and paper. Brownstone also offers Chinese heritage classes and Aboriginal language classes that are open to all students. Finally, like Mills Road, Brownstone is part of the Model Schools for Inner Cities initiative in
the board, indicating a high level of economic need at the school. This program provides additional funding for lower-income schools to engage in initiatives such as anti-bullying education. Additionally, this school recognizes that programs and special events often need to be subsidized to provide opportunities to all students.

The music room is upstairs on the third floor toward the end of the hall. The room is alive—filled with music picture books, music books, props from years of musicals, stuffed animals, posters, a full set of homemade Gamelan, Gamelan notation charts, and several lyric sheets for the Primary Choir Musical (*The Wackadoo Zoo* by Jill Gallina). At the side of the room under the lyric sheets and Gamelan notation sheets, there are stacks of Orff instruments. Behind the teacher's desk, there are bins filled with auxiliary percussion instruments and miscellaneous resources. There is a stack of *Musicanada*\(^{10}\) textbooks, and the cubby holes with bins inside are filled to overflowing with bongos, multiple frame drums, tambourines, and a can full of mallets. In the corner, there are stacking baskets full of props and stuffed animals and a large collection of hats that was donated to the school. The piano is in the same corner of the room. Behind it are more bins and more resources. The teacher's desk is decked with years of presents, two pairs of spoons, a rainstick, a bell, two ocarinas, a trophy, a staff picture, and numerous resources, as well as a handful of Valentines. The staff picture reveals the staff demographic is more than three-quarters white.

The homemade Gamelan is literally made of pots and pans. The melodic instruments have hammered down keys from Orff instruments to alter the tuning for the Javanese scale. There are some side cubbyholes on the opposite side of the room containing coloured paper and numerous resources and hooks and hangers at the side of the class. There is a sink with a dish rack full of dishes, a small CD player, and a coffee pot. Next to the sink, there are two charts—one for the “Junior Choir Student of the Week” and one for the “Primary Choir Student of the

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\(^{10}\) *Musicanada* (general editor, Penny Louise Brooks) was a popular elementary textbook series from the 1980s.
Week.” The latter is divided into “Choir 1” and “Choir 2.” There are a few chairs stacked for use by the assistants. The students do not sit in chairs while they are here. There are posters of white, male composers of the past above the window. Around the door, there are many posters of things going on around the city. Outside the classroom are events that the students have attended including the children’s opera—*Isis and the Seven Scorpions* by Dean Burry. There are also instructions on how to make an instrument out of a hose. There are literally resources everywhere in the room—stacks of books on shelves and in cubbyholes, bins of instruments, charts with lyrics rolled up in every possible nook in the room. There are two bins of cassette tapes and shelves of music books behind the desk. There are music picture books displayed on the board and on shelves.

The students have a strong connection with their teacher. She has taught most of them since they were four and they have built a relationship. She is firm with them and expects them to not be silly. She takes them seriously and listens to their stories and to what they have to say. Her expectations for behaviour are high and for the most part, the students meet them. Each class covers a lot of material in a week. Unlike the average music teacher schedule where students receive one or two classes a week, students at Brownstone have music classes either three or four times in a five-day cycle. Because of Sarah’s long tenure at the school, she now teaches a few students whose parents she also taught.

Her program involves a range of musics. While I was observing, they worked on a Gamelan unit. The younger classes do extensive movement and many singing games. Earlier in the year, Sarah had made use of the wealth of Orff instruments in her classroom although I did not see the Orff approach while I was there. In the past, she has done Ghanaian drumming with the students through the board world music program. She also makes wonderful use of music picture books. While Western standard notation is present in her program, it is not a particularly large component. She produces a large-scale musical annually involving the primary students
and a smaller scale one involving the junior choir. She believes musicals are helpful with language learning and is quite proud of the musical theatre productions at the school. Primary choir is part of her timetable and all primary choir students are in the musical. She sees the seven primary classes (grade one to three) in two large groups, one class each at the end of the day. They are two groups of approximately seventy students each. All students from that large group who are interested in speaking parts for the musical come at lunch, between forty to fifty students. In addition to the curricular primary choir, her co-curricular ensembles include a junior choir and the Gamelan ensemble. She has a large number of boys involved in both the junior choir and the voluntary aspect of the primary choir and the Gamelan ensemble is fairly evenly divided between boys and girls.

One of the most unique aspects of Sarah’s program is her involvement with the community. She makes students aware of musical opportunities in the city through exposing them to artists directly, either by taking them to performances, or bringing artists into the schools. Over the course of the eight weeks I was there, the students saw a beat-boxer give a presentation on bullying, heard a Brazilian drum and dance ensemble, played the Gamelan, and went to the symphony at Roy Thomson Hall. All of these events were fully subsidized by the school and the trip out to the Toronto Symphony Orchestra cost the students one dollar for public transit. The Brownstone Gamelan Ensemble also travelled to the Indonesian Consulate to practice on their full Gamelan set twice during my time at the school. Before I arrived, the students had seen an opera performance at the school and gone to hear a choir perform. When I left, the junior choir was going to hear a choir perform at Roy Thomson Hall, a beat-box flautist was coming in, and some local musicians who run a community music school in the area were coming into the school to perform. Sarah made students aware of musical happenings in the city. When I inquired how Sarah felt she challenged dominant paradigms in her program, she immediately mentioned her connections to the community and wanting students to be aware of
their city. She also noted her connection to world music in her program and to the Gamelan in particular.

I contacted Sarah on Susan’s recommendation in her capacity as a former music consultant with the board. Susan felt that Sarah would be a good fit for the project. I met with her for coffee in January to discuss it with her and began observing in mid-February. I finished at the school in mid-April. I had not met Sarah prior to that meeting, although we soon discovered that we knew many of the same musicians.

**Susan Thomson.** Susan’s heritage is Irish Canadian and American—Irish Canadian on her mother’s side and American on her father’s side. She is originally from a city in eastern Ontario and a place she describes as lacking diversity. During her childhood, the city demographic was white Anglo Saxon Protestant. Her exposure to the “big world,” as she terms it, came through her father—a biology professor who taught international students. She has lived in multiple places since then, including Scotland for eight years.

Susan’s family emphasized education and her parents wanted to see her continue with postsecondary school. She was a strong student academically and began studying music at the age of seven. She studied piano and by age sixteen, she taught piano to younger students. She pursued exams through the Royal Conservatory of Music and completed her grade ten by the end of high school. Following high school, she studied musicology at an Ontario university. She left after a year to pursue an honours English degree at another institution and completed her degree in English. She later began a master’s degree and doctoral work abroad, the latter in middle Scots poetry. Besides English, Susan speaks French fluently, some Italian, and high school Latin. When she returned to Canada after Scotland, she obtained the Associate of the Royal Conservatory of Toronto (ARCT) certification in order to have a diploma in piano. She took a course with a well-known early childhood music educator and apprenticed with her for a year. At that point, she discovered the Orff approach and the Kodaly method and became
passionate about it. She completed her Orff certification and seven or eight courses subsequent to the three training courses. Afterwards, she spent time studying with teachers she considers extraordinary.

Susan studied cello and piano privately for many years and also had the opportunity as a teacher to do extensive choral study. Although she sang in choirs as a child, her experience with choral music came with teaching. She also learned guitar informally, and recorder as a component of the Orff courses. In this regard, she is mostly self-taught. She cites a number of opportunities through the school board that allowed her to learn some Ghanaian drumming, dancing, and singing, and Javanese Gamelan techniques. She describes a broad range of listening tastes—classical, jazz, folk music, opera, musics from around the world, and other genres or artists in between that “catch her attention.”

Her thinking on music pedagogy came early. When she was sixteen, her piano teacher assigned her a young piano student to teach as her own studio was full. A subsequent teacher, who took over for Susan’s own teacher when she took a year’s sabbatical, handed Susan a copy of Diller’s (1957) *The Splendor of Music*. At that point, Susan began to think about how to teach instead of imitating the way she had been taught. The reading about pedagogy continued and although she left the musicology degree after a year to pursue honours English, followed by further education in New Zealand and Scotland, when she returned to Canada after eight years in Scotland, she went back to music and completed her ARCT in piano and her Orff training. She became an itinerant Orff teacher with the local school board, working half-time. She also ran a music and movement program privately for preschoolers. From the itinerant work, she applied and was accepted to a Bachelor of Education program in Ontario.

Susan’s first teaching position was in the centre of Toronto and was largely a senior school position (intermediate grades). It was a difficult position: classes of thirty-five students,

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11 See the Carl Orff Canada website at [http://www.orffcanada.ca/](http://www.orffcanada.ca/) for further information on Orff courses.
including a psychiatric class integrated into a regular classroom without the benefit of teaching assistants. As a first year teacher, Susan struggled with management issues. The school was reorganized at the beginning of the year and she ultimately taught half-time at that school and half-time at another school that was also in the centre of the city. She remained at the second school half-time for fifteen years. She describes that school as having a diverse student population. There were some students of privilege and some students from a local refugee house. There was not a large population of English Language Learners (ELL), but there were always some students. Her first year of teaching was split between these two schools. She remained half-time at the second school in year two and returned to the Orff department as an itinerant with the remainder of her time.

When she decided to leave the Orff department and return to the classroom full-time, she remained at the second school and began half-time at a third school, spending three years there. This school had a predominantly Portuguese and Vietnamese population. She describes the school as a “hundred per cent immigrant population.” The teachers at the school worked a great deal on first language literacy and developed a first language library long before other schools did. She believes her Orff program with its intensive language-basis helped with language learning. At the end of the three years at that school, she took a year’s sabbatical and began working with a colleague in her music curriculum consulting business, doing curriculum development. At that time, she also had the opportunity to pursue extensive reading on educational philosophy and trends. When she returned from her sabbatical, she took on an instructional leader position in the school board, working with teachers and itinerants in a professional development capacity. She also coordinated larger projects such as choral projects and board-wide initiatives. Following the instructional leader position, she began to teach at her present school and is currently in her third year with the students.
Morrison Public School is in a relatively affluent area of Toronto west of the centre of the city. The neighbourhood surrounding the school appears wealthy. The houses are mostly two-story and detached—many with their own unique designs. As I was riding the bus at the beginning of my time at the school, I had a careful look at the houses in the neighbourhood. I looked at the numbers and for multiple doorbells to see if there were indications of multi-family/multi-unit houses. To the best of my knowledge, the homes in the neighbourhood are single-family dwellings. The brown brick school is also two stories. There are two murals outside the school, which is attached to the community centre. Both buildings are welcoming and one mural is made entirely of handprints. Student art greets the eye at the entrance and the office is directly inside. The “winterscapes” on the bulletin board seemed out of place in the flash of March spring weather, but became seasonal again as the temperature dipped back below zero. Across from the office is a fundraising bulletin board boasting a $31,000 fundraiser. There are pictures from various school fundraising events including a pub night. Outside the music room are pictures of students playing instruments at the December school concert and two concerts programs—the school concert program from just before the spring break and the concert at George Weston Recital Hall that included the Choral Project\textsuperscript{12} in which the school participated featuring Aboriginal blues artist Pura Fe and renowned choral conductor Lori-Anne Dolloff.

According to Susan, there is a subsidized housing project near the school. She says that many of the African Canadian students who attend the school live in that community, and there is a divide between students along class lines. Susan says, “We have that significant minority of kids and I think it’s hard for them in a way at Morrison because the rest of the kids are very affluent.” Racially, the school is predominantly white. Many students are of eastern European

\textsuperscript{12} The Choral Project takes place within the school board. It provides an opportunity for many school choirs to come together to form one mass choir and work with a master conductor on shared repertoire.
descent from countries that include Serbia, Croatia, the Ukraine, and Russia. A minority of students are African Canadian.

The school is wealthy. Over the last two years, Susan’s room alone received $20,000 to purchase Orff instruments. Many students are busy with afterschool lessons and programs including music lessons, swimming, and various other sports. Parents play an active role in the school, both through Parent Council and fundraising, but also at the classroom level with their children’s teachers. According to Susan, the parents of the children in the subsidized housing are less actively involved in the parent council, which she attributes to a “lack of empowerment.”

The school has an extended French program beginning both in grade four and grade seven, which results in three different streams of students in grades seven and eight—those who have been in extended French since grade four, those who began the program in grade seven, and those who do not participate in the program. The extended French program entails students receiving half of the day’s instruction in French and the other half in English. There is also a Home School Program (HSP) at the school for students who are two or more years behind in their grade level. The HSP students are integrated for music, creating, in one case, a class of forty-one. The principal is extremely active and always present and visible in the school community. She is very supportive of music. Since the population of English Language Learners is small (most of the students are second generation Canadian), there was less emphasis on the kind of first language learning program Susan experienced at her previous school. Susan notes that many students speak a second language, but they have also spoken English their whole lives. She stated that in general, there are between six and eight languages represented in each class.

The school has a vibrant physical education program and the students are involved in many sports activities. Susan describes the students’ schoolyard activities as reflective of a high degree of skill that they acquire through the school program. Students are often out of school
competing in sports tournaments. They also have a cardboard boat race and a robot building competition. Additionally, the school has a swimming pool attached to it, so the students have the opportunity to swim as an aspect of the physical education program. There is also a media club that films events in the school. The school is also involved in Character Education—a board-wide initiative that recognizes one student in each class for a “trait” designated for each month. The school participates in anti-bullying campaigns and is also a designated eco-school, although it is much less of a focus here than at Banks Public School.

Susan’s program is quite diverse in repertoire, resources, and approaches. The room is massive. It has an expansive open floor space at the front, a full complement of ergonomic chairs made especially for music rooms, and three tiers up to the back stage where there are three rows of Orff instruments. The stage holds more instruments. There are string instruments in the back cupboards on one side and guitars on the other, and two double basses at the side of the room. The piano is at the front of the room, as is the teacher’s desk, where her personal computer is hooked up to speakers. There are bins of recorders at the side of the room. Tall storage cupboards line the perimeter of the room. On the front cupboard, there are rhythm cards and a list of basic Western musical forms including ABAB, ABAC, AABB, AAAB, ABBA, AABC, AABA, AB, ABA, ABACA, Verse-Chorus. There is a list of “rhythm building blocks”—two-beat rhythms that the students can use. A large blue chart allows students to place rhythms on display for the class and create rhythmic “questions” and “answers.” On the front board, there is a chart showing the Curwen hand signs in mirror image for a right-handed person. There is also a recorder chart, a xylophone chart, and two treble staves. Next to the board, there is a list of the (Western/curricular) “elements of music” with points underneath each element. The music class rules are also displayed. They include: “1) Enter in silence and listen. 2) Act respectfully to everyone/everything. 3) Play instruments only when asked to. 4) No gum. 5) No washroom

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13 Each class begins with music listening.
breaks. 6) Do your best always.” On the wall by the door, there is another recorder chart with fingerings for the notes C through C’ and an article about Billie Holiday. The side of the room lists either voice or recorder types (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and some possible (Western) terms for dynamics and articulations. The Ontario Music Educators’ Association (OMEA) poster on the “Creative Process” is also on display. There is a map of the world on the side bulletin board. Under the map, there is a chart about a listening log. So far this year, students have listened to songs in many genres from around the world. The songs for grade eight students were chosen partly because they demonstrated a specific musical element (at the beginning of the year), because they were on the program of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra concert the school attended at Roy Thomson Hall, or because they fit into the world music theme of the year. Each class begins with listening of some kind, and the intermediate students are responsible for a listening log to track their listening.

The program is Orff-intensive and quite diverse. The primary grades focus on singing games. Games are often about animals or other subject matter that potentially incorporates movement. Movement is ubiquitous within the program right up through grade six. The students move imaginatively through activities that provide opportunities to create music and to improvise. There is an emphasis on building a classroom community. Reading notation is an aspect of the program, but it does not dominate. In grades four, five, and six, the students study the recorder. The grade sixes and the grade fives in the grade five/six split classes play the alto recorder. The intermediate students have a guitar program, which is largely chord-based. The schedule is such so that the students only have music once a week for forty minutes, with the exception of the intermediate students, who have an extra thirty-minute period for their guitar classes. The timetable includes two thirty-minute periods at the beginning and the end of the day. The classes go by quickly between the entrance and exit routines. The intermediate students are on a different timetable than the junior school. They do not have recesses throughout the
day, but they finish fifteen minutes earlier than the junior school and have transition time throughout the day. Like many music teachers, Susan regularly gives up every lunch hour. There is one day in a five-day cycle on which she has three recess duties. In the mornings, she often arrives by seven o’clock and she regularly is last to leave at the end of the day. For the primary and junior grades, she follows a program in a curriculum series called *Gameplan*, a program from the United States. She supplements the program with her own material. For the two intermediate grades, she has a specific focus. The grade seven classes looked particularly at music with African roots as the foundation of the majority of popular music in North America. The grade eight classes examined musics from around the world, culminating in a project on a song of their choosing. The students presented the project to a small group in May, during my last week at the school.

In addition to the activities that occur in class time, Susan runs multiple co-curricular activities including a primary choir, a junior choir, a grade three choir, an intermediate choir, and an Orff ensemble. She also has a choir called the “Man Choir” for boys who like to sing. There are several grade four boys in the choir, a number of intermediate students, former students who are now in high school, one teacher, male singers from a community choir, and one parent. She hopes that the program will encourage the boys to keep singing through their voice change. An itinerant strings teacher and recorder teacher provide a complementary strings and recorder program in addition to what Susan offers the students. She does five concerts a year, one concert for each school division (primary, junior, and intermediate) and two ensemble concerts. She has also brought in a Ghanaian master drummer, a Gamelan expert, and a Chilean percussionist who work with the school board. Students attend concerts outside the school and often experience performances brought into the school at some point during the year.

Before I met Susan, I attended a number of her workshops over the years. A workshop at a Canadian Orff conference in which her students performed a South African gumboot dance
and played the mbira\textsuperscript{14} using mbiras and Orff instruments particularly impressed me. The students had physically rearranged the Orff instruments so they were organized in the manner of mbiras,\textsuperscript{15} in addition to playing with multiple mbiras. When I was networking with my contacts, searching potential participants for this project, Susan’s name was raised by two of my contacts. A colleague who teaches music sections in the Initial Teacher Education program at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education recommended her as someone that he respects. The second person suggested that I get in touch with her as a former instructional leader to connect with people who were doing “radical work.” When I introduced my project, she suggested a number of people, including Anne and Sarah, and indicated that she wanted to be involved as well, as someone who has been deeply interested and engaged in issues of curriculum and program, particularly pertaining to world music over the course of her whole career.

**The Four Participants**

These four music educators offer a broad range of perspectives to this project. While aspects of their education were similar, their orientations are diverse. To summarize briefly, on the next page, I provide a demographic table (Table 1) of the participants and their schools. In the next four chapters, I explore themes that emerged from the data collected in the form of interviews, observations, artifacts, and my personal journal.

\textsuperscript{14} An mbira is a thumb piano found in many countries in Africa under different names. In South Africa, it is an mbira.

\textsuperscript{15} The lowest note of an mbira is in the centre of the keys (which is also physically the longest). Next to the lowest note, one note on either side, are the next two lowest notes, and the notes move up from there in thirds on each side. The notes on the mbira have a V-shape with the lowest note at the apex.
Table 1: Demographic Chart of Participants and Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name (Pseudonym)</th>
<th>Amanda</th>
<th>Anne</th>
<th>Sarah</th>
<th>Susan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Mid-30s</td>
<td>Mid-30s</td>
<td>Early 50s</td>
<td>Early 60s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years of Experience</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racial/ National/ Religious Background (Self-Description)</td>
<td>White, 8th generation Canadian, Anglo, Welsh, Scottish heritage, Christian</td>
<td>White, Canadian, Irish, English, Scottish heritage, Christian</td>
<td>White, Canadian, French and English heritage, Christian</td>
<td>White, Irish Canadian and American heritage, Christian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Name (Pseudonym)</td>
<td>Banks Public School</td>
<td>Mills Road Junior Public School</td>
<td>Brownstone Junior Public School</td>
<td>Morrison Public School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Size</td>
<td>700 Students</td>
<td>400 Students</td>
<td>350 Students</td>
<td>700 Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Grade Range</td>
<td>JK-6</td>
<td>JK-5</td>
<td>JK-6</td>
<td>JK-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Racial Demographics</td>
<td>Predominantly white (minority of African Canadian, Muslim, First Nations, and Asian students)</td>
<td>Predominantly black (minority of white, Asian, and Muslim students)</td>
<td>Predominantly East Asian (minority of white, black, and brown students)</td>
<td>Predominantly white (significant minority of African Canadian students)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Socioeconomic Demographics (Identified as a Model School?)</td>
<td>Wealthy/Privileged (Surrounding neighbourhood consists of $2 million homes)</td>
<td>Families have significant socioeconomic need. Identified as a model school</td>
<td>Families have significant socioeconomic need. Identified as a model school</td>
<td>Wealthy/Privileged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Students Taught by Music Teacher</td>
<td>All but one class</td>
<td>All students</td>
<td>All students</td>
<td>All students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Music Classes per Week for each Class</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3 to 4 (rotating schedule)</td>
<td>1 (Grade 7/8s have 2 classes)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 5

Rupturing Traditions in Curriculum Content: On the Road to Challenging Dominant Paradigms in Elementary Music Education

The next two chapters begin to explore the ways in which Amanda, Anne, Sarah, and Susan rupture traditional notions of music education in their classrooms discursively, practically, and philosophically. Following the format of the literature review, in this chapter, I focus on program and curriculum content and explore the broad range of musics and ways of engaging in music included in each program, while in chapter six, I examine the pedagogy of these four music educators.

Music instruction within the ensemble paradigm of music education traditionally privileges Western classical music and reading notation above other genres of music and types of music that do not use Western standard notation. The Ontario curriculum generally reflects this “traditional” paradigm; many of the expectations require some form of notation, and examples of musics offered typically feature one classical music example and one “Other” example. The teachers in this study pushed far beyond this “traditional” paradigm of music education in their teaching by including a broad range of musics and ways of engaging in musicking activities. In this chapter, I discuss the four teachers’ use of popular music and “world” music, the ways that teachers engaged in notation with their students, their means of recognizing a range of ways of doing music, and their approach to creating in their classrooms.
Beyond Classical Music: A Wide Range of Musics and Ways of Engaging in Musicking Activities

**Popular musics.** In the attempt to make their music programs relevant to students’ lives, music teachers sometimes turn to popular music. Green’s (2001, 2006) work pushed the discipline in this direction. *Musical Futures* (Green, 2008), her project in the United Kingdom, replicated in Canada by Wright at the University of Western Ontario,¹ offers a music program where students work to create popular music as they define it. Music education scholars increasingly strive to orient music programs toward vernacular music, with the work of scholars like Green and Allsup (2002, 2003, 2004a, 2004b, in press) at the centre. Practice, however, generally does not reflect this shift in the literature. Music festivals are still geared toward bands, orchestras, and choirs and, as previously mentioned, the curriculum largely focuses on classical music and notation. This section explores the ways in which these four teachers engaged with popular musics in their programs.

**Teacher engagement with the vernacular.** Throughout my observations at all four schools, teachers were familiar with the students’ musics and engagement with popular culture to a varying extent. Its presence in the program ranged in importance, but teachers were familiar with what was “current” for the most part. Whether it was Amanda’s constant references to popular television shows and frequent use of YouTube to offer a window into the music studied, Anne’s use of popular music in choir in collaboration with a colleague, the presence of a grade twelve hip-hop artist in Sarah’s class, or Susan’s use of *Somebody that I Used to Know* by Walk off the Earth for an alternative assignment, teachers had a sense of popular culture, although the two younger teachers demonstrated this familiarity to a greater extent than the older teachers.

“**Keeping it current**: students’ personal musics in class.** Because teachers had a degree of familiarity with students’ music, they created space within the program for it. There were

¹See the website at [www.musicalfuturescanada.org](http://www.musicalfuturescanada.org) for further information.
days in Amanda and Susan’s room where students brought in electric guitars and performed for the class. In the fall, Amanda wrote John Lennon’s name on the board and asked the students to “tell her everything they knew.” She recounted students filling the board with facts—some of which were unfamiliar to Amanda. When it came time to sing *Imagine* at the Remembrance Day school assembly

they all sang so well…so in the end I had three of the six classes of fives/sixes sing at the Remembrance Day ceremony…and they were so excited about it and…they were…boys included, right. Like…to have so many boys standing up there singing…like…singing their guts out. I was…like…ok…this is meaningful.

In reflecting on her practice, she philosophized about her musical choices in the program:

Amanda: The biggest thing is you have to find ways to make music relevant. ‘Cause dead white guy music is not relevant to kids, especially in a school district like Toronto. I mean, maybe it is for these kids more than it would be…like…in Scarborough…but when you’re teaching to a class of brown kids who know about ragas, how is Mozart…like…making their lives any better? You know, you have to…like…teach globally and you have to teach about…like…what’s going on in their lives. You can teach quarter notes by Justin Bieber just as easily as you can teach quarter notes through…you know…Peter and the Wolf. Like…and if that’s the door…that’s the door. The point is you have to get kids to like it.

Centring students’ music was the key to making music class relevant for Amanda. Her thinking here relates to Afrocentric philosophy to a certain extent. Asante (1991) advocates for *centricity*—

a perspective that involves locating students within the context of their own cultural references so that they can relate socially and psychologically to other cultural perspectives. The centrist paradigm is supported by research showing that the most productive method of teaching any student is to place his or her group within the center of the context of knowledge. (Asante, 1991, p. 171)

The connections of this approach to the study of “world” music become obvious in the next section, but the theory also applies here. Amanda suggested that teachers should draw on music from the students’ cultural references to comprise the material used in class. Schippers (2010) concurs, arguing for the use of the “aesthetic references of the learners as a point of entry into any given music” (p. 57). Although Asante (1991) intended this theory to apply to the students’
cultural references based on ethnic background, I contend that students have multiple cultural references—at minimum those of their ethnic background and those of their affinities, although ascribing cultural references to students is territory fraught with potential assumptions.

Although their programs included fewer musics from popular culture than Amanda’s program, Anne and Sarah also tried to “keep it current,” as Sarah said in an interview. Anne’s choir worked on a Katy Perry song while I was there and one morning when I arrived, Anne was searching for graduation songs ranging from the *Vitamin C* graduation song to Natasha Bedingfield’s *Unwritten*. The recorder club was playing Taio Cruz’ *Dynamite* among their chosen songs for the school “Get Together.” The music program’s contribution to the North York Centre concert put on by the board in the fall was an arrangement of *Crazy Frog*, entirely initiated and arranged by the students. During the interview, Sarah discussed a Michael Jackson project they did in the program initiated by the students. A few of the musicals she chose in past years also related to current trends in popular culture. The year the new Muppet movie came out, for example, they did a musical on the Muppets. The grade six students in her program often discussed *Glee* with her. She knew many of the songs and the students enjoyed talking about their music.

Susan struggled with bringing popular music into the program. When she arrived at the school, students had “Performance Days” the last class of the month where they could contribute musics to the class. Performance Days made up one-quarter of the program, since Susan only saw the students once a week. They consisted mainly of students lip-syncing to videos on You Tube. Susan found it problematic both because students often disliked music from other students, and because of the extremely limited amount of time she had with them. She ultimately dispensed with Performance Days, and chose to incorporate students’ musics into her listening program at the beginning of each class. She also made space at times in classes for students to share. At other times in the past, she tried different strategies:
Susan: Whereas if...when I’ve tried to move into their world, I’ve got half the class hating me ‘cause they don’t like that song or that artist or that piece of popular music and this other half loves it. The first year I was there, I did an Orff arrangement of *Wavin’ Flag*, for example, and *Wavin’ Flag* was a fun, “poppy” song, but by the time we’d finished with it they hated it as much as I did. I never said that…but it was thin material…it had one good chorus. It wasn’t terribly well written in terms of words. It went on too long. It had all kinds of weaknesses as a piece of material. And my standard for a piece of material was higher than that but it was the big song of the moment. And they played it and their parents were really impressed because, as a one-off, it’s great. They were amazed their kids could play this thing and sing it...we did all kinds of actions. But you know how many times you have to do it to perform it. It wasn’t a worthy piece of material and I don’t like being in that situation where I’ve subjected them to weeks and weeks and weeks of something that isn’t worth that kind of effort. So there’s my quandary. I…it’s something I would like to be able to do. I don’t know how to do it. That’s a lack in my training or in my motivation or something…but right now I don’t know how to do it in a way that works for me.

Students’ choices in popular culture played a subsidiary role in Susan’s class, but it seems as though Amanda’s approach may address issues Susan saw emerge in her attempts. Amanda’s class worked on an Asa song called *Jailer* in the fall before I arrived—a song with a social justice focus. Amanda noted that even students who complained that the song was not “their genre” admitted to it “being catchy.” Amanda’s and Susan’s approaches are quite different here. Where Amanda went right into the students’ world and then broadened that world to include songs like *Jailer* in Asante’s (1991) centric manner, Susan tried to find a methodology that moved beyond what she considered “thin material.”

**Popular musics as curriculum.** To further this discussion, I examine Susan’s listening program and Amanda’s overall program in more depth. Susan began each of her forty-minute classes with listening. The students arrived each class to music playing. The selections were quite diverse. When considering listening choices for her program, Susan said she often tried to “pick up on something that’s happened,” whether that meant playing a Bob Marley song the week of his birthday, selecting *Arcade Fire* when the group won a Grammy, or choosing *Hockey Night in Canada* when a Canadian team is in the race for the Stanley Cup. Susan also
made note of the songs chosen by students for the grade eight “World Music Project” for use in the listening selections for the following year.

Amanda’s program examining diasporic musics included a broad range of examples of musical styles that she presented in a contemporary context. Although the unit started with Ghanaian music, the study of diasporic musics began with *maculelê* in Brazil. After working through some of the complexities of the machete work with rhythm sticks in class, she showed them a YouTube video of *maculelê* from *So You Think You Can Dance Canada*; the students were transfixed. Every time she showed the video, she emphasized that the costumes were not real; people dancing *maculelê* in Brazil would just wear white. She articulated that using contemporary examples made something that could seem far removed relevant to their lives. Amanda moved into the students’ worlds, but she also expanded those worlds. When she introduced the Blues, for example, the students asked immediately if they would study Stevie Ray Vaughan because one of the boys could play “Pride and Joy” on the guitar. That was Amanda’s intent for her program, but along the way, she introduced a range of artists from Robert Johnson to Eric Clapton to Muddy Waters to Bessie Smith to B.B. King. She was explicit about the tragic history of some of these artists and did not shy away from discussions of racism. The following excerpt from my observations illustrates her approach to the music of Bessie Smith, who died in a car crash in 1937:

Bessie Smith was in a single car accident really badly hurt. The person with her went to get help. While he was gone, a car with white people in it hit her car. When the ambulance came, it took the white people to the white hospital right away. By the time the ambulance came to take her to the black hospital, it was too late. She died in the ambulance. Even though slavery's over, there's still segregation. There's still major, major, major, major racism. (Excerpt from observations, February)

The room was completely silent as she told Bessie Smith’s story. She did not soften the hard realities of racism in her discussion of the blues. She also connected the artists she discussed to

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2 See the video at [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=siT2QIKc2VY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=siT2QIKc2VY) (Paul Becker, judge and choreographer).
present realities—B.B. King’s presence on an arthritis commercial, for example. During the following class, she played a number of examples from different artists to help students prepare to write their own blues’ lyrics. This time, she chose Canadian blues artists—Jimmy Bowskill from Peterborough, Matt Anderson from New Brunswick, and Shakura S’Aida, Maple Blues Awards’ “Best Vocalist of the Year.” She described seeing 18-year-old Bowskill at the age of twelve:

Amanda: I got to see him when he was 12 and I couldn't believe it. He sounded like an 80-year-old man from Mississippi. Right now he's 18 years old. This video is probably from when he was about 16.

This artist was not much older than the students were. She connected Matt Anderson to music their parents might hear if they listened to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) radio, and made note that Shakura S’Aida’s guitarist was Donna Grantis—a female blues guitarist. Women play instruments in blues and rock bands less commonly than men, so Amanda made sure to feature Donna Grantis that day. She had showcased Bonnie Raitt the week before.

Although students clearly had connections to some of the artists discussed, Amanda broadened their listening spheres to include unfamiliar artists, all the while connecting these artists to what was familiar—aspects in the students’ worlds that made sense to them—returning to Asante’s (1991) cultural reference points.

Informal opportunities for musicking. Amanda also provided space for informal engagements with popular music:

A group of girls comes into Amanda’s classroom at morning recess to watch the Jennifer Hudson video of the Whitney Houston tribute. There are probably twenty girls gathered around the computer. The students chat a bit with Amanda about the Grammys. Afterwards, they put on a different Celia Cruz video. Amanda says, “That's a very famous drummer too, named Tito Puente.” Some of the girls are standing on chairs to see. One of the girls starts to play classical piano, while others get small percussion instruments out of the cupboard. Others listen to Adele's “Rumour has it” on YouTube. (Excerpt from journal, February)
The manner in which Amanda created her classroom environment encouraged students to engage in their own music in the classroom. This engagement also occurred on occasion in both Sarah’s and Anne’s classrooms.

**Community and world connections.** Aside from continually drawing connections between classroom material and the students’ realities, teachers also connected musics studied in class to events in the city. Amanda, for example, directed students to places they could find *salsa* or *maculelé* in Toronto. Sarah also connected students with a young hip-hop artist. Earlier, I discussed the manner in which Amanda linked music class to the students’ worlds, but her connections looked to the media. The missing aspect in that discussion was the connection to the local context. Amanda and Sarah in particular found ways to connect class material to musical happenings in the community.

**Utilizing older popular styles.** While Susan struggled to find a way to bring contemporary popular music into the classroom, she found a different path to including popular music:

Susan: Well, something like *I’m Walkin’*, they don’t see as their music because it is 50 years old or 70 years old, whatever it is. It was 1950-something. And that to me has been how I’ve kind of side-stepped that issue, as you know. ‘Cause I find I get one hundred per cent enthusiasm for a song like that and that…it’s the kind of thing…you know…the grade eights hear the grade sevens doing and say, “Oh we did that last year,” and “Can we do that again.” And they’ll want to sing it again. And so, it’s…but it’s got many of the same structures as the music that they enjoy listening to, but it’s kind of the root of where the current popular music has come from…is all those things from the 50s and 60s. So, the…the other thing that worries me about doing music from what they’re listening to currently, apart from getting into the divisions between…you know…sects in the class between who likes which particular style of music, is that this is the narrowest they’ll ever be in their musical choice…in their personal music choice in their whole lives, right now. And if I can persuade them to enjoy music beyond that narrow, narrow selection they’ve made for themselves because it’s part of identity and everything else then I’ve broadened their road for them…again, it’s kind of like money in the bank for them for their futures that they’ve got the possibility of more open ears and a more open mind for their future lives.
Susan selected music from earlier styles such as the blues and rock n’ roll, acknowledging those genres as the historical basis of much of the students’ current musical tastes. Like Amanda, her intent here was to expand students’ listening choices. Unlike Amanda, she did not enter their worlds. She did, however, choose musics that linked to their current choices.

Creating popular music. Amanda, Susan, and Sarah all took initiative to have students create their own popular music. Amanda and Susan both did a mini-unit on the blues, culminating with the students writing their own blues lyrics. Susan’s students followed the model of the *Talkin’ Blues*, and Amanda gave her students some examples of different types of blues and provided a worksheet to help them brainstorm an issue in their lives that would be appropriate for a blues song.

Amanda cited song-writing as a final goal of her unit:

Amanda: And eventually my goal will be by the end…after this unit I’ll probably start a song-writing unit…or at least a lyrics writing unit so we start to look at how songs are formed…just like…pop…again it’s pop ‘cause I just…that’s their reality…so why not teach to their reality instead of like imposing something on them. So…verse, chorus, bridge…understanding that…how…what’s a hook…what’s an intro…what’s an outro…how does a song work…what do you need…what are the elements…why is the song good…ok now let’s try to make one…

Once again, Amanda looked to the students’ worlds to drive instruction. Being informed by the students’ worlds in this manner is reminiscent of Ladson-Billings’ (1995, 2009) efforts to put forward what she terms “culturally relevant pedagogy.” In her study of eight teachers who work successfully with African American students, Ladson-Billings discusses varied approaches teachers used to honour students’ perspectives and expertise. Amanda’s work here draws on this type of culturally relevant pedagogy. Sarah’s approach was a little different:

A hip-hop recording artist, who is a student at the local high school, volunteers in Sarah’s music program. Sarah had the idea of using the Gamelan as a backbeat to a rap and the three of us discussed fusion possibilities. Sarah pulled a few students from the grade 6 class to come back and try some riffs at recess. A student teacher from next door plays the tabla and wanted to join in. I added a drum pattern on the Kpanlogo. This could be a very interesting fusion. (Excerpt from journal, March)
This type of active engagement reflects the reality of musical collaboration among professional musicians. About ten students participated in the improvisation that day and they did so as creative musicians. The sound was unique and complex.

Overall, teachers incorporated popular musics in their programs using a range of strategies. The overarching theme for this particular section, however, goes back to Asante’s (1991) notion of centricity—beginning with the students’ own cultural referents and expanding from there (p. 171). It is important to note that nowhere in this expansion of musics included is the “bait-and-switch” phenomenon that is all-too-familiar in the use of popular music in the classroom, where the teacher uses popular music as “bait” in order to get to the ever-important business of Western classical music (see Johnson, 2010 for discussion). Popular music in these programs was there to stay; there was no “switch.” The various popular musics studied remained as centres in the program as teachers exposed students to different musics and worked to link the centres to one another.\(^3\)

**“World musics.”** Before beginning any discussion about “world music,” it is important to dissect the term. One might think the term “world music” should include all musics of the world in its scope. However, what people generally mean when they use the term “world music” is musics other than Western European musics.\(^4\) Thus the terminology itself marks the category as Other, hierarchically inferior to its Western counterpart. This problematic term is further complicated by the fact that when I use the term, I refer to music other than Western European music, thus reinscribing the power relation the term invokes. The four teachers in this study used a range of musics in their classrooms, and had various philosophies about and approaches to the curricular inclusion of a broad selection of musics. The next section explores these approaches and philosophies.

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\(^3\) See my discussion of a rhizomatic curriculum (Hess, in press).
\(^4\) See Frith (2000) for an extensive discussion on the discourse of world music.
“Teaching music with a global lens.” All four teachers took an approach to teaching music that operated in the same multicentric manner as Amanda’s method of teaching popular music (discussed in the previous section). This approach considered the study of music through a global lens, focusing on musics in relation to each other, and as entities unto themselves. This method is in opposition to a more additive approach, where students consider musics in relation to a larger Western European centre. Amanda described this philosophy:

Amanda: For me, music has to be…like…taught with…like…a global lens…like…because you can be…it’s really easy to become ethnocentric and I honestly believe that the music curriculum is ethnocentric and…again…it’s not reality. Like…if we want to make sweeping generalizations, who is listening to Mozart? White, old people. Like…generally…of course there are always exceptions…but still…like…so…and then to say that’s like…that’s what we should all be striving for when it’s like…why can’t we talk about the greatness of Bob Marley? Why can’t we talk about the greatness of Ravi Shankar? They’re just as important and influential…and whatever…as Mozart…as whatever. And it’s just not the reality of the world we live in…like we live in a globalized community so we better learn about it. And music’s a really good entry into culture…right…’cause if you’ve got that universal language, that common thing, then when you meet people when you travel and when you meet people from other places you have this…like…instant…like…ability to meet somewhere.

Her description of the curriculum document as ethnocentric is insightful. The curriculum focuses on Western music; so-called “Other” musics are considered through the lens provided by Western classical music, and are evaluated according to Western conceptual understandings such as the “elements of music.” Instead, Amanda advocates for an approach to music education that considers musics that are relevant to the students, but also enables students to think about these musics on their own terms, instead of terms dictated by Western standards.

All four teachers worked to engage and teach music on its own terms, utilizing transmission practices and contexts inherent in the music. They taught diverse musics and worked to incorporate elements essential to each music. Susan cited the importance of an integrated approach where music is not an autonomous entity as it is conceived in the
Western sense, but rather integrated with movement, speech, and dance. Students in Sarah’s class studied Gamelan using numeric notation to address its unique system of tonality, as opposed to the major and minor modes of Western music.

“Miss, that sounds like music from my home, my place, my people”: musics that represent the student population. In the next chapter, I discuss in detail the validation aspect of selecting musics that represent students’ cultural referents—whether they are based on cultural background or on affinity. However, Anne described a moment when this inclusion was significant for a student in her class:

Anne: I really love it when I saw…what was it…I was teaching them a song, *Ho Ho Watanay*, and one kid said, “Miss, that sounds like music from my home, my place, my people.” And he’s a First Nations kid.  
Juliet: Nice.  
Anne: It is. And he was so thrilled to be learning a song…you know…that represented him.

Susan and Anne in particular selected musics that represented their school population. The majority of students in Anne’s school were of African descent, and I observed an Afrocentric focus in the music she chose for the students. Susan also chose musics to connect to the students’ cultural backgrounds. Although there is potential here for cultural assumptions, teachers avoid these problems when they take care to include the students in the selection process.

**Beyond affinity and identity.** Teachers also selected musics beyond the scope of the students’ identities and affinities. The thriving Gamelan program at Sarah’s school, for example, was not particularly representative of the student population, but Sarah still considered the music and the accompanying skills to be valuable to the students. In schools where white privilege was prevalent, Amanda and Susan both placed music with African roots at the centre.

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5 I draw on Harris’ (1995) work to define white privilege. Her paper, *Whiteness as Property*, was foundational to critical race theory. Harris (1995) begins her paper with a narrative about her grandmother’s working life and her ability to “pass” as white in the working (white) world. She uses this experience to illustrate the idea that whiteness
of their programs, hoping to destabilize white privilege in the process, something I discuss more in chapter eight. Given all four teachers’ approach to diverse musics, in my interviews I asked directly if they would alter their approach in a more homogenous environment. The answer from all four participants was a resounding “no”:

Susan: ‘Cause it’s not…it’s seeing your own culture as important, but also I think in places…you know…and when I go to Kingston or somewhere like that, it is much more homogeneous. That…that…those kids really need to see…umm…that the world is a bigger place than the one part of it that they happen to live in. And that it doesn’t hurt them at all. In fact, it’s what they need most…is to have their world opened up. Everybody lives in a global community now.

Susan continued on to articulate why:

Susan: And I also hope that they’ve got a real awareness, which is…an awareness of the big world of human culture and the part music plays in that, right around the world. And a respect for the kinds of music, that whether they like them or not, are made by people all around the world. And maybe…the ability to keep their ears open a little longer than they might otherwise have, because when you go into grade nine, you’re probably at your narrowest musical view…self-selection than you’ll ever be again…in terms of you want to listen to one kind of rap and that’s it, or. But if they’ve come from a rich music program, I think they will return to at least the…just the…the awareness that they have…to be more accepting of a broader range of kinds of music and especially music from many different places in the world and many different time periods and stylistic types of music. And…umm…having heard their classmates bring in different kinds of music, I think that is a powerful way of building toward that.

The four teachers generally agreed that teaching music beyond the scope of identity and affinity was important, and these selected musics included Western classical music.

This notion suggests a potential second stage to Asante’s (1991) cultural referents. While he proposed beginning with students’ own cultural referents and expanding beyond them, the thinking of these teachers represents the next stage of that argument.

Movement toward teaching a broader range of music. Anne, Sarah, and Susan discussed the recent movement in music education toward teaching a broader range of musics.
They mentioned the world music initiative of the board. Sarah was involved in the Gamelan aspect of the initiative from its inception in 2000. The board currently provides more opportunities to engage in a wide range of musics, from the initiation of the world music programs, to broader choices of music at board-wide concerts, to events such as the celebration of Martin Luther King Jr. Anne found the movement toward a more inclusive program to be more gradual beyond the school level. However, both she and Susan remarked that this year’s board-wide Showcase program included more diversity in schools and musical groups than previous years. For Anne, this movement toward broader inclusion began in the classroom:

Anne: And I think, if it starts in the classroom with teachers like me who are going to be introducing songs from around the world. And I know there’s a growing number of us who do. Then that’s naturally going to happen too. So, I think we’re moving in the right direction. I’d also like to take a step back in some ways and make sure we’re including...you know...umm...traditional Christian music as well. And I don’t mean the churchy type music, I mean...like...I don’t think we need to be afraid to include Christmas carols at the winter concert. And there’s been a huge pendulum swing against that where...to the point that we’re excluding of music from Western arts now. So I think it’s important that we find that balance again and instead of shying away from music...a whole group of music just because it might be sacred. If we teach about it rather than avoiding it, then I think we will have found something. If we...if we can learn to teach about the music without preaching that that is the only kind of music, then we will have achieved what we’re looking to achieve.

Anne’s remarks here elucidate a movement toward a more critical approach in the board. Anne and Susan both indicated that traditionally, groups that have performed in the board events have been from large choral programs. This year’s concert at Massey Hall featured greater demographic diversity within the groups chosen to participate, the musics performed, and among the types of ensemble. Anne’s final comment is quite interesting in light of the work of Mohanty. Mohanty (2003) puts forward three curricular models that describe the manner in which “Other” subject material is engaged in women’s studies’ curricula. In an earlier paper, I applied her model to music education, rethinking her Feminist-as-Tourist Model, Feminist-as-Explorer Model, and Comparative Feminist Studies Model. I reconceptualized these models as a
**Musician-as-Tourist Model, Musician-as-Explorer Model, and Comparative Musics Model** (Hess, in press). The *Musician-as-Tourist Model*, which generally takes an additive approach to music education, places Western classical music at the centre of the curriculum and arranges so-called “Other” musics around the “core culture,” literally marginalizing them in the process. However, of greatest interest here is the second model—*Musician-as-Explorer*. For Mohanty (2003) the “Feminist-as-Explorer Model” pedagogical perspective originates in the area studies, where the “foreign” woman is the object and subject of knowledge and the larger intellectual project is entirely about countries other than the United States. Thus, here the local and the global are both defined as non-Euro-American. The focus on the international implies that it exists outside the U.S. nation-state. Women’s, gender, and feminist issues are based on spatial/geographical and temporal/historical categories located elsewhere. (Mohanty 2003, p. 240)

Applied to music education, the *Musician-as-Explorer Model* focuses only on “Other” musics, excluding Western music from its focus. Decentring Western music and simultaneously assuming that only “Other” musics are worthy of study actually serves to normalize Western (classical) music. What Anne points to in her statement is the movement of music education toward the “explorer” model. She pushes instead toward a model where students consider all musics relationally—the *Comparative Musics Model* I propose based on Mohanty’s work. Such a course would be taught as a comparative course that emphasizes the interconnectedness between the musics and the contexts of the musics. Anne’s statement contains these possibilities.

While Anne’s remarks consider the recent history of the school board, Susan traces the progression of the integration of “world music” historically:

Susan: One is, if you look back at the music education books from way, way, way back...like...certainly way...in the 19...even the 1930s and 20s, music from around the world was always there.

Juliet: Right.

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6 Schippers’ (2010) “intercultural” approach to cultural diversity reflects similar ideas. See the literature review for discussion.
Susan: Always… [As music educators,] we love to do music from many different places. But equally, it’s true that it was done without expertise, without context, in English, and, in many times the transmission of the actual piece…even the melody, or the time signature, or the feel of the music was very, very suspect. So now, it’s…I see, certainly within the Orff community, there’s a genuine enthusiasm for and an excitement about the fact that we have YouTube versions and we have good DVDs now and we can…and we have good training programs where we can actually go and work directly with people who are expert in various styles of music.

Susan’s comment traces the movement in music education toward a more inclusive pedagogy generally. She directs our attention to problems that have emerged historically with the inclusion of “world musics” in the curriculum—problems of translation, lack of examples, lack of expertise, and lack of context. As a teacher and former curriculum consultant who continually reads educational literature, she was able to clearly articulate trends in the profession.

Despite the forward movement she outlined, Susan wanted to see students have a broader experience than just learning the music alone. However, within the drive in music education to work with diverse musics is the importance of considering the impetus behind the desire to engage with this material. Questions of consumption (Ahmed, 2000; hooks, 1992) and identity production through transgression (Razack, 2002) are important to keep at the centre of these practices, and I discuss these issues later in this chapter and in chapter seven. Susan continues:

Susan: I get more nervous when I see a little choir of people standing in little white shirts, perfectly correctly and…umm…trying to sing a song from Africa. And it’s...are they getting anything of the real experience of that music or not? And so, it’s that in some ways…I don’t know exactly to treat that in...in...and what the conductor’s thinking of who’s doing that.

Juliet: Yeah, and what the power relations are and…

Susan: And yeah…it’s…umm…like Doreen Rao’s all that wonderful. She’s published many wonderful choral settings of global musics, and I love the fact that she’s done that. But, it’s…umm…you want to know that the kids learned more than just the words and the notes of that music. And it’s so possible for them to have a fuller experience now that we’ve got a way of accessing some models. So, it’s…I guess I’m not sure where we’re headed with that and how…whether it’s just a hot button issue for some people, or whether it’s truly something that’s life altering in
terms of music education. I hope it is. I think…I feel more hopeful than not about it. But I wish there was more expertise going around.

Susan’s remarks reveal a nervousness that speaks to questions of consumption, I believe. Although she does not articulate precisely why she is uneasy, she is clearly apprehensive about issues of power in relation to the performance of diverse musics. The use of the word “correctly” is also interesting here. Susan worried that a Western approach to choir was inappropriate for singing an African song. Certainly students in white shirts, standing up still and straight is rather antithetical to a more embodied approach, however the term “correctly” implies there is an “incorrectly.” While her statement points to the inappropriate nature of performing African music using a Western approach, her use of language illuminates the power of the discourse of traditional music education—a discourse so strong that an embodied approach could be framed as “wrong” through an accident of language. The issue here is that there is no accidental language. Her thinking is shaped by a discourse strongly influenced by structural racism. Susan was uncomfortable with what she saw, and she knew that the behaviour of the choir was shaped by power dynamics. Despite her discomfort, she still used language that categorized certain (Western) choral behaviour as “correct.” Language is so powerful and it may be possible to consider ways to move beyond it so that the automatic use of language does not reinscribe dominant structural power relations.

**Maintaining the integrity of the music.** Maintaining the integrity of the music was a focus when teachers approached the musical content of their programs. Susan used a guideline provided to her by conductor Lori-Anne Dolloff as part of the choral project in which she participated:

Susan: I mean when Lori Dolloff produced that list of…Judith Cook Tucker’s list from the *World Music Press* site…that consolidated everything I know about what are the quick things that you look for…you know…it’s context, it’s line of transmission, it’s a recording…and, of course, when I started, that wasn’t possible, there were no recordings of any of this music. But World Music Press came into being and that was the first source where you could find recordings associated with
publications and information. That was brand new and that was not around when I
was first trying to do this. Umm...I'm trying to think...maps...umm...first language
as opposed to translation...you know...all of those things that are on the...I'm
leaving out some of the important ones...but...you know...that is kind of my mental
set now and I try to stick to it.

Because musical integrity was important to Susan, she valued having a resource to help her
evaluate potential music.7 Susan continued on to say that she believed that maintaining integrity
of musics and manipulating musics were not necessarily mutually exclusive concepts:

Susan: But I just felt that traditional music...it has the value of being music that was
meant to be manipulated by the people who are singing it. So, by messing around
with it a little, it's...you're not violating the intention of the music or the people
who originally wrote it because they are always messing with it too...and that's
what musicians do. But you can't mess with a Beethoven sonata...and there's...and
there's certain kinds of songs from cultures that you're not a part of yourself that
you would never mess with. And that's the key...you know...the trick is knowing
when it's okay, when it's not okay and sometimes you guess. But...but it's...but the
fact that traditional music usually allows for improvisation...for creating your own
verse...for creating your own accompaniment...and maybe even altering the
melody...or...you know...but it's meant to be...umm...you know...a template that
you grow out of

For Susan, it was possible to maintain the integrity of music while exploring it and creating
with it. As she said, “that’s what musicians do.” Notably, after expressing the impossibility
of “messing with a Beethoven sonata,” she described playing with some concepts in a Bach
invention with students, revealing that despite her expression to the contrary, “messing with
classical music” was in fact possible and welcomed in her program. It is important to note
then that contemporizing music and perhaps fusing it with other musics, as Sarah began to
pursue with Gamelan, does not entail unethical musical behaviour. Rather, if music teachers
keep ethics and integrity at the centre of their focus and consider criteria for their musical
selections such as those outlined by Tucker (1992), they can push toward fostering both a
respect for familiar and unfamiliar musics and a willingness to engage with the musics on
their own terms.

7 The original source was an article by Judith Cook Tucker (1992) of World Music Press.
An activity in Anne’s class provides an example of maintaining the musical and contextual principles that drive a musical selection while expanding the activity. With the grade two and three students, Anne introduced a song called *Tongo*—a song sometimes sung in the Philippines as people row boats. Utilizing call-and-response, the song helped maintain steady rowing. Anne had the students create rhythmic patterns for the song. Throughout the activity, she maintained the call-and-response structure and reminded the students to use the words of the song along with their rhythmic patterns. The resulting arrangement was easily as rhythmically conducive to rowing as the original song. The concern for integrity expressed by both Susan and Anne emerged as a theme from all four teachers.

*Working with experts and professional instruments.* There were many opportunities within the programs for students to work with professional musicians and professional-quality instruments. All four schools made use of the world music program offered by the board, which included use of instruments and an instructor/master musician for several half-days in the classroom. Within the four programs and depending on the school, some of the students studied Ghanaian drumming, Javanese Gamelan, Georgian singing, South Indian solkattu, and various styles of Latin American percussion. Sarah’s program afforded the students who participated in the Gamelan club the opportunity to play the professional Gamelan set at the Indonesian Consulate and work with a master musician. The following excerpt is from my journal the day of the first trip to the Consulate:

In the afternoon, the fourteen students in the Gamelan club took their first trip to the Indonesian Consulate. Although the school had a relationship with the Consulate in the past, none of these students had been there before. At lunch, before they left, Sarah talked about what they would see at the Consulate and what the expectations were for their behaviour there. They had fun on the streetcar and as soon as they arrived at the Consulate, they were in awe of the beautiful set of Gamelan in a room that looks like it is used for events. They were met by a Gamelan performance artist who has performed with Sarah's professional group before and has worked with past groups. Some of the students had to try a new instrument because the set is a
different set than the one at the school and they all remarked on the size of the tabuhs (the mallets), which were much bigger to accommodate the significantly larger instruments. Sarah called them up to their instruments one at a time. They adjusted to the larger size of their instruments and the tabuhs and began with Ricik Ricik. There is one instrument they’ve never seen before that plays four notes on each count. The first boy who tried it struggled with it, but it was his first day in Gamelan club today. The second boy was able to get it. The students were so focused and they concentrated very hard throughout. After they played it on the first tuning (1 to 6—the same tuning they have at school), they turned and played it on the second tuning (1 to 7— which they do not have at school). The sounds of the different tunings are quite distinct. What happened next was remarkable. They had a bit of time while the artist and Sarah discussed what the next step would be and they began to teach each other the new parts that they had learned. They worked together and mentored each other to take on the new material. Sarah saw what was happening naturally between the students, and gave the students about twenty minutes to work with each other. After the break, they did Manyar sewu with music and again, they tried it in both tunings. They were able to follow well as the leading drum sped them up and slowed them down. The Consulate General was pleased to have the students rehearse there and spoke about the longstanding relationship that the Consulate has with the school. (Excerpt from journal, March)

When they returned to the school that day, the students enthusiastically told their peers and teachers of their experience. They were excited and wanted to share what they learned. Working with a professional musician is certainly a valuable experience. However, there are some caveats of which we, as music educators, may want to be aware. “Culture bearer” is the term traditionally used in music education to describe a (racialized) master musician. The term is highly problematic due to both its racialization and use of a “person of colour,” and the subsequent normalization of Western classical music. The inherent assumption here is that it is possible for one person, as a “culture bearer,” to represent a fluid culture. Vaugeois (2009) offers the following critique when she asks

whether any person should be expected to stand in, imaginatively, as representing everything there is to know about her or his people—as if people identified as Other should or could be reducible to the unified, static, and knowable. In other words, the often unconscious expectation that a racialized person can or should be able to represent her or his ethnic community reveals another aspect of racializing hierarchies. (p. 16)

Vaugeois continues on to argue that music educators would not expect a Western orchestral violinist to behave in the same capacity demanded of these so-called “culture bearers.” There is
no expectation, after all, that a violinist educate anyone about Western culture. Vaugeois contends that we would most likely want to hear from other violinists to compare perspectives—something sorely lacking in the study of “world music.” Working with master musicians can be a wonderful experience, as the students in Sarah’s program discovered. It is important to keep in mind, however, that any musician offers only one perspective.

**Caveat: world music and the reinstalling of the Other.** Within the drive toward inclusion, it important to note that studying the music of the Other can also serve to reinstall the Other as stranger. Ahmed (2000) argues that incorporation of the stranger, in particular through multicultural discourse, can actually work to “fetishise the stranger as the origin of difference” (p. 113). Throughout the book, she argues that identity is understood relationally—that the self comes to know itself only through interactions with the stranger. Her contention here echoes that of Razack (2002) in her argument that transgression into racial space is an identity-making process (p. 144). It is important to consider what studying “world music” does. There is potential to reinscribe those hierarchies so firmly entrenched simply through working to include.

Did the students find these musics strange? How might it be possible to counter that feeling in the classroom? Ahmed (2000) pushes us to imagine how we might “encounter an other in such a way, in a better way, that allows something to give” (p. 154). What would this ethical encounter look like in music education?

All four teachers strove to include diverse musics in their classrooms. Rather than set up the “Self/Other” binary so readily established by the label “world music,” these teachers took the term to mean all musics of the world, inclusive of Western classical music, but not as a naturalized, dominant centre. When Amanda, Anne, Sarah, and Susan selected music for their classrooms, they considered both how it might represent their student population and how it might be outside the identities and affinities of the students. What further work needs to occur to keep ethics at the centre?
Deemphasis on notation. One of the aspects of all four programs that emerged as particularly remarkable was the lack of emphasis on Western standard notation. Given the fact that the Ontario Arts Curriculum (2009) privileges Western standard notation, it seems unusual that all four teachers decentralized notation within their classrooms. Instead, teachers emphasized oral transmission over a focus on symbols, encouraged students to “figure it [music] out” aurally, and located the music within a broader social context. Teachers also privileged using “authentic” transmission practices for musics studied.

Emphasis on oral transmission. Teachers primarily taught music through oral transmission. Amanda’s program largely consisted of music taught entirely by rote. In programs that used notation, teachers always taught the music orally/aurally first. If the activity was notation-based, they first introduced the music by rote. When working on notation tasks, Anne described her strategy as follows:

Anne: Usually I will start with the oral tradition. I start by singing by rote and once the kids are really familiar with the song, then I can introduce the notation to them once it’s already embedded in their minds. Once they’ve felt it, sung it, and experienced it, played it, then I can introduce the notation and they’ll understand it better. That’s my theory.

A composition activity in Susan’s grade two class provided an example. I made the following observation in my journal:

Susan scaffolds leading up to the composition activity. She has them clap two measures back and they complete the activity ORALLY without knowing they’re already doing it. (Excerpt from journal, April)

“It’s more important to me than knowing what a dotted eighth means”: less focus on symbols. Further to the focus on oral transmission, teachers actively decentred notation:

Amanda: I want…the big thing for me is that kids feel welcome and they feel like this is a place where they’re safe to say and do things that in other contexts they’re not. Umm…because I think it will eventually…if not already…like…lead to creativity. Because I don’t want…like…a rigid…I don’t want a rigid music program because I just…I’ve been there and it doesn’t inspire anything except being academically correct and things…and to me I don’t…I want ideas to
flow…like…eventually I think I’ll end the year with the grade 5s/6s doing some lyric writing…

Juliet: Nice…
Amanda: So I want them to…like…hear about stuff, talk about stuff, think about stuff. It’s more important to me than knowing what a dotted eighth means.

Amanda’s lack of emphasis on symbols came from a desire to privilege feelings of safety and critical thinking. Later she contended that understanding music in a social context was also more important in her program than learning notation. Susan’s thinking, conversely, derived from a recognition that learning from notation was only one musical behaviour in a myriad of other possibilities:

Susan: I try to make it…umm…and I don’t think I do make it [notation] the whole focus because…umm…because there’s so many other kinds of musical behaviours which I think are really important as well…including…you know…composing in whatever way. And I never have kids compose directly from notation. It’s always another way in and then we use notation, sometimes, to record what they’ve created. And sometimes we don’t…’cause that’s not always the logical end result. So, it’s an incredibly useful tool for any musician and, of course, the curriculum does require kids to learn notation. But, you know, I’d say my grade sevens and eights don’t have efficient note reading skills by any means…but they have a key to a door and if it’s going to matter in their lives, they will pursue it.

“Imagine teaching the Ghanaian unit with written out parts!”: use of “authentic”

transmission practices. Amanda also emphasized the importance of using transmission practices appropriate to the musics being taught:

Amanda: Right…and…I mean…to be authentic about its teaching too. Like…we sort of talked about this before…but…like…imagine teaching the Ghanaian unit with written out parts. Like…it’s crazy right…that’s not the point. The point is you should be learning it how it’s taught. And if it’s an oral tradition, you should be learning it orally. So…when I…I am going to do…I’ve got two units left, I think, to finish out the year…like two big chunks of things that I want to do. And one is…yes…I’m going to do the dead white guy thing. So we’re going to look at it through Peter and the Wolf and that will be the context where I’m going to teach more theoretical stuff, ‘cause that’s the context. That’s where that stuff belongs. It doesn’t belong in salsa…I mean…it does in a way…because salsa is highly…like…scientific too and written…sort of…but it’s not…

Juliet: Different…
Amanda: Yeah…so…yeah…I’m just trying to be as…like…true to…true to the actual music as I can be.
Amanda points to the importance of considering the way each music studied is generally transmitted when considering the transmission practice for the classroom. Musics transmitted orally often do not lend themselves to notation, and in many ways, notating them is not only ethnocentric, it is also a colonizing activity. Forcing musics that do not use notation into the symbols of Western standard notation in many ways seems to mimic colonial relations. However, the issue is more complex as teachers trying to move beyond Western classical music despite entirely Western-based education often notate or utilize Western conceptual elements as a way to transition to a more inclusive practice. As I noted in the literature review, ethnomusicologist Averill (2004) captures this phenomenon when he highlights a question often heard in the study of non-Western musics—“Where’s ‘one’?” “One,” in this case, refers to the first beat of a Western measure in a way of marking time structured by a meter and a time signature. As a longtime student of Ghanaian music, it is a question I hear repeatedly as students of Ewe music try to understand the music using their own cultural referents. While thinking a music in terms of the previously familiar may seem like a colonizing activity at first glance, looking again, it seems more like a place to begin. Regardless of background, we all need to begin from our own cultural referents in order to begin to understand other epistemologies (Asante, 1991).

“Figuring it out.” Finally, there were points in both Susan’s program and Anne’s program where they encouraged the students to “figure it out”—to take a melody or bass line learned aurally and learn how to play it by experimenting. Sometimes the teacher scaffolded this process. One morning in Susan’s class, grade eights worked to “figure out” the bass line:

The students are to figure out the bass line. Susan has them sing the melody while the person on the contrabass bars plays only F. She tells them, “When it doesn’t sound good, put the beat on your knees. When it does sound good, put the beat lightly on your hands.” She asks the contrabass student to follow what the class is doing with his hands. She asks them to predict what the next part will be. They have it figured out. By measure, the bass line is F-C-C-F, F-C-C-F. They go to the instruments and play it together. (Excerpt from observations, April)
While Susan scaffolded the process, Anne taught a melody by rote and let the students experiment to “figure it out”:

As they work on the Orff instruments, the melody emerges from a number of instruments over the general din of people working. They are learning to pick out melodies on instrument. When they move onto the second phrase, there are problems. She asks the people who are sure they have it to play it. Students are really focused on picking out the melody. Some students are helping each other. One girl is going around helping students—showing them how it goes. She takes on a role of responsibility. Anne goes around and helps other students. There is a bit of confusion around the ending. One girl asks if she can play it on the recorder. Anne says yes. The bass metallophone and bass xylophone play a solid bordun while the metals play the melody. Two students then play the recorder. Then the woods play. The two students who tried the recorder come over to borrow a pencil to write down the notes on their sheets. They double check it on their Orff instruments. A number of students try it on recorder at the end of class. At recess, one girl picks it out on the piano. Then another goes to the piano and tries to pick out Beethoven’s *Für Elise*. One student picks out the melody on the steel pan. (Excerpt from observations, May)

Students used a range of strategies to pick out the melody—a valuable aural skill in the music world. There were many different learning behaviours used and once students “figured out” the melody on one instrument, they quickly applied their learning elsewhere—an application encouraged by Anne.

These four music programs all emphasized learning through oral transmission over learning through notation. They valued placing music within a social context and fostering multiple musical behaviours rather than restricting transmission strategies to Western standard notation, as privileged in the curriculum document. Instead, teachers encouraged students to develop their aural skills and “figure it out.” The next section explores how teachers used notation in their programs.

**Notation.** Although the teachers involved in this research placed less emphasis on notation in their classes, when they included notation, they utilized a range of strategies to make it accessible to students. They found ways to keep it relatively simple. For the most part, they
constructed small notation tasks for the students including games, and they supported these tasks with resources and through teaching by rote.

**Keeping it simple.** Regardless of the activity, teachers emphasized keeping notation tasks simple. They generally did not discuss this philosophy, but it was evident in practice nonetheless. Amanda inherited a program where the students experienced six music teachers over six years. When she focused on notation, she primarily concentrated on rhythmic notation. She taught notation in the fall to students in grades one through four. The teachers found different ways to keep it simple. Anne, for example, started each junior class with a “rhythm of the day,” a simple one-measure rhythm on the board that was the first activity in every class. The simplicity of notation tasks made them accessible to students.

**Use of small notation tasks.** Linked to this idea of simplicity was the emphasis placed on notation tasks that were relatively small. Sometimes teachers emphasized solfege, at other times rhythmic notation, and still other times tasks with simple melodic notation that they often coupled with solfege. Although the tasks were small, Susan laid the foundation for notation early. She used the following activity in a kindergarten class:

Susan puts down pictures of animals that match the ten animals in the book “Over in the Meadow.” She invites four students to come up and pick an animal each which will create the rhythm pattern they do at the end of each verse. She chooses four different students for each verse. The first pattern is: “Turtle, bee, robin, fox,” followed by “bunny rabbit, owl, fox, bee,” followed by three more patterns. After everyone has had a turn, they sing the rest of the book with the pictures. This activity provides a foundation for rhythmic notation. (Excerpt from journal, April)

Anne devised a larger structure for sequencing small notation tasks. She ran a *Recorder Karate* program in her classroom in which students worked to achieve belts. Although this program had a more formal notation focus, the tasks remained small and manageable, and recorder took up one class of the two classes students had each week.

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8 Solfege is a system of syllables that designates degrees in the scale (do, re, mi, fa, so, la, ti, do’).
What is important here is that notation tasks never dominated class time. When teachers turned their attention to Western music and notation, rather than structuring the entire program around learning notation as both the curriculum and a traditional band/orchestra/choir paradigm urge, they gave notational activities a moment within their daily schedules.

**Use of resources in the room.** All four classrooms also supplied resources in the room to support students’ notation tasks. There were posters to assist with note names, recorder fingerings, rhythmic note values, guitar fingerings in Susan’s case, and larger resources as well including books and handmade resources. When students worked on notation tasks, they had access to these resources to help them with their work.

**The “poison rhythm”: use of games in learning notation.** When teachers planned notation tasks that were small in scope, they also worked to make these tasks into games that engaged the students. Anne, for example, had a game called “Poison rhythm.” She clapped a rhythm and that rhythm became the “poison rhythm.” The students then clapped back to her a series of rhythms, but they could not clap back the “poison rhythm.” Susan created a game with rhythm cards: if she played the rhythm on the card correctly, students could clap and say it back. However, if she said it incorrectly, students could tell her she was wrong. Students were thrilled to continually inform Susan that she was wrong. In general, students responded positively to notation tasks in the format of games.

**Supporting notation through teaching by rote.** Another aspect of learning through notation described in the previous section was the use of teaching music by rote to support notation. Teachers embedded learning orally in almost all tasks involving notation—a choice which not only engaged multiple modalities, but supported learning what essentially amounted to a new language.
Importance of taking different approaches. Sarah’s program utilized not only Western standard notation, but also numeric Gamelan notation, and learning by rote. Sarah emphasized the importance of taking different approaches to learning music:

Juliet: In terms of the balance between notation and learning by rote, like, what’s your philosophy on that?
Sarah: I believe they’re all important. Um, I believe…I believe that to learn by ear is really a great tool and it really develops your musicianship in another way. I do recorder…We haven’t done that yet here…Because it really helps them to read. But I will do units when we will just take a week and we will really focus on learning to read notes again and that sort of thing, so, um…We’ll go through stints of doing that. Just units of that. Just for their knowledge. I think it’s important. It’s in the curriculum.

Sarah felt strongly that the dual emphasis on the written and the aural were important aspects of learning to make music—a perspective also reflected in Anne’s program and Susan’s program.

“The key to the door.”

Juliet: So what skills do you want a grade eight student who graduates from your program…like…what do you want them to have?
Susan: So…umm…music skills or every kind of skill?
Juliet: Every kind of skill…
Susan: Every kind of skill…okay…’cause the music skills will be from sublime to ridiculous and that’s…I’m a…I’m really hardly in control of what happens in there because I set up little tasks and then it’s kind of up to them where they get to. And…umm…so I hope they have enough…you know…music reading skill that they could build on that and become proficient readers. Most of them won’t be proficient readers in grade eight, but they’ve got the key to the door.

Susan continued on to discuss the importance of the social aspect of music. However, what is important here is the notion that proficiency in reading, despite the curriculum emphasis, is not a focus of the program. Instead, what Susan looked to provide was the “key to the door”—the foundation of notational literacy that students could then develop if it became important to their lives. This approach is different from the curriculum intention of building some level of proficiency. Susan and the other teachers in this study chose to make notation one of the multiple ways of approaching music.
Recognition of different ways of engaging in musicking. In music programs that fit into the traditional ensemble paradigm of band, orchestra, and choir, there is generally one understanding of making music. This understanding involves an orientation toward the director, the use of Western standard notation and Western elements of music, and a generally singular conception of what making music entails. This section explores how teachers in this study moved beyond a singular understanding to recognize multiple ways of engaging in musicking activities.

Different styles of notation. The band/orchestra/choir paradigm traditionally focuses on Western standard notation. Within both Anne’s and Sarah’s programs, students engaged in more than one type of notational practice. In May, Anne introduced a new type of notation to the grade four and five students; with a great deal of scaffolding, she taught them to read chord changes and play them on Orff instruments. She thought carefully about how to introduce a different kind of reading to the students:

Anne tells them they will be learning about chord changes today. She plays a song that has only one chord (Starlight). Then she plays a song with chord changes. (She plays the Papaya song, which has three chords. Some of them remember the chords.) She plays the song again without changing the chords. Then she does it a third time and asks them to say “change” where they think she should change chords. They identify the changes almost perfectly. She has them “get their ladder out” (do to do’ on their arm from their elbow to their wrist). She tells them “do” is number “I” and that we call it the tonic. Then she talks about “so.” On the board, she has eight vertical circles labeled “1-8” and “C-C.” She shows them the chart and goes over how to read the Roman numerals. They connect the Roman numerals to what the notes will be. As students catch onto this new way of reading, she moves them gradually to the instruments. Within a few minutes, they play the chord changes to their graduation song from the chart stand. (Excerpt from journal, May)

Anne’s alternative notation related to Western notation and the elements of Western music. In Sarah’s class, however, students learned an entirely different written approach to music—a numeric notation for the Gamelan. The notes on the Gamelan are numbered one through six and the corresponding notation is numeric with a series of markings such as brackets, circles, dots, and “v” shapes that tell certain instruments when it is their turn to play.
When I arrived in February, students were familiar with this notation, and read it fairly fluently. In the same manner that most teachers treated Western standard notation, Sarah supported the reading component with oral transmission by regularly having students sing their parts. In an interview, Sarah spoke to the importance of recognizing multiple ways of communicating music:

Sarah: I guess it’s a way of seeing the world that there’s no one way. That many cultures have developed their own way of communicating notation and who’s to say which is…And, and they’ve developed differently because of that…So it’s just another way to learn the elements of music as well. It doesn’t have to be done one way, but that way is a good way and that way is a respected way, so let’s learn that way, but “Hey, we can also do it this way and develop those same musical skills this way.”

The recognition from both Sarah and Anne of multiple ways of writing music is important here. All four teachers recognized multiple approaches to communicating music, but Sarah and Anne acknowledged multiple ways of transmitting music through notation as well.

**Different physical orientation.** The band/orchestra/choir paradigm orients students toward the conductor or instructor. While the teacher remained central in all four programs, the physical orientation of the class varied. Sometimes the reasons for this shift were formal. In Gamelan, for example, students often have their backs to the leading drum:

Sarah: And I asked my Gamelan teacher once about how…if it would be okay if they would sit on the other side of the gong and look in. And I think the answer I got is that actually you want to be as close to the Kendhang, the drum, as possible so you’re hearing things not too far away. It’s more about the hearing and working together rather than the visual. Which I find really… And you saw, even at the Consulate, the instruments are in different directions depending on what tuning you’re doing. So some tunings you can just see each other’s backs, some tunings are facing all the other ways, so it’s not about watching, it’s about listening. And patterning.

The Gamelan arrangement away from the “director” was fairly formal in structure. In other programs, however, the different class configurations were more informal. Students in the other three programs often engaged in group work. They had a task, but worked with peers to
complete it, while the teacher circulated and assisted. This collaborative environment was quite different from the more teacher-centred traditional approach to music education.

**Different musical orientation.** Within Gamelan, there were also variations in musical orientation. The Western music at the centre of the curriculum and traditional music programs orients toward beat one of the musical phrase. The first beat of each measure receives emphasis; it has a subtle or more overt accent than the other beats in the phrase. Conversely, Gamelan orients toward the end of a phrase. The end of the cycle on beat eight is where the gong tone sounds. Students in Sarah’s program seemed to seamlessly adapt their thinking toward this end-of-cycle emphasis. This adaptation was not as easy for me. After five weeks of observations, I recorded the following note in my journal:

I have now started to feel the different orientation of the Gamelan; the end of the phrase is the most important part. The gong ageng and gong siyem sound on beat eight. It's so interesting how your brain wants to put the music in a box that it understands. I'm finally starting to think it on its own terms at the end of week five in this school. (Excerpt from journal, March)

My observations of my own cognition also resonate with Asante’s (1991) assertion that we begin from our own cultural referents. Beyond the Gamelan program, students at the other three schools also engaged in musics with different orientations. Students in Amanda’s program studied Ghanaian music in the fall—music that is cyclical once again, but without the same kind of emphasis on “beat one” present in Western music. “Beat one” does not exist in the same capacity in Ghanaian music. Rather the emphasis might be on the low beat in a gankogui cycle or a call from the lead drum. All four teachers participated in the Ghanaian component of the world music program through the school board, and teachers readily encouraged their students to conceptualize music differently.

**Listening over watching.** Another component of recognizing multiple ways to engage in musicking is the privileging of listening over watching. To use Sarah’s Gamelan program as an

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9 A gankogui is a double bell made of welded iron that features a low and high sound.
example once again, students learned to respond to aural cues over visual cues. The Bonang signaled the beginning of the piece and the drum signaled when they were to pick up and put down their tabuhs (mallets). The drum also controlled the tempo. Students concentrated intently to match what they heard on their own instrument. Between the presence of a conductor and the use of Western notation, there is a visual emphasis in traditional music education. Making listening the primary focus was a way to engage in musicking differently.

*Multiple musical “languages” or “behaviours.”* Susan spoke very directly to fact that there are multiple ways to make music:

Susan: That was a very performance-based model and for elementary it was very choral-based and for me choral is always one of the ways that you express your musical learning, but there’s…I’ve always felt strongly…should be a bunch of ways ‘cause there are those kids who that is not their first choice of musical behaviour who…you know…for…you’re going to cut them off forever if you say this is the only way to learn music. And they’re just going to sink and…you know…it’s differentiated and stretching in music means providing the broadest possible program.

The implication here is that limiting students to a traditional choir paradigm of music education erases the fact that other approaches to musicking are equally valid and important. As Susan expressed earlier, there are multiple “musical behaviours” and recognizing different behaviours is crucial in a general music program.

*Rearrangement of instruments into a different configuration.* Before I met Susan, I attended a number of workshops including a workshop at an Orff conference. At the conference, she was working with mbiras (thumb pianos from southern Africa) with the students. Some students worked with real mbiras and others worked with Orff instruments that Susan reconfigured as mbiras. The reconfiguring of instruments to enable a different way of thinking impressed me at the time and I asked her about that experience in an interview:

Juliet: …the thing that I saw you do at *Collage* with the mbiras…rearranging the Orff instruments…
Susan: Oh yes…
Juliet: You talked about the actual physical having to rearrange and the way that registered…
Susan: Yeah…well…that was…yeah…because you’re thinking as a musician about music a completely different way if your instrument is organized that way and…umm…and so you’re thinking in thirds and you’re not thinking a linear sequence, you’re not thinking scales, you’re thinking chords and interval relationships. And so…it’s…it’s like the thing I said about…you know…what was Bach’s idea here when he made that two part invention? Well, what’s the idea when you’ve got an mbira under your thumbs? What does it lead you to do and how does it lead you to think about music? That interests me so much. And I love seeing when it’s…the commonalities between musics of really different styles and periods…but also those differences that…you know…the fact that a Gamelan is tuned to be out of tune slightly with every…so that you get a shimmer of sound when you hear this note number two played with that note number two. And I learned to hear and value that. And…umm…and whereas if you hear that in a string quartet, that’s not a shimmer…that’s an out-of-tune note. So…it’s…that’s exciting to me too. And to help kids to hear that there’s different lenses for organizing…different…not different lenses, it’s more like different templates for thinking about how we organize sound…so let’s go in a different way.

It is important to note that it is possible to play something intended for mbira on a scalar instrument. However, the scalar mindset is not the way the average mbira player conceives the music. By configuring Orff instruments as mbiras, Susan created the possibility to think about the music in the same manner as musicians who work with that instrument.

**Rethinking the “elements of music.”** Susan also considered how it might be possible to rethink the Western “elements” of music so that they could be applied more broadly. During one interview, we talked about the Countryman (2009) article (discussed in Chapter 2). The article’s discussion about rethinking musical elements to be less ethnocentric impressed us both:

Susan: I actually gave that out to [the Additional Qualifications] students last year. I thought that was a really helpful article. Stumbling Toward Clarity, yeah…yes…that was it…yeah. Exactly…find a language that is a little more universal.
Juliet: Yeah…and it seems like you’re pushing toward that same kind of…
Susan: That’s…that’s the way I…the kind of language I’m trying to use and…umm…but trying…I also am not ready to abandon the…sort of…traditional elements of music language…to the extent it is useful and helps kids to make connections between different kinds of music. Umm…but…but I’d like to see…yeah…something that’s…that I would…that’s almost a universal principle of…you know…of a way of organizing sound. And that you could take that same principle and jump it to a bunch of different things. Like…you can…the Bach invention, just listen to Gamelan music. You’ve got the same thing going, which is
the little guys up there doing that little complementary, decorative stuff up there compared to the bongs down here. And it’s…we’re working with the horizontal motives...like…so once you…it’s like getting a key to a door; to understand one way of organizing music. And so, it’s…it’s…umm…the kind of teaching I never had when I was first taking music…

Finding a less ethnocentric way to discuss music was important to Susan. Countryman’s (2009) article offers suggestions toward this goal, but the road to being less ethnocentric is littered with potential assumptions. For how is it possible to conceptualize elements that apply more broadly when any conceptualization comes from a singular perspective? The path here is complex, but the Susan’s push to reenvision is important. Once again, however, there are unconscious values apparent in language. Susan’s understanding of what she labeled “traditional” elements included those elements associated with Western music—pitch, rhythm, timbre, and texture, among others. The word choice is interesting as it employs that same correct/incorrect binary set up in her earlier discussion about her discomfort with choirs singing African music “correctly.” Such language use inheres Western/Other musical paradigms with hierarchical value judgments.

All four teachers recognized that there are multiple ways of understanding and engaging in music—a recognition quite distinct from the singular understanding present in the band/orchestra/choir paradigm. Teachers introduced different styles of notation in their programs, varied physical orientations, and multiple musical orientations. They considered different ways of configuring instruments to understand music in distinct ways. Susan also wondered how it might be possible to rethink the “elements of music” so they were less ethnocentric and more broadly applicable to multiple musical cultures.

**Creativity in music: finding ways to compose and move.** Teachers also found different ways to foster creativity in their classrooms. They created space for students to explore and experiment, and planned small creative tasks that students found accessible. They showed students how to make critical creative choices and generally applauded all student efforts at creating movements or compositions.
“Messing around time.” At the beginning of most activities involving instruments, teachers allowed time for the students to “mess around”—to explore the instrument they had in front of them and discover its possibilities. The majority of creative tasks began with this “mess around time.” Observing during those moments was exciting; melodies and chords emerged in fragments above the din, and students often experimented with a method for playing an instrument, as well as experimenting with sounds using a technique with which they were familiar. Music education generally deems this “mess around” time quite valuable, as do the students who partake in the process. Burnard (2000), for example, describes a child who articulated how much she valued the opportunities to “mess around” that she had in her life.

**Freedom to explore and experiment.** “Messing around time” occurred largely at the beginning of activities or within the context of “figuring something out.” The programs with creative tasks also included time and space for students to explore qualities of both sounds and movement. Susan considered the importance of exploration through the philosophical perspective provided by the Orff approach:

> Juliet: I’ve written down that it’s an exploration-based approach. And you had said something—“Imitate, explore, create”…
> Susan: That’s…yeah…the Orff process is that and I’m always conscious of that scaffolding of…you know…they have to have some kind of vocabulary before we start exploring and then let’s see where we can take it and then ideally end up creating and improvising using it.
> Juliet: Yeah…
> Susan: Yeah…and…but that’s…the language has got to become their own.

The Orff approach follows the model of “imitate, explore, create” where students first imitate sounds and techniques within the style to become familiar with the facets of the specific music. After they become comfortable with the style, the next step is to explore it—using the elements learned in the imitation component to expand and explore the music. Finally, once students have learned elements associated with the music, imitated them until they become part

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10 “Messing around” is a long-standing practice of the Reggio Emilia philosophy.
of the students’ musical vocabulary, and explored the possibilities with the elements, they can then progress to the final stage—creating within that style. Susan modeled this methodology in her classroom. In planning creative tasks, particularly when using a broad range of musics, the danger exists of creating through a Western lens. The model of “imitate, explore, create” allows the possibility of creating music by considering it on its own terms—first learning the style, then exploring the elements, and finally, creating within culturally appropriate parameters. Susan also acknowledged, however, that there was flexibility within forms to experiment, and that experimentation was the musical behavior characteristic of “real musicians.” When we first met in February to discuss observing in her class, she talked about a journal article in the music education Orff journal *Ostinato* (Johnson, 2012) in which an Aboriginal artist discussed the way styles fuse over time:

Susan: I mean she is one of the people who has also been a huge inspiration to me because she provides accessibility for a start and…umm…but she’s also insisting that…you know…it’s not like any traditional art just sits there and is not moving…the real musicians are morphing and fusing styles all the time…and there’s scarcely a thing in the world that you could point to and say…that is of its ilk and nothing else. Everything has influenced everything…and real musicians don’t ask…”Where did that come from?”…or…you know…”Is it okay to play this?” They hear a riff they like, they steal it…and so knowing that the real world of music is like that is also healthy for kids…I think. They need to understand…you know…what they hear.

For Susan, it was possible to push the activities of exploring and creating into the realm of fusion, as doing so paralleled the behavior of “real musicians.” She continued on to say:

Susan: And my attitude to that is that if most traditional folk music…whatever…comes from a tradition where people are meant to manipulate…you know…they manipulate it…that’s what you do with that kind of music. So it doesn’t feel disrespectful to do that in many cases…or I try to make sure that what we’re doing is…is really in the nature of the music anyway and that’s what I want kids to feel is that music is there to be played with. And that…you know…your high end, most sophisticated music…that’s all they’re doing. It’s a fancier way of playing with it. But that’s what we do with music. And we say it…we play music, so let’s do it. Let’s make it be playful.
I add the caveat here however that it is important to keep integrity and ethics at the centre of any fusion activity as well as consider the effect of power dynamics between multiple musics. With the inclusion of a hip-hop artist in her classroom and a lively Gamelan program, Sarah found some interesting possibilities for fusion:

Sarah: And I have this...grade 12 student who has been placed with me and he loves music but he loves rap music so it's going to be interesting. He was just placed with me and it just so happens that another class is doing a poetry unit with a student teacher here. And so we’re thinking if we can incorporate as the beat-box maybe a Gamelan riff with a... with what the children write, that could be one of the backdrops of the percussion for a kind of poetry—maybe rap. So that might be an interesting thing.

Considering the model that Susan put forward in which fusion occurs organically when musics meet, Sarah’s project traversed a number of borders. It is important here not to diminish the potential for colonizing power relations in fusion. However, with the presence of colonizing power relations, there is also potential for strong subversive rhetoric of counterhegemony. For what are the possibilities when we fuse a music that at its best is counterhegemonic—hip-hop in this case—with a music that operates in a space completely apart from a Western way of thinking? The potential is certainly powerful. Carefully considered, this project could open up new possibilities.

Finally, this space to explore is just as apparent in movement activities. It was perhaps most obvious in Susan’s program and Anne’s class. Activities like the following occurred regularly in both programs:

Susan goes to the piano and asks them to go for a walk as if they're wearing their ordinary running shoes. Then she changes the music to have them walk in “great, big working boots” followed by “ballet slippers.” Their quality of movement changes drastically with the different shoes and corresponding music. For each of the different kinds of shoes, she changes the quality of her playing. Then they do “marching shoes,” followed by a student-selected “fuzzy slippers,” and ending with “galloping shoes.” There is lots of repetition here.

Observing this activity in two different kindergarten classes over the course of a day revealed a wide range of qualities of movement. Students responded to the music individually, and with
real variation. Susan and Anne both created spaces where the students could explore movement safely and find different qualities in response to sound without social repercussions. The freedom to explore more generally was an important attribute in all four classes.

**Lyric writing.** Students engaged in writing song lyrics in the classrooms of Amanda, Anne, and Susan. Within all three classes, the teachers found a way to provide a structure for creativity to foster success. The students in grades five and six in Amanda’s class worked on creating their own blues lyrics:

The students have a new assignment—writing blues lyrics. They read the assignment aloud together and students volunteer to read without hesitation. When she begins playing examples of blues songs, the students listen totally attentively. Some students nod their heads or tap their foot to the music. They concentrate on the lyrics and they are not talking at all. Then Amanda gives the students some time to work on their own lyrics. They are to brainstorm about things that make them feel sad. She suggests that they look at “3 o’clock Blues” and “Walkin’ Blues as examples. The worksheet asks them to “let their ideas flow.” She tells them that later, they will choose their best ideas. The brainstorm section gives them lots of room to be creative. This is an excellent framework for creative lyric-writing. She has multiple scaffolds in place. She has students brainstorm ideas first and then looking at someone else’s structure. Finally, they will try to create their own. They write down all steps of the process.

For Amanda, writing lyrics is an expressive form. In the discourse of wanting students to be successful, it is easy to set up an activity where a student can achieve by completing a structure. Amanda offered students models to examine, but did not restrict them to those models. The other lyric-writing activities I observed were more regimented, but students still found ways to insert themselves into the lyrics. The issues with much of the discourse about creativity lie in the fact that to a large degree, creativity is culturally situated (Sternberg, 2007). To limit students to a structure and eliminate ideas as “wrong” when they do not fit that structure is potentially dangerous territory. To instead provide a structure where students have multiple models from which to choose, and the option to follow their own path opens up myriad possibilities for students to explore.
“Everyone can compose.” In our discussions of composition and improvisation, what Anne and Susan both wished to communicate was the notion that everyone can compose:

Anne: I want them to understand that composing isn’t something that needs to be scary…like…it can be as simple as coming up with your own words to a song you already know. It doesn’t have to be some mammoth great big work. That’s the first step. If you have success understanding how language and music fit together then it’s going to give you a base on how to…you know…write your own songs, express yourself in lots of different ways. Umm…I have one kid who came to me with her own song and gave it to me for Christmas.

Similarly, Susan said the following:

Juliet: The composition aspects of your program, what do you hope they take from them?
Susan: That everyone can compose. I mean, composers aren’t special people, they’re just special people who have a passion and have developed their skills to a very, very high level. But, that everyone can compose. And that the idea of a composition is often something that’s very accessible and something we can try out. And, so on the one hand I want them to have huge respect for composers and people who make that commitment to spending the time it takes to do it in a power…in a sophisticated way. But at the same time, I want them to feel, “Yeah, I can do that.” And it’s…there’s such a disconnect in our schools between say a language arts program where every kid writes every day. From grade one on. And a music program where, maybe, they compose about twice in the whole time. So, I don’t think my program, this year, with the one period a week has had enough of that. And it’s…you know…looking critically at what I’ve done this year, I think there has not been enough of that. And there hasn’t been enough improvisation. But certainly there’s a little there and it’s, I hope, something that they’re aware they can do.

Susan and Anne both emphasized how important it was for students to recognize that composition was accessible to them. Susan raised an interesting point about the incongruities between a language program where the students write constantly, and the music program that traditionally replicates material already created—yet another facet of so-called “traditional” music education. Within their own programs, they provided opportunities for students to find their compositional voice. They created activities for students in grades as young as kindergarten to enable this creativity. The following activity took place in a kindergarten class in Anne’s school:
Anne introduces a book to the kindergarten class: “There was an old lady who swallowed a chick.” She asks the students, “Who remembers some of the other books that I’ve read to you like this?” The students rhyme off titles: “There was an old lady who swallowed a cat,” “There was a cold lady that swallowed some snow,” “There was an old lady who swallowed some leaves,” “There was an old lady who swallowed a bat,” “There was an old monster.” Anne asks them, “What do these books have in common?” “All of them swallow stuff.” “The words are the same.” “Are all the words the same?” “All of the books have an old lady, but some of them no.” “Why do you think I show them to you in MUSIC class?” “High and low.” “What do you mean?” “It has music to it.” She teaches them their part to sing and they sing the book together. Then they watch a short Scholastic movie based on “There was an old lady who swallowed a fly.” “I have shown you a whole bunch of ways that the old woman has swallowed a fly. Do you think you could make up your own?” Students call out “Yes!” and “No!” simultaneously. She shows them how different people became the author of the books. “There's no reason why we can't have another book up here that's written by room 104.”

Although the activity was relatively simple, Anne conveyed to the students that composition was accessible, and something they could do. However, there are disability implications to this discourse, and teachers have the opportunity to attend to issues of access when engaging in composition activities. Composer Pauline Oliveros is currently piloting software that enables students with limited mobility to produce sounds with very small movements so that they can engage not only in composing activities, but also in music activities more generally.\(^{11}\)

It is important to note, however, that within the idea that everyone can compose, “composing” as a task is Eurocentric. “Composing” in the manner meant by these teachers does not exist in many cultures. Music is sometimes more organic than formulated, and created on the spot to serve a specific purpose by a large group of people. The discussion of South African freedom songs in the documentary *Amandla!*, for example, explores the nature of songs created on the front lines in response to a need (Hirsch, 2002). “Composing,” as it is understood in schools and in the curriculum, emerges from a particular Eurocentric idea of music.

**Small creative tasks.** Similar to the tasks to teach notation, creative tasks were small in scope. Teachers, for the most part, provided a structure that allowed the students to be

\(^{11}\) See [http://deeplisting.org/site/content/adaptiveusenews](http://deeplisting.org/site/content/adaptiveusenews) for further information on *Adaptive Use Musical Instruments.*
successful. Whether the task was composition-based, an improvisation activity, or movement exercise, teachers ensured that students both had space for exploration and enough structure to be proud of what they created. Anne, for example, created an improvisation activity for a song she introduced in grade one:

Students are focused on their improvisations for the song. The structure Anne provided was fairly basic; four measures of three quarter notes plus a quarter rest. It’s really interesting to hear their separate improvisations. Some fit the prescribed structure. Others are quite musical, but do not meet her expectations. What of these improvisations that do not fit the structure? Are they considered “wrong”? (Excerpt from journal, May)

In discussion with Anne afterwards, she provided the structure to ensure students had success. Many students did not follow the structure and created patterns with a great deal of complexity. Although Anne encouraged students to follow the structure, she did not insist, and did not label any pattern or musical behavior as “wrong,” opening the space to multiple ways of improvisation. While Sternberg (2007) contends that students’ “intelligence” is often determined by the culturally situated understanding of intelligence by the teacher, Anne did not limit “success” to her definition, but rather made “her way” one possible way to create. More generally, the small scope of creative tasks eliminated the more daunting nature of larger composition projects. Students moved freely in movement activities, tried their hand at improvisation, and attempted composing in multiple styles and capacities.

Making critical creative choices. Teachers also asked students to make critical creative choices—to think critically and make decisions in their composition and improvisation work. Anne worked with the grade one and two students to create their own arrangement for the Trinidadian song Shake the Papaya Down. Students chose instruments to play, and made decisions where to play them within the song.

Anne: So they’re picking not only the place that they have to play, but they’re making critical choices and critical thinking is such a really important component in life, not just music, but music is such a beautiful way to teach that skill.
Juliet: Yeah…oh yeah…definitely. Umm…they have a lot of choices as well and…like…you give them a lot of choices in terms of…like…instruments that they want to do, the way they want to play them. Umm…I mean, there are just…there…everything is within a structure, but there’s a lot of liberty within that structure.

Anne: And as the year goes on…I’ve scaffolded that, right. The beginning of the year didn’t start out that way. At the beginning of the year, it’s much more prescribed. But as they get more comfortable and competent, then I can give them more and more and more. As long as I maintain that structure. And eventually what we’re going to be doing with that is they’re going to be improvising their own pentatonic B section and stuff, so…yeah, we just keep building it and then getting that reflective piece where they have to assess whether they like what they’ve done and give feedback to each other and to themselves, and then rework it.

Anne pushed students to critically reflect on their musical decisions. As I explain further in chapter six, she followed this activity with an exercise in which students gave constructive feedback to each other in small “bands.”

**Applauding student compositions.** Teachers also found moments within their programs to applaud student compositions, providing a recognition of achievements discussed under “validation of students” in chapter six. Susan discussed the *I Want a Dog* song composed by a student in the primary division:

Susan: And he just came in and…bounced into primary choir and said, “Mrs. T., I made up a song.” And he sang it. And so, then…what do you do with it? And so I had to think fast. I always want them to have the opportunity to do a little solo thing at the beginning, so that’s when we did the…umm…we got to sing the name of a dog and the class would sing it back if they wanted to. And every row, we’d stop and sing the “I Want a Dog song” again…so…

Juliet: Was he thrilled? I didn’t…

Susan: Oh yes, because then the next class…the next rehearsal, we got to the end of the rehearsal and we hadn’t done it and he said, “Mrs. T., we didn’t do my song yet.” So, okay… “So, let’s do that.” And we did it again. We did it in his next class and the other kids love it.

Juliet: Well, everyone…

Susan: Everyone wants a dog. Who doesn’t like a dog…I mean, really?

In this case, the accolade went to an individual student, but group projects also received recognition within all four programs. When students created, teachers recognized their efforts.

**Accepting all student ideas.** The notion of accepting all student ideas connects to a statement Susan made about ideas being gifts to be used in the class. All four teachers found
ways to validate students’ ideas in the classroom. The following creative example took place in

Susan’s kindergarten class:

Susan says, “Outside it is windy and it is sunny and in a minute, we're going to make the wind in here. We're going to make it in two different ways. We're going to make the wind with our bodies and we’re going to make it with the instruments.” She teaches the students a song called “Listen to the sound of the rain.” The song has four elements. It begins with rain, followed by wind, snow, and sun. The students make sounds. Susan says, “We're going to try to put all of those sounds on the glockenspiel.” She explains, “Glockenspiel means ‘playing a bell’ and it does sound an awful lot like playing a bell, doesn't it?” She has them make the sound of the rain, the sound of the wind, and the sound of the snow. Then she asks for ideas for each element. One boy offers a sound for the snow. “The sound of the littlest key for the snow. What a lovely idea. Everybody try the very littlest key.” Someone else suggests a repeated sound in the middle of the instrument for the sun. They try it. (Excerpt from journal, April)

Validating students’ creative ideas emerged as an important theme in considering the creative component of the different music programs.

**Conclusion: A Wide Range of Musics and Ways of Engaging in Musicking Activities**

The “traditional” music education paradigm generally focuses on Western classical music and a singular approach to understanding music. The approach centres the director and tends to concentrate on replication of repertoire already produced rather than the creation of new works. It also places Western standard notation at the centre of the curriculum. This chapter explored the range of musics and ways of engaging in musicking activities that these four teachers included in their programs. They included a range of vernacular musics—musics largely associated with student identities or affinities—and actually limited the extent to which Western standard notation drove their programs. They emphasized possibilities for creative compositions, improvisations, and movement in music class and found ways to understand music through multiple lenses. With the diversity of programs they offered, these music teachers challenged the “traditional” paradigm of music education and worked to create a different space in their classrooms.
In chapter six, I move from content to examine pedagogy, noting there is much slippage between content and pedagogy. Broadly, chapter six first discusses how these four teachers worked to place diverse musics in a sociocultural and sociohistorical context. It then explores the ways in which teachers privileged relationships with the students over a more performance-oriented model in which the music dominates.
CHAPTER 6

Rupturing Traditions in Pedagogy: On the Road to Challenging Dominant Paradigms in Elementary Music Education

The previous chapter discussed the program and curriculum content in the classrooms of four music educators. There are many slippages between content and pedagogy, in this chapter, I attempt to tease out two significant aspects of the pedagogical practices of Amanda, Anne, Sarah, and Susan. I begin with an exploration of the emphasis each teacher placed on the contextualization of musics studied, followed by a look at the different facets of the discourse of centring the student and what that meant in the classroom for each teacher.

Context, Context, Context: Placing All Musics in a Sociocultural and Sociohistorical Context

Further to the previous chapter’s examination of expanding the range of musics and musicking activities, in this section, I explore how teachers choose to present these musics. One of the issues that arises within the ensemble paradigm is the way in which teachers tend to present Western classical music devoid of context, thus naturalizing it. Contextualization of all musics emerged as an important theme within this research. Teachers felt strongly about presenting music within a sociocultural and sociohistorical context and as demonstrated in the literature review in chapter three, this emphasis is prevalent in the discourse in music education. In this section, I discuss the importance of contextualization for these four teachers and also consider the cultural literacy they promoted in their classrooms—a literacy through which they encouraged students to think critically, draw on outside knowledge, and make connections between musical and non-musical material.
Importance of contextualization. Teachers continually referenced the importance of contextualization within their discussion of their classroom philosophy and within their practice. For these teachers, contextualization encompassed bringing in experts to work with students on different musics, connecting all musics to their cultural and historical contexts, drawing relationships between musics, and searching for accessible resources.

Bringing in experts. One of the first elements discussed within the idea of contextualization was the importance of bringing in experts to work with the students. All four teachers had worked with a master drummer in Ewe music, and Susan and Sarah also worked with Gamelan musicians. Sarah had done some work with Georgian singing as well. While I already discussed the problematic nature of the inclination to engage with this so-called “culture bearer” within music education (see chapters two and five), it is possible to engage in such a way so that the expert musician does not come to represent all of what there is to know about a culture and a group of people. Sarah’s Gamelan program went far beyond simply working with one individual. She had studied Gamelan extensively, and her program was multi-faceted. Not only was she able to provide a complex and nuanced view of Gamelan herself, but she also introduced students to a wonderful dancer/drummer, a set of professional instruments, and the chance to regularly visit the Indonesian Consulate. The students’ experiences were therefore not reduced to a singular experience with an expert Gamelan musician.

“Music is about humanity…about people. It’s not this like extracted thing.”:

Connecting all musics to their cultural contexts. All four teachers emphasized the importance of connecting musics to their cultural contexts. This contextual emphasis is often absent from music education. Teachers present songs without context, and few resources provide extensive sociocultural information, as Bradley (2003) notes in her discussion of choral music. Why did these four teachers feel context was so important to their classes?
Amanda: Right…well…music is about humanity…about people. It’s not this like extracted thing. Like…it happens for a reason. And especially the kind of music that we’ve been talking about…like…it’s not an academic pursuit. It’s…like…it happened because this was the historical context…this was the social context…this is the…whatever. So I don’t see how you can extract them from that. And that’s how I’ve learned about the world…so…why not start teaching the kids early? ‘Cause nobody taught me about that sort of stuff. Like…I remember learning things like that calypso song “Yellow Bird.” In…like…grade 4/grade 5. ‘Cause it’s in the Musicanada books…right. And just being…like…ok…I really like this song…but I had no context for it whatsoever, other than this is a nice song. And that was it. And I don’t think it’s that difficult to put a context around it.

Amanda and I had similar music class experiences in elementary school. Our respective teachers presented Yellow Bird, a vibrant Calypso song, as a song sung with piano accompaniment completely without context. Bradley (2003) suggests that when teachers or conductors present music without context that students will imagine the music’s origin. When singing a song from Ghana, in other words, if not provided with context, students draw on the always already Other (Bradley, 2003)—that figure amalgamated from multiple sources, including the media—to create their own context for the music they perform. Doing so becomes highly problematic when World Vision infomercials comprise the images of Africa available to the students. When I learned Yellow Bird as a child, it was simply a song. My experience would have been infinitely richer had I been able to situate the learning in the context of other music I knew.

I also asked Susan what she felt was important when teaching music from around the world.

Susan: Well…umm…put it in a context. I’d like them to have a sort of a mini-sense of historical development of music. And also, the world map is…you know…I don’t know how anyone teaches without a world map on their wall. I mean, we use it all the time. And…umm…it’s…but kids don’t use maps a lot in school now, so it’s…they really don’t know where countries are. So it’s, I think, really important to have that over there. And so, there’s that, and then also the getting a feel for the style…you know…what would the…where would this music be performed…you know…the samba, that’s a street piece, but I played The Girl From Ipanema…that’s not a street piece, where would that be performed? And they figured it out…that it was nightclub music and…umm…so it’s…yeah…where does the music come from, so that it’s not just floating out there with no background. It’s always rooted in some kind of human experience and that’s where it’s come from. So I guess that so that however in whatever minimal way we do it, we can at least have a sense of what
would be authentic for this piece of music and enjoy a kind of a whole story around it, not just sing the song.

For Susan, situating music in its context was the first issue she raised when I asked what was important to do when teaching music from around the world. Amanda based her approach completely on contextualization, but when I asked this question of Anne and Sarah, their immediate responses also privileged context as the most important aspect of teaching a range of musics.

Given the potential to reinscribe so-called “strange” or “Other” music as “strange” or “exotic,” the treatment of the contextualization of Western classical music in the classroom is of interest precisely because of its traditionally privileged place in the hierarchy of both musics and “civilizations.” In these particular classrooms, while classical music was not particularly privileged in the amount of time devoted to it, it was also not usually contextualized beyond details of composers and their lives. Given the imperial relations that have historically privileged Western classical music, examining with students the sociopolitical relations that led to this privileging, including an analysis of power dynamics, may have enabled a deeper contextualization.

*Drawing relationships between musics.* Besides situating musics in their contexts, teachers also considered how musics connected to other musics. They actively drew connections between musics with their classes. For Susan, drawing these connections sometimes meant looking for the organizing principle of the music:

Susan: I have a workshop that I do called From Buns to Bach which starts off with Hot Cross Buns and just developing complementary rhythms. And then going and looking at the two part inventions of Bach, which are entirely based on complementary rhythm…three motives and complementary rhythm, that was the only two rules in the whole thing…in the inventions…that’s there’s three motives per invention and complementary rhythm…eighth notes here, sixteenth notes there….then take the same and turn it the other way. And when I played those darn things no one ever helped me to see that. And, and…once you start seeing it, it’s

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1 It comprised between ten and twenty-five percent of the classroom content.
simple enough to see that kids who don’t read music can find it by the shape. And so, any kind of music there’s something like that behind it. There’s some kind of organizing principle or something that made it enjoyable to make the piece of music. So find it and help kids to play with it, or locate it, or understand it, or…you know…whatever it happens to be. So…like…that’s the thing that intrigues me a lot about introducing different kinds of music, because often there can be so many different pathways in and that will influence what kind of…the way the music opens up…you know.

Susan goes on to discuss how those same complementary rhythms appear in Javanese Gamelan—longer note values in the larger instruments and shorter complementary rhythms on the smaller instruments. Thinking about music in this way allows students to think about the like and unlike ways that musics are organized across all genres. However, there are more possibilities here. As a first year teacher, Amanda plans to draw on this year’s contextual knowledge in the future to make connections between musics:

Juliet: I think a lot about…like…the kind of musical touristic idea versus…like…a richer, more contextualized approach and…like…your program, although it is looking at different cultures…like…you’re not taking a superficial…you’ve gone down the next layer somehow…
Amanda: Right, I’m trying not to just say…oh look isn’t this cool…maracas, sombreros…yeah I’m definitely trying to not do that. I would like to go even deeper, but I know the kids would get bored. So even, I even now feel like…oh we should be spending more time on Guantanamera…and I’m…like…no two lessons is enough ‘cause I still have more that I want to do. But again, I’m still thinking long term…so that…you know…next year I obviously won’t do Guantanamera again because so many of the kids will have done it…but still, it give you that door into it that we can say…remember what we did last near…now this year…and you can spend more time doing other things as they get older…So…just…every year they’re getting one more thing to put into that compartment of their knowledge.

Music teachers typically draw on students’ previous knowledge, but often that knowledge is concept-based. In this case, the important previous knowledge was the context.

Susan described a Mandarin song from her program called *Mo Li Hua*. It was a folk melody that Puccini used in his opera *Turandot*. He harmonized the melody and Tan Dun, the composer of the film *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, utilized Puccini’s harmonization for his arrangement of the song for the Beijing Olympics. As a class, students traced the song from East to West and back again, following the connections and examining the changes. They explored
how the same melody appeared in different ways across different countries over time. An interesting extension might explore the power dynamics and economic impact of the “borrowing” of eight Chinese melodies for use in a Western opera.

Susan and Amanda in particular constantly considered ways to connect diverse musics to other musics, whether through organizing principles of the music, through tracing the musics through multiple incarnations, or building on previous contextual knowledge throughout several years of music class. There are further opportunities to extend relationality. While all four teachers placed musics within their contexts, even in relation to other musics, looking at the manner in which certain musics are privileged and the means through which this status was granted would be an interesting extension to this kind of work. Adding the economic or material element to the consideration of different musics allows students to think about relationships between musics with an understanding of global hierarchies. Studying music in this manner then potentially opens up possibilities for subversion of these types of hierarchies.

**Available resources.** Susan also talked extensively of resources she used beyond those resources common to music education. When creating units in grade seven about musics with their roots in Africa or musics from around the world in grade eight, she read voraciously. The books she chose included both resources from children’s literature and academic books that informed her own knowledge on the subject matter. When she presented context, she presented a complex view of Canada as a nation-state—a history far from the rosy picture generally told about Canada. She complicated national and international stories with disturbing interruptions to well-worn narratives—interruptions such as a discussion of blackface and a conversation about the number of formerly enslaved people who, after making the journey north to Canada, the so-called “promised land,” chose to leave Canada in favour of the United States.

The school board recently released a preliminary version of an Afrocentric curriculum—a curriculum that described black Canadian composer Nathaniel Dett as “embarrassed” about
black music due to the prominence of blackface at the time he actively worked. Rather than allow the nebulous description in the curriculum to stand, Susan examined the context with the class. The response was strong from the students and the discussion was heated. Upon looking at what the board had provided, Susan realized the students had no basis from which to imagine the reasons for Dett’s embarrassment about black music that led him to initiate his quest to “emancipate black music.” Rather than allowing students to imagine the reasons he might be embarrassed, as Bradley (2003) cautions, Susan situated the issues, based on her own historical reading and understanding. Leaving students to imagine why someone might be embarrassed by “black music” could lead to outcomes ranging from ahistorical guesswork to overt racism. For Susan, the supplemental reading proved essential to her program, and this type of reading was also evident in the other three classrooms. In the discussion of elements essential to teaching a broad range of musics, contextualization emerged as the most important theme in the philosophies of these four teachers.

**Active practice of contextualizing.**

**Connecting music to its cultural context: from philosophy to practice.** Across all four classrooms, teachers introduced musics within a context. The depth of the context varied from teacher to teacher, within the scope of the individual teachers’ practices and across the grade levels they taught. The main focus of Amanda's program provided sociohistorical and sociocultural context that situated all musics taught. She finished a unit on Ghanaian music the December before I arrived in January. In the two months I observed in her class, she discussed the Middle Passage with the students. On her board, she displayed a proportionally accurate Peters map of the word with red lines that traced points of departure for enslaved people from Africa and points of landing in the Americas. Over the two months I was there, she followed the transatlantic crossings across the ocean to examine the musics that emerged upon their arrival through to current incarnations of these musics. On my first day at the school, she discussed her
struggle with how to frame this unit with the students. The musics are wonderful, but she wanted to situate the musics as rich *in spite of* rather than *because of* horrendous violence and oppression. She worried that with the wrong presentation, the oppressive history could be lost. She tried to make the severity of the slave trade felt with each group. She took the time to emphasize that music now with African roots is due to the strength of African culture, rather than any kind of positive effect of the slave trade. In every class she taught, she stressed the circumstances out of which the music emerged. Using the map, she visually traced the crossings to their respective landings, beginning with studying the music that resulted from the Portuguese colonization of Brazil and the enslavement of African peoples to work in Bahia. The students learned about and engaged in *maculelê*—a music from Brazil originally performed with machetes on plantations in Bahia. She taught the students about the dance associated with *maculelê* acting as a covert way to train people enslaved on plantations in Bahia to fight. She connected *maculelê* to *capoeira* and other martial arts.

After examining *maculelê*, the students studied salsa in Cuba, also looking at the history of enslavement that produced Afro-Cuban music. They learned about the life of Celia Cruz, the song she made famous across the world—*Guantanamera*—and past circumstances in Cuba. Cruz emigrated from Cuba to the United States, and Amanda made it clear that oppression for Celia was at least two-fold; she experienced both overt racism and sexism upon arriving in the United States, and was highly successful despite the structural oppression she experienced. Amanda also highlighted a music video Cruz made in her seventies, directing students’ attention to what their own grandmothers do in their seventies.

The classes then studied the musics that emerged from enslavement in the United States. They watched an episode from *The Reading Rainbow* that discussed the song *Follow the*
Drinking Gourd. Together, they decoded the song taught on plantations in the south that gave directions to the north. The grade two and three classes mapped the song in pictures they drew, based on the directions they decoded. From there, the younger grades went on to discuss jazz, while the older students examined Jamaican mento and the evolution of the blues. Amanda contextualized all three genres and again revealed the social activist elements of mento and the structural racism that ultimately killed blues singers like Bessie Smith. Oppression was at the centre of the discussion, as was the depth and beauty of the diverse musics. She connected the songs she introduced to their current realities, examining their presence in various media. She made connections constantly between musics and also between different aspects of history. Amanda’s program provides a rich example of a program that privileges the study of the sociocultural and sociohistorical context, revealing oppressive power relations. The students rose to the challenge and the discussions became increasingly thoughtful over my eight weeks of observation.

Cultural literacy in the classroom: making connections, listening critically, and thinking critically. This section examines the ways in which teachers worked to foster critical cultural literacy in their classrooms, introducing ways of “reading” the media and thinking critically about music. By the term “cultural literacy,” I mean the manner in which students learned to “read” and consider music within its cultural context. Teachers in this study encouraged the students to make connections between materials, to draw upon outside knowledge to apply it to their in-class learning, and to think critically about music. They emphasized the importance of learning to listen, and aimed to expose the students to a broad range of materials.

2 This Reading Rainbow episode originally aired on October 18, 1993 (season eleven, episode six) and can be viewed in its entirety at http://vimeo.com/6494507.
**Drawing connections between materials.** Connecting materials occurred most frequently in Amanda’s classroom. Often the students connected material they learned in music class with new material, but they also asked interesting questions based on other experiences. Amanda always engaged the material about which students inquired. She connected a question about Australia to the discussion at hand about the enslavement of Aboriginal people, even though Australia was beyond the scope of the class discussion. A grade one student connected the purpose of the code song that provided directions north to their earlier work on *maculelê*, as both musics served the function of escape. She linked music they studied in January to the Ghanaian music they studied earlier, to their work on Bob Marley’s *Redemption Song*, and to a performance they saw in the fall by *Ballet Creole*, a Caribbean drum and dance troupe. In Amanda’s class, all musics connected to other musics and emerged from a sociohistorical and sociocultural context. Nothing occurred in isolation, only in conjunction with other events, musics, and the context from which the music emerged.

**Drawing on outside knowledge.** Amanda also encouraged the students to draw on their outside knowledge and apply it to class material. In her class, students puzzled out unfamiliar Spanish words based on some knowledge of French and from the context of the story that utilized Spanish words in conjunction with English. Amanda gave the grade five and six students an assignment in which they drew meaning from the song *Day-O* sung by Harry Belafonte. She asked them to consider what they knew from the unit already and their outside knowledge to analyze the words and the musical elements of the song. For the most part, students saw past the upbeat mood of the song to understand the social issues it discussed. When Amanda spoke of music, she often related the music to students’ lives—connecting musics to the media, and offering examples to demonstrate a point. When they watched Celia Cruz’ music video, made when she was in her seventies, Amanda likened it to their grandmothers making a music video in order to showcase its exceptional nature. She took up the students’ questions,
and what they brought to the class. Upon hearing several blues examples played in class, a student said, “I know that Elvis was rock, but he sounds like blues.” Amanda had not played Elvis, but the student made a connection, and Amanda addressed it: “Good question. Elvis' biggest controversy was that he was the first white person to sing what was considered ‘black’ music.” A discussion ensued; this conversation was one of many that occurred regularly in Amanda’s class. She contextualized all knowledge the students brought to the classroom, and situated it within the learning. Situating student knowledge in this manner ultimately extended the learning in most cases.

**Thinking critically about music.** Amanda based her program on teaching students to think critically about music and consider its role in society and the (multiple) messages it communicates:

> Amanda: To me…like…the ultimate kid in grade 6 is graduating with the…like…basics…I do still want them to know about quarter notes and whatever and do, re, mi, fa, so…you know, whatever. And I do…I will focus on that at some point. But…umm…it’s about being able to critically think about music and critically think about its role and why it even exists and what’s…what does music do that writing doesn’t, or speaking doesn’t…or whatever.

She continued on to explain a project she did the previous year with a Selena Gomez song called *Who Says* in which she critiqued the song and the message with the students. She articulated that, in her opinion, the point of teaching music is to foster students’ ability to critique the musics and media messages in the world around them. It was particularly interesting to watch the ways in which this philosophy came to life across a range of grade levels in Amanda’s program. In junior and senior kindergarten, thinking critically about music sometimes meant thinking about the social and environmental issues raised by a song, connecting the idea of “making good choices for the world” to concrete actions students aged four and five could initiate. In grade two and three, thinking critically in one situation meant critically analyzing the words of the “code song” for meaning. The older
students, conversely, analyzed more abstractly. They looked for implied meanings and extramusical messages communicated by music. In Amanda’s class, thinking critically at different developmental stages followed Dewey’s (1910, Chapter 10) trajectory from concrete to abstract thinking. Amanda emphasized learning to articulate thoughts about music. She reminded them to be critical of the media—to “remember to ask if TV is telling them the whole truth or only part of the truth.” When students worked on responses to class material, she pushed them to think beyond answers such as “I like it because it’s good.”

Amanda: Right…like…I…I mean it’s on the thing…right…like…under the try on my board…don’t be afraid to be wrong ‘cause there is no wrong in here. Like…sure…I mean…fine…you can be wrong if you give me the wrong answer for what a code song is. But those are just facts. Like…on that sheet, way more important to me is what you think music did for enslaved people. If you don’t know what a code song is, well whatever…but I want to see your brain working…

Amanda often advocated for higher level thinking in her critical work with students.

Rather than focusing on music’s larger picture, Susan took a different approach. When I arrived in March, there was a list of over twenty songs that the students heard over the course of the year. She asked them to listen analytically with careful attention to the different elements of the music. She tended to focus students’ attention on one specific component of the music and engaged them to consider it. The listening choices were quite diverse. In the eight weeks I observed, they ranged from an Aboriginal flute piece, to a Bob Marley song, to a string quartet playing with West African style percussionists, to an Andean folk tune. Students articulated their thoughts about the elements clearly and were able to discern different aspects of the piece and any changes that occurred. The Kronos Quartet fusion with the West African percussion raised some interesting questions for me, and it also created a possible way to take a relational pedagogy further. Although this activity was a five-minute activity at the beginning of class, exploring the power dynamics inherent in this particular type of fusion would have been an
interesting way to foster critical thinking in respect to colonial relations and hierarchies of music.

**Importance of learning to listen.** Amanda also privileged learning to listen above other musical skills:

Amanda: I want to teach the curriculum but through…like…from the kids’ perspective, the kids’ point of view…like…their entryway into it. They’re not listening to Beethoven…they’re not. Like…they…some of them might be because a couple of kids…like…their mom plays them classical music or whatever. But…and that’s not to say that I’m not going to play Beethoven for them. But I don’t think that’s the way in. I just don’t…so…you know…taking a song…like earlier in the year I did a Jamaican work song. We learned it just by ear, but then I gave them the music and we could identify how you hear the quarter notes and eighth notes…oh that’s a rest…so I’m trying to look at it that way. Trying to go…because…it’s got to be like language…you don’t learn to write first, before you can speak. So why am I going to shove all this theoretical language at them when I’m not even convinced that they know how to listen to music. […] So I want kids to learn how to listen…so that to me is way before anything else. But I know that’s…I’m always caught in whether…I trust that my instincts are right about that…even though maybe by the end of the year they won’t be able to say… “Oh, that four bar rhythm sounds like this,” and clap it for me…because I don’t know if that’s as important as learning to be a listener.

For Amanda, learning to listen and think about music was fundamental and a skill she wished to foster in the students. She made an interesting point about music as a language—learning to speak before learning to write. The previous commentary on oral transmission certainly supports this assertion. In this study, teachers taught students to “speak music” before they taught them to write music.

**Exposure.** Finally, the four teachers in this study exposed their students to a broad range of musics, both practically and in listening programs. This exposure was particularly evident in Susan’s room due to the listening chart on the wall that tracked the year's listening selections. Every class entered to hear a song playing each week, accompanied by a task to consider the music. For older students, selections from the beginning of the year focused on specific musical elements, while other selections picked up on popular culture, and still others spoke to specific elements such as fusion. Listening was an important aspect of all four programs, and teachers
generally considered broad exposure important. Stephens (2013) emphasizes the importance of teaching the unfamiliar to students in terms of creating access to what was previously inaccessible. He included classical music as the “unfamiliar” within his scope. There may also be an opportunity for an extension within this work to expose students to many musics. At present, teachers in this study largely did not examine the power relations that privilege Western classical music. Being explicit with the students about these relations may help to destabilize white privilege—a point I discuss further in the last three chapters.

The push toward cultural literacy emerged as important in the different programs. Teachers urged students to draw connections between material and rely on their outside knowledge. Thinking critically about music was a fundamental element of the programs, particularly in Amanda’s and Susan’s classroom. Overall, teachers emphasized the importance of learning to listen, and worked to expose students to a broad range of musics.

**Conclusion: placing all musics in a sociocultural and sociohistorical context.** When discussing the important elements of teaching diverse musics, contextualization emerged as crucial across all four classrooms. In so-called “traditional” music education with the ever-prevalent ensemble paradigm, teachers often present musics devoid of their contexts, with varying results. Presenting classical music devoid of context naturalizes it in many respects, while presenting so-called “Other” musics without contexts often leads musickers to imagine the context based on an always already present other (Bradley, 2003). Conversely, in these programs, teachers emphasized context, and they provided contexts for the majority of musics studied. Analyzing the material power relations that allow Western classical music a place of privilege is a possible further application to this work. In the next section, I explore the importance each teacher placed on privileging relationships with students over the music.
Centring the Student

“Students first, subject second”: relationships superseding the music.

Susan: I learned from someone else that you’re never a teacher of a subject, you’re a teach…you look after children…Incidentally you teach them things, but your first job is to look after children…And …I actually have those goals in kindergarten expectations of…you know…finding a partner, being able to share materials…It’s looking after children. It’s letting them know how to be with each other. So that’s part of…the most important thing we do.

Throughout the project, one theme emerged as a constant; the four teachers who participated in this research privileged their relationships with students above any emphasis on the music or the “product.” This centring of the student is somewhat antithetical to a more performance-driven model of music education—a model which has a strong historical precedent in music education (Bartel, 2004b), as evidenced in particular by the robust tradition of instrumental music education. A conversation with Susan revealed a strong belief she held that rotary teachers—arts and physical education teachers, for example—teach their students first and their subject second. This belief pervaded the discourse, practice, and philosophy of all four teachers throughout both observing and discussing their relationships with the students. Given the nature of the “revolving door” of the typical rotary schedule when a teacher sees seven or eight different classes a day, privileging the subject seems perhaps easier than engaging in individualized relationships with the students. These four teachers all chose to prioritize these individual relationships, as opposed to performance and achievement-driven programs.

Performance was an aspect of all programs, but it was far from all consuming. Across all four programs, relationships superseded the music.

“A place to feel good.”

Amanda: Music’s the…like…medium…but for me it’s about making connections with kids and for the kids who don’t have another place to feel good. I want this to be the place.
Amanda’s statement encapsulates a feeling present across all four programs. This idea of the music classroom being that “place to feel good” was an overarching theme. There were moments within all programs where other struggles subsumed this theme—a point I discuss in chapter seven. Its overall presence, however, is important to the conversation. I begin this discussion with the ways in which the music room as a “place to feel good” emerged in practice. From there, I examine some of the discourse and philosophy about this phenomenon.

Practically, one of the aspects of each school that struck me immediately was the physical arrangement of each classroom. All four classrooms featured a wealth of resources, and the presence and importance of the students was obvious upon first entering each space. They were welcoming and open spaces, with room for movement. The classrooms also had many instruments, Amanda’s classroom less-so than the others. Sarah’s classroom had a full homemade Gamelan set, as well as a complement of Orff instruments, and many auxiliary percussion instruments. Susan’s room was fully equipped with not only a complete set of Orff instruments and auxiliary percussion instruments, but also a class set of guitars, and string instruments for the itinerant string program. Anne’s classroom also had a full range of Orff instruments and a half class set of djembes. All four rooms were covered in posters that ranged in theme from events around the city, to great musicians, to the all-too-prevalent posters of historical white male composers present in so many music programs. Remarkable however, was that while posters featuring Western classical composers and Western musical elements were present, they did not overwhelm the content in any of the classrooms. They were simply an aspect of the composition of the room, albeit a large one. Amanda’s room included a bulletin board that said: “Welcome. Music is a Universal Language” with names of many types of music from around the world. The bottom of the board had notation for “It’s a small world after all.” One remarkable aspect of Sarah’s room was the presence of stuffed animals and costumes that were quite appealing to the students. Anne’s program also featured puppets. All four programs
had large collections of picture books related to music. The presence and importance of students was central in all four classrooms. These were student-centred environments.

All four classrooms were spaces students sought outside of class. Amanda, for example, had an open/closed door policy. If the sign for her door was on “open,” students could enter during recess or lunch and experiment musically, look at YouTube videos, and share with each other and Amanda. It was not uncommon for twenty students to be in her room at morning recess. Notably, this regular occurrence was gendered. The majority of students who came in at recess were female, although there were exceptions. It was not uncommon to hear YouTube videos blasting the latest *Glee* favourites, Adele, or the top forty combined with someone playing Adele or something classical on the piano, and another group collaborating on auxiliary percussion. This cacophony of sounds occurred often while one student sat off to the side reading *The Hunger Games* and several other students worked on their knitting from the school’s extra-curricular knitting club. It really was a “place to feel good.” There were also a number of “jamming sessions” that occurred during my time with Sarah. The students in the Gamelan club and in the extra-curricular ensembles often spent additional time in the music room. A particularly memorable event was a large-scale improvisation with a grade twelve student hip-hop artist who began improvising on the piano about the students “not taking his candy.” Music time here was informal and social and, importantly, across a broad age range. Students in grade five and six actively created and improvised with a student artist seven years older, with contributions from their music teacher and myself. Anne’s students—again, mostly girls—regularly raced into the music room twenty minutes before school in the morning to try to achieve a recorder belt in the “Recorder Karate” program Anne initiated. At Anne’s school, music from music class was omnipresent in the school. Walking around the school and the playground, it was not uncommon to hear strains of recorder around the building and songs from class being sung as well. Susan’s room, although less full at recess, was often bustling with
students who wanted to work on something or needed some extra help. The informal banter at these times between students and teacher was constant, and it was both casual and positive in nature.

Activities chosen for in-class activities also contributed to the music class environment as a “place to feel good,” and this aspect emerged in discourse, practice, and philosophy. Sarah said:

I want them to have the greatest time and I want them to focus and I want to hear the little giggles and...I want them just to not realize that they’re developing.

These giggles she spoke of continually occurred in all four classrooms. From movement games, to “follow-the-leader”-type games, to chasing games, to hiding games, to dressing up, to getting to play with exciting toys such as stuffed animals and instruments of all kinds, the giggles were everywhere. The activities varied from grade to grade, but the “fun-factor” remained throughout, although fun for older students tended to occur in collaborative situations that had a social factor, such as small group composing, performing, or working as a class to pull together a complex song. Younger students, conversely, tended to giggle their way through movement activities or various games. While the curriculum was present in all of the classes, relationships and the emphasis on experience took precedence over curriculum. Sarah was explicit here:

I believe that although there is a curriculum to learn, I believe the children must have experiences where they learn together and enjoy learning together.

Once again, students come before the subject.

In considering philosophical motivations behind the recess environment, Amanda clearly articulates her reasons for her open-door policy—a policy present in all four classrooms. Her policy is perhaps more explicit than the others, as it is demonstrated through an open/closed sign. She draws on her own experience, recalling that she preferred not to do some of the stuff kids did at recess. I would have much rather been in here and told my teacher about some great song I heard on the weekend. And you know…that’s what they do. They want to share things that they like and…those two
girls that are writing a song and they want my help. And I want them to feel welcome and try stuff out...’cause if they don’t just try it, how are they going to know they like it?

For both Amanda and the other teachers in the study, the music room became a space for students to be themselves, to explore their interests, and to share them with each other and the teacher. One of the intermediate students at Susan’s school spoke excitedly after-school about future schooling plans in archaeology and paleontology. During my observations, I regularly saw students bubble up with enthusiasm whether they were sharing a song they loved, a song they wrote, or something unrelated to music that excited them.

Anne saw the evidence of students feeling good as a result of the program one afternoon at the field trip to the symphony. One of the students who struggled personally outside of school, according to Anne, had a moment at the symphony when she recognized a song the orchestra played and was thrilled with herself. She connected with Anne and was so proud. Her reaction supports the literature on connecting to musics outside of music class. Zenker (2004), for example, advocates adopting a music education paradigm that educates for a musical life, “harness[ing] student imagination, personal experiences, and opinions to assist them in developing the motivation to continue to explore…the variety of music to which they have been introduced” (pp. 134-135). Although this discourse about the drive for lifelong learning contains shades of neoliberalism, what Anne’s experience adds to this equation is that “feel-good” moment on the student’s part when that recognition occurs.

For Susan, “feeling good” connected to providing an experience of “the joy of music for the students.”

Juliet: What effect do you feel your approach in your program has on students?
Susan: …At its very best it’s the…the little boy I was talking to you about earlier who says, “Mrs. T. likes me, so I like music.” And it’s…it’s affirming…it’s…you know…a way of succeeding. Another mom came in yesterday and said that her daughter had been struggling [in school]…Anyway, this child’s mother said she’s got something she feels wonderful about because she knows she’s good at music and now she’s making up all sorts of songs and [they] bought her own little guitar
and she’s loving that and she’s joined the choir…And so I think it’s building their sense of self…People always say music helps you to express yourself. It’s not so much that as finding yourself in music that it is a way of being…I do like the expression…”the joy of music” that…when you ask a parent…any parent, what they want for their kids from the music program, they’ll say the joy of music…And, that’s the job, I think, is…to give them that feeling, that experience of whether it’s flow\(^3\) or…you know…taking you right out of yourself because you’re participating in something with other people so it’s a sense of community, it’s that common rhythm and…it’s a point in their day when they…it’s totally other and I think…you know…a good Phys. Ed. program…does the same…So I’m not saying this is the only place it happens. It can happen in the drama room…it could happen in any room. But I hope it happens in music and that the singing and the playing…those things are what do that and that’s why, ideally, I like to have them spending a lot of time making music, not just thinking about it. We have to think about it too. So that’s…I would say my main goal is to give them that feeling of…I guess flow would be the most current word…right…for that. It’s sort of not so current any more…but it’s a good word in terms of what…the way you experience music…so that…but I also am always looking for giving the kids a sense of worth who might not be getting it elsewhere in their programs…by giving kids a home in the school who might be finding it hard to find a home somewhere else in the school.

The desire for the students to have an experience in which they feel valued and valuable is the driving force behind the practical realities of fostering this feeling in the classroom—the welcoming, child-centred environment, the openness and availability of the space beyond class time, and the planned activities for the day. Susan took this idea significantly further. For her, the music class was not only a “place to feel good,” but also a “home” perhaps unavailable elsewhere in the school. Adderley, Kennedy, and Berz (2003) describe the music room as a “home away from home,” drawing on similar ideas. Their context was somewhat different, as their research focused on extra-curricular ensembles, but the underlying feeling was the same. Like Elliott (1995), Susan also suggested that “flow” was a desirable outcome of music class—that moment where the musical challenge perfectly matches the level of musicianship (Elliott, 1995, p. 122) resulting in the “optimal experience” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990) where time seems to disappear.

\(^3\) Susan is referencing the work of Csikzentmihalyi (1990) with whom she is familiar.
“Whatcha touching my ball glove for?”: making connections with students. Essential to the emphasis on relationships was the actual forging of connections with the students. Discursively, philosophically, and practically, this process occurred in a number of ways. Evidence of personal support emerged as important across all four schools, as well as the related category of attention to student needs. Finally, connections outside of class and sometimes beyond the context of music also occurred regularly.

All four teachers worked to support students personally whether it was in a class environment or on an individual basis. In a full class situation, for example, Amanda offered support to any student in the class who had a hard time with the video she showed them about slavery. She let the students know that the video was sad, so they needed to prepare for that. She also said they could talk to her afterwards, if they felt they needed to talk about it. All four teachers regularly helped students achieve on an individual basis, supporting them and providing encouragement. Support often also entailed emotional care. The extreme example of this type of personal emotional support came through Anne. A student of Anne’s for five years who was active in her program lost a younger brother to complications from Sickle Cell. Anne made arrangements to attend the funeral and provide support to the student. Sarah also became part of a student’s “team” as her mother battled cancer the previous year. Susan also mentored a young student who had graduated from her program the previous year; he came back on several occasions during my eight weeks at the school. She found opportunities for him to shine in the school and beyond. These teachers regularly found ways to emotionally support their students, once again privileging relationships above any content in the classroom.

Teachers connected to their students outside of class—sometimes in the capacity described in the previous section at recess, but also through other activities. Anne, uniquely,

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4 From what I understood from Sarah, the hospital put together a team to support the child because the mother was so ill.
participated actively in the sports programs at the school. She coached one of the school
baseball teams, and regularly supported colleagues involved in sports. She also agreed to have
erself duct-taped to a wall as an incentive for the school food drive. One afternoon, one of the
boys wandered over to her baseball glove in class. She went over and teased him: “Whatcha
touching my ball glove for?” His grin when she did that revealed a connection. I wondered if
she felt her engagement beyond music made a difference:

Juliet: Do you find that all of the stuff that you do—participating in sports and
having teams…like…do you find that makes a big difference in kids’ attitudes or
the way they engage with you?
Anne: Absolutely. In fact if there’s a couple of kids…sometimes this works better in
junior…if there’s a couple of kids who are reluctant to…you know…hop on board
the Matthews train…umm…you know…I’ll take my ball glove out into the field at
recess and try and connect with them in other ways as well, ’cause music isn’t for
everyone, as much as we like to think it is. You know…some kids just…they’d be
happier to listen to their iPod than listen to me. There are going to be personality
differences ‘cause we’re human. But…umm…yeah…try and make the connections
with the naysayers.

Her response indicates the deliberateness of finding ways to connect beyond music class.

Finally, all four teachers centred their students’ needs in their classroom. Practically,
sometimes this centring meant following the direction of the students’ attention. For Amanda,
on multiple occasions, the students’ attention was on the ant problem by the computer where the
class watched the YouTube videos she selected. For Anne, sometimes it was about the
announcements, or, on one afternoon, the flickering light. At such times, paying attention to
what was important to the students in that instance subsumed the planned activity. On other
occasions, centring the students’ needs meant ensuring that each student got what they needed.
Sometimes that meant something as simple as a turn in the current game. Other times, it was a
place to sit in class where the student felt comfortable. At still other times, it was
acknowledgement and validation of what the student was feeling. In Anne’s room one morning,
this focus on student needs entailed directly addressing the needs of a kindergarten child who
started to cry while a CD was playing. When he said that it hurt his ears, rather than minimizing
or dismissing his needs, Anne validated them, expressing that she knew his ears were sensitive. The crying stopped immediately.

**Humour: being silly with students.** Humour emerged as a constant throughout all of the other themes. Teachers found ways to engage with students, finding humour based in silliness instead of the meaner humour that dominates the media. There were moments throughout the six months of data collection where the interactions made it impossible not to smile. One morning, for example,

Amanda said she felt like she had not seen the students forever because she was sick. She had lost her voice and she couldn't find it anywhere. “Did you find it?” “Yes, it's back. See?” “Where was it?” “I found it under my bed.” The students all share stories about losing voices. One student volunteers that her mom lost her voice when she was speaking Greek. (Excerpt from observations, February)

While this type of interaction regularly occurred in all four classrooms, Sarah was the only person to articulate how important it was to maintain a sense of humour, not only with the students, but with the staff and with yourself as you are teaching. It was moments such as this one that resulted in students dissolving into giggles unrelated to the classroom activities.

**Discipline from a place of respect.** Another theme that emerged throughout was the importance of disciplining from a place of respect. Amanda, for example, always made it clear that when she disciplined, it was not personal. Any time she needed to address a behaviour or a situation, she followed her actions by immediately melting into a smile, and working to connect with the student in question. The teachers in Ladson-Billings’ (2009) study who exemplified “culturally relevant pedagogy” also maintained constant respect, even when they needed to discipline students (p. 74). This emphasis on the relationship and connection over the behaviour was also prevalent in Susan’s and Anne’s classroom.

**Coming back to visit: long-term connections.** The evidence of strong relationships formed was particularly obvious when former students returned to visit. These visits occurred primarily with Sarah, who had been at Brownstone Junior Public School for twenty-four years,
and Susan, who was in her third year at Morrison Public School. Sarah’s students returned to assist her with co-curricular activities, to talk to her, and sometimes to bring her concert tickets for their own musical endeavors. Sarah teaches several students now that are children of former students. We bumped into one such mother at a recess and she was positively thrilled to see Sarah. A student that Susan had mentored also came to visit several times while I observed. One time he stayed and assisted in class, helping some of the students in the back row grasp an Orff pattern that was difficult for them. These long-term connections speak to the prioritization of the relationships over the subject. Susan speaks to the emphasis the school board places on forging these types of relationships:

[The director of the board] did challenge every staff member…to mentor one student. And because there’s so much research that says one significant adult in your life is enough to make a difference. Not even a huge amount of time, but that one significant person who’s the right person for you…and you can’t assign the person…that’s the thing. The high schools assign a person now…and that may or may not end up being the right person. It’s the person that the kid has found or the teacher has found the kid and there’s a connection.

While a policy such as this one potentially has saviour narratives running through it, drawing on the teacher archetype of Lady Bountiful (Meiners, 2002), connecting meaningfully with an adult in your life does not negate the parent-child relationship. Ideally, it is supplemental—perhaps in an area of interest. Above all, in these classrooms, relationships superseded the importance of the music. Creating a safe classroom environment also emerged as an important theme.

“I like knowing that those kids feel safe around me”: fostering a safe environment.

The comfort level of the students. The idea of safety was prevalent in classroom practice, although less so in discourse. Teachers did not necessarily consciously articulate an emphasis on fostering a safe environment in their teaching. Classroom practice, however, highlighted the importance of both comfort and safety in these music programs. Amanda stated directly how important safety was to her practice:
Amanda: Like yesterday I had a boy who was in grade 4 tell me all about how over March break at his daycare, he’s going do Project Runway. He’s going to run it. He’s going to be Heidi Klum. And his biggest goal in life is to meet Jean Paul Gaultier and he showed me all of his designs for women’s clothing that he pulled out of his jacket pocket. I like knowing that those kids feel safe around me. Because, that’s not something he could talk about openly, necessarily…right…but he was so…easy to talk about it and he already knows what design school he’s going to go to in New York.

Amanda deeply valued the comfort level demonstrated by this particular student. Anne and Sarah also spoke to the personal nature of musical tasks, and the necessity of feeling safe to execute them. Amanda articulates that aspect of music succinctly:

Amanda: Feeling emotionally safe…to me [that’s] like…number one. In a class…like…this is a class where they’re learning emotional issues…right. Like…I started thinking about that this fall too…this is the one place where…like…emotions and how you feel about something is like…the first and most important thing.

Despite the lack of articulation related to the importance of deliberately fostering a safe environment, overall classroom practice exemplified feelings of safety and comfort. Students in all four classrooms were comfortable singing solos and regularly volunteered to do so. The same classroom environment explored in the previous section that was so conducive to students coming into the music room in their spare time also illustrates that the music room is a safe place for the students who voluntarily spend extra time there. Students supported each other for the most part during assessment activities, particularly with the recorder karate program in Anne’s class. They cheered for each other’s successes, and encouraged one another to try to achieve.

**Ways in which the teacher fostered feelings of comfort and safety.** Teachers fostered feelings of safety and comfort in a number of different ways. The physical arrangement of the room as a welcoming space discussed previously was one aspect of nurturing a safe environment. All four schools were also friendly and welcoming. Student art was everywhere,

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5 Discussion of a safe classroom environment is prevalent in education discourse. (See Gibbs, 1995 for example.)
and accolades won in sports and music were also proudly displayed. Outside the grade one room next door at Anne’s school, there was a collage of hands together, clearly traced and coloured with a sign that said, “All the colours we are.”

Teachers also offered reassurance to students who were frustrated or nervous. One afternoon while Amanda taught *maculelê* with rhythm sticks, a student became upset because she could not grasp the movements. Amanda said, “Keep trying and you’ll get it” to the student and then said to everyone, “It takes a long time. Don’t get frustrated if you don’t get it right away.” On a test day in Sarah’s room, the students appeared quite nervous. When some students struggled she told them “Just do your best.” These assurances tended to result in tears instantly stopping and additional resolve to work through the activity.

Teachers also considered what individual students needed to feel safe in music class. A student in Anne’s class wanted to try for a belt, but did not want his classmates to look at him. Anne made sure that nobody in the class watched him while he performed, and he did achieve his belt. This effort to make sure that students received what they needed to feel safe was also evident in Amanda’s class. One morning, kindergarten students were coming up with rhymes for different animals for a song. One of the students was told by another that her rhyme “wasn’t a rhyme.” Amanda intervened immediately, “It’s not a rhyme, but it is funny. It would be funny to see a cat with nail polish on.” The same student went on to try again later. This type of support allowed students to feel safe enough to take a risk and offer something personal to the class.

There was also an explicit demand for safety from students in their treatment of each other. Anne, in particular, and Susan and Amanda as well, never let students address each other’s behaviour as inappropriate, or laugh at other students. They insisted on the safety of the space for the students. Sometimes this insistence entailed addressing physical safety, such as the time a kindergarten child hopped into another child during a movement activity in Anne’s class.
Anne said immediately, “You were not being safe and you ran into her. How are you going to fix that?” The boy apologized to the other student. However, most of the time safety was addressed by ensuring that students treated each other respectfully. Overall, these classrooms were child-centred. In these spaces, the music mattered far less than the people participating.

However, it is important to note in the discourse of the safe environment that what qualifies as safe is not the same for all people. In the context of thinking about a classroom community, Mayo (2002) applies Woolf’s (1938) discussion of patriotism to consider the manner in which the word “we” can both engender a feeling of community and also of suspicion, where the “we” stood as more of a normative claim—a “with us or against us” in all matters facing the so-called “community” (Woolf, 1938, p. 9, as cited in Mayo, 2002, p. 177). In working to foster an inclusive community, it is important to consider the possibility of this type of alienation.

**Validation of students: recognition, fostering success, and providing opportunities.**

This final section examining the centring of the student explores the complexity of the ways in which teachers recognized students in the classroom, the methods teachers used to ensure success, and the opportunities teachers provided to students to contribute to positive feelings. I begin with the different facets of recognition.

**“Their” music: recognition through representation in the program.** All four teachers found ways to represent the students in the music they chose for their programs. As a first year teacher, Amanda put serious thought into how she could represent a large contingent of students of Greek cultural heritage in her long-term plans at the school:

Amanda: Learning about Greek music…I need to do that ‘cause there are a substantial number of Greek kids at this school, so they need to be represented…so we need to talk and probably more than about Nana Mouskouri ‘cause that’s probably only what their grandmas listen to…but that’s all I…that’s my own weakness…I don’t know anything about Greek music. I mean, the bouzouki and Nana Mouskouri and that’s about it. Like…Greek pop music…nothing…I mean nothing…but…there’s got to be representation from the world. And then, because
this demographic of kids goes on crazy vacations, they go to Cuba and they hear Guantanamera, they go to Africa and they hear a style of drumming that we did...or whatever...like...we talk about Brazilian music and they’re like...my dad works for Inco and he’s always in São Paolo...They make connections...right...but at a totally other level than maybe you would in a school at [in a less affluent part of the city]...

Amanda’s concern here focused on finding music that was culturally relevant to the students—music that connected with them on a personal level, whether it be cultural or affinity-based, or even based on exposure. In an earlier interview, she also addressed her preference for music she felt would be culturally relevant to the students, as opposed to music beyond the scope of most students’ present realities:

Amanda: But I would love to...because there are so many Greek kids here...I know nothing about Greek music...so I would love to...like...make a point over the summer that that’s going to be my project...is to find out some stuff about Greek music. I mean, of course I could talk about Gregorian Chant or...you know...like...again dead white guy music...but I’d rather talk about what does the bouzouki do...what’s this instrument...and then really have kids relate to it, ‘cause I know they would. I’m sure they hear it...

Similarly, Anne wanted to see her students connect with the music in class on a personal level:

Anne: I’m hoping that some of my students will connect with the music that they’re hearing. That maybe they will have heard some of it at home, or it'll seem familiar in the style of music because they...It’s culturally relevant to them. And we have so many different backgrounds at our school. Another thing is I want to impart to the students that music is universal. And that, of all the things that we can do in the world, music is one true universal...everyone, every culture has music and uses it for various reasons. Umm...and that’s a great way to help understand each other.

To a certain extent here, Anne wanted her students to see themselves within the musics performed in class, but there are broader social implications in what she said. By selecting a broad range of musics, Anne wished to impart the universality of music and perhaps that recognition of the self in others inherent in Bradley’s (2006a) definition of multicultural human subjectivity, as explicated in chapter two. Although a desired recognition of self in others and the ensuing and ever-problematic notion of sameness has the potential to erase structural power
relations, a recognition of a universal still seems a hopeful possibility—particularly when the teacher strives to maintain the diversity of the universal.

Susan approached the desire to represent differently. While I was at the school, the grade eight students in Susan’s program worked on a long-term world music project they presented on my last day at the school in May. Susan described the project goals as related to cultural identity:

Juliet: So…in terms of what your goals are for the students, what do you hope that…like…the grade eights will get out of the grade eight world music project?
Susan: The project itself, I hope will bring together for them…their learning over the year, cause them to reflect back on some of the experiences that they had when they’re analyzing a new piece of music that they can’t define for themselves. But I’m also really hoping that it’s going to affirm, for some of them, their own sense of cultural identity or at least have them explore what matters to them in terms of cultural identity. And for some of them, they’re searching outside their own racial identity. They’re looking at the songs that are meaningful for them in cultures that have nothing to do with their DNA. And so, that is also…I think it’s also part of that piece of identity seeking, which is so important for kids in middle school. And, but the reason I repeated the project this year was that that worked so very well last year.
Juliet: How did you frame it so they could choose outside of what, theoretically, is theirs?
Susan: I said, “Just something you have a connection to.” And we talked about what a connection might be and I said, “For some of you it’s going to be something that you’re…you know…you speak that language…you visit that country every summer…it’s a country or a culture where you have a strong connection. But for others of you, it’s going to be something that you’re attracted to and…and feel it’s some kind of personal connection to because you love it and that’s going to be what you seek out.”

What I felt was particularly unique about this project was the lack of desire to force students to connect to their theoretical “roots.” Several times during this research, when the teacher introduced songs of a specific background in class, the teacher appeared to assume that students who shared the music’s cultural background had insider knowledge of the song—an assumption without basis in multiple cases. This particular project left space for affinities and allowed students to pursue music that attracted them personally or to investigate music to which they were theoretically connected. One of the aspects of the project that emerged as exceptional was
the sheer number of musics that were a fusion of some kind. The following excerpt is from my journal the day they presented—my last day at the school in May:

The presentations were pretty incredible, but the reasons for choosing songs even more so. I heard bits and pieces of quite a few presentations. The first presentation I saw, the student was of Irish background and was completely taken with the Irish bouzouki when he heard a man perform on the instrument. He had looked it up at the time and found out more about it, and was going through a detailed diagram of the instrument when I stopped by their group. One girl was presenting on a Cuban song called “Che Guevara” by a Cuban singer. She is of Serbian background herself, but her dad was interested in Che Guevara and had listened to the song. He was also learning Spanish so he was telling her about it. She said to the group that she doesn't live with him so choosing that song was a way to connect with him. Another boy chose “Con Te Partiro.” He never got to the reason he chose it, but he analysed the form texturally and by tempo, which I've never seen before. It certainly has interesting implications compositionally. There were a number of Serbian folk songs from students with Serbian background and a boy who presented on Little Birch Tree in the original Russian. He showed a dance video and presented a bristol board with a beautiful illustration of a tree. A girl who didn't get a chance to present chose an Italian band performing a song called Havana Mambo. She is of Italian background, but the song is certainly fusion. It seemed as though many students chose songs that their parents were interested in, but many of the choices were fusion…Susan says that she keeps a chart of the songs that they have chosen and that she uses them for listening selections the following year.

What emerged in reflecting on students’ reasons for choosing the songs for their projects was the absolute diversity of possible reasons for connecting with music. In this class alone, students based their selections on cultural roots with elements of fusion, attraction to an instrument, and various relationships. Susan made no assumptions here of music they “should” have chosen.

Beyond the grade eight project, Susan also worked to represent her student population in the songs she chose for the students. At the beginning of my time at the school, Susan told the intermediate students that the parents who attended the school concert before March break sang along to the Croatian song Ciribiribela, and other parents understood the meaning of the Mandarin words for Mo Li Hua. In my journal at the time, I noted that the students performed songs that held meaning to their parents. I wondered, however, how the students felt about these songs within the program. Did they feel represented? On the day they worked on their post-
concert reflection, the smiles in response to Susan’s statement possibly indicated a feeling of pride, although that is merely conjecture.

Susan’s listening program was also quite diverse. Her selections included musics from around the world and many fusions as well. While I was there, the three selections I recall most vividly were Toronto musician Jesse Cook’s *Bogotá by Bus*, a song she labeled “Columbian/Western fusion,” Bob Marley’s *Jammin’*, and a Dakota flute piece performed by Jacob Pratt. Playing the Dakota piece prompted a student to tell Susan that she was Ojibwa. Susan said she finds that playing a wide range of musics often leads children to talk about their own connections to it.

Finally, at some point in each of Amanda’s, Susan’s, and Anne’s classes, students brought their music to share. In Amanda’s and Susan’s grade five and six classes, electric guitars enabled students to share what they learned on their own. Susan then had the two young guitarists accompany the song the class performed in the school concert. In these cases, teachers created space in the classroom for the students’ music.

The terminology “culturally relevant” pervaded the four teachers’ discourse on music chosen for the classroom, but what musics did the teachers consider “culturally relevant” to the students? The question inherent here is: “Culturally relevant” according to whom? Such terminology could easily rely on assumptions either of cultural background and supposed connections to “world”-based material or of affinities. How can teachers determine what is relevant to the students—culturally or otherwise? Susan actually based her listening program in part on choices students made the previous year in their grade eight assignments. Representation here occurred not through assumptions, but rather through asking students directly, allowing teachers to recognize students in the classroom. Amanda explicitly avoided making assumptions. We had a conversation after the final interview and I made the following notes in my journal afterwards:
From what she has been to in terms of board workshops this year, Amanda feels that many music teachers still treat global music as an add-on (i.e. Chinese music for Chinese New Year) and are not following the James Banks model.\footnote{James Banks offers a model for multicultural education that encompasses five dimensions: i) content integration or the simple integration of multicultural material (notably only the first dimension); ii) knowledge construction that helps students to understand and critique materials they encounter; iii) equity pedagogy where the teacher modifies how s/he teaches so all students can achieve; iv) prejudice reduction where teachers work to reduce prejudice in the classroom; and v) empowering school culture and social structure where teachers and students work to make school culture equitable. See http://www.learner.org/workshops/socialstudies/pdf/session3/3.Multiculturalism.pdf for a brief discussion of these tenets.} We discussed people who single students out as experts based on cultural background, and she said that she has been very careful during this unit that this is not happening to the few African Canadian students in the school. She has been watching for it. She’s also planning to keep an eye on the two First Nations students as they go through the school. She notes that some teachers would ask them about powwow music, but she would never make that kind of assumption. In general, she says she is very careful not to make assumptions about what students know and not to make them “cultural experts” when they don’t have the knowledge, or don’t want the association or to be singled out. She does not single out students for difference ever. She does allow students to shine if they would like to take the role of the expert or move the conversation forward in the class. (Excerpt from journal, March)

This type of care is of vital importance in attempting to assemble programs that resonate with students. In attempting to recognize students by representing them through musical selections, teachers cannot necessarily make assumptions about what musics students should or could know. I place this caveat at the forefront of all discussions that include the words “culturally relevant.” If “cultural relevance” is to be the basis of the criteria for determining musical selections for the program, as music educators, we can look to students to determine said cultural relevance in order that they see themselves represented in the musics of the curriculum. This recognition through representation is an important aspect of recognition.

**Recognizing achievements.** Teachers also made a point of recognizing student achievements in a number of formal and informal ways. There were often announcements congratulating students for participating in events. Formally within the programs, Sarah kept two charts—one for the Junior Choir Student of the Week and one for the Primary Choir Student of the Week. The latter is divided into Choir One and Choir Two. She made sure to
recognize different students every week, and students vied to be the selected student. Similarly, Anne had a music bulletin board outside her classroom that featured a list of the lines that the students needed to be able to play to achieve their belts in Recorder Karate, as well as a list of exemplary achievers. The way in which Anne administered the recorder program also fostered recognition. The following is an excerpt from my observations in May:

The class really encourages the second boy who plays. Anne sings the last part of the line to him and another student says the note names. He gets it. “Get the man a yellow belt.” He grinned.

This program not only recognized student achievement, but it also offered students something tangible that they could carry as a mark of their achievements. Students tied their belts—a coloured piece of yarn—around the bottoms of their recorders, and they were frequently a topic of conversation among students. Although there may be potential here for teasing of low achievers or high achievers, I did not observe such behaviour during my time at the school. Conversely, students generally supported each other’s efforts.

More informally, teachers regularly congratulated students for their musical and non-musical efforts and achievements outside of class. I often made note of words of congratulation for participation in activities, whether the activity was Gamelan club at Sarah’s school, the “man-choir” at Susan’s school, or a sports activity. Teachers also often asked students to give themselves a round of applause or a pat on the back for classroom achievements.

Connected to recognition of achievements is this idea of positive reinforcement. Teachers frequently validated students for their efforts. Where this idea is distinct from overall recognition of achievements lies within the fact that a formal achievement was not obligatory; when teachers provided positive reinforcement, they made students feel good about making an effort. An example here goes back to Amanda’s junior kindergarten class. This class attempted to create some new lyrics to a song by rhyming with the animals. Most of the students could not
yet rhyme, but Amanda supported all of the students in the same way she supported the girl discussed earlier in this chapter who created a rhyme about a cat wearing nail polish.

Recognition for achievements of a more personal nature was also important. In an interview, Susan discussed the changing voices of the intermediate boys in her choir:

Juliet: Are they changed voices? 
Susan: Two…three of them have changed…really changed voices. In fact, last year they were wandering in the desert in grade seven, all three of them, and this year, two of the three have a really deep and quite secure range. And the third one is still wandering a little…But it was…I suddenly realized last fall and I said, “You guys have got it.” And they were so excited.

The teenage voice change is so deeply personal that many students stop singing at that point because they are self-conscious. These students were thrilled to get recognition for that particularly difficult achievement. As previously discussed in chapter five, Susan also had a student bounce into primary choir one day announcing that he wrote a song called *I Want a Dog*. They performed the song as a choir that day, and Susan considered possibly submitting it to a journal. She also believed that

one of the things that’s wonderful is when kids make up their own music…is to give them a printed version of it sometimes because they…here’s your real piece of music you wrote. This is so validating for them.

Finally, Susan also considered the importance of being able to recognize students at different levels of achievement.

Susan: There should be room…in the music making for kids of every level of experience and skill. And the music making should always happen as a community kind of thing where you can recognize the wonderful solo moment of someone who…has a really high level of performance, but also include everyone in and give everyone their moment in the sun. And, I guess, their moment…lots of significant choices within the program, so that they can establish, for themselves, some ownership and satisfaction.

In contemplating how to best recognize student achievements, it seems that there is potential to either only recognize the high achievers or to bring everyone to a level somewhere in the

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7 O’Toole (1994, 1998), for example, talks about the lack of boys who participate in choral music and the resulting privileging of boys in choral programs.
middle. What Susan elucidates here is the necessity of providing a diversity of possible achievements—something which speaks to the heart of Elliott’s (1995) contention that the level of musicianship must not be greater than or less than the challenge (p. 122). However, Susan extends this idea—arguing and demonstrating through practice that it is possible to offer multiple musical challenges to one group, matching their diverse levels of musicianship, and challenging each student distinctly.

While recognition of achievements seems unequivocally positive, there are also individualistic narratives of civility running through educational discourses. It is interesting to think about what types of behaviour we validate as teachers, and the ways in which they conform to ideas of civility. In music education historically, those behaviours have included physically still comportment in response to music (Gustafson, 2009). In education more generally, Mayo (2002) points to silence and inaction in response to difficult situations as likely behaviours in response to schooling. The question then becomes, when the matter is validation, is it stillness and silence that we validate? Keeping these issues in mind assists us in setting up practices that validate students in different ways.

**Hearing students’ voices: recognizing what students have to say.**

“I try to speak to kids like they’re people”: students as individuals. Students’ individual ownership in the program also emerged as a constant, although teachers found different ways to make students aware that they were important. The next few illustrations emerge from discussions with Anne and from observing in her classroom. Anne was remarkable in the ways in which she taught students they were valuable and important:

Juliet: …dovetailed with it is that you instill in kids the notion that their word is worth something. That if they say they haven’t had a turn, that they will be taken at their word and it does teach honesty and it also teaches them that they will be trusted and…do you find that it makes them…like…rise to the occasion?
Anne: Sometimes. And there will always be one or two who take advantage. But I think the greater number…umm…appreciate that kind of trust and…you
know….it’s funny, I don’t really think about that kind of thing. It’s just one of those things I do subconsciously, I guess.

Juliet: Yeah, ‘cause…like…what a powerful thing when you’re four to be taken at your word and know that what you say is going to be counted for true by an adult. Like…I don’t think that happens when you’re four all that much.
Anne: No.
Juliet: Do you?
Anne: I don’t know…it’s…I mean I’ve always spoken to my own kids…I try to speak to kids like they’re people, not like, “Oh isn’t that nice…you’re so cute.” I don’t do that. So that’s not something I do consciously. It’s…I wouldn’t have picked that out as something.
Juliet: Yeah.
Anne: It’s funny…you know…teachers teach their own values without knowing it….right. And their own biases without knowing it.

I do worry that I dominated this conversation far more than I should have, but it was firmly grounded in observations. Anne had a way of making students know that they would be taken at their word—that their word was valued and that Anne trusted them. Anne encouraged them to take responsibility for their own actions—to speak up if they missed their turn, and conversely, not to take a second turn if they had one already. Students knew that what they had to say was important, and there were many instances of this valuing of student voice. One example among many occurred in music class about another issue. The following is an excerpt from my journal in May:

The lunchroom has apparently been quite difficult this week. Anne has been surveying students who have come in right after lunch about how they feel about being in the lunchroom. She said to me over lunch that change is often implemented without talking to the people who it affects (i.e. the students). Today when I was in, she surveyed the students. They talked to her about feeling annoyed, frustrated, and scared. They worried about people sharing food because of allergies. One student says it makes him feel destructive (wow...). (Excerpt from observations, May)

Changing the structure of lunchtime and what had become a problematic lunchroom had been on the staff agenda, but nobody asked the students about a potential solution. Anne inquired directly about their feelings on the situation and recorded them. She found ways to make their voices heard when others did not. This valuing of the students’ voices was not an anomaly; it occurred everyday in some form. Students learned their voices mattered.
“You got your hair cut!”: students’ personal lives in the classroom. In all four classrooms, students shared stories about their personal lives, and were engaged by the teacher about those stories. Students talked about their outside-of-school activities—their sports, their music lessons, where they were going on March break. Sometimes students’ outside lives merged with the curriculum. An activity in Susan’s class had kindergarten students name jobs with which they were familiar for a song about jobs:

“Today we are doing all sorts of songs about people who have a job.” Students are eager to share their stories and the jobs they know about. “Computer teacher.” “They go to work every day.” “Do you know what they do when they get to work?” “They work.” “Go on a bus.” “Works computers.” “My mom's a lawyer.” “Studying cancer.” “My mom works at night and when she gets back home she has to sleep during the day when I watch TV.” “My mom has a baby on her tummy.” “My mom makes clothes.” “Help with homework.” “Help your dad and your mom.” “That's your job, isn't it?” “My dad's a principal.” (Excerpt from observations, April.)

Although students’ concepts of jobs varied, Susan valued what they had to say, listened, and engaged with them.

Students spoke more informally as well, and they often arrived bursting with news. Whether it was loose teeth, birthday parties, candy, or something more serious, students wanted to talk. Teachers also made a point to ask students about their lives, notice new haircuts, ask about sports, and talk casually about the Grammy Awards and popular musicians. Sarah discussed the importance of having a space to share:

Sarah: They want to share.
Juliet: Yeah, absolutely. You’ve got a line between the kind of informal chatter/banter and the “Okay, now we’re getting down to business.”
Sarah: “Now, it’s time.” But it’s important that they feel that they’re heard and it’s important that they know it’s still a class. But it’s also important that…they feel comfortable to share. You can’t do music if you don’t feel comfortable.

Students also brought in material to share on occasion. Students in Sarah’s and in Anne’s class brought picture books with music notes to share. In Anne’s case, they brought the book “because she liked to sing,” and in Sarah’s case because they wanted to know how the notes sounded. In both cases, teachers put aside the planned lesson to explore what the students
brought. A student in Amanda’s class brought in a book from *Kids Can Press* on Black History and the Underground Railroad. The same child made sure the class knew that Canada’s role in slavery was far grimmer than most Canadian stories revealed. This type of sharing occurred regularly in all four classes. Teachers valued the students’ contributions and regularly made them central to the class.

“*Tell me everything you know!*”: not a “*tabula rasa.*”

Amanda puts the word “Jazz” on the board and says, “Tell me everything you know.” (A musician, what kind of instruments...). Students contribute words quickly—one after the other. “Improvisation, guitar, piano, saxophone, fast (bebop), drums, trumpet, singers, Louis Armstrong.” They pause. “Did he go to the moon?” “No, Neil Armstrong went to the moon.” “Shirley Bassey…” Then Amanda says, “Put your hand up if you’ve heard of these people: Ella Fitzgerald, Duke Ellington, Dizzy Gillespie, John Coltrane...” A few hands go up. (Excerpt from observations, February)

The beginning of Amanda’s discussion of jazz captures the nature of this category. Overall, teachers deeply considered knowledge and experience students brought to the classroom. They made no assumption of “tabula rasa;” they knew well that the students were not “blank slates.” Rather, students had much to contribute. In her first interview, Amanda discussed the school initiative of “accountable talk”:

Amanda: …this last term has been on accountable talk. That was the big theme. Just getting kids...basically...it’s basically what I do all the time...especially with the 5’s, 6’s. It’s just to let them talk. I guide it, I facilitate it...but I don’t...I try not to implant too many ideas in their head and get them to come up with them. That’s the whole idea of accountable talk...Yeah, ’cause I want them to come up with the ideas...’cause they’re smart and they need to know that their ideas count and nobody’s wrong...like if you’re willing to make a guess at something. I’m not going to say you’re wrong.

Amanda built on student ideas and made no assumption that they lacked experience or knowledge. Discussion often began with open-ended questions. When I arrived at her school in January, she was in the middle of a unit that began with Ghanaian music in December and followed the transatlantic slave crossings to their ports of landing in the Americas, looking at the
Afro-musics that resulted. This discussion took place at the transition from looking at Ghanaian music to looking at musics in the Americas with African roots.

Amanda asked one class: “How can it be that we have African influences in music in North America, South America, and the Caribbean?” Addressing an older class, she asked: “Almost all pop music has an African influence. How did that happen?” She took the students ideas and built on them. There are no answers in either class that considered slavery, but Amanda supports their ideas through building on ideas such as the fact that travel was necessary. She is supportive and she does not shut down off task answers or stories. She simply guides the students back to task. The students do not fear getting a “wrong answer.” They share their opinions and their previous knowledge.

There were moments in all four classes where students became the expert. Whether it was being able to translate the Spanish words in a picture book in Amanda’s class or teaching their old instrument part to new players on the Gamelan in Sarah’s room, teachers encouraged students to become the experts. Susan spoke to the idea more generally, in a way that connects to the manner in which Anne instilled in students that they were valuable:

Susan: Robert Abramson said, “Anything a student gives you is a gift, so you must use it. Your obligation as a teacher is to use it.” So…and so…if you’ve asked them to contribute an idea, you’ve got to use it. And if they just come up with them, you’ve got to use it…ideally, sometimes you can’t, but most of the time you’ve got to take what comes and make it work.

I made a note in my journal in April in response to this statement.

Susan is brilliant at using students’ ideas. Students continually give her creative ideas and they implement them. It's wonderful to watch. For example, Susan told the class that one of the students had an idea: to put something in the rest. They put an “uh-oh” in the hole in the rhythm. Then they say nothing but the “uh-oh's.” One of the boys asks if they can take turns offering what will fill the gap. They switch the rest sound a few times. It ends with “Star Wars” which they sang to their homeroom teacher (who is apparently a big fan). (Excerpt from journal, April)

As previously discussed, Anne instilled a sense in students that she would value and trust their word. Susan expands this feeling of being valued and valuable to the realm of ideas; not only would students’ words be valued, but Susan appreciated and used ideas. Coupled together, this
fundamental feeling of being valued for both thoughts and creative ideas has important implications for the confidence and self-worth of very young students.  

*Intergalactic monkeys: considering responses to curricular material.* Teachers also created space for students to respond to curricular material in their classrooms, whether it be through songs that left places for student contributions, discussions that allowed students time to think about special trips or performances, or spaces for reflection on class material.

Many of the songs in Susan’s and Anne’s classes left places for the students to contribute ideas. One of Susan’s classes, for example, did a song called “Going on a picnic.” They all have a chance to offer an idea:

Susan teaches them a song called “Going on a Picnic.” They need to fill in: “Did you bring the _____?” “Yes we brought the _______?” and they do so with great imagination. There was a selection of oceans, balls, picnic baskets, ant repellent, celery sticks, trees, sandwiches, go-gos, cupcakes, underpants, lunch, chicken fingers, cake, French fries, Ms. Thomson, football, barf—no—okay—intergalactic monkeys, basketball, fishsticks, mangoes, and pet dinosaurs. The students smile at the prospects... Midway through the last row, Susan says, “This young man has an evil look on his face.” “Underwear!” he proclaims loudly. (Excerpt from observations, April)

Susan and Anne regularly included this model of song. Students offered things they wished for, things they loved, things they hated, and the requisite amount of toilet humour.

Students also had the opportunity to respond to special events whether they were in-school performances by guest artists or trips outside the school. Students at Amanda’s school saw a performance called *Sugar and Gold* about the Underground Railroad to Canada. The performers did a range of songs from that period in history—”Go Down, Moses” and “Children, Go Where I Send Thee,” for example—and some composed songs about specific people who were a part of the railroad. They started with the history from Africa and enslavement and the transatlantic crossing to the escape. They did not problematize Canada in the least, and although

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8 A number of scholars point to the increased sense of self-confidence students develop from participation in music activities (Adderley, et al., 2003; Hess, 2008; O’Neill, 2002).
they mentioned Nova Scotia as a landing point, there was no mention of Africville or the subsequent related events. They ended with a discussion of the singer’s personal family history. Her great-grandfather came to Canada via the Underground Railroad, and she told her own story with family photographs. In her afternoon classes, Amanda asked students for their responses to that morning’s performance. “You're allowed to think it was bad, but you have to tell me why.” The conversation went fairly deep in several classes. Students liked and disliked different aspects, and some students were quite critical of the family story aspect of the presentation. It is beyond the scope of this project, but at another time, I will explore the issues that arose in the ensuing discussions.

Sarah also emphasized student reactions to trips and performances. For example, there was an extensive discussion about a beatboxer who performed on an anti-bullying theme at the school. Students in the Gamelan club went on two trips to the Indonesian Consulate while I was at the school. When they returned, they had the opportunity to describe the professional instruments to their peers and discuss their experience, taking on the role of the expert discussed in the previous section. Sarah also had the students reflect on their musical activities. At the end of the majority of exercises, she had the students consider both the strengths and weaknesses of their work and strategies to improve it. In conversation, Sarah said,

And it's nice at the end when they can comment about what they, what they felt about what happened. And I always, if there’s time, and sometimes I even go over time just so we can connect a little bit about what just happened. ‘Cause I find that really validates what they’ve done and what we’ve done as a group so it’s, it’s identified.

It seems as though the discourse of validating student voice was present here, but how does this validation exist in practice? The following interactions took place in a grade five/six Gamelan class:

Sarah reminds them that they are one big jigsaw puzzle. One boy volunteers, “It's like the pieces have separated and we have to put them together.” She says she can hear when they play and she can feel when they are focused. They do a much better
job with the timing after she calls attention to their focus. “That was interesting. Let's have some observations on what you were doing.” “I couldn't hear you saying the numbers because of the music and it was hard.” “How can we remedy that?” “Count in your head?” “That's a good solution. What else could you do?” She takes many suggestions. She suggests that they play a little softer. She asks students on the large gongs to play them very softly. She asks a number of students to play their instruments very softly. They try again and she asks once more for comments. “Could you hear better that time?” “Yeah.” “Do you think you're improving?” “Yes.” “We have a longer attention span.” “At the beginning of the year, we didn't know our instruments that well. Now we know them better.” “What about your listening?” “We can pick out instruments now.” “Do you see how every instrument is important?” Many heads nod.

Finally, Anne took this idea of feedback even further with grade one and two students. They had gone through a sequence of activities with a Trinidadian song called Shake the Papaya Down. By May, students were collaborating with each other to create an arrangement in small “bands” with small percussion instruments. After they created something they liked, they performed it for the class, and the class offered constructive feedback—what the group did well and what could be better.

Anne spent time teaching students how to provide constructive feedback to each other. She modeled two answers. The first—”I liked it because it was pretty”—was an example of an answer that did not use musical words, and was not specific or helpful. Her second example—”I liked it because there was a loud sound at the end that made it sound finished”—was an example of a specific, musical answer. As they worked through constructive feedback, Anne taught them how to shape their words to support other students:

A student was critical of another student’s contribution to the ending: “At the end, she never played.” Anne said immediately, “So, you could reword that to say that it might sound nice if Jennifer9 played at the end. It makes people feel better.”

By the end of the activity, students regularly articulated clear and helpful comments to their peers.

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9 Jennifer is a pseudonym.
These four teachers did not discuss leaving space for the students to respond to classroom material. My observations showed, however, that teachers prioritized space in classroom activities for students to speak. The importance of privileging student voice in the classroom permeates educational literature (see for example Bennett & Rolheiser, 2001). “Accountable talk,” as described by Amanda, is also at the forefront of the discourse (see for example Green, Lundy, & Glass, 2011). From observing in these four classes, it is clear that educational discourse continually influences and merges with practice.

Subverting the “let”: student leadership. Beyond finding ways to have students be experts, teachers created leadership opportunities in their classrooms. Again, leadership was far more evident in practice than in the teachers’ own articulated philosophies. Anne spoke to the type of leadership she worked to foster in her classes:

Anne: You can be a leader, you can…you don’t need me to do this all the time. Like…I like the whole idea of gradual release of responsibility…right. So at the beginning of the year, it’s very me-centred. And then as the year progresses, my goal…it doesn’t always happen…is to let them lead…you know. So whether it’s improvisation or composition or leading the “Follow, follow me” or whatever. They’re showing me that they have learned from me and that they are now able to lead it…I find teaching something to someone is a great way to know whether you yourself have learned it. And so if they’re able to lead it comfortably, then I’ve done my job.

I wonder at the word “let.” “Let” implies that all-too-prevalent power dynamic that privileges teachers over students—the dynamic that gives teachers the power to determine when students can lead. In a world where the teacher is the only adult, how might we subvert this relation so students can take on leadership positions without seeking permission? Anne was clearly aware of this power dynamic and looked to undermine it in her class.

Anne provided leadership opportunities for students as young as four. Kindergarten students led call-and-response songs with a puppet (Mr. Monkey) at the front of the class. They also had a chance to conduct the class in an adult-sized jacket and baton. In considering future performances, Anne and Susan both left space for the students to determine the facets of the
performance—repertoire, determining which students played which instruments, and whether to add additional aspects such as movement. Within the class context, teachers often offered students the opportunity to teach one another. In split grade classes in particular, the older frequently assisted their younger classmates. At the beginning of my time at Sarah’s school, students in the older classes switched to new Gamelan instruments. Many students taught patterns to their peers who played instruments they had played previously. On occasion, there were also leadership opportunities connected to instruments. In Sarah’s class, the student playing the Bonang,\textsuperscript{10} for example, had a solo call at the beginning that served as an opening cue to the players. The player determined when the class would play. Bonang players in various classes often played the cue amidst a flurry of activity, but their cue brought the class to order and the playing commenced. The actions of the Bonang player signaled an inversion of the power dynamic. Rather than being “allowed” the privilege of starting the class, that power was inherent in that particular position in the class—a position that rotated. I wonder if there may be potential there to move from a model where teachers “let” or “allow” students to have leadership opportunities to a model where students initiate leadership themselves.

\textit{Ensuring success.} Ensuring success was another aspect of centring the student, and doing so provided another form of validation for the students. This validation affirmed once again the privileging of students above the music or the performance in a “product-based” system of music education. Teachers engaged a number of approaches to ensure the success of their students.

\textit{Eliminating barriers.} Amanda and Anne both emphasized ideas over spelling and grammar. While students in Amanda’s class worked on their term work, she informed them:

“Your spelling doesn’t have to be perfect. Your sentence structure doesn’t have to be perfect. I want to know what you’re thinking.”

\textsuperscript{10}The Bonang is an instrument in Javanese Gamelan that consists of two rows of small gongs suspended by strings onto a wooden frame.
In an interview, Amanda reflected on her privileging of ideas and critical thinking over language conventions:

Juliet: …What do you feel is the effect of your program on students in specialized programs…so like IEP [Individual Education Plan], ELL [English Language Learner] and…
Amanda: Umm…I see a lot of kids…like…feel open to doing work here that they wouldn’t do. Like…there are a couple of girls that I know are in the home school program and their folders that they handed in were great…you know…filled with crazy grammatical and spelling errors, but I know what they’re saying…and that’s…for me, in this class, that’s all that I care about. Like…I’m not here to teach you how to write sentences. I’m not here to make sure your spelling’s right…
Juliet: Yeah…what’s the home school program?
Amanda: That’s for kids who spend half the day with a special ed. teacher doing…like…real one-on-one work. There’s only 4 kids in the whole school that are in that…so…those four kids see the special ed. teacher for half a day.
And…umm…I know they are having problems because a couple of them I went to their progress report interviews in the fall and…umm…it’s totally changed.
Like…they’ve gotten really great. One of the girls is in choir. Like…I just think this is a place where that doesn’t matter. Like…their answers are as valid as anybody else’s…It levels the playing field. ‘Cause every kid knows something about music. They all have tastes. They all have, whatever…so they know what they like. It’s getting them to articulate why is the thing. ‘Cause some kids are still like: “It was good.” Well, why? What does it mean to be good? What do you need for music to be good or bad?
Juliet: Yeah…it’s interesting…have you found that no spelling, no grammar has opened it up across the board?
Amanda: Yeah…yeah…I think kids aren’t afraid to…and every time they write something I try to be really clear that there’s no right or wrong. Like…music’s music and you have opinions and whatever you say…like…if you tell me there’s…like…a saxophone in it and there isn’t…ok…fine…that’s wrong. But still, is that really important? Again, that’s something you’ll just learn as you get older and hear saxophones…like…when would a kid in grade 5 hear a saxophone…

Fostering critical thinking was far more important to this teacher than grammatical details. The privileging of ideas created space for all students to participate, eliminating aspects of school that daunted some students. When students know that what they have to say is valuable, and as correct or valid as the thoughts of others on the subject, there are powerful implications for building confidence.

Additional supports beyond class time. All four teachers provided support beyond class time. Whether it was working on recorder belts with Anne, practicing for solos or speaking parts
in the musical with Sarah, or coming in at recess for extra help or a chance to redo a test with
Susan, students regularly approached teachers for help. After she discussed working with a
student to achieve on recorder, Susan pointed to a broader goal connected to working with
students in this manner:

Susan: And that’s…if you can get kids to trust you they will come and believe that
they can build the success for themselves, which is…you know…you’re
empowering them for their lives if they do that.

All four teachers helped ensure success for students by making themselves available for
assistance outside of class time. What Susan suggested here is that this engagement might help
students learn to build their own success. When students seek attention outside of class time,
they recognize a need or a lack and look to remedy it. Ideally, as they become adults, students
will be able to address their own needs, or to recognize a need or a problem and seek assistance
when needed. Perhaps the school system might consider finding ways to help students identify
where they may seek help, as a way of developing this valuable behaviour.¹¹

Identifying success criteria: clear expectations in music class. Teachers also ensured
student success by providing clear expectations. Particularly in Anne’s and Susan’s classes,
students knew exactly what their responsibilities entailed. Anne’s approach was quite unique:

Juliet: The way you identify success criteria…you lay it out very, very
clearly…like…from having the signs up there to just every time you’re doing any
kind of assessment, you put it up there….
Anne: I think that stems from my experience as a chair actually, you know, having
to lead division meetings. Umm…I think music lends itself to that naturally, but I
certainly point it out a lot more as a result of PD sessions I’ve been in the past three
years…as a…as a position of responsibility, so I have that “what are we learning,”
“why are we learning it,” and “how will we know.” And those success criteria are
all created by students and then I just amalgamated them into…you know…”cause I
can’t have a poster up for each class in every grade. It would just bombard their
senses. So I just took the key points and put it in child-friendly language and then I
don’t always have to be teaching it. Well, that's the goal. I still find myself referring
to it. But it’s a visual for kids…you know. “This is what I expect to see and when

¹¹ Notably, many schools engage in such practices already. There are board-wide initiatives on anti-bullying. Gay-
Straight Alliances (GSAs) are present in more and more schools and adults and students now discuss teen
depression openly. See, for example, the “It Gets Better” project at http://www.itgetsbetter.org/.
you get your mark back, this is what I’m marking you on.” So it gives kids a point of reference and I find them really helpful. It’s only the second year I’ve had those up there. And…you know…all I have to say is, “Take a look at the poster,” and it cuts out my verbal cuing significantly.

Juliet: Yeah. It’s good to have the ability to look up and…

Anne: It focuses my teaching too. Like…it really…when I take the time to say at the beginning of a class…you know… “What are we learning today and why are we learning it,” I really…it makes me more on point… “Okay, why am I doing this? Is there a good reason to be spending a class doing this?”

Anne had charts on the top of the front board that outlined expectations—expectations that students identified as important “look-fors” in each activity. With each additional activity not covered in full by the charts, Anne wrote expectations on the chart paper at the front or on the board. Students always knew how they could achieve. The push in education toward assessment by rubric\textsuperscript{12} prioritized the provision of clear expectations to students. Providing a full list of expectations to students lets them know exactly what they need to do in order to be successful.

\textit{Scaffolding}. Teachers also relied on scaffolding strategies to foster student success. Vygotsky’s (1978) scaffolding theory explores how teachers can support students at their current location in order to help them achieve a goal. Susan, in particular, utilized many scaffolds in her classes to help students achieve. For every desired goal, she had a “building-blocks” approach—supports or “scaffolds” she inserted based on the students’ needs if necessary. Metcalf, Krajcik, and Soloway (2000) expanded Vygotsky’s work, creating three categories of scaffolding—supportive, reflective, and intrinsic. “Supportive scaffolding” provides support for the activity. It is coupled with the “fading” of supports as the student progresses. “Reflective scaffolding” provides ways for the students to consider or reflect on the task. Finally, “intrinsic scaffolding” changes the complexity of the task to better match the students’ capabilities. Susan regularly engaged in supportive scaffolding—whether that meant providing a step-by-step approach to playing a song on recorder by only playing one note and

\textsuperscript{12}The majority of websites about rubrics on the Internet seem to date from the late 1990s through to the present. The rubric, then, seems to be a trend of the last fifteen years.
singing the rest or learning the gross motor skills of an Orff pattern before putting it on a xylophone. Sarah’s approach to Gamelan with younger students provides an excellent example of intrinsic scaffolding:

Juliet: And you start in grade four [with Gamelan], right?
Sarah: I introduce it in little grades as well, the smaller grades. And we might, you know, count to eight and play on every number eight, you know or… I’ll make up my own patterns just so they’ll get a sense of what it sounds like, ‘cause they love to play the gongs. And they love to play all the pots and stuff, so I might just make up an exercise where we go eight counts and on eight, you’ll play number one and then the next eight you’ll play number two, you know… but it’s getting them listening and it’s getting them hearing the sound. So I’ll create my own little exercises for it. And concentrating.

Susan also employed intrinsic scaffolding at times, simplifying the task or having multiple versions of an activity running simultaneously, as I discuss later. Anne and Sarah often asked students to reflect on their musicking, and create strategies to help themselves achieve the task at hand. The kind of reflection discussed under “Considering responses to curricular material” in this chapter provides an excellent example of reflective scaffolding. As an overall strategy, teachers employed scaffolding to help students achieve the musical task.

Differentiation, creating visuals and movement, and checking for understanding: finding ways to support special needs. Beyond the measures teachers employed to foster student success, such as providing scaffolding and clear expectations, teachers also found ways to explicitly address special needs within the classroom context. I discuss three of the approaches they utilized in this section: differentiation, creating visuals or movement, and checking for understanding.

As a longtime teacher and former curriculum consultant, Susan ran a fully differentiated classroom. She offered students choices of activities within given tasks and sometimes the ability to select which instrument they used to perform the task. In a grade seven/eight guitar class I observed, for example, there was a task on the board with an “easy version” and a “hard version.” Students had the option of completing the assignment on guitar or on an Orff
instrument. Susan asked everyone to start with the easy version, and to move to the hard version if they managed the easy version without issue. Her guitar program after three years at the school is student-directed based on small tasks, but getting to that point was a difficult process.

In a conversation about how she felt her program challenged dominant paradigms in music education, Susan reflected on how the differentiation in her guitar program began. As an experienced teacher entering a strong program, she made the assumption of a high skill level with the students—an assumption which turned out to be false. When one of the students exploded and swore at her for imposing a playing test, she realized she had to rethink her approach:

Susan: The principal or someone brought her back in and made her apologize and I said…”Or there’s the other way of doing this, which is on an Orff instrument.” This is entirely by the seat of my pants at this point and I grabbed the girl who was the most problem and said…”Come on over here and let me show you how this would work, okay that on the page, look on that chart, what’s that note?” “It’s an A.” “Okay, find something labeled A on the instrument.” And it was something that was almost scale-based and so within two minutes I had her playing it. “Is that all you want?” she said. I said, “Yeah, that’s it…you just played it perfectly…you just got ten out of ten…now I need you to teach three other kids.” And so she became my meter for teaching that. She was always difficult after that, but she never ever gave me the “fuck you” again because we did have some level of trust that I would not do that to her again and that I would show her how she could be successful…So, anyway…that was a perfect example of: “You have to think outside the box and do this differently…” So…so, that’s the kind of thing…every program I’ve taught I’ve had to start again and rethink it in that way…Big picture—what do the kids need out of it which will actually show real musical growth which will empower them as musicians, but also empower them as people…And I’ve always put that ahead of anything that might happen to be written on a page about what I’m supposed to be doing.

That was the birth of Susan’s guitar program—a program where students choose their instrument and their level of activity. She also created this possibility in younger grades when she perceived a need. In multiple recorder classes, some students played a glockenspiel so they could achieve. There were no exchanges between students I observed that indicated any adverse feelings about this arrangement. Susan teased out the philosophy behind her practice of differentiation further below:
Juliet: The differentiation that you do, a differentiation…like with the guitar…like you do kind of a self-selection… Which is a really interesting path to take with that.

Susan: Well, it’s partly survival…it’s really practical. But if you believe kids like to challenge themselves, why wouldn’t they select something a little harder when they’re ready for it…and they do. And the kid who’s done something…the easy thing really fast usually can be moved on to the next thing because they really get the plus of succeeding quickly. So, yeah…I mean that’s a…to me that’s a no-brainer. Always give kids open-ended things or several alternatives. It is kind of like…do you know the layered curriculum gal? Well she’s kind of discredited but she had a model that was worked out in way too much detail. But I learned from reading about her and hearing her…which was the idea…you know…you can offer 20 really easy assignments four slightly harder ones or one really hard one and the kids get…you know…select to do five of the easy ones or two of the medium or the one really difficult one and they self-select. Any of them will fulfill the curriculum goal you had in mind for them…Taken to extremes that’s silly, but the philosophy is…it makes sense.

What is most remarkable in Susan’s strategies for differentiation is the fact that she provided levels of challenge in activities for students to self-select according to their needs, without singling out any particular student or raising students’ level of self-consciousness.

Differentiation was organic to her classroom, and students were clearly comfortable trying multiple levels of an activity. This kind of environment links to the feelings of comfort and safety explored earlier. The origins of the program also reveal Susan as a reflective practitioner, capable of thinking-in-action and responding appropriately.13

Teachers had other strategies for addressing students’ special needs. Susan made a point of always providing a visual for new songs in the younger grades to support language learning. Although there was a relatively low population of new immigrants at her school, including visuals allowed her to address the language needs of English language learners. All four teachers used movement to assist with activities, whether that entailed actions to remember the words, support an activity musically such as a canon with both words and movements operating canonically, or to build language learning through listening to song-based instructions and responding with movements. The latter occurred frequently in Sarah’s class. Many students

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were new to English at her school, and she did a number of songs with the students that asked them to respond in certain ways to the songs with particular movement.

Finally, Sarah focused on checking for understanding. She always made sure that students understood longer words and concepts, as well as any reference to popular culture that came up in her class. Sarah had a grade twelve student hip-hop artist volunteer in her classroom. The students were excited about his music, and when he introduced himself, he mentioned Drake—a Canadian hip-hop artist. Sarah surveyed the room of grade five and six students and promptly asked about Drake. This check for understanding occurred regularly in her class. When a choir student suggested having “bling” as a part of a costume, Sarah asked him to explain. I asked her about this practice in an interview:

Juliet: You ask questions when you think students don’t know the answer or that they don’t want to ask and it makes it… Well, I don’t want to put words on it necessarily, but it’s a really interesting pedagogy and one that I haven’t seen before.
Sarah: Sometimes I don’t know what’s going on and I don’t mind the children knowing that I might not know or everyone else knows what’s cool or hip or this. And I know a lot of things, but I think it’s interesting for them to see that I’m open to learning as well. And I will also say it because I know there some very shy students who would never ask because they wouldn’t want people to know. Or even word meanings. I’ll make sure if there’s a word that is different…Some kids will come right out and ask you but some kids just won’t. And they won’t have…And they won’t really understand. And they’re too afraid to understand. So I might say, “Now does anyone know what that word means? You used that word” you know. Or “I’m not sure what that word means. Can you tell me exactly what you mean?”

Whether it was something she did not know herself or something of which she felt the students were unsure, Sarah made an effort to ensure that all students could follow the discussion in her class. Differentiation, supporting learning with visuals or movements, and checking for understanding allowed teachers to ensure success through the support of special needs.

“Just let me hear where you're at. I'll come back if I need to.” Flexible assessment and evaluation strategies. Susan’s assessment process was extremely flexible—particularly for the
guitar classes. For performance tasks with a graded assessment component, she offered students a chance to try their test again if they found their mark unsatisfactory:

Susan: “If you feel after you have played that it was not a fair depiction of your ability, you can see what [mark] you got and do it again afterschool if you wish.”

Students were able to perform tests with other students in a comfortable environment. Susan regularly heard tests while people were still working, so as not to call attention to anyone. When a student indicated he was insecure, she responded, “Just let me hear where you're at. I'll come back if I need to.” Those words gave him the confidence he needed to try.

This low-pressure environment coupled with the ability to try again allowed students to achieve at a high level and fostered success among students. Many students made a second attempt at tests to improve their marks, and they knew within this model, it was possible to be a high achiever.

_Making the shift from teacher-directed activities to student-directed activities._ Susan also discussed group work in the context of ensuring student success. In the final interview, I asked about insights she would offer to beginning teachers, and she reflected on the beginnings of her own teaching career:

Susan: Oh yes. I think I wish I’d understood how…how to give kids group work so to give them ownership. At the beginning I felt like I…it all had to come from me and I had to keep driving the whole thing all the time and I could never step out of that role and I was exhausted as a result… So, that would be one thing that…how to set up tasks with enough criteria, but not too many and so that students can experience that success working with each other… And so often the process described in a book or something is not going to include those very critical pieces, like this is what you say, this is what you post on the wall, this is the planner you give the students, whatever it happens to be. That helps them to get their…or this…you do this step, but don’t give them the instructions for the next step until after they do this step. All of those little pieces that build success for kids. So, that would be one huge thing that I wish I’d known.

Susan recognized the importance of student-directed learning—an active decentring of the teacher and centring of the student. The notion of ownership is present in Susan’s thoughts; students own work that they direct. Her discussion here is more complex, however. Even though
she advocated decentralization of instruction, scaffolding toward success was still a key component of instruction. For Susan, in student-directed learning, it is the teacher’s responsibility to ensure success, thus providing validation for the students. The other aspect of this theme relates to the decentring of the teacher. In traditional models of music education including the ensemble paradigm, the director (teacher) is the centre of all activity. Initiating group work decentres the teacher and destabilizes the teacher-student power dynamic; the pendulum can now swing away from the teacher. How might we take this idea further? Within Susan’s model, students’ activities still largely originate from the teacher. How might we, as music educators, create a model where students’ activities originate from the students themselves or in collaboration between students and teacher?

“Feeling good.” The phrases pervading the teachers’ discourse in this category often captured the idea of music class being a “place to shine.” All four teachers saw music as an opportunity for students to participate and excel in their chosen capacity.

Susan: It’s that bridge to respect for the rest of the world and respect for kids of all different levels of ability. And it’s easier, in some ways, to do it through the kind of activities that we do in a music room than in many other subject areas in the school…
Juliet: Yeah. I mean that’s what I was just thinking about. It’s…like…why music as opposed to…I mean you can see some of what goes on in here happening in visual arts or…like…there…
Susan: Or drama, absolutely and…
Juliet: Language.
Susan: And language, yeah. But the minute you get…yeah, math…even in the gym program there tend to be kids who just are extraordinarily skilled and how do you have the other kids as…you know…with two left feet, as leaders in a gym program. But here, in the music program, there’s usually a way.

Susan goes on to say that there is always a way for students to be successful. Anne and Susan in particular found different ways in their classes for the students to engage in music, so they could “feel good” about their efforts.
In practice, teachers also connected personally with students to make them feel special. There was a morning in Amanda’s class when a junior kindergarten student was reluctant to sing. Amanda said,

“I have never in my whole life heard you sing. That’s amazing. You have a secret singing voice.” He sang! (Excerpt from observations, February)

Amanda also worked to make students feel good about improvement.

The students in Grade 1 Choir do a good job singing the round the second time through. One student says it was loud. Amanda says, “It was a little bit loud, but it was much better than last week, and that’s what I’m always listening for—was it better than last week?” (Excerpt from observations, February)

The focus on improvement led to smiles; students could feel good about improvement.

Generally, the four teachers articulated that “feeling good” in music class came from success, whether in the classroom, in a performance, or through improvement.

**Special opportunities.** Finally, teachers also provided many special opportunities to students. All four teachers utilized the world music program offered by the school board, bringing in artists from the community, and utilizing full class sets of various instruments.

Anne, Sarah, and Susan all took part in the concerts at the professional venues of Massey Hall and the North York Centre concerts run by the school board in years past. Anne brought the students to perform at the North York Centre in December before I arrived in April. Susan participated in the board Choral Project this year, working with Toronto choral conductor and composer, Lori-Anne Dolloff and Aboriginal blues artist Pura Fe. Amanda’s choir participated in a board event in January honouring Martin Luther King Jr. called *Keeping the Dream Alive*, which featured choirs from around the school board, board alumni Fefe Dobson and Jordan Croucher (JRDN) as hosts, and headliner Kardinal Offishall. Amanda’s, Susan’s, and Anne’s schools all participated in a choir festival this year, and three of the four schools also took a trip to hear the Toronto Symphony Orchestra at Roy Thomson Hall. The nature of the programs themselves also often offered special opportunities. Sarah’s classroom housed a homemade
Gamelan set, and students involved in Gamelan on an extra-curricular basis had the opportunity to play a full professional Javanese Gamelan set at the Indonesian Consulate. Susan initiated a “Man Choir” at her school on Monday nights—a choir comprised of boys from the school, high school boys who are alumni of the program, a parent and a teacher from the school community, and men from a local community choir. Susan saw the choir as a way to build “opportunities for boys. That’s a really important thing to give them time on their own around music because that’s not going to just happen for a lot of them.”

There was a moment in Sarah’s Gamelan class one morning that beautifully demonstrated a possible outcome of providing special opportunities to students:

The students are excited at the instruments. They talk to each other and play a bit on their instruments. They play loudly—much louder than they need to—but they are able to play the gong tone together after a few tries. One student says, “Whoa. We’ve only got 5 minutes left. Whoa.” They are focused. (Excerpt from observations, March)

The class goes on to reflect on what they just played. This moment perfectly captured the “flow” that Csikszentmihalyi (1990) and Elliott (1995) discuss in their respective works. Completely absorbed by the activity, this student “fell out of time”—lost in the flow of the activity.

Perhaps, the most important facet of theme of special opportunities emerged from a discussion with Susan about inclusion and exclusion:

Susan expressed the feeling that music is often linked to sports and that many schools have the attitude that they want to win at sports or that the performance is the be-all-and-end-all, but that it is actually about providing an experience for students who need it. (Excerpt from journal, April)

Opportunities then are really about the experiences they provide. In turn, such experiences connect to “feeling good,” offering validation to the students. Overall, teachers found myriad ways to validate the students.

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14 Notably, the proliferation of “man choirs” in music education is consistent with the writing of O’Toole (1998) on the ways in which boys are privileged in choirs.
Conclusion: centring the student. As elucidated in chapter one, traditional music education focuses on the performance—the music—above all else. Preparing for the school concert often erases students as individuals and directs attention toward the final goal or finished “product.” Centring the student above the music emerged as an important theme in this research. In this second section, I examined three facets of this theme as they occurred in the four classrooms of this study. The first component was the notion of relationships supersed ing the music. Teachers provided students with “a place to feel good” and a safe environment. The final aspect that permeated the data was the notion of validation. Teachers found ways to recognize students as individuals, whether through representation in the songs of the program, recognition of achievements, or providing space for students to respond to material and share their stories. All of these facets contribute to a complex understanding of the ways in which teachers work to centre the student.

Conclusion

In the previous chapter, I looked specifically at content and considered the ways in which the four teacher participants in this study strove to expand the musics in their classroom far beyond musics typically used in the ensemble paradigm. In this chapter, I explored the manner in which these educators worked to contextualize all musics in their classes and worked to centre the students in their classrooms. While many of these strategies can be read through a liberal framework, in the final chapter, I put forward what I consider to be a radical rereading of some of these same strategies. In the next chapter, chapter seven, I explore some of the ways that hegemony can potentially be reinscribed through music education.
CHAPTER 7

Reinscriptions: Difficulties Strewn along the Path to Challenging Dominant Paradigms in Elementary Music Education

This chapter explores the ways in which various music education practices can reinscribe hegemony discursively, practically, and philosophically. Broadly, it looks at occurrences within the classroom and their implications for hegemonic power relations. While the previous two chapters examined common themes emerging from my research that ran counter to dominant paradigms in music education, this chapter traces practices that reinscribe hegemony.

Reinscribing Hegemonic Paradigms

Throughout my time observing at these four schools, much of what the four teachers did challenged dominant paradigms in music education. However, situations also arose that reinscribed hegemonic power relations and reinforced structural inequities. Sometimes the inequities occurred as a result of teacher practice, but more often reinscription of hegemonic paradigms happened as a result of the way students engaged in the classroom material or practices. In this section, I address privileging that occurs in pedagogy, examining what I term “superficial multiculturalism” and Eurocentrism, the lack of available resources on equity and equity education, and the ways in which structural inequities emerged and were reinforced. With almost every reinscription, there was a counteraction. Teachers actively worked against some of the inequities that occurred. Alongside the discussion of the reinscription, therefore, is a conversation about the ways in which teachers countered hegemonic actions.

Superficial multiculturalism. I begin with a discussion of what I term “superficial multiculturalism.” In the previous chapter, I discussed a rich, contextualized approach to diverse
musics. Superficial multiculturalism in music class, conversely, often presents music without its context. It sometimes takes a concept-based approach to music education, privileging musical concepts in isolation over a situated method that considers relationships in a profound manner (see Abril, 2003 for further discussion). Music education in general often takes a superficial approach to diverse musics—an approach that is additive or touristic in nature (Hess, in press). This approach literally arranges “Other” musics around the periphery of Western classical music.

An “add-on”: an additive approach to multiculturalism in music education. Amanda critiqued the additive model she saw in music education:

Amanda: It still seems to be…like…a lot of education in general where it’s like the multicultural, diversity thing is…like…an add-on…it’s not embedded in daily teaching. So it’s not the James Banks thing. It’s not…like…it’s not just about…oh, it’s Chinese New Year, let’s learn a song and that’s it…and that’s the only time and the only thing you would ever talk about anything…like…any kind of…you know…so…yeah…I still…I don’t see enough of it.

We discussed the additive model of multiculturalism in music education fairly extensively (see discussion in chapter six). What does an additive mentality look like in the classroom when teachers approach so-called “world music”? As Amanda mentioned, bringing out a Mandarin song once for Chinese New Year is a dominant practice in music education. One teacher gave an example of something she did in a past year at a Winter concert:

So we’ll try to look for materials that will make it accessible or very inclusive. Like, we did, “We wish you a Happy Chanukah, we wish you a Happy Eid,” you know…and you try to include lots of festivities in this one little song that had a few verses and you try to reflect your school population. And everyone was okay with that. Even though it was to the melody of “We Wish you a Merry Christmas” and it was singing and some cultures don’t sing. So you just try…

This song was an attempt at inclusivity, yet because of the Christmas melody, the song unintentionally reinscribed Western culture as the dominant centre. This song very much exemplifies an additive approach to music education. At the same time, this practice is infinitely
more inclusive than simply singing “We Wish You a Merry Christmas.” Perhaps the next step, then, is looking for songs or cultural practices that better represent the students.

As previously discussed, welcoming the stranger can also reinstall who is and is not the stranger (Ahmed, 2000). In a situation where content integration takes priority over deeper work toward understanding, it remains all too clear who is “outside.”

**Problematics of a concept-based approach.** The practice of using a range of different musics to teach a musical concept can lend itself to a kind of superficial multiculturalism—particularly if the concept chosen supports a Western ethnocentric approach to the world. Anne mentioned that she used “songs from around the world to teach different concepts.” While a conceptual approach initially worried me, the way she enacted the process very much maintained the integrity of the songs chosen. As previously discussed, for example, she taught a Filipino boating song. The song was a call-and-response song, echoing the nature of the activity for which it was intended. When she worked on the song with the students, the activity chosen emphasized the call-and-response nature of the song and expanded on the concept.

It seems as though the key here is in the concept chosen. To focus on singing in tune while learning a Filipino boating song misses the point, and also fails to recognize the opportunities the song offers. To take a concept-driven approach to diverse musics provides the chance to work with concepts integral to each music. The danger of superficiality arises when imposing a Western concept or simply an unrelated concept on a piece of music—the teaching of concept for the concept’s sake rather than because it emerges from the music.

**Presenting material without context.** As discussed in the previous chapter, presenting material without context can also be problematic. Bradley (2003) worries that without context, students will rely on the always already present other and imagine the context for the music they perform. There were a few instances in my observations in which students sang or performed music with a context beyond the scope of their everyday lives, and the teacher presented the
material without context. Students in the primary division in one school, for example, learned a
dance from Denmark called *Seven Jumps*. The teacher introduced Denmark as a country “across
the water.” The dance was complex; it involved putting elbows down on the floor and then nose
down on the floor. In observing the dance, I felt there must be an interesting story to the
sequence. The teacher was unsure of the story, but wanted to research it. Students performed the
dance without context, and they loved that class. Every time elbows hit the floor, the students
erupted with giggles. When the dance finished, students called out “Again, again.” Perhaps the
addition of context would have added to their experience, or grounded their knowledge in
something more concrete than “a country across the water.”

Many resources available to teachers also encourage that same kind of superficiality. At
one of the schools, there was a world music bingo game. I glanced through the resource to get a
sense of what it offered students. The game instructed each student to take a bingo card. It then
asked them to “guess” the “world” instrument played on the compact disc. Some of the
instruments included the bodhran, the shofar, the ud, the steel pan, and the digeridoo. The game
presented all of the instruments without context and literally encouraged students to imagine
what they might be hearing. Unfortunately this resource is not atypical of the kinds of resources
available to teachers who wish to engage in diverse musics in their classrooms.

**Taking a celebratory approach.** Finally, there is also a danger of taking a solely
celebratory approach to diversity. Alibhai-Brown (2000) critiques this “saris, samosas, and steel
drums” approach to multiculturalism. As music educators, it is easy to celebrate moments in the
year—highlighting “Black History Month” or the Chinese New Year, as opposed to fully
integrating musics from these traditions into our programs. Instead, they often serve as
interruptions to “regularly scheduled (Western classical) programming.” For the most part, this
celebratory approach did not occur at any of the four schools without much more profound
integration of diverse musics into the tapestry of the classroom. One of the teachers mentioned her school’s celebration of the Chinese New Year:

Because of our population we really celebrate Chinese New Year here at this school and in music I always have erhu music or we do a little New Years song or a dragon song and it’s all on the pentatonic scale or sometimes we specifically will get Chinese musicians to come in and play. And we do a huge big Chinese potluck for that. Every parent brings food and we have music over the whole school and it’s…we really do celebrate it in a big way, which is nice.

Many students in the school celebrated Chinese New Year, and the school represented their population through a large celebration. In isolation, such an action could seem tokenistic. However, Chinese culture and music had much more than simply a moment in the school year. In music class alone, students learned folk melodies on their recorders and had opportunities to share songs they knew in their home languages. Where the issue arises is when “saris, samosas, and steel drums” (Alibhai-Brown, 2000) come to represent all of what there is to know about a culture and a people. Marxist feminist Bannerji (2000) argues:

As long as “multiculturalism” only skims the surface of society, expressing itself as traditional ethics, such as arranged marriages, and ethnic food, clothes, songs and dances (thus facilitating tourism), it is tolerated by the state and “Canadians” as non-threatening. But if the demands go a little deeper than that (e.g. teaching “other” religions or languages), they produce a violent reaction, indicating a deep resentment toward funding “others’” arts and cultures. (p. 79)

Music as an art fits beautifully into the superficial category of multiculturalism—the “skimming the surface” that Bannerji (2000) describes. We can read this surface engagement in two ways. We could allow it to remain merely a superficial engagement with the “Other,” ultimately tokenizing and participating in a kind of musical tourism or, as the teachers in this study did routinely, we can take it as an opportunity to use what is on the surface and accessible as a gateway into deeper engagement.

Beyond content integration. Over the six months I spent with the four teachers, I saw each teacher work to push her program toward inclusivity and, in many cases, toward social justice. It is possible to argue that in many ways, their efforts could be termed additive.
However, in different ways, all four teachers worked beyond mere content integration in their program toward a broader understanding of music and the world among the students in their classes.

Banks and Tucker (1998) offer a model for multicultural education that encompasses five dimensions: i) content integration or the simple integration of multicultural material; ii) knowledge construction that helps students understand and critique materials they encounter; iii) equity pedagogy where the teachers modify how they teach so all students can achieve; iv) prejudice reduction where teachers work to reduce prejudice in the classroom; and v) empowering school culture and social structure where teachers and students work to make school culture equitable. Notably, content integration is only the first, and most superficial, of the five dimensions.

While all four teachers easily integrated diverse material, their work moved beyond content integration. Teachers worked to help students critique the world around them—music and media in particular. Teachers regularly mobilized different pedagogies that addressed the needs of different students. Prejudice reduction occurred on a continual basis in relation to both the subject matter and also issues that arose between students in the school. Although the fifth dimension occurred less often, teachers considered ways to do this work beyond their classrooms.

Troubling the image of the “exotic.” In working with a broad range of musics, it is also important to question how students will consider non-Western music as other than exotic. In watching Sarah’s students weave in and out of multiple musical epistemologies when they moved from work on the Gamelan to studying Western music, it seemed as though the music was no longer “strange” or “exotic.” Rather, students were comfortable and even fluent in its language, not noticeably viewing it in any way as different from the every day. I wonder then if viewing so-called Other music as exotic may be the first step toward a deeper understanding. In
my own experience with Ghanaian music, I have no doubt that it first appealed to me as “exotic.” At the beginning, I understood Ghanaian music through the lens of Western music. I worked to make sense of it through a framework I already had at my disposal. However, as I continued to study, I stopped “translating” Ghanaian music into Western terms and slipped into a different way of knowing music. Viewing non-Western music as exotic is indeed problematic, but perhaps only a first step in what occurs when students encounter new musics. Sarah’s students, having grown up with Gamelan, among multiple other musics, certainly did not view it as in any way distinct from themselves, although more research would be required to make such a determination.

**Eurocentrism.** I often critique the Eurocentric nature of the arts curriculum in Ontario. Although the Ontario Arts Curriculum (Government of Ontario, 2009) is much stronger than the previous version (Government of Ontario, 1998) in that it now draws in musics other than Western classical music, it is still ethnocentric in nature and often considers diverse musics through a Western lens. These four teachers, for the most part, approached music from a global perspective, as discussed previously. However, there were a number of aspects of the various programs that remained Eurocentric. This section discusses three of these components: the importance placed on attending the symphony in three of the four schools, engagement in material that lacks cultural relevance to the students’ present realities, and a lingering desire for Christocentricity in December around Christmas time.

**Importance placed on symphony trip.** The Toronto Symphony Orchestra presents a series of youth concerts each year in an attempt to introduce and attract younger audiences to the symphony. Attending the symphony with students is normalized; many music teachers take students to the symphony and the discourse about the field trip is usually something to the effect of “exposing students to something they would not ordinarily see.” In April, three of the four
schools in this project attended the youth symphony concert at Roy Thomson Hall. Following one of the concerts, I wrote the following entry in my journal:

The symphony trip was a success, I think, at least from the perspective that the students saw a performance in a concert hall. As I was looking around Roy Thompson Hall, three things struck me: 1) it is by far the youngest audience I have ever seen at the TSO [Toronto Symphony Orchestra]; 2) it is pretty much the only audience I’ve every seen that was not largely white for classical music; and 3) attendance by these young students who were mostly of colour was not voluntary. It seems an interesting phenomenon that something that does not generally interest either a young audience or an audience of colour required the presence of music teachers (largely white, female, and schooled in Western classical music) to get this program to function.¹ It certainly is food for thought. The TSO does these concerts to build audiences and certainly the program was far more geared toward real students than concerts I have seen in the past. Our school was relatively quiet, but the school across from me was absolutely not. Why force students to listen to something? I am so tired of the attitude that it is somehow good for them to hear Western European music. It is a very colonial notion. There are some very interesting power dynamics involved in going to the symphony. All three schools I am at right now are making the trip this week, so it is broadly deemed “important,” but this needs to be unpacked. Has it simply become normalized or understood to be common sense that “providing these kinds of experiences” for students IS important? Who gets to decide? When we were talking about Abigail Richardson’s The Hockey Sweater afterwards narrated by the book’s author Roch Carrier, the teacher I was with commented that “they don’t know what they’ve just seen” with the implication that it was truly something special. It was a wonderful piece and a world premiere of the work based on a “uniquely Canadian hockey story,” but what is it about that experience that makes her believe that there is so much value in the work? It is a bit uncanny. I find it more than a bit disturbing that it is essentially normalized that Western European classical music is “good for you” and that “everyone should have that experience.” These ideas seem like they need to be unpacked. In the meantime, the cycle self-perpetuates as the teachers are mostly schooled in that tradition and the belief that it is a “good” experience is instilled within them, which then encourages them unconsciously to bring students to the symphony. The program this morning really was better than the late great white male composers the Toronto Symphony Orchestra used to trot out for the occasion. The one year I took my own students to the symphony, there were no current pieces. I had to prepare them for Haydn and Mozart, with perhaps one token Canadian composer. The program was not memorable in the least and certainly not particularly relevant to teens and preteens. The students across from me who were not performing their best “symphony behaviour” served as my compass. Of all the pieces we heard, the one that did catch their attention was “The Hockey Sweater.” And this piece was much more like a story. It was narrated, the illustrations were projected above, and there were even moments of acting on the stage with the

¹ See Locke and Barr (1997) for an extensive discussion on women’s role in cultivating the patronage of Western classical music in America. As the title of their introduction notes, music patronage is a “female-centered cultural process” (p. 1).
conductor as referee, etc. The other pieces for the most part did not go over as well. I asked one of our students on the way back what he liked and he liked the Newfoundland song (it had excerpts from *I’se the B’y* and *The Kelligrew Soirée*). He said he knew one of the songs from a video game. Still, the students across from me got me thinking. Why should they care? What is so important about the symphony? That is not to say that I unequivocally find that experiences at the symphony are not valuable. I do believe in introducing students to musics with which they are not familiar. However, I think I would take a more multicentric approach—centre the students within their own cultural background and move out from there, touching on classical music as *a* music at some point after firmly grounding them in their own traditions. (Excerpt from journal, April)

There are many power relations embedded in such field trips and I found it quite interesting that three of four teachers in this study felt that the symphony was an important experience for the students. However, although the trip was an aspect of these teachers’ programs, it was simply *one* aspect. Students attended the concert for the most part with some contextual preparation, but the symphony did not attain the privileged place as the most important musical event of the year. In the midst of the symphony trip, for example, Sarah took students twice to the Indonesian Consulate, she planned an event for the school with musicians from the local music school, she organized a beatbox flute player to come to the school, as well as a Brazilian drum and dance ensemble. The week following the symphony, her choir attended a choir concert outside the school. The symphony did not dominate as the most important music; rather it was simply one music of many.

An interesting extension here might include taking the opportunity to discuss the privileging of classical music and perhaps interrogate its assumed importance in the classroom. Perhaps instead of simply not allowing classical music to take a dominant place, teachers could interrogate its dominant place historically and the material effects on the present that include activities such as trips to the symphony.

*Material that lacks cultural relevance to students’ present realities.* The last chapter discussed the choice of music that represented the students’ realities, whether through culture or affinity. There were a number of songs throughout my observations, however, that did not seem
to connect with the students’ present realities. Often, these musics were children’s songs, Eurocentric in nature, and based on rhymes or events from the Western European past. Students sometimes disengaged with the material, perhaps seeing it as connected to a time and place apart from themselves. Although I support moving students beyond their own scopes, I agree with Asante (1991) that centering them first in their own realities is important.

**Desire for Christocentricity in December.** Over the course of our discussions, two teachers mentioned the shift in the school board away from Christian content in December due to the diverse population of the school communities. Both teachers felt strongly that Christmas material was important and worried about excluding Christian content entirely. Instead, they felt that they should include Christmas material in their programs as one music among many. One teacher in particular felt the pendulum swing away from Christmas as a loss and looked forward to a point when she could include some Christian sacred content.

Because of the Eurocentric focus of the curriculum, Christmas music is often at the centre of the school concert, and Christmas music in December is naturalized to the point of being “common sense.” I often marvel at the fact that I do not celebrate Christmas myself and because of my schooling, I still very much associate December with Christmas. At many schools, the majority of the student population does not celebrate the holiday, and the board pushes music programs to reflect this reality. However, at least one teacher in this study felt the non-recognition of Christmas as both a loss and a lack of acknowledgement of her own heritage.

Despite the emphasis that chapter five placed on including a wide range of musics in the program, there was some lingering evidence of Eurocentricity in aspects of these four programs. Teachers placed an emphasis on attending the symphony, for example, and some of the songs chosen for the students to sing were also Eurocentric in nature. Finally, the desire for Christian content in December indicated the presence of Eurocentricity as well.
Lack of equity education and the need for equity resources. Amanda and Susan both identified the lack of equity education and the need for equity resources within the board. I made the following note in my journal following an interview with Amanda:

Ironically, as soon as the interview recorder was off, we got into an interesting conversation. We started talking about where teachers are in general with equity issues. Apparently at the beginning of the year, there was an event for first year teachers. Part of what was discussed was the distinction between equity and equality. Amanda attended with a few other graduates of a critically-focused teacher education program. She said that she and her colleagues from the program offered all of the answers to the questions—that the majority of first year teachers had not gotten into equity discussions in their teacher education. She wondered why, seeing as equity is infused in board policy. (Excerpt from journal, February)

Amanda found the equity education in the board lacking—an interesting commentary given the commitment to equity expressed by the director of the board and the equity infusion in board policy. Susan identified a specific lack of resources for special education available to music teachers:

Susan: I had no resources around special ed. and most music teachers still don’t. And that’s a huge area where all…so often kids in…even the ones who are housed separately for part of the day are integrated for music. And with no advice, no if you go to the home school person to help with…for help modifying the program…they’re not really interested in helping the music teacher because it doesn’t matter…you know…and so…or they don’t understand enough about music to work with you anyway. So, you’ve got to really toil along with not much advice. And you’re not present at the team meetings when the IEPs are discussed. In general, we don’t dive into people’s OSRs and IEPs, though we should be doing that. And so, yeah…once again there’s just a total lack of training and expertise. And yet, most of us really like working with kids who are…who have these challenges and would really like to do well by those…by them. And…umm…and there’s no lack of enthusiasm. No lack of caring. So it’s, again, just a matter of this specific training that could be made available and currently isn’t.

Susan would like to see resources and education for music teachers about special education.

Over the course of my time in her school, she highlighted on multiple occasions the lack of resources provided, particularly to new teachers, to address special needs in the classroom.

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2 OSR is the acronym for “Ontario Student Record”—a file kept on every student as they go through school in Ontario.

3 IEP is the acronym for “Individual Education Plan”—an individualized program outline for students who have special needs.
Her own system of differentiation emerged from years of teaching and much self-directed reading about education. Amanda identified the need for equity education in general in the board, but Susan was more specific in the resources she felt students required.

**White privilege.**

*Power plays based on class material.* The demographics of the schools involved in this study provided an interesting contrast in data. Amanda’s and Susan’s school populations were predominantly white and at the higher end of the socioeconomic spectrum, whereas the other two schools both met the board criteria for the *Model Schools for Inner Cities*—a list identifying schools with a high level of socioeconomic needs. In all four schools, the majority of teachers were white. Given the contrasts between the schools, there were certain ways in which students performed white privilege. I draw on Harris’ (1995) work to define white privilege. Her paper, *Whiteness as Property*, was foundational to critical race theory. Harris (1995) begins her paper with a narrative about her grandmother’s working life and her ability to “pass” as white in the working (white) world. She uses this experience to illustrate the idea that whiteness is a valuable commodity and her grandmother’s story is not unique. She ultimately discusses whiteness as property, arguing that black people engage in coerced black denial of identity (i.e. “passing”) in order to gain some of the privileges “naturally” accorded to white people. For Harris, whiteness as property “does not mean that all whites will win, but simply that they will not lose, if losing is defined as being on the bottom of the social and economic hierarchy—the position to which blacks have been consigned” (p. 286). Harris’ (1995) discussion speaks to the very essence of white privilege.

Looking back to the four schools now, in the two schools that were predominantly white, white privilege emerged in music class in an alarming manner. Both Amanda and Susan were deeply aware of the privileged positions of their schools and the students and also of the potential and actual marginalization of students marked Other. They worked to address these
factors in their teaching. The method they both chose to address privilege involved in depth study of diverse musics. For Amanda, these musics all had African roots. For Susan, Afrocentric music was the basis of her grade seven program and musics from around the world were the focus of her grade eight program. Amanda and Susan chose the Afrocentric musics in order to foster a real appreciation for the strength of the culture in the face of horrendous oppression.

In both schools, almost without exception, all of the classes consisted of over eighty percent white students and the material was largely Afrocentric in nature. Both teachers wished to use the material to dismantle privilege. Amanda, in particular, worked to reveal the structural oppression and racism out of which the musics emerged. However, students enacted their privilege in an unusual way. Within a class dynamic, there are generally students who vie for popularity and compete for position within the class hierarchy. Challenging the teacher often provides some currency toward popularity. However, in this situation, students in Amanda’s class chose to engage in power plays for popularity by challenging the teacher via the class material—Afrocentric repertoire. In some cases, students openly mocked the material to move up the class hierarchy. In observing, there was little question that students engaged in this behaviour for reasons that had little to do with the material, but the effect remains. White students, looking to gain currency in the class hierarchy, mocked Afrocentric material for their own gains in classroom cultural capital. I repeatedly noted students making fun of “strange” cultures, shouting on one occasion “Guantanamera” across the room in reference to Guantanamera—one of the songs they studied. In February, I made the following note in my journal:

A number of grade threes in the French immersion class were aiming to get attention through both making fun of Spanish content in the Celia Cruz, Queen of Salsa book and making derogatory remarks about Cuba. My inclination is to think that they are attention-seeking, but it is a very interesting attitude that is indicative of the social class and racial demographic of the school. The question is how to deal with it. If it is attention-seeking behavior, ignoring it is probably the right approach. (It is the approach that Amanda is taking.) Ignoring it also does not give credence to
it. However, there is also something to be said for shutting down that kind of commentary. Still, if it is attention-seeking behavior and it gets attention (significant negative attention), will it ultimately reinforce the behavior because the goal (of attention) has been achieved? (Excerpt from journal, February)

Amanda and I discussed these classroom commentaries extensively. She usually ignored them, assuming if she lent credence to them by addressing them, the situation would worsen. When she ignored comments, they tended to abate. However, the power relations of this situation essentially replicate structural oppression. Whether or not it was a conscious decision to replicate problematic relations or an unconscious decision to mock simply based on the desire for popularity, the result is the same. Would the students mock any material to gain classroom cultural capital or only “black music?” What was the effect on the two or three students of colour in each class? Would the students mock the music if there were more students of colour?

The nature of what occurred when students in this school engaged with Afrocentric music has serious implications. Amanda, as a new teacher, worked to foster respect among her students, but this respect did not always extend to the music. She chose the material for the class in order to subvert hegemonic relations and make students aware of their oppressive history. However, students somehow managed to replicate problematic oppressive relations despite intentions on the part of the teacher. I wonder how it may be possible to create a situation that targets interrupting structural inequity and oppression without replicating dominant power relations.

**Race inequity.** Besides displays of white privilege and Eurocentricity, there were other racial inequities that occurred at various times. There were moments in two of the schools where black students withdrew from activities on occasion and an issue that arose for a colleague of Susan’s that she identified as problematic. There were also specific ways that teachers worked to counter racial inequities.

**Tendency of black students to withdraw from activities.** In two of the schools in particular, black students sometimes withdrew from activities to a greater degree than students
in any other demographic. In watching the students disengage, I thought about Dei’s book

*Removing the Margins* (Dei, James, Karumanchery, James-Wilson, & Zine, 2000) and the discourse about schools not meeting the needs of black students. I take the following two situations as examples. The first is an excerpt from my journal:

Then, this afternoon in the primary combined class with the “special needs” students, there was a black boy who was clearly not enjoying himself. When he stopped, she tells him he was doing such a good job earlier. He starts working again and she singles him out for his good work. He does not enjoy being singled out. If a student is over-praised for what a teacher deems “appropriate” behaviour, what does that do? I would venture to guess that it would be a contributing factor to attrition. Is there a theoretical basis for this feeling? (Excerpt from journal, March)

Watching this student’s discomfort at being singled out for praise made me think that this type of reinforcement is more problematic than helpful. He did not behave differently than anyone else in the class, yet the teacher praised him for his behaviour. Praise in this situation could easily amount to silencing. The authors in *Removing the Margins* advocate for a system where marginalized voices are at the centre—an inclusive form of schooling that draws on a range of models to literally “remove the margins” (Dei, et al., 2000).

The second situation is also a journal excerpt, but from a different school:

The same [black] student buzzes and plays his recorder simultaneously. He is reminded to face front. There are some very interesting questions of engagement emerging. This boy has been targeted as a “problem.” He goes to his instrument when asked and then ends up sitting in the chairs. (Did someone ask him to?) The volunteer engages him. He says, “I’d rather be in math class than in music. This class is so boring.” She tells him it’s only 5 more minutes. He says, “5 minutes. That’s like 5 hours. Nothing’s fun. Babies play with this [the Orff instruments]. It’s so easy. My nephew plays with this. It’s so boring.” This is what George [Dei] talks about – “push outs,” not “drop outs.” What would it take for it not to be this way? He’s a new student. He’s been here for 3 months. He says he misses his old school. (He was apparently expelled multiple times from his last school and has been shunted from school to school from the sounds of it.) He has a recess detention so they can talk. (Excerpt from journal, March)

At the end of the day, I finished reflecting:

This morning, there was the student in the grade 4/5 class who was so rhythmic when tapping his recorder, but completely withdrew from what he was “supposed” to do. He had no interest in playing the recorder or doing the tableau positions.
When he was asked to sit down after going to the Orff instruments, he said that they were for babies and that even his little nephew could play them. What would he want a music program to be? What will connect with him? That class was quite subdued on the recorders, but liked the movement and the Orff activities. He was rhythmically perfect when he was “playing” the piano part by tapping his recorder. I doubt the other students even knew what the piano part was. He is engaged and very musical, but this program is not reaching him. (Excerpt from journal, March)

Gustafson (2009) points to the almost one hundred percent attrition rate of African American students from school music programs in the United States and traces its genesis historically through an examination of school music programs beginning in the mid-nineteenth century. In all four schools, the level of engagement was high, but in these two schools where black students were in the extreme minority, considering who disengaged from activities revealed that such disengagement was racialized. Despite the diversity of the programs, the content did not reach some of the black students in the program. This particular student was clearly musical and yet, the music program did not speak his musical language. Given the underrepresentation of black students in these two schools and their overrepresentation among the students who disengaged from the programs, it seems as though developing a musical language that speaks to these students warrants careful consideration. If, as Gustafson (2009) points out, attrition and withdrawal from music programs is racialized, we can take the opportunity to examine the activities that successfully engage students to create a program that speaks multiple musical languages. There is also a systemic problem exemplified by this student. Multiple schools expelled him, and he moved from school to school. Three months into his time at this school, he was hopelessly behind the other students. The system both failed him and continuously set him up for failure, perpetuating the cycle. Music class here was therefore also a symptom of a larger systemic problem—a problem that again was clearly racialized.

“I don’t want my son learning slave songs.” Susan raised the following issue in her description of a situation of a teacher colleague:
Susan: But, at the same time, my worry is...and I’ve heard this from other teachers and I’ve only ever had it happen to me once when one teacher was teaching *Juba This and Juba That*, she had a parent march in and say, “I don’t want my son learning slave songs. And so...”

Juliet: What was the demographic of the student?

Susan: African Canadian. And because they were descended from slaves, her family, she did not want to go there and she didn’t want her son going there. And...umm...so the music teacher and the principal sought the opinion of the equity department and the equity department was able to pull language about we were actually mandated to make sure people not teach it as a slave song but teach it as a mark of cultural respect...you know. But this is such an important history and such an important...umm...stylistic piece that kids need to know about that’s influenced everything that came after it and it must never ever, ever happen again as a historical fact that ends slavery. Another thing is I keep saying to kids...there’s lots of slavery in the world today, you’re just not aware of it. And I don’t know great detail about slavery, but I am aware that it is very, very widespread. And virtual slavery where people are paid so little or indentured servants where they have no freedom of action. So it’s not like this is something we can dismiss as an artifact in the past, it’s still with us. So, it’s...those two messages are big for kids and hard for them to take. And yet when I approach the actual music I want that to be a celebration and an act of respect and I want them to enjoy that heritage for the wonderful, wonderful thing that it is. So that’s ideally what I get across.

Susan raised an important issue that connects to the previous discussion of the way students engage with explicitly oppressive subject matter in class. When Susan taught music historically sung by enslaved people, she ensured students understood both the oppressive history and the fact that enslavement was by no means over. Then when she approached the music, she introduced the music as extraordinary and special. However, the mother of whom she spoke did not want her son learning “slave songs.” Despite a teacher’s best intention to make the teaching a mark of cultural respect, in many ways, singing this music forces a student with a family history fraught with oppression to literally embody it. There is no question that this music is important, and that anti-oppression teaching requires learning about oppression. However, there is an issue of an almost forced embodiment of oppression here, an issue compounded by the predominantly white, female subject positions of elementary music teachers. Susan took an ethical approach to this music. She worked to reveal oppression and embed it within the historical context, and yet the large scale power relations of a white teacher asking a black
student to sing a song from enslavement are considerable. How can we, as music educators, address such issues in the classroom? How might we shift classroom practice with this repertoire to avoid replicating oppressive relations?

**Countering oppressive relations: explicit teaching of African musics in schools that are predominantly wealthy and white.** Amanda and Susan explicitly taught Afrocentric material in schools with a predominantly white and middle to upper class demographic to intentionally speak to oppressive power relations—both historical and present. Amanda offered the following insight:

Juliet: You have a deep valuing of what cultures with African roots have to offer the world. That’s really reflected in your program. But that…like…it seems to be…like…it’s this year that you’re focusing on…like…
Amanda: Yeah, I have a feeling it’ll come up all the time…just because it’s…in our culture it’s impossible to get away from. Like…it’s everywhere. Like…we honestly wouldn’t have the pop music…well…and the art music too…like…if we’re putting jazz into that sort of academic category now too…like…that wouldn’t exist.
So…kids need to know that…they need to know where it comes from to be able to appreciate it. I just…yeah…we can’t…You just can’t deny it. It’s just everywhere. So…I think you need to know where you’ve come from and for good or bad reasons too…like…the white kids need to know what their ancestors did too…you know what I mean…so. Yeah…I just want it to be a place where I’m constantly pushing the envelope or…like…questioning things…why society is what it is. And I that by doing this with the young kids that by the time they’re in grade 5 and 6 we’ll have even better discussions than I’m already having with the grade 5 and 6’s that are happening…right. ‘Cause we will have been doing it for so long by then…
Juliet: And some of the JKs today…like…were right in and were remembering and…it was awesome.
Amanda: Totally…totally…totally…

The attitude that white students need to become aware of their privilege and their oppressive history was a driving force behind Amanda’s program. Despite the areas of slippage discussed earlier in regards to student power plays over class material, Amanda worked to undermine hierarchical power relations that reinscribe white privilege. She deliberately taught students to ask critical questions—to critique the world and to not accept present conditions of hegemony.

If students learn at an early age to question systemic inequities, a gradual shift toward more equitable relations may become possible. Susan also chose to emphasize Afrocentric music and
“world” music in a school where the majority of students were white. The black students in the school lived predominantly in a local housing project, so a major socioeconomic disparity accompanied the racial differences between students at the school.

It seems quite significant that both Amanda and Susan (the two teachers placed in largely white schools with a higher socioeconomic demographic) felt that it was important to centre oppression and the musics that emerged from oppression. Although issues arose from this method of engagement, both teachers took a critical pedagogical approach that looked to foster an appreciation and respect both for the music and for a marginalized group of people, while providing historical knowledge and awareness of privilege and oppression. Although centring oppression carries within it the potential for condescension and a reinscription of dominant power relations, that was not the intent here. Instead respect and critique was at the centre. Both teachers wanted their students to question systemic inequity and ultimately work to counter it.

However, the question of subjectivity lingers. Elementary music teachers are predominantly white and female, which introduces an interesting power relation when the classroom material is Afrocentric. The potential for reinscription emerges simply from positionalities. That potential needs to remain at the centre of any anti-oppression work in the classroom.

The nature of the subjectivities of many music teachers raises another interesting question. The four teachers in this study engaged in critical pedagogy in their classrooms. Is practicing pedagogy in this manner a privilege available only to white teachers? What happens when a teacher of colour chooses to counter privilege in the class and to decentre the canon? It seems likely that s/he will face serious opposition. In fact, some have argued that teacher of colour are not celebrated for engaging in this type of pedagogy. Métis scholar Larocque (1991) contends that
when peoples around the world speak out against racism in a manner stronger than I or other Native persons have done, they have been accorded heroic stature; we, on the other hand, are often maligned and censured. (Larocque, 1991, p. 75, as cited in Schick & St. Denis, 2005, pp. 306-307)

With this dynamic in mind, when teachers practice critical pedagogy in music, it seems important to consider that the very power relations critical pedagogues aim to disrupt are those same relations that allow white teachers to do this work while teachers of colour often face opposition. Teachers can also take this opportunity to consider effects of their pedagogy on non-white students. Might there be a consequence for knowing less about Western classical music? In a world that functions largely on cultural capital, is it possible that choosing a diversity of musics could actually place students of colour at a disadvantage? As Koza (2008) argues, institutions in higher education place value on musics from the canon and “fund” this knowledge through admission to music education programs. All four teachers in this study questioned the limits of their knowing. They situated themselves as learners and were self-reflexive in that way. They were fully aware there was much they did not know. However, when thinking about Eurocentrism, it is important to think about who is free to disrupt it.

**Gender inequity.** Some gender equity issues also emerged during my observations. The dynamics of paired activities in all four schools tended to be along gender lines. There were also some interesting gender relations in Anne’s “Recorder Karate” program involving differing levels of respect within the class for girls and boys.

**Pairing issues.** One of the issues that arose often was the gendered nature of paired activities. When choosing a partner, girls routinely chose girls and boys routinely chose boys, and students reacted strongly to pairing that did not conform to this model, even in grades as early as junior kindergarten:

Even at this age (JK), there is one pair where the boy has his hands up his sleeves and his female partner is holding onto his sleeves. There is another pair that is doing the same thing only the girl has her hands up her sleeves and the boy is holding on. (Journal, April)
The completely firm delineation of acceptable pairings was present in students as young as four. Boys went out of their way to avoid pairing with girls and vice versa. When boy-girl pairings occurred, the reluctance displayed in the excerpt above was commonplace. All four teachers emphasized rules for finding a partner—“that if someone asks to be your partner, you have to say ‘yes.’” The gendered pairing occurred despite the teachers’ insistence on switching partners and pairing with anyone who asked. Pairing along racial lines also occurred periodically, particularly in Susan’s program where the few black students often paired together, and in Anne’s program where the few white students did the same. Where, at the age of four, had students learned to partner along gender and racial lines?

Tatum (1997) offers an interesting discussion of children’s questions about race and suggests students learn quite young to group with students they consider to be similar. Martin (2011), however, contends that young children learn gendered behaviours from older children. She suggests that adults need to find ways to help young students alter their gendered perceptions and behaviour. Is there a way for teachers to shift something in their classrooms to change this type of pairing that may ultimately have larger scale implications?

**Recorder Karate and differing levels of respect.** Recorder Karate appeared gendered in a number of ways. The following excerpt is from my journal in May:

The gender dynamics of the recorder belts are interesting. Only girls for the most part come in the morning except for the last few days, perhaps indicating more buy-in among the girls for the program. Watching that period seven 4/5 class today was interesting. The girls were all toward the front (and they outnumbered the boys in the class) facing forward. There was only one boy among the students located toward the front of the room. The boys were clustered in the back and toward the left. However, two boys paired up by themselves and one was helping the other so he could get a belt. They are clearly working toward belts, but they are engaging in them differently. What was particularly interesting is the way the students attend while different students are playing belts. They are required by Anne to be attentive while others are playing. The two times during the class where the students burst into spontaneous applause were both in response to boys achieving a belt, although
there were girls who also received belts. When girls were playing, talking seemed to occur more easily, while students were often attentive and encouraging to boys, particularly those who were struggling. (Journal, May)

There are many interesting facets to these observations. Girls pushed in conventional ways to be high achievers in “Recorder Karate.” Every morning before school began, there were eight to fifteen girls in the classroom trying to achieve a belt. The program resonated with them overall. Boys also worked to achieve, but not outside of class time. I frequently observed students helping each other achieve. Students often worked collaboratively in pairs and coached each other on notes and fingering. What was interesting and somewhat worrisome were the ways in which the students attended to each other when they worked toward belts. When a boy tried to achieve a belt, he was well supported, and the classroom was generally quiet. When a girl tried for a belt, her peers were more likely to talk. Anne insisted on respect, support, and quiet for all students trying to achieve a belt, but there were moments when she had to stop the class to ask for quiet during “belt-time” and moments when she did not. The times she did not have to ask for quiet were invariably when boys were working to achieve. The implications here are disturbing. Anne insisted that support and attention be given to all students working, and yet the students gave the boys preferential treatment. The idea that girls are somehow less worthy of respect than boys among students around the age of ten is highly problematic and replicates patriarchal relations on a larger scale. Unfortunately, I observed this type of behaviour multiple times, which lends credence to the idea that the lesser degree of respect that girls commanded from their peers was not coincidental.

Inequities related to special needs and disability. Equity issues related to special needs and disability emerged as some of the most urgent in the schools. In three of the four schools, major issues arose with the scheduling of music for students with special needs. The timetable problems were diverse across the three schools and raised many concerns generally for the ways in which schools address students who have special needs. In one school, the
“Special Education” program was clearly racialized. This racialization of special education is a systemic problem that the board has yet to address. The issue of exclusion is also important to this discussion. I conclude this section by discussing some of the ways that teachers countered inequities based on disability.

**Music schedule and timetable issues for students with “special needs.”** Observing across four schools gave me a unique opportunity to see the ways in which the four different locations worked with students identified by the system as having “special needs.” What became clear is that the schools did not prioritize music education for these students, but the problems went far beyond the music room. The situations were worse in the schools designated as “model schools.” In one school, the few students in the special needs class joined another class for music in both the primary and the junior grades. In the junior division, the class combination was consistent, but in the primary division, it varied. The group of students identified as having “special needs” were integrated into two different classes over the course of the five-day cycle despite the music teacher’s objections. The students did not know each other’s names, and they were integrated into a grade one/two class some days and a grade two/three class on other days, so the class material was not consistent. There was no consideration in the timetable for providing a stable environment to those students for whom consistency was particularly important. When the teacher raised this issue with other staff, the special needs teachers felt that the students knew the timetable at that point in the year, and to change it would be disruptive.

In the other school, students in small classes in the morning in the home school program (HSP) and the Learning Opportunities Index (LOI) were integrated into different classes in the afternoon. The principal chose to use the additional funding from the “model schools” designation for another half-time teacher in the mornings. This meant that there were five classes of grade fours and fives in the morning, but three in the afternoon, and the class composition was different from morning to afternoon. A class of sixteen students in the morning
became a class of thirty in the afternoon. This meant that students identified as having special needs changed from one environment with one group of children and teacher in the morning to an integrated class environment with a different teacher and a different group of students in the afternoon. There was no consistency to their day. Additionally, students in Intensive Support Programs (ISP) did not attend music until April and then did not come with any class consistently.

Providing a stable environment for students identified as having special needs was not a priority. Their music time occurred almost haphazardly, and with little thought as to what the students might need to make the situation work. Both teachers were frustrated with the situations in which they found themselves. One teacher in particular felt that she could not do justice by these students given the situation. The older two teachers in the study, Sarah and Susan, both lamented the loss of a time when administration did not organize timetables around union demands such as an exact number of minutes of preparation time, but rather around the needs of the students. They both felt the loss of this student-centred programming.

For Anne, the problematic arrangement had a number of implications for the way that special education should be organized. Within her program, she saw the students identified as having a “learning disability” (LD) in a small group of about ten students.

Anne: This year when I teach them [students identified as having a “learning disability”] in a contained class, I feel they’re more comfortable with themselves. They’re more willing to take risks and chances because they’re accustomed to being together than when they are with 30 others. And I’m able to teach to them more specifically. I get more one on one interaction with them. So when we’re doing things like the Orff instruments I can hand over hand if need be for the kids who are really struggling or...you know...you saw the ribbons...they’re willing to give ideas. Whereas, if we had been in a group of 30 with the regular classes, there’s no way they would have done that. So...umm...I do feel that the special program kids get more serviced when they’re not integrated in music.

Anne much preferred the smaller group model for the students with special needs. She felt that they offered ideas more freely and were more comfortable. Within her timetable, she also had
one opportunity to teach one of the five morning classes within the “Learning Opportunities
Index.” The class contained sixteen students, and it was the only small class in her schedule:

Anne: That’s a junior four/five split…Just that those are the class sizes in the
morning and he just need an extra…he just needed his own prep. So I got lucky
enough to be able to teach them. And that is what…I think if I could teach all the
junior classes at that size, it would be like that.
Juliet: Yeah. So there are 16?
Anne: Mm-hm. There’s 16 or 17 of them…yeah. And it’s amazing what we
accomplish in that little class once a week.
Juliet: And do you end up kind of getting them an extra period ‘cause…
Anne: Yeah…they’re an extra period. So I teach them different stuff than what I
would…or I use them as my guinea pig class. I try stuff out on them. And then they
become my experts in the afternoon. Like…I did that with Pomp and Circumstance
yesterday.
Juliet: Cool.
Anne: So then they were supporting when I was trying to teach in the afternoon. But
it’s like night and day teaching that morning group. First of all, I get them in the
morning which is a huge change. And there’s half of them. It’s…it’s really…I don’t
understand how the people who decide what class sizes should be…I don’t know
the last time they’ve been in a classroom…but if they could come and see those
two…

The difference between Anne’s group of sixteen students in the morning and the groups of
twenty-five to thirty students that came in the afternoon was significant. The morning group
routinely accomplished more than the afternoon groups and also received more individual
attention when needed. The program structure in Anne’s school suggested a smaller group
model better addressed students’ needs. However, the large group model prevailed in all
four schools as students in smaller groups at other times in the day often joined larger
groups for music, with a result that was sometimes quite dysfunctional.

Racialization of “special education.” In Susan’s school, the large group integration of
students in the Home School Program (HSP) for music created a class of forty-one twice a
week. The students spent their half-hour class of the week working on small guitar projects that
they could complete on either guitar or on Orff instruments. One of the observations I made
immediately was the racial and gender divide between students who chose the guitar and
students who chose the Orff instruments.
The students group by gender. The back row of Orff instruments is entirely boys. The first two rows are girls. There is a group of girls in a circle at the front of the room. There are three pairs of boys working in partners and one pair of girls. One boy works alone. Every single student who has chosen guitar in this class is white. All of the students of colour are on Orff instruments plus six white students. Three of the girls who are white sit together and two of the boys. One of the girls sits alone in the second row. The colour lines in this class are stringently drawn. Is there something racial to the guitar/Orff divide? (Excerpt from journal, April)

Observing these strict racial lines disturbed me and I began puzzling through why this divide might be the case:

The 7/8 guitar class of forty-one students is a disturbing phenomenon. The students self-select between Orff instruments and guitar. Not a single student of colour selected the guitar for the “Walking Blues” activity. Why not? There were a few white students on the Orff instruments, but 100% of the students of colour self-selected the Orff instruments. This does not make sense to me in any way. Has guitar become the instrument of white male teens in garage bands after being a blues instrument of choice for so many years? Are the students of colour congregating together? If they are, do they feel they have to? Is there exclusion going on here? In their rows, the separation doesn’t happen, but that is a formal seating plan. However, in guitar, it is unmistakable. (Excerpt from journal, April)

I talked to Susan about this divide immediately after observing it, and she added additional insight. The majority of students who chose the Orff instruments were also in the Home School Program (HSP), complicating the situation further. She pointed to the racialization of special education and indicated that it was a much larger systemic problem than an issue localized at this one school. However, there are many intersections here that Susan illuminated. The majority of students in the special needs programs were students of colour, and most of the students of colour in the school lived in the housing project close to the school—a fact which indicated socioeconomic disparities along racial lines and a factor consistent with societal demographics as a whole. Race and class thus intersected with special needs programs. The socioeconomic disparities meant that the students who received private lessons on guitar or

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See Erevelles, Kanga, and Middleton (2006) for a discussion of the intersection of race and disability in the context of schooling and the overrepresentation of African American students in special education classes. See also Mitchell (2010) for a discussion of the disproportional representation of racialized students of the lower socioeconomic classes in special education programs.
other instruments were largely white—the same socioeconomic and racial demographic of students who chose guitar. The manner, therefore, in which the students chose to play guitar or the Orff instruments for their playing tasks in grades seven and eight illuminates both the raced and classed nature of special education. When I earlier wondered if students of colour congregated together, there were at least four intersections. The manner in which students selected Orff instruments revealed divisions and groups along gender, class, racial, and disability lines.

_Exclusions._ In one of the schools, the teacher had two allotted “choir periods” at the end of the day: three-and-a-half primary classes joined together to create half of the primary choir. There were approximately seventy students in each of the two groups, and each group practiced once in a five-day cycle during the last forty minutes of the day. In that same school, students in the small primary special needs class left before the end of school—at three o’clock—the bus took them home early due to the nature of their bussing schedule. The students in the primary choir worked on a musical to present in the spring. All of the students in the primary grades were in the primary choir except the group of less than ten students in the primary special needs class, who left before the rehearsals took place. There were approximately one hundred and fifty students in grades one through three and the only students not participating in the musical were these ten children—something of which they were aware as their other music classes took place with other classes. When I addressed this issue with the teacher and proposed a number of possibilities, she pointed to the bussing schedule as an impediment. The board creates the schedule for bussing in the school system based on the necessity to make multiple runs after school, and schools have to accommodate bussing schedules. There is not a great degree of flexibility with the system. However, the fact that the students with special needs left early excluded them from the musical.
It seems particularly important when dealing with a population routinely marginalized by the system and by other students to work toward inclusion by every means possible. These students physically wore their exclusion when they joined other music classes as they often sat isolated from the others. When the musical became in-class material, the exclusion became even more evident. At that point, the music teacher consulted the teacher of the students with special needs to find a solution. As educators, we know that students often marginalize others and feel marginalized based on participation in special needs programs—programs that are raced, classed, and gendered, as previously discussed. It seems imperative, therefore, that inclusion and access be at the forefront of every decision that affects these students. In fact, Haywood (2006) suggests that students with special needs themselves are often the best source of information on how best to be inclusive and address barriers. Although this assertion is perhaps more realistic for older students than very young children, children do have a strong sense of what they need. With foresight and planning, this situation could have been inclusive and positive.

**Countering inequity based on disability.** The quantity of systemic issues that emerged in this section indicates that placing students in special needs programs at the centre of all administrative decisions is important. With careful consideration, schools could structure both programs and the timetable for inclusion. Every school in my study had a slightly different model. The issues and sheer number of students were significantly greater in the “model schools,” which speaks again to the raced and classed nature of special needs programs, as the populations at both schools were racialized and lacked the affluence displayed at the other two schools. Despite what took place in other places in the school, the decisions made about how to integrate students into music programs largely failed the students. Susan had a class of forty-one students, Anne’s classes changed groups from morning to afternoon everyday, and Sarah’s special needs classes attended music class with different groups depending on the day. The timetable did not foster success for students with special needs and often led to their exclusion.
The fact that these issues of inequity emerged in three schools out of four is significant. Music class has the potential to be a different space. However, the problematic ways in which schools scheduled programs carried into music class. The fact that special education programs were also raced, classed, and gendered only compounded the problems.

Despite the systemic issues, teachers addressed inequities based on ability in a number of ways. Teachers utilized differentiation (as described in chapter six) to address the needs of students with learning differences. Susan’s program, in particular, was rich with differentiation. Teachers also removed any imposition of spelling or grammar restrictions from written work. For these four teachers, any written content was about ideas. However, the system marginalized students in these programs, and until these systemic issues are addressed, as individuals, teachers cannot shift a fundamentally inequitable system.

“Special education”—a largely raced, classed, and gendered phenomenon (Mitchell, 2010, see chapter four in particular)—did not seem to foster success. While common sense suggests that such programs should emerge from concerns for the “best interests of the children,” the programs in this study actually integrated students, who were often quite vulnerable, into problematic situations both in music class as well as in aspects of the day. Teachers worked at the classroom level to address some of the inequities, but people in positions of authority within the system can take the opportunity to consider these problems with the children at the centre of the discussion.

**Class inequity.** Class inequity also occurred on both local and systemic levels. On the local level, the matter of private lessons emerged as important, while Susan identified systemic issues that were classed.

**Inequity in who is able to have private lessons.** After considering the racial implications of Susan’s guitar program (see previous discussion), I now turn to the class element:
I spoke to Susan this morning about the guitar/Orff divide in the class of 41. She feels that it is indicative of the privilege of the white students in the class—many of whom take private guitar lessons. Apparently, many of the students who play the Orff instruments are HSP students. She says that the manner in which they experience guitar (half-an-hour a week which really becomes twenty minutes) does not really allow them to have success or feel good about it UNLESS they have outside experience. It seems that having that Orff option was her way of leveling the playing field. (Excerpt from journal, April)

Susan recognized the economic disparity between students who could afford private lessons and those students who could not. She created a differentiated program so that all students could achieve. However, although she addressed the fact that many students did not have access to private lessons at the local level in her classroom, the issue also arose in the system as a whole:

Susan: There’s a lot of lip service [about equity in the system], I would say. I don’t think there’s lip service at the top in this board. I think at the top there’s…you know…a profound sense of the importance and that there are a great many people that do go along with that. But then when it comes right down to things like…umm…are we going to when we’re talking about growing success for all our students, are we going to actually hand the opportunities to the kids like the young man I mentioned to you many times, who didn’t get to go to the school of his choice because he hadn’t taken private music lessons.

One of Susan’s former students had prepared and auditioned for an arts school the previous year. He was extremely musical but largely self-taught. His music lessons mostly took place in Susan’s class. However, according to Susan, the arts school sought students with private lessons. As a young black student from a single-parent family, lessons were beyond the scope of possibility. He did, however, attend music camp on a bursary that Susan arranged in grade eight. He was a wonderful music student, but could not compete with students from a different socioeconomic demographic who had more musical opportunities available to them. Susan felt strongly that the system failed to serve students at a socioeconomic disadvantage and planned to write to the director about the classed nature of arts school auditions.

Addressing class inequity in the system. Susan wanted to see careful consideration of the needs of each individual student:
Susan: And yet I’m…you know…I look at things and it comes down to things like…you know…having money to get the right running shoes, or…you know…it’s TTC tickets to get to something, or…you know. And there has to be that kind of personal, really personal look at all…at any kid who’s fragile and some kind of a…you know, “This is how we do it, this is the way we make sure this happens for this kid.” And I don’t see that in place. I just think if you took everyone who was employed from the Ministry of Education on down in elementary and secondary education in Ontario and divided the number of adults by the number of kids who are using our services and just put us in small pods…you know…it would probably work out to four adults to ten kids. And four adults to ten kids could do a lot…you know. If we could re-think the model and start again and not have all these union agreements and…you know…legislation everything that prevents us moving…or even just experimenting…piloting and experimenting. It’s so tied up. And I really find a problem here with that we have to have so many minutes of prep time and we have to have…half a day has to be exactly half a day, and it has to look like this, and…you know. There’s so many things… Instead of kids’ needs and programming needs driving the model, it’s like the model is created in response to all this legislation that has nothing to do with kids’ needs.

Susan saw ways in which the system failed students and wanted to see support put in place to consider the needs of all students. While we can certainly view this notion through a liberal discourse of benevolence (Meiners, 2002), that is not the discourse at play here. Susan believed strongly that it was the responsibility of the system to ensure that all students got what they needed—whatever those needs happened to be.

At the local classroom level, Susan’s guitar differentiation strategy revealed a recognition of the class disparities among her students and a commitment to ensure that despite an uneven playing field, students could achieve in her program. What she wanted to see was a more proactive approach to addressing students’ needs.

Disempowering students. There were occasions in these four schools where pedagogy or classroom practice actually disempowered students. I discuss four such practices: occasions where the floor is open for discussion when it should perhaps not be, a lack of time for personal stories in the classroom, a demerit-based “incentive” system, and less vigilance around language learners than may be necessary.
**Times when the floor should not be open for discussion.** One of the most empowering practices discussed in the previous chapter consisted of students providing feedback on musical happenings in the class. There were a few times, however, when this practice extended beyond music, with disempowering results. In three schools, students in the special needs classes joined another class. In one school in particular, there were some interesting dynamics between the two classes. I observed on one day when one boy experienced difficulties that required attention. However, the teacher opened the floor for discussion of the situation, as she generally did for musical problems. The “open floor” led to a barrage of comments from students in one class actively criticizing the students in the special needs class:

The teacher asks for “thoughts and feelings.” One girl says she feels sorry for Derek [pseudonym]. Another student feels it’s not fair to her class. Another student says, “Treat other people like you want to be treated.” Still another: “Yelling at people is against the rules” and “Always say sorry.” “You should be fair to other people.” “I feel bad because I think he’s feeling confused and everyone is being mean to him.” Someone told Derek that he wasn’t his friend. “When Derek feels bad, he yells. Some people cry. Some people just want to hide.” (Excerpt from journal, March)

Within the musical context, asking students for feedback provides them with a sense of ownership and a sense that their contributions are valuable and help to shape the music. However, this same strategy applied to issues in the classroom was disastrous in this case, leading students to talk negatively about one individual. Having opened the floor, the teacher shut down the discussion after these comments, but despite the importance of hearing student voice and having open spaces to speak, it is clear that there are some times when the floor should not be open. The discourses invoked by the students were discourses of pity and of fairness that firmly maintain social hierarchies, and place students in special needs classes second to students in the so-called “regular” stream. However, when well-facilitated, having a conversation about a crisis that occurs in the classroom context without hurting other individuals is potentially very powerful pedagogy.
No time for personal stories. Hearing students’ personal stories was also important to the previous discussion in chapter six of student voice, and teachers engaged students in discussion about their personal lives quite regularly. There were moments, however, when teachers shut down personal stories in favour of curriculum. When time is limited, as it is within a rotary schedule, privileging the program is understandable, but the benefits discussed previously indicate that a balance between the personal and the task at hand is important. Despite minimal class time, teachers usually found time to hear their students. The curriculum aspect of the class appeared more seamless, perhaps as a result of this practice, as students felt the teachers listened to them.

My observations led me to wonder about the lack of another aspect of the personal. I observed as a junior kindergarten class entered Amanda’s room one afternoon. They burst into the room, taking up all available space, and jumped, tumbled, skipped, and dove onto the carpet. It made me wonder:

When do we lose all of our action verbs (i.e. skip, tumble, dive, crawl, slither, jump)? When we get desks in grade 1? (Excerpt from journal, January)

In all four schools, students moved freely in the very young grades; however, the older grades moved much more formally. Gustafson (2009) discusses comportment extensively in her historical work on race and music education. She argues that the ideal listener had the comportment of Rodin’s *The Thinker* and listened to music without moving his or her body. He or she “paid attention to rhythmic detail but made no indication of it” (p. 153). I saw this evidence of disciplining the body with children as young as grade one. It seems that something important is lost when that freedom of movement is discouraged and the lack of movement is institutionally validated.

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5 Addressing students’ concerns and issues they bring to the classroom is a major tenet in critical pedagogy. See for example Peterson (2009) and Giroux (2009) for discussion.
Rewards systems on a merit and demerit basis. Many rotary teachers use rewards systems as an approach to classroom management. Amanda instituted a rewards program through which students earned points in squads of approximately five children. The squad was eligible for a prize and were eligible for a prize every time they earned ten points. The first group earned ten points in January—six months after the system started. It was difficult to earn points, but the points accumulated; after a group achieved ten, they continued on to twenty points after claiming their prize, while the rest of the groups kept working toward ten. Losing points was impossible in this system and prizes were not candy, but rather activities such as sharing a favourite song with the class by “being the DJ.” In a rewards-based system, another model is demerit-based—add a point or subtract one, according to classroom expectations. In classrooms that utilize reward systems, a demerit system has more potential for students to “feel badly” for losing a point, whereas in Amanda’s system, every single squad would achieve ten points by the end of the year. However, both merit and demerit-based rewards systems can be problematic, as they highlight the non-achievement of students who do not receive a reward. They also do not necessarily work toward intrinsic motivation.

Importance of being particularly aware of language learners. It became apparent over the course of observing in different schools that teachers needed to be particularly vigilant with students learning English. The following is an excerpt from my journal on my first day at Sarah’s school:

One of the boys in the class was relatively new to the school and spoke only a little English, but he made an effort to make it clear that something was wrong by going to get paper towel, soaking it in water, and holding it to his cheek. He communicated to me that another boy had hit him at lunch and hurt his cheek. I explained what had happened to Sarah. She took the boys aside and asked the boy who hit him if he had anything to say. He apologized. They talked about making different decisions next time. When the boy who was hit came back to his seat, Sarah said to him quietly that if it ever happens that he has to find a way to communicate it to the teacher—by pointing or saying a name or whatever he can do. (Excerpt from journal, February)
In a large class of twenty-five students, it is easy for teachers to miss crucial behaviours. Because of my position as an outside observer, I recognized that something happened, but the signs were subtle. Holding a paper towel to the side of his face may be an unusual communication strategy, one that requires a different type of attention from the teacher, but it seems particularly important to be aware of students with communication issues. While Sarah was able to address this situation, there was potential for disempowerment had the student’s chosen method of communication gone unnoticed. This specific situation speaks to the benefits of having an extra person in the classroom to attend to students’ needs while the lesson unfolds. The expectations on teachers intensify constantly, and all classes have certain special needs. Being mindful of students who have difficulty with communication is crucial precisely because they may not communicate major issues; however, more assistance in the classroom would enable teachers to better address most students’ needs.

Susan advocated a systemic approach to supporting language learners:

Susan: And so, if we’re really going to do it [promote equity] then we need to put in place all the supports. And…you know…there’ve been times when we come really close to it, in my experience in the two boards I’ve worked with. When, for example, the schools in the downtown Toronto area welcomed in immigrant families from the moment the babies were born and they had the adult ESL class and the crèche, the ESL crèche, and the parenting classes, all in the same building with the school. And that was…and the daycare…and that was the model. And so kids just…you know…started out as babies in that building and their parents were in the building from the second they arrived in Canada. And finally they toddled off to a kindergarten when they got to be four years old. But they’d been in the building for years at that point and in the meantime, their moms and dads had learned English. And…you know…that was right, that was saying, “What are all the things these people need to make this transition successfully.” And…and that’s what’s supposed to be happening. From in our…you know…from elementary to high school programs, I do not see it as yet. Although maybe I’m not in the high schools as much as I would like to be, but I don’t see those supports in place across the board for what the kids actually need.

Susan wanted to see better support systems in place for language learners. She advocated for a more holistic approach that addressed family needs as well as student needs, and involved recognition of what families and individuals might require. She saw a more community-based
role for the schools and felt this approach would support language learning and transitions more effectively than current English Language Learner (ELL) programs in the schools.

**Regurgitation of class material.**

*Unthinking reproduction of given knowledge.* The unthinking reproduction or regurgitation of given knowledge ironically emerged as an issue in an activity in Amanda’s class. Her program emphasized cultural literacy and critical thinking, and yet it became evident in this particular activity that students routinely reproduced given material without much consideration of its applicability to or veracity in the present situation. Amanda gave the grade fives and sixes a group task to listen critically to Harry Belafonte’s song *Day-O* to determine its meaning and its musical elements. When the time came to present their “mind maps,” while a few of the groups clearly engaged in critical listening, most of the groups regurgitated given knowledge from the handout they received on Jamaican *mento*. Amanda said afterwards that it made quite a statement about what students think will get them marks. Although we discussed it immediately afterwards, I also raised the issue in an interview:

Amanda: …even though it’s not supposed to be the norm any more [regurgitating answers], that we’re supposed to be teaching for understanding…umm…it clearly isn’t happening still…you know what I mean. Like…there is still this obvious “teach to the test,” teach to the answer that you want and just expect them to give the answer you’ve already given them. And so, for me, what I’m going to be getting the kids to do and what I’m trying to do…I mean, again, it’s this whole idea of the kids that are in grade 5/6 now there’s only so much I can do, but if I can start with them young and get them to be…like…no this room…even if it’s the only place…this room needs to be the place where you open up and anything goes…like…any thought that you have…nothing is wrong…like. And I want you to think about it. I don’t…here are the facts, but the facts are supposed to inform you…inform your own thoughts, it’s not supposed to be here’s the facts and that’s it. Like…that’s what it is. So now that you have the facts, what could this mean…right…
The presentations for this activity revealed a belief from the students that knowledge from the teacher was more important than their own thinking.\(^6\) They firmly felt that the way to achieve was to regurgitate information, which is a disturbing statement about education and the opposite of the cultural literacy Amanda worked to foster. However, there are larger social implications. If students replicate without critically questioning, they can easily reinscribe hegemonic norms. Conversely, if they learn to consider everything that appears in front of them, problematic norms may shift because people will approach them mindfully and analytically.

**Bullying.**

**Bullying based on difference.** All four teachers spoke about bullying situations that occurred because of difference. As educators, they routinely worked to shut down bullying and advocate for marginalized students. Students ostracized other students for a range of reasons. Marginalization and bullying occurred when boys showed preferences for toys and clothing deemed to belong to girls—in one case, the colours pink and purple and the toy “My Little Pony.” There was some question as to whether bullying occurred because of race when one of two Asian students in a grade five/six class of white students burst into tears and was inconsolable one afternoon. Sarah and Susan both identified the exclusion of students in the Home School Program (HSP) as an issue. Other students marginalized these students regularly. Susan noted that in situations where students had to find a partner, the HSP students often were left without a partner until there was an intervention. All four teachers reacted strongly to any sign of bullying, and yet it occurred regardless of their efforts. The explicit marginalization of students based on difference speaks to the urgency for different types of initiatives.

**Anti-bullying education and explicit teaching: Countering marginalization.** All four schools had anti-bullying programs. Sometimes artists performed at the schools with an anti-
bullying message; at other times, the school engaged in its own initiatives. The Model Schools received extra funding from the board for anti-bullying programs. The board also ran a board-wide anti-bullying day—“Pink Day”—where students dressed in pink to promote awareness of bullying.

Teachers were also quite vigilant in making sure the students did not police other students:

Juliet: So...in terms of what you did this afternoon...umm...with that student...when he went out and what you did with the class...when I think about things that challenge dominant paradigms, what you did is very uncharacteristic of what people normally do once a student’s left for the office...so...
Amanda: But that’s...for me that’s point. It’s like...I just have seen those kids get bullied even though they’re the ones that are the pain in the ass...right. And I don’t want what I’m doing to give the kids permission as I just said...like...’cause you eventually see the kids going...“come on, be quiet”...like...to the other...like...kids monitoring kids...
Juliet: Right...
Amanda: And that can be good. But if you’re doing it in a...like...condescending and mean way, no that’s no. I know that kid is talking...I’ll deal with it. You...like...what I should be doing more is...like...the sort of self-policing and self-regulating talk. “Worry about yourself...are you talking...are you doing...ok...that’s all you need to worry about.”

Students often compound the issues when a student goes to the office for behaviour. Teachers in this study were adamant for the most part that students not take part in any disciplinary activity.

Teachers also engaged in explicit teaching to counter bullying and exclusion. In classes where students routinely found partners—Susan’s and Anne’s classes in particular—teachers ensured that “find-a-partner” rules were in place. There was a major issue with partnering, however, in Susan’s class one afternoon:

One of the two black students in the class can’t find a partner during the dance. She tries four people and they all have another partner. She ends up with the volunteer. The second time she gets a partner easily. She doesn’t the third time. Or the fourth time. The fifth time she pairs with the one other black girl. What is going on? She doesn’t get one the sixth time either. She does the seventh time. She had one the eighth time and she loses the partner (goes with someone else) and ends up with the volunteer again. This is not good. Back in the circle, she smiles. It doesn’t look real. I mention to Susan at recess that the other students actively rejected her. (Excerpt from journal, April)
In discussing the situation with Susan afterwards, it once again became apparent that the extra pair of eyes (mine) was helpful, as Susan was playing the piano and supervising a large group dance with partner-changing. Next class, she addressed the issue:

“Kindergarten, we need to talk about something.” She reminds them of the dance. She makes it clear that it is not acceptable to say no when someone asks you to be a partner. “If you haven’t got a partner, your hand is in the air.” She goes over rules for partnering to make sure that everybody understands how to get a partner and how to allow a partner to find you. She quietly lets the assistant know that last week, that student didn’t get a partner four times (it was more than that). This week, Susan makes sure all students have partners. (Excerpt from observations, April)

After becoming aware of exclusion, Susan explicitly taught a counter-practice that she later reinforced in that class when one boy tried to avoid pairing with another. Susan responded immediately, “He asked you to be his partner. You say yes.” However, enforced partnering may not be the ideal solution as repercussions may occur elsewhere. Perhaps more disturbing are the racial implications of this activity. In a predominantly white school, there were two students of colour in this kindergarten class. Both girls were black. In this demographic, students continually rejected one of the two black girls, which has shades of underlying or perhaps overt racism. Bullying in schools largely occurred based on difference, and it is difficult to know whether or not ensuring students have a partner through enforcing partner rules helps or exacerbates these problematic situations.

**Making assumptions.** Throughout my time at these four schools, I observed assumptions at work in classroom interactions. These assumptions included the heteronormative composition of the family, of mothers or fathers being present in students’ lives, and of knowledge of cultural music based on cultural heritage. One of the ways in which teachers worked to counter these assumptions was through altering the language they used in the classroom.
**Assumptions of heteronormativity.** A grade two student visited Amanda before school every day I observed at her school. They always chatted about a range of topics—school, home, music, measurement. The student was clearly very comfortable and confided in Amanda about a situation with his father. She asked about his mother and he clarified; he had two dads. Amanda critiqued her own assumption and altered her language when she addressed students from that point forward. Assumptions of heteronormativity occurred throughout observations although the level of awareness increased throughout.

**Assuming the presence of mothers or fathers.** Teachers routinely referenced mothers and fathers in discussions with the students, which left students living with grandmothers or siblings or in other arrangements to translate language to their own situations. Changing language here is relatively easy and a point I return to at the end of this section. Students should not have to translate language so it applies to them; that is the domain of the teacher.

**“I’m from Cuba.” “Then you know what a bongo drum is.”**: assuming knowledge of cultural music based on cultural heritage. On a few occasions, teachers assumed that students had intimate knowledge of a cultural music or instrument based on their cultural background. In some cases, the assumption proved to be the case, but as discussed in the previous chapter (six), the likelihood of a positive response is greater if the teacher assumes no background knowledge and allows the student to volunteer any further information. Students can undertake the role of cultural experts on a music, but only if it is a role they wish to take up.

In the case of the title quote, the discussion emerged from a listening activity with bongos. The teacher connected the drum to Cuba, and a student volunteered the information that she was from Cuba. However, being from Cuba did not necessarily ensure any drumming knowledge. The conversation did not go further, but it is important to note that theoretical cultural associations do not necessarily intersect with students’ knowledge.
**Countering assumptions: Changing language being used in the classroom.** Teachers in this study altered their language immediately upon recognizing assumptions in their own thinking. After her encounter with the grade two student, I watched Amanda ask students on a number of occasions to speak to “someone at home” or to get “someone at home” to sign the permission form. She did not assume heteronormative families, and nor did she assume that students had a mother and a father. Anne had a number of students with mobility devices. When they joined the class for music, she automatically changed any songs about “walking around” to songs about “moving around.” Teachers countered their own assumptions through altering language to be inclusive.

**Conclusion**

This chapter described a number of classroom practices that reinscribed, or had the potential to reinscribe, hegemonic paradigms. These practices included a superficial practice of multiculturalism in the classroom and a prevalence of Eurocentrism in some activities. Teachers identified a lack of equity resources and equity education within the board. A number of equity issues also arose, including some ways in which students exerted white privilege in the classroom, issues of race, class, gender, and disability. Within the system, there were indications that students often regurgitated given knowledge instead of thinking critically—a practice likely to replicate existing structural power relations. In all four schools, bullying issues arose in relation to difference, and there were a few situations where disempowerment occurred. Finally, teachers made a number of assumptions at times about students, although they self-corrected over time by altering their language.

The next chapter examines how teachers actively engaged in subverting hegemonic relations in their classrooms. There is potential in the strategies and practices found in chapter
eight, and also through a rereading of strategies found in chapters five and six, to move toward a radical music education, which I then explore in the final chapter.
CHAPTER 8

Radical Musicking: Actively Subverting Dominant Paradigms in Elementary Music Education

While the previous chapter examined some of the reinscriptions and issues that arose on the path to challenging dominant paradigms, this chapter explores some of the ways that these four music educators worked to actively subvert hegemonic paradigms in their classrooms. In many ways, their pedagogy is powerful and contains hopeful possibilities.

Actively Subverting Hegemonic Paradigms

Teachers worked to actively challenge hegemonic paradigms in a number of different ways. They connected music and politics in their classes and explicitly talked about equity. A number of teachers advocated for equity work beyond the school walls. They centred social goals in their classrooms—both in class interactions and in advocating for students to take responsibility for their own actions. They also explicitly taught social and curricular expectations. All four teachers emphasized music from marginalized groups in their classroom. As previously discussed, they worked to counter assumptions and focused on inclusivity.

Connecting music and the political. Amanda, in particular, worked to connect music to its political context. She pushed students to consider structural power relations and face historical and present realities of racism, enslavement, and colonialism. The following excerpt is from a class during my first week of observations at the school:

Amanda begins the discussion by wondering how it is “possible that so many musics have their roots in African music.” Students volunteer different answers; some answers involve travelling and Amanda builds on this idea. She asks the students, “What does it mean to be enslaved?” One student says, “Holding someone against their will.” “What does a person do if they’re enslaved?” Amanda asks. “Do you get paid for the work you do?” Students shake their heads. She says that people have estimated that 15 million Africans were taken and enslaved. She uses child-
centred language that reflects the harshness of the topic nonetheless. She refers to enslavement as “kidnapping.” People were “chained, forced to walk for as long as it took, sometimes for weeks. Europeans would overload the ships because some people would die on the way across.” This class takes the discussion very seriously and they talk about being treated like an object. She explains imperialism in simple terms, defining it as Europeans taking over the Americas and enslaving African people to make a profit. Amanda asks the students think about being enslaved themselves and taken somewhere new. She talks about trying to preserve the culture from the place of origin. One of the students pointed out that there is still slavery. Amanda agrees and draws the distinction between the fact that it used to be legal, and now it’s illegal. She says that just because slavery is illegal does not mean there is no racism. She notes that the most common connection to slavery now is child labour—a practice in which children are forced to work. She then connects the history back to the music: “Out of this terrible history, we see the strength of a culture.” (Excerpt from journal, January)

There were times, however, when the discussion was more conflicted. Within the context of the same discussion in a different class, when faced with blatant oppression, the students discussed buying slaves and setting them free. They believed that if faced with that situation, that is what they would do. Amanda challenged them: “But what if everyone else was doing it?” She pointed out the financial discrepancy and loss to students’ own hypothetical plantations “if everyone else was doing it and you were not.” She then connected the discussion to Lincoln. I found it interesting that the (white) students associated themselves with the people who did the enslaving. Amanda did not allow them to say they would not enslave; rather she made them understand that they would, at the very least, have been complicit. This conversation made me wonder how the discussion of slavery would change in a diverse class or school, or a different setting altogether. How do assumptions of student knowledge change? When I talked about colonization in my own elementary teaching, I made the assumption of some family knowledge with some of the students. They had a solid foundation of knowledge at the school where I taught, and the discussion was sophisticated.

To provide one more example, the following lesson discussed the idea of a “code song.” Amanda shared the history behind such songs, and the class worked through the words together:
Today, they students have to decode a code song—“Follow the Drinking Gourd.” There is an outline of the Big Dipper on the board with an arrow pointing toward North. The lyrics sheet is as follows:

**Follow the Drinking Gourd**  
*by Peg-Leg Joe*

**CHORUS**

Follow the drinking gourd,  
Follow the drinking gourd,  
For the old man is awaiting for to carry you to freedom  
If you follow the drinking gourd.

**Verse 1**

When the sun comes back and the first quail calls,  
Follow the drinking gourd.  
The old man is awaiting for to carry you to freedom  
If you follow the drinking gourd.

*(CHORUS)*

**Verse 2**

The river bank will make a mighty good road;  
The dead trees show you the way.  
Left foot, peg foot, traveling on.  
Follow the drinking gourd.

*(CHORUS)*

**Verse 3**

The river ends between two hills;  
Follow the drinking gourd.  
There's another river on the other side.  
Follow the drinking gourd.

*(CHORUS)*

**Verse 4**

Where the great big river meets the little river,  
Follow the drinking gourd.  
The old man is awaiting for to carry you to freedom  
If you follow the drinking gourd.
They work together to decode the lyrics. The discussion is excellent—critical and analytical and very insightful for grade three. Amanda explains the importance of the quail—a signal of spring. A student notes that in winter, your footsteps would be more noticeable. Another student offers that people living where it’s warm might not know they “need warm clothes for winter, so spring would be better.” Amanda asks about walking along the river. One student says, “The sound of the river will cover your sound and you can listen for the river so you know which way to go.” The students agree that it would not be smart to walk on the road, as you’d be easily captured. They recognize the “left foot, peg foot” reference as a symbol on the dead trees that people could follow north. Amanda says, “There’s not really code in verse 3 and verse 4, but it gives you an idea of what the map would look like so you’re able to know if you’re on the right track.” And then a student interrupts: “I have something to say. Canada wasn’t a free country either. There just weren’t plantations.” Amanda responds immediately, “That’s right. There was slavery here too. Slavery was made illegal in Canada before the States. But just because it was illegal didn’t mean people couldn’t be treated badly.” The student continues, “That’s right. And people are still sometimes treated badly.” (The demographics in the class are 14 white students and 1 black student.) When the discussion moves into a critical direction, Amanda guides and facilitates them and pushes them to think further. The discussion is amazing. This is the first class where the students are critical of Canada. (Excerpt from journal, February)

Throughout my time at Amanda’s school, she continued to critically engage issues. She introduced the proportional Peters map to the students. They traced the different transatlantic crossings from Africa to the Americas and examined the resulting musics within the context of extreme oppression. Vaugeois (2007) asserts that teachers often teach the official Canadian narrative of the *Underground Railroad* in which Canada, as a “safe haven” is to be congratulated for its moral superiority to the United States (p. 175). Significantly, in their work with Afrocentric music with white students of privilege, neither Amanda nor Susan allowed students to invest in this idea of “moral superiority.” Rather, they both made the darker side of Canada’s role in slavery plain to their students. The explicit connection to the political occurred in other schools as well, but was a significant aspect of Amanda’s program. Linking politics to the music allowed for rich, contextualized discussion of equity issues in music class.
Explicit equity talk: naming race.

**Naming race and racism in the classroom.** According to Morrison (1990), the habit of ignoring race is understood to be a graceful, even generous, liberal gesture. To notice is to recognize an already discredited difference. To enforce its invisibility through silence is to allow the black body a shadowless participation in the dominant cultural body. (Morrison, 1990, pp. 9-10)

To name race explicitly is often considered controversial. Within music education, Bradley (2006a) calls for explicit discussion of race and its naming in music education discourse. “Race talk” and talk of other equity issues occurred most prevalently in the classes of Anne and Amanda who were both explicit in their discussions. One issue that arose regularly was the idea that naming race was effectively synonymous with being racist. Amanda addressed it one afternoon:

> The students discuss Celia Cruz and stumble over discussion of race. Amanda interjects: “Okay, saying someone is black isn’t racist. It’s a fact.” She talks about the words versus the actual colour (i.e. she’s more pink). (Excerpt from journal, January)

Anne took an explicit approach to issues of race, but there was also a more nuanced aspect to her philosophy:

> Juliet: Where do goals including anti-racism, multiculturalism, interrupting dominant paradigms…like…where does that fit into the equation? 
> Anne: I’m hoping it’s embedded in everything that I do. It’s not really something I spend a great deal of time purposefully thinking about. I believe that it happens naturally in the way that I teach because of my focus on justice with the students. And my focus on multicultural music. And just my general philosophy, I think…I hope it caters to that on its own. I believe that the kids come to school with a lot of learning that may have to be undone. And whether it’s from the schoolyard or at home or society, ‘cause there’s certainly a lot of it everywhere. And we have to strive as educators, no matter what subject we’re teaching, to try and break those barriers down in the ways that we teach.
> Juliet: What kind of unlearning? 
> Anne: Unlearning…like…for instance the student that came to me and said that blacks should only be dating blacks. Like, they didn’t hear that from me. They’ve heard it from somewhere. I don’t believe that an eight-year-old comes up with that on their own. So that kind of thing. We have to unteach that…right. So how do we go about that? So I think the way I do it is when I’m confronted with something like that or a similar issue in class…you know…or the boy who’s in grade two wants to play with the pink *My Ponies* and gets teased for that…you know. The way we
handle that as teachers forms students’ ideas around those concepts. So if I let it go, they’re going to believe that it’s okay. But if we stop and talk about it as a group, as I’ve done many times, or if I go around the other way and teach…you know…the value of multicultural music without explicitly saying, “By the way, we’re…you know…even though we look different and we come from different places we still share similar things.” We attack it from both sides. Then I think we’re helping students understand that there’s a lot more to being a person than the colour of your skin or the sex that you are or how smart or slow you are. So, I hope I’m attacking it from both sides…you know. If it’s confronting…if it comes up in class we deal with it, and the way I teach…you know…by taking turns and changing partners and multicultural music and things like that, I’m hoping that it’s rounded.

Anne had two sides to her philosophy of anti-racism. From one perspective, she believed that her approach to multicultural music in the classroom fostered cultural understanding. The second aspect of her philosophy was her explicit approach to addressing issues as they emerged.

When a group of grade five girls informed a white student that she could not like a boy because he was black, she abandoned music for a “more important issue.” She introduced history into the discussion, and they had a deep conversation as a class. She continued:

Anne: And we…I mean when you look around in our classrooms…that day we had the conversation, we went around the room and out of 30 kids, 25 different countries were represented. So it’s celebrated here every day, just by the fact that we are all from different places here. And in other neat ways, people don’t see the difference sometimes…you know…like…you look around the room and it’s just a room of kids. You don’t see all the colours and the shapes and the languages. It’s just a room of kids at Mills [pseudonym].

Looking back to the citation from Morrison (1990, pp. 9-10), this ignoring of race in favour of a liberal colourblindness, sameness, and homogeneity can ultimately lead to misrecognition of difference and the reinscription of hegemony (Hess, 2013a). However, although Anne’s comments point toward that idea of sameness here, they are not couched within erasure or misrecognition. Rather, they capture a recognition of difference or heterogeneity within the larger whole.

**Challenging assumptions.** While teachers critiqued their own assumptions and worked to alter their own language and thinking, they also actively challenged students’ assumptions:
Anne: How do I deal with them [issues of racism]? Well, I face them head on. I don’t let them go... or try not to... if I can catch them. I don’t always hear them all, right. I was teaching song “Shake the Papaya Down” and we were talking about, “Where could it be from,” and using the lyrics to figure out where it’s from. And the kids said, “You should know, you’re from that country.” I’m like, “How’d you know he’s from Trinidad?” “Well, ‘cause he’s black.” So all children who are black... so we deal with it daily and so then you have to stop and say, “Well, actually... just because you’re black or white or whatever doesn’t mean you’re from a specific place.” Just a lot of explicit teaching about it because they come with these messages from wherever they’re getting them, whether it’s TV or home or wherever, I don’t know. ‘Cause they’re too young to be coming up with it on their own. Umm... we have to do a lot of re-teaching.

Anne worked to challenge students’ assumptions about each other, actively countering the idea that it is possible to identify someone’s history by his/her appearance. I did not witness this particular class, but a similar situation occurred during my observations:

Another boy pointed to an Asian boy and made a comment about China. Anne asks why he thinks the boy is from China. She says that that would be like saying that she looks like she’s from France just from looking at her. She tells the students you can’t tell what part of the world someone is from just by looking at them. (Excerpt from journal, May)

When assumptions emerged in the class, Anne worked to dispel them. She countered them, but also spent time explaining, so students understood the issues.

**Naming race in curriculum.** Teachers were also explicit at times in relation to the subject matter. Amanda’s classes examined Afro-Cuban music and the music of world-renowned salsa singer Celia Cruz. The following discussion took place in a grade three class:

“Celia Cruz moved to the U.S. in the 1960s. Imagine for a second that this was how life was. If you were a woman, you would have to stay home and have babies and clean the house. Nobody really had a job outside of their home. If you were black, you had to sit at the back of the bus, you had to use a different water fountain, you couldn’t go to school with white kids. If you were from another country, people frowned upon you for not speaking English. Celia Cruz was black, she was a woman, and she spoke Spanish. There were three strikes against Celia and she still became the Queen of Salsa. She was very famous, even after she was dead. She had a career.” The students think about this. Then she asked the students to think about how else Celia broke the rules. She prompts them: “When you’re an old lady, society says you’re not famous anymore, you’re not beautiful anymore, you’re not a rock star anymore. She didn’t think so. And she did make a music video.” She continues, “Our culture doesn’t necessarily like to see old people. Our culture wants
everybody to be young and beautiful. Celia said, ‘I’m old and beautiful.’ These are rules that aren’t spoken in society.” (Excerpt from observations, February)

Amanda looked at intersecting oppressions in this discussion couched in child-centred language so students largely from privilege could get a sense of the barriers Celia faced when she emigrated to the United States. This type of discussion occurred regularly in her class. She frequently addressed the politics of race and racism. She named the death of American blues singer Bessie Smith as an act of racism and had students in the older grades examine the origins of the blues. She also deliberately chose musicians like Bonnie Raitt when she selected musical examples for the classes. As a female guitarist, Raitt is in the extreme minority of female popular instrumentalists. Many female popular musicians sing, but female guitarists are rarely featured in bands. Amanda chose powerful female role models for her young students.

In many ways, teachers explicitly addressed equity issues. They named race in their classes and pointed to oppression and equity issues as they arose. They actively challenged students’ assumptions. Sometimes the discussions dealt directly with a problem that occurred; other times they were in relation to the classroom subject matter, which they chose in order to create a space to have such discussions with their classes.

**Equity work beyond the school walls.** Amanda also wanted to see equity work in action beyond the school walls:

Amanda: I do want to see a little bit more of it put into action outside of the walls of this school.

Juliet: Right.

Amanda: It’s still pretty insular. And we like to pat ourselves on the back and say we’re so great. So let’s do something that shows everybody else why.

Amanda felt the school placed a great deal of emphasis on the eco-schools initiative and the school was quite environmentally conscious. However, she worried that the eco-focus was for appearances and validation. In a school of relative privilege, she wanted to see the school engage in equity and environmental initiatives for their own sake.
Social goals: learning to connect with people.

Learning to work with other students. All four teachers identified social goals as a fundamental aspect of their programs. They focused on teaching students to interact with each other, to address conflicts, to work collaboratively with others, and to take responsibility for themselves and their actions. Amanda cited music as a kind-of “meeting ground”—a place where people could come together:

Amanda: Like…it’s sort of…the whole thing is cheesy…like…that music is a universal language…but in my experience…many occasions in my life I’ve been in situations where no one around you speaks your language, and you don’t speak theirs and somehow, by the end of the night, everybody’s singing songs, smiling, laughing and that’s it, and you’ve made a connection with people and music was the…like…vehicle for it. There’s…like…there’s a comedian called Bill Hicks who talks about…like…if people fighting wars…if there could be just be…like…a little stop and then you would realize that…like…the person you were fighting also loved Pink Floyd…and you’d be like…“What, I love Pink Floyd”…what, really…and then suddenly you wouldn’t be able to kill that person.

Her words are quite reminiscent of Bradley’s (2006a) definition of multicultural human subjectivity as they capture those “feelings of connectedness to people in other places and cultures” (p. 17)—a key aspect of her definition. However, as I noted earlier, it is important to recognize difference within those feelings of connectedness and not become lost in misrecognition or erasure. For Amanda, music provided a potential means to elicit those feelings of connectedness.

Within music class, teachers often had specific social goals—particularly during paired activities or group work:

Juliet: When they always have to partner with different students as they’re working around…umm…what are you aiming for?
Anne: That’s totally social. Yeah, there’s nothing musical about that. I just want…I want them to learn that in life, you’re not always going to get to choose who your partners are and it’s important to learn how to work with all kinds of different people. And it’s not even about race. It’s just about people…you know. You always have to work with people that you may like or dislike and you have to learn to do that without hurting people’s feelings, without making a big deal, and just getting past it. So, I often insist that groups will work with mixed gender as well and I will do my best to keep the best friends apart sometimes. Not all the time. Sometimes
they choose their own groups. But diversity of groupings is important so that they learn as well. ‘Cause you can learn a lot from each other as well as just your best friends.

Anne actively wanted students to learn to work with a diversity of people, as a valuable social skill for their future environments. She actually engaged in the explicit teaching of methods of social engagement in a manner resonant with what Delpit (1995/2006) suggests in teaching “other people’s children.” Delpit advocates for the explicit teaching of discourse mobilized by (white, middle class) groups with social and cultural capital to groups who lack such capital, in order to provide opportunities to participate in that world and ultimately subvert it using the “language of the master” (p. 165).¹ The manner in which Anne taught the social in her classroom reflects the position Delpit (1995/2006) promotes. Susan also wanted her students to work with a diversity of people, but she connected the social skills to leadership:

Susan: I think it’s a life skill that everybody should be able to work with anyone else in their immediate community and I really believe in kids finding strengths in each other’s knowledge, and that…you know…the…it’s…it can’t always be the same kids glomming on to the same kids…that if you are two very capable kids, I want to see you working with other kids in the room. Umm…so it’s mainly…it’s…partly that…I guess it’s more a social skill than anything is what I’m saying there. But…but also exercising leadership. And I’m not saying…you know…half the class are the leaders and the other half need to be led. I want all of them to have that feeling of…ok the second you got…understood that particular little pattern, or whatever it was, I want you to be able to cross the room and work with someone else.

Beyond learning to work with other students, Susan also wanted students to be able to take on leadership roles. The leadership she referred to here was on a small scale; she felt any student

¹ The reference to the “master” here also refers to the famous Lorde speech “The master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house” (reprinted in Lorde, 1984/2007). Delpit (1995/2006), however, suggests that perhaps they can. Lorde’s original speech was on an invited panel at the New York University Institute for the Humanities conference. She spoke to the lack of representation of the difference of race, sexuality, class, and age. As a black, lesbian feminist, she was one of two black women represented and she was relegated to the final panel of the conference. She argued that a discussion of feminist theory that excluded a discussion of difference and omitted commentary from poor women, Black and Third World women, and lesbians limited any possibilities of change. She contended that as long as these divides remained between women based on difference, and the goals concerning difference were effectively about mere tolerance, that dismantling racist patriarchy was impossible. Lorde insisted that the master’s tools would never dismantle the master’s house, although they might “allow us temporarily to beat him at his own game” (p. 112). She insisted that genuine change was impossible while using the tools of the oppressor. Delpit (1995/2006) argues effectively for the use of the master’s tools, but ultimately, in order to truly move past racist patriarchy, a new set of tools (and a new house) perhaps seem more desirable.
should be able to take on the role of a leader once they understood a concept. Many students took on leadership roles in her classroom; students helped other students and it was not uncommon to see a student quietly teaching a concept to someone else. There is a degree of empowerment with knowing enough to teach someone else. What was remarkable was the fact that most students filled that role at some point during the eight weeks I observed. Encouraging students to learn collaboratively and to teach and take responsibility for one another is a tenet in what Ladson-Billings (2009) has termed “culturally relevant pedagogy” (see p. 60 for discussion).

In considering the peers with whom students interacted, Anne extended the idea out into the community:

Anne: One of the things that I’ve done in the past is I pair up with another school and we share. We do a joint choral piece together and we each perform…we have a mini choral festival workshop…But it’s fascinating…right…”cause then the kids…and it’s also different age levels too. So then other students in TDSB are exposed to…you know…each other, to different cultures, to different repertoires, different styles of music teachers, different neighbourhoods. Umm…and yeah, I think it’s important that every school be introduced, at least, to music from around the world, because it’s important. We need to learn about each other. Whether your own school is representative of the world or not, eventually you’re going to be in the real world and you need to understand people and music’s a great tool for that. So, yeah, I think even the schools where it’s all predominantly white or…you know…Western traditional, it needs to have variety.

Mills Road housed a predominantly black population largely marginalized in the board. As a Model School that received the designation because of the high level of socioeconomic need at the school, Anne collaborated with a music teacher from a more privileged school with predominantly white students. For her, that partnership was important to fostering connectedness across white privilege toward Bradley’s (2006b) multicultural human subjectivity. However, I contend that connectedness is only a beginning. With feelings of connectedness and recognition come responsibilities. The economic disparities between schools in Toronto are massive and the board needs to address these issues. A charity model reinscribes
the hegemonic power relation, but a collaborative and reciprocal model has the potential to do something different and perhaps more hopeful.

*Learning to resolve conflicts.* Anne also actively taught students to resolve conflicts using structured language:

Something happened between two students in line. Anne asks them to use their words: “I don’t like it when you...” and then has the other student respond “I don’t like it when you...” and suggests that maybe next time, the girl could line up a few people away from the boy. Anne really emphasizes the importance of students talking to each other about their feelings when a situation or conflict arises and she encourages them to work to solve it themselves. She uses a lot of sentence starters to start the conversations with the very little ones (i.e. “It made me unhappy because...”). She models that kind of conflict resolution and has found that at times she sees it reflected outside on the playground. (Excerpt from journal, May)

To draw an example, the following conflict occurred just before lunch in a kindergarten class:

A girl pushes a boy out of line. He scowls and gets ready to push back. Anne interjects, “Did you tell her why you are unhappy?” He shakes his head. “Tell her why you are unhappy.” “I am unhappy because ______.” “How did that make you feel?” She gets them to talk to each other. (Excerpt from journal, May)

While there is a power dynamic still at play, over the course of my time at the school, I observed students using this model of conflict resolution themselves. Although there was a certain level of behaviour imposed from the top, the students readily used their words with guidance to resolve issues rather than resolving the conflict through being physical.

*Strategies for working collaboratively.* Anne was also proactive, teaching problem solving strategies before beginning group work with the classes:

She tells the grade ones and twos the goal for the day and reminds them, “When you’re working with a group, you have to consider everyone’s ideas and you have to be considerate of everyone’s ideas as well. What are some strategies you can use if one person in the group wants it their way and another person wants it another way?” The students offer a whole range of suggestions. “Rock, paper, scissors.” “Eeny-meeny-miny-mo.” “You could have a vote.” “You can each take a turn choosing something.” (Excerpt from observations, May)
Students offered excellent suggestions to help themselves solve conflicts that arose within the group. By teaching strategies in advance, Anne created a space in which students worked collaboratively and democratically.

**Instilling individual responsibility.** Fostering individual responsibility is inherently connected to strategies for both working in groups and solving conflicts that arose outside of the group work collaborative context. Anne pushed students to take responsibility for their own actions, and yet, at the same time, to not worry or comment on the behaviour of other students. Anne often asked students not to “call people out,” if students interjected during class about the actions of another student in the class. This practice was consistent. She did not allow students to “tell” on each other. She commented further on her philosophy behind this idea:

Anne: That’s probably my biggest pet peeve in society is nobody takes responsibility for their own actions anymore. So…it drives me nuts. Grown-ups, children, parents of children will let…there’s always an excuse for why something isn’t happening. So yeah, I don’t…unless somebody’s bleeding, I don’t want to hear a lot about it. Unless there’s bleeding or unless there’s a very strong problem with bullying or…you know…a racist or sexist claim or something like that. Umm…yeah…you know…let’s in terms of taking turns and stuff in all the games I do…’cause that can just stall the whole game…you know…when somebody starts saying, “But he already had a turn,” or “He’s out…she’s out,” or whatever it is…whatever game we’re playing…you know. And I want to instill the virtue of honesty too…you know…if you’ve had a turn, don’t put your hand up again. And there will be repercussions whether it happens in class or out on the schoolyard. “You already had a turn,” and they’ll know. Just that whole taking ownership for your own actions thing is huge for me…If you want change, you have to be the change in how you act and what you do. So if you don’t like it when other people take a second turn, make sure you don’t take a second turn. And don’t be the one to tattle tale if it’s not a big deal.

I commented earlier on the manner in which this approach instilled in students as young as kindergarten that they were responsible for their own actions. Students in Anne’s class knew that Anne would take them at their word. However, her final statement about “being the change” is a powerful discourse and can potentially empower students further. While there are shades of meritocratic discourse here, Anne did not advocate any kind of merit-based system. Rather, it was a system of individual responsibility—a system in which if individuals believe change is
warranted, they begin with themselves. What is missing then from this philosophy is the notion that individuals have varying degrees of agency to “be the change,” and it is the intersecting oppressions based on race, class, language, immigrant and refugee status, gender, sexual orientation, age, marital status, religion, and disability that determine these degrees.

**Explicit expectations for behaviour.** In the next school year, Anne’s school will pilot a behaviour model that utilizes affirmative reinforcement to support positive social behaviour. Anne identified a large amount of physical conflict at her school, and the school decided to pilot the program to reinforce a positive model of behaviour. Rather than follow any kind of deficit model, this program operates in much the same way as the posters that Anne displays in her room. These posters present an amalgamation of the students’ views on “good singing” and the behaviours they need to display to engage in “good singing.” In Anne’s class, expectations are clear, and students have checklists of exactly what they need to do to achieve in her class. The structure of the new program sounds like it is along those lines; it will provide clear expectations of, for example, “appropriate behaviour” for a lunchroom.

While stringent models that urge conformity can be worrisome in the erasure of voice, there is another aspect to this particular model. Explicit teaching of different behaviours for different environments provides a tool to navigate a world ridden with oppression. However, “appropriate behaviour” is raced; these words are coded language for “white behaviour.” “Appropriate behaviour” for listening to music, for example, varies across cultures and different situations. At the same time, learning to navigate “white spaces” and spaces of privilege can be a powerful tool of subversion. To be able to perform “appropriate behaviour” allows access to spaces that a person can then challenge. To again invoke Delpit’s (1995/2006) work, she contends that students who lack the privilege granted to white, middle class students who “speak” the language or discourse of the school systems can be explicitly taught to navigate
these codes. Anne’s program, such as it is, and the pilot program planned for next year, work toward this end.

Teachers in this study worked to address the social within their classrooms, urging students to work together, giving them strategies for conflict resolution and group work, and instilling within them a sense of individual responsibility and explicit understanding of ways to behave in different (white) environments (see Delpit, 1995/2006 for further discussion).

**Caveat: the problematics of civility discourse.** While this type of work toward social goals and conflict resolution is important, it is also crucial to keep in mind the effects of a discourse of civility. According to Mayo (2002), a “discourse of civility asserts that teachers, students, and administrators ought to be kind, respectful, and tolerant of everyone without having to specify to whom they are being kind, respectful, and tolerant” (p. 174). She points to the habit of polite society of ignoring conflict and contends that in minimizing conflict, civil discourse often ignores even blatant issues (p. 174). In many cases, working toward civility maintains distance between people and across conflicts instead of resolving issues that keep people apart. In anti-bias education, politeness and civility often greatly limits the conversation possibilities.

When I was teaching elementary music, I received a group of posters from Yamaha. The posters featured classical musicians—all white men. When I discovered the content of the posters, I decided not to put them up at first, but then changed my mind and used them as an opportunity for conversation. As class after class entered my room, I let students know that a number of things bothered me about these posters, and I asked the students to have a look at them. In every class, the student who noticed the whiteness timidly put up his/her hand and began the sentence with “Not to be racist, but…” In many ways, being respectful is important, but not at the expense of having what is now termed “courageous conversations” in educational
discourse. As vital as it is to “get along,” we can take steps to ensure that this “getting along” does not occur only when some are silenced.

**Emphasis on music from marginalized groups.** Amanda and Susan both placed music with African roots at the centre of their programs. For Amanda, the Afrocentric emphasis was the driving curricular focus through all the grades whereas for Susan, it was the centre of the grade seven program. The Afrocentric content was particularly significant in that both Amanda’s and Susan’s schools housed predominantly white populations and in Susan’s school, the small percentage of black students mostly lived in the housing project close to the school, revealing real socioeconomic disparities along racial lines. To centre African music also actively challenged its lower position on the raced and classed hierarchies of music. Both teachers wanted students to be aware of the richness of the music and the extreme oppression, violence, and racism embedded in the history behind the music. Amanda specifically wanted the students to be aware of the damage inflicted by their ancestors and to begin to recognize white privilege. Susan wished to foster a sense of respect for what she considered the most marginalized population. Neither teacher engaged the music from the simple perspective of the richness of the music. Rather, both teachers complicated the music with overt oppression and racism and worked to make their school population of largely white students of privilege feel the inequity and the violence of the past and the present.

This pedagogy was powerful and it disturbed students to varying degrees. The two examples where this interruption was most blatant was the day that Susan discussed blackface in her grade seven/eight class and showed them a YouTube video from Bing Crosby’s “Holiday Inn,” and the day that Amanda recounted the circumstances of the death of Bessie Smith. On both occasions, the room was completely silent followed by an explosion of discussion. Students in Susan’s class were alarmed by the video and arrived at class the following week still talking about it. In Amanda’s class, students could not believe that a “white ambulance” left a
fatally-injured Smith to wait ultimately too long for a “black ambulance.” Students felt the racism in those moments, and it was in such moments where it was clear that the goals of these programs went far beyond any kind of superficial appreciation of the music, but rather pushed toward fostering feelings of social justice—another characteristic in Bradley’s (2006b) definition of multicultural human subjectivity.

The centring of music and the oppression of marginalized groups in predominantly white schools was a powerful counterhegemonic strategy in these two schools. Teachers asked students to actively face their own histories of oppressing marginalized Others and consider their privilege. Although results varied, as revealed in the previous section, there were certainly moments when students received the message.

**Countering assumptions.** In chapter seven (on reinscription), I discussed teachers’ assumptions and the ways in which they countered their own and the students’ assumptions. These challenges to assumptions were a fundamental aspect to the ways teachers challenged hegemony in their programs. They worked to change their own thinking as they recognized assumptions and actively changed the language they used to name the identified assumptions in the classroom. As discussed in the section on “Naming race,” critiquing and challenging students’ assumptions was also important to these teachers.

**Inclusivity: issues of access.** Teachers worked hard to be inclusive of all students. Anne, in particular, had many students with physical needs in her school. She had a number of resources for students with physical access issues including three drums with legs on the bottom so the player could play the drum without lifting it off the floor. In my second week at the school, I observed a class of special needs students:

> At the beginning of the day, she had a small class of special needs students, including two students with mobility issues, one of whom was present today. The class is working on a ribbon dance that they are collectively choreographing for the concert. Rather than marginalizing the students who need to be stationary for the most part, they are doing kind of a T-formation with those two students at the front,
one student on each side and the other students moving behind them, forming either a centre line, a circle behind, or standing in two lines behind them. The student who was present today uses a walker and her ribbon was catching on her walker, so they talked about having her sit in a regular chair so the arms of the walker wouldn’t get in the way. (Excerpt from journal, April)

Anne made sure that she found ways to level the unequal playing field in her classroom, providing multiple opportunities and modes of participation. She commented further about addressing different learning styles:

Anne: I like to try and appeal to all different kinds of learners…right. So not every kid is going to respond well to sitting and listening, or to sitting and singing…as we see when we’re doing all that turn taking stuff…right. And some kids won’t understand it just through oral repetition, some kids need to feel it. So you try to do things that will appeal to all the different kinds of learners, the kinesthetic…you know…the oral and all that kind of stuff. And the movement really just helps solidify the concepts that we’re trying to teach.

The acknowledgement here is that all students learn differently, and some approaches work better for some students than others. The visual, aural, and kinesthetic modes of learning were predominant in all four classrooms. Students saw, heard, and felt music and responded to it. What is missing here is a critical analysis of the reasons behind these differences. Learning modes are, to a certain extent, culturally situated (Sternberg, 2007). Depending on personal background, some students respond to certain modes more than others. Addressing multiple modes in a single class is a way to acknowledge that students learn differently based on their experiences. To work effectively with all students, addressing multiple modalities is both important and an access issue. At the front of Anne’s room was a sign that declared “fair does not equal same.” Anne was clear with this policy that students had diverse needs, and that providing the “same” treatment to all students was inappropriate. This policy was evident in her work. When students struggled, she found ways to give them what they needed on an individual basis, and what they needed often differed from what the other children received in that same class.
Considering issues of access is important from both a physical accessibility perspective and because of the necessity of addressing multiple modalities. Students approach music with a range of needs, abilities, and partiality to varied modes of learning, some of which are raced. The teachers in this study, Anne and Susan in particular, actively worked to address multiple issues of access.

**Caveat: questions of charity and heroes.** All four teachers worked to subvert hegemonic paradigms in various ways. However, critical work sometimes hinges on salvationist tropes. In doing critical work, it seems possible to understand one’s efforts as heroic in some way. While discourses of benevolence and charity could easily become issues, this intent was not present here. A “Lady Bountiful” in music class typically “saves” students with classical music. This discourse is present in mainstream movies such as *Music of the Heart* (Craven, 1999) and in organizations such as *El Sistema.* In these four classrooms, teachers deliberately chose different musics, but the salvationist narrative was absent. There was no expectation that students *should* like certain musics, nor any notion of certain musics being “good for” students as is inherent in a discourse of charity. Instead, teachers introduced students to both familiar and unfamiliar musics, including Western classical music. It became more of an issue of accessibility in which students became familiar with varied musics (see Stephens, 2013 for discussion) for their own use later.

Teachers structure their programs in accordance with what they feel is important. With this type of programming, there is no doubt that some teachers do feel that the choices they make are the right choices for students. However, with any kind of discourse of benevolence comes hierarchical power relations (ever present in the classroom) that preclude the possibility that the choices made are not necessarily unilaterally good for everyone. These four teachers all

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2 See Meiners (2002) for a discussion of Lady Bountiful.
3 See [http://elsistemausa.org/el-sistema/venezuela/](http://elsistemausa.org/el-sistema/venezuela/) for an example of the discourse circulated by *El Sistema.*
worked toward access so students would have tools to pursue musics of interest, but they also made it possible for students to discard class material or use it in a different manner.

**The work of Amanda, Anne, Sarah, and Susan and the preoccupations of critical pedagogy.** In many ways, the work of these four teachers aligns well with the preoccupations of critical pedagogy as I highlighted in the section on critical pedagogy in the literature review (see chapter three). Freire (1970) put forward a problem-posing education that is dialogical and critical. Teachers and students learn from each other and all have a voice in the classroom. Themes that emerged in this study, particularly in regard to student voice and critical consciousness, all resonate with issues long discussed in critical pedagogy.

**Conclusion**

Teachers in this study actively worked to challenge and subvert hegemonic paradigms through various means. Amanda and Susan explicitly connected the content in music class to politics. Teachers also explicitly addressed equity issues through naming race, challenging assumptions, and directing students' attention to oppression and racism. Sometimes they addressed equity issues because of problems that emerged in class, and at other times, they discussed equity, and more specifically issues of race, in relation to curricular content. Amanda, Anne, Sarah, and Susan also worked to teach social expectations in their classrooms through actively teaching skills for conflict resolution and cooperative group work. They instilled a sense of individual responsibility and understanding of behavioural expectations in different (white) environments.

However, in considering discourses of individual responsibility and behavioural expectations, critiques of civility (see for example Mayo, 2002) are important to keep in mind. The two teachers teaching in predominantly white schools emphasized, with varying degrees of success, Afrocentric music to push white students to face an oppressive history, their own
privilege, and the richness of a marginalized culture. Finally, teachers worked toward inclusivity through both addressing multiple modalities in their teaching and through attempting to level an unequal playing field for the students in their class. The attempts at subversion were successful in many ways, although the ways in which they were not successful inform the construction of future strategies for subversion for music educators. What was remarkable was the wide recognition of the diversity of oppressions and the desire to centre those oppressions for explicit challenge and discussion. As the sign at the front of Anne’s room said, “fair does not equal same.” Teachers recognized students had diverse needs, and they had a reasonably firm grasp of the ways in which various intersecting oppressions limited students within their classrooms. They worked to address these external limitations and challenge them with the students, subverting hegemony in the process.

In chapters five and six, I discussed the different ways in which these four music educators worked to challenge the dominant paradigm of music education. In chapter seven, I considered situations where a hegemonic paradigm was reinscribed. This chapter explored active ways that teachers worked to counter hegemony and inequity in their classrooms. In the final chapter, I consider concepts put forward by philosophers Mikhail Bakhtin, Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari, and music educator Elizabeth Gould to consider ways music educators may draw on this study to formulate a truly radical music education. I also draw on the work of Sara Ahmed and Gada Mahrouse to consider some of the limitations imposed by positionality on this radical music education.
CHAPTER 9

Jumping off the “Bandwagon”: Toward a Pedagogy of Social Change

I began this research with an anti-oppressive theoretical framework that comprised anti-colonial, anti-racist, and anti-racist feminist lenses. I chose these lenses because they addressed the colonial and hegemonic issues I saw readily in music education. It became clear throughout this work that the “anti-” of anti-oppression in this case intrinsically opposed so-called “traditional” music education or the dominant paradigm. The perspective served its purpose, as I analyzed the data through this lens—a move that allowed me to centre issues of power and continually account for race, gender, class, disability, religion, and sexual orientation.

However, as I worked through the data, it became apparent that, as I hoped, the music education I encountered in these four classrooms was not the same music education found in so many “traditional” programs. I began to view traditional music education as a bounded form—closed and fixed. Much of what I observed in my research conversely, was fluid and flexible. Teachers drew relationships between many musics and sometimes weaved in and out of different musical epistemologies. Material was often interactive and rooted in both present and past practices, but in such a way that these practices were linked. When I chose my original framework, I chose it in opposition to what I saw as problematic within the dominant paradigm of music education. However, what I observed largely did not conform to that paradigm of music education. The original perspective helped to reveal issues of oppression that arose within the data. By the conclusion of the analysis, it seemed that I required a theoretical framework that spoke to both the closed nature of traditional music education and the open nature of the kind of work I observed in these four classrooms. It is therefore in the conclusion that I draw on Bakhtin.
to consider the open and closed forms of music education. I continue to employ an anti-oppression lens while mobilizing this framework.

Although the Bakhtinian framework represents the different forms of music education, it does not speak to the struggle involved in engaging the “non-traditional” forms within the institution. Much of what I observed did not conform to the dominant paradigm of music education. However, the musical practices that entered the classroom from beyond school walls also did not quite reflect their counterparts from the exterior. Alongside Bakhtin (1981), I therefore draw on Deleuze and Guattari (1987) to consider that struggle. I employ Bakhtin’s (1981) concepts of the epic and the novel and Deleuze and Guattari’s (1987) work on nomadology and the war machine. It is this expanded framework I put forward in the final chapter.

In addition to the work of Bakhtin (1981) and Deleuze and Guattari (1987), in order to draw some conclusions from my research I also look to two music education scholars who already utilize the concepts I address., I explore the philosophies of these five scholars in conjunction with the data analyzed in this project to push toward what I call a pedagogy of social change in music education. In theorizing and actualizing such a pedagogy, I remind the reader of the anti-oppression theoretical framework I introduced in the first chapter as the orientation for the discussions of this chapter and what I draw from my research. Finally, in order to highlight issues of positionality, I employ the work of Ahmed (2000) and Mahrouse (2007) to bring to the foreground questions of who might enact this pedagogy.

Closed and Open Forms: Bakhtin’s Theorization of the Epic and the Novel

In his important work *The Dialogic Imagination*, Russian philosopher and literary theorist Bakhtin (1981) explores the literary forms of the epic and the novel. In many ways, for Bakhtin, the epic and the novel are situated at opposite ends of the spectrum of literary forms;
while the epic is located in what Bakhtin terms the “absolute past,” the novel is openended and
flexible. According to Bakhtin,

> [t]he epic is a genre in its own right may, for our purposes, be characterized by three
constitutive features: (1) a national epic past—i.e., Goethe’s and Schiller’s terminology the
“absolute past”—serves as the subject for the epic; (2) national tradition (not
personal experience and the free thought that grows out of it) serves as the source
for the epic; (3) an absolute epic distance separates the epic world from
contemporary reality, that is, from the time in which the singer (the author and his
audience) lives. (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 13)

The distance here is significant. Bakhtin (1981) notes that the events unfolded in the epic do not
necessarily have to be in the past, but they are written as though they are:

> Both the singer and the listener, immanent in the epic as a genre, are located in the
same time and on the same evaluative (hierarchical) plane, but the represented world
of the heroes stand on an utterly different and inaccessible time-and-value plane,
separated by epic distance. (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 14)

It is a world of the “national heroic past”—a “world of ‘beginnings’ and ‘peak times’ in the
national history, a world of fathers and of founders of families, a world of ‘firsts’ and
‘bests’” (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 13). What is significant here is the utter emphasis on the past, on
the notion of being “finished” or “complete,” and the complete distancing from the
present—the “zone of familiar contact” (p. 14).

Conversely, the novel is an open form; it takes place not in the past, but in the
present and very much interacts with the reader, utilizing literary devices such as humour to
directly engage the reader and encourage a very personal and familiar encounter. The novel
is self-critical, which also sets it apart from the epic, and often incorporates parody
(Bakhtin, 1981, p. 6). Unlike the epic, it has no canon of “great” works (p. 3). For Bakhtin,
novels

> become more free and flexible, their language renews itself by incorporating extra
literary heteroglossia and the “novelistic” layers of literary language, they become
dialogized, permeated with laughter, irony, humor, elements of self-parody and
finally—this is the most important thing—the novel inserts into these other genres an
indeterminacy, a certain semantic openendedness, a living contract with unfinished,
still-evolving contemporary reality (the openended present). (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 7)
The indeterminacy and openendedness is crucial here for there is nothing finished or resolved about the novel. It is rife with potential for interaction. Bakhtin (1981) highlights three basic characteristics that distinguish the novel from other genres:

1. Its stylistic three-dimensionality, which is linked with the multi-language consciousness realized in the novel;
2. The radical change it effects in the temporal coordinates of the literary image;
3. The new zone (the novel for structuring literary images, namely, the zone of maximal contact with the present (with contemporary reality) in all its openendedness. (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 11)

Unlike the epic, the novel escapes the clear fixing of a definition, largely because of its openended nature (p. 9). In contrasting the epic with the novel, it is possible to summarize much of the difference between the forms in the distinction between closed and open forms. The distance and proximity inherent in the two distinct forms is useful for thinking about the dominant paradigm of music education in juxtaposition with those music educators actively working to challenge that paradigm.

In using the novel as a philosophical idea, it is important to note Said’s (1993) connection between the form of the novel and imperialism. The form of the novel often worked to reinscribe empire and imperial power relations. This reinscription of imperialism occurred through a number of mechanisms that included assumptions of a European audience with no fear of reprisal from those on the “Other” side of the story, significant exclusions, and passing references to what Said terms “major appropriations” (for example, a plantation in a colony) (p. 66). He suggests instead a “contrapuntal reading” where readers take into account both processes, that of imperialism and that of resistance to it, which can be done by extending our reading of the texts to include what was once forcibly excluded—in L’Etranger, for example, the whole previous history of France’s colonialism and its destruction of the Algerian state, and the later emergence of an independent Algeria (which Camus opposed). (Said, 1993, pp. 66-67)

Said cites the importance of reading Jane Austen alongside Fanon in order to affiliate modern culture with its engagements and attachments (p. 60), implying perhaps that we can read
Western classical music alongside counterhegemonic “texts” or musics and also consider the forcible exclusions of this music. I use the novel as a philosophical abstraction, drawing on Bakhtin, but Said’s advocacy of the contrapuntal reading actually aligns well with Bakhtin’s construct. Bakhtin (1981) sees the novel as inherently openended and flexible. He supported engagement with the text and theorized extensively on dialogism (Bakhtin, 1981). Said’s counterpoint operates in tandem with this particular philosophical construct.

Theorizing Bakhtin’s “Epic” and “Novel” in Music Education

How can Bakhtin’s (1981) discussion and conceptualization of the “epic” and the “novel” be useful in theorizing and thinking about music education? Let us begin with the idea of the epic. In many ways, the dominant paradigm of music education as described in chapter one corresponds nicely with the epic as outlined by Bakhtin. The band/orchestra/choir paradigm is steeped in national tradition. Pictures of late, white composers line the walls of classrooms and largely comprise the content of the curriculum. Beethoven and Mozart are important people. Children learn that great music is past music; that flashes of genius were white and male and have no bearing on present reality other than to communicate to us that we cannot possibly accomplish what they did in their lives. This type of music education conveys the “firsts” and “bests” of the past and emphasizes the fact that they are over—that all greatness was already accomplished. As Bakhtin (1981) reminds us,

[t]he dead are loved in a different way. They are removed from the sphere of contact, one can and indeed must speak of them in a different style. Language about the dead is stylistically quite different from language about the living. (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 20)

This epic mode of engagement in music education entails aspiring to closed forms. As Allsup (in press) elucidates in his critique of Elliott’s (1995) praxial music education, it is the teacher-as-expert who sets the musical challenge. The student, in this case, is understood within a deficit model—as lacking skills to meet the challenge, where the goal is ultimately to gain those skills
Such musical “challenges” often merely reinscribe the past; they do not necessarily work toward fostering something new. In the dominant paradigm of music education, replication of the “finished” is at the centre. Within the music classroom, music is the “text;” within an epic framework of music education, the role of the “reader” (that is, student) is simply to read—to replicate—not to engage or create.

A novelistic music education, in contrast, is flexible, open, undetermined, and playful. There is no sense that “greatness” and the “best” is over and contained in a time apart. The musical challenges put forward within this system are not posed within a deficit-model; rather they suggest a multiplicity of possible ways of approaching the world, as opposed to one particular path toward a particular goal. Absent from novelistic music education is any notion of distance or the “finished.” Music, instead, occurs in the here and now; it is present. The element of indeterminacy is fundamental; there are no “wrong” ways. The past informs the present, which informs the future, and there is much interaction between “text” (music) and readers (students and teacher who is no longer situated as expert). As Allsup (in press) illuminates in his work on closed and open forms, the discussion of Barthes’ (1977) concept of the death of the author is important here. The “text” or music no longer privileges its author. Rather, after writing, the place of the author (or composer) in the text is that of a guest (see Allsup, in press, pp. 17-18). All participants, then, in any given music, may manipulate it, interact with it, and change it. It is truly an open form. At this point, I draw the relationship between the epic form of music education (what music educators consider to be the dominant paradigm of music education) and the novel form of music education (the possibility of challenge to “traditional” music education).
A Call to Re-Envision Music Education: The Role of Nomadology

As previously established, as of late, many music educators are calling for a re-envisioning of music education. In the clamour to jump on the bandwagon of change by jumping off the “band”wagon, the true sense of praxis—the combination of thoughtful reflection and action (Freire, 1970, p. 65)—is not always present in the practice of music education. Before bringing this discussion into the realm of the practical, I therefore introduce one additional philosophical concept, as I feel it accurately reflects the movement toward change in music education.

In their book *A Thousand Plateaus*, French philosopher Deleuze and French psychoanalyst Guattari (1987) put forward a theory of nomadology and the war machine. They describe two apparatuses in opposition—the State apparatus and the war machine. However, this opposition is not binary, nor is it polar. Instead, it is relational; the State apparatus exists in relation to the war machine and vice versa. As Deleuze and Guattari (1987) argue, “their opposition is only relative; they function as a pair, in alternation, as though they expressed a division of the One or constituted in themselves a sovereign unity” (p. 351). Institutionalized rules govern the State apparatus, and movement and opposition to the war machine is possible only under specific circumstances. Conversely, Deleuze and Guattari’s (1987) war machine opposes the State apparatus and moves without restrictions or limitations (p. 353). Space of the State apparatus is striated—structured and homogenous—whereas space of the war machine is smooth—heterogeneous and fluid—a zone of contact (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, pp. 370-371).

I put forward the following contentions from Deleuze and Guattari as a group, as I will subsequently argue for their relevance to music education and this discussion:

*The State has no war machine of its own; it can only appropriate one in the form of a military institution, one that will continually cause it problems. (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 355, emphasis in original)*
But of greater importance is the inverse hypothesis: that the State itself has always been in a relation with an outside and is inconceivable independent of that relationship. The law of the State is not the law of All or Nothing (State societies or counter-State societies) but that of interior and exterior. The State is sovereignty. But sovereignty only reigns over what it is capable of internalizing, of appropriating locally. (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 360, emphasis in original)

It is in terms not of independence, but of coexistence and competition in a perpetual field of interaction, that we must conceive of exteriority and interiority, war machines of metamorphosis and State apparatuses of identity, bands and kingdoms, megamachines and empires. (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, pp. 360-361, emphasis in original)

What is crucial for this discussion is: 1) the perpetual field of interaction; 2) the appropriative nature of the State apparatus; and 3) the notion of the interior and exterior and the impossibility of the State to reign over the exterior unless it appropriates it and internalizes it. When the State opposes the war machine, a dance ensues. There are no limits to the ways in which the war machine can engage, but the State is regimented. The State then internalizes what it can from the war machine in order to oppose it, causing the war machine to devise new strategies, which the State then appropriates. The State cannot control the rules of engagement with the war machine, as there are none—or many that continually change and adapt to the shifting terrain. Rather than control, then, it appropriates what it can to better oppose the war machine. It is important to note, however, that there is a degree of privilege that comes with mobility. The lack of limits on the war machine’s ability to move may be in part classed and raced, a point I discuss further in the next section. Nevertheless, being official, the State is dominant in the hierarchy. However, what is the application of nomadology and the war machine to music education?

**Radical Musicking in the Institution?: The “Not Quite” Edition**

The call for change in music education that began largely with the Tanglewood Symposium in 1967 was pervasive across the discipline by the 1990s. However, many educators did not necessarily have an idea where to begin. Consider for a moment the dominant paradigm
in the “epic” form I just described as a State apparatus. Institutionalized music education in epic form is very much a dominant narrative. It is rooted in the past—in “national tradition”—and steeped in the regulatory restrictions—“striated space”—of curriculum documents, board policies, school policies, and more. In contrast, however, lie the plethora of musicking activities beyond the four walls of schooling—a playful, “novelistic,” form of music with a polyphony of voices. This world is one of garage bands, drum circles, YouTube, scratching, do-it-yourself recording, and instant access to any music of interest. This terrain shifts and is flexible. Its limits are really only what it is possible to imagine. Here, the question of mobility is interesting. While mobility itself is inhered with privilege, youth who push the limits of music forward into new territory often lack privilege. These bodies are often racialized and come from lower-income families. When called to change, institutional music education with its largely classically trained teachers, looked around and wondered how it might be possible to bring what is outside (the exterior) into the institution (the interior). However, the interior can never control or reign over the exterior. It can only appropriate the strategies and tools of the radical exterior into the institution. Given the racialized and classed bodies who largely create that exterior, it is important to keep in mind the power relations inherent in an appropriation of such material into a State institution.

With the challenge to re-envision music education, therefore, came an “internalizing” or “appropriating” of the musicking activities of the exterior. Popular music, for example, emerged in the school context, but shifted somehow, as the institution of school still functioned according to the rules of striated space. Popular music outside of school, conversely, operates in smooth space. It is adaptive and dependent on conditions not produced in school. Although it is possible to assign students to “garage bands” in schools—even of their own choosing—the fundamental element of choice is absent. Although students may be excited about the project, the excitement inherent in forming a band by choice is intrinsically different. The appropriation of such
strategies that often originate with students of colour is an interesting power dynamic. Music education appropriates these musics to appeal to students, but misses somehow. Institutionalized music education aims to meet the needs of the students it serves, but in selecting activities in which these same students engage in different circumstances, it offers a changed and regulated version—a simulacrum at best. Thus, the movement music education embodies through appropriating the “outside” mirrors the movement between State apparatus and war machine put forward by Deleuze and Guattari (1987). In appropriating and internalizing the musicking activities of the exterior into the “State” or dominant narrative of music education, music educators essentially attempt to read the “novel” as an “epic,” resulting in a music education that now resides somewhere between the dominant narrative and the world beyond, but regimented firmly by the rules governing striated space.

In thinking about such an appropriative music education, its liberal character becomes obvious. Anti-racist scholar Bonilla-Silva (2006) and critical race scholar Goldberg (1993) argue that the principles that define liberalism include individualism (the belief in the individual over the collective), universalism (the belief in universal principles such as freedom and equality for all humans based on their intrinsic rationality), the belief in the rationality of humans, and meliorism (the belief that social institutions, society, and all people can be improved) and the inherent notion of progress.¹

Notions of equality and merit are at the root of liberal education and prevalent discourses in music education and education in general. Notions such as “student success,” “creativity,” and “safe environment” frequently do not acknowledge the unequal playing field upon which students are situated. A liberal dominant paradigm of music education then is often additive in nature. Western classical music or the band/orchestra/choir paradigm makes up the majority of the curriculum, while musics appropriated for use in school are often arranged around the

¹ For discussion, see in particular Goldberg (1993, pp. 4-5) and Bonilla-Silva (2006, pp. 26-28).
periphery, signifying hierarchical relations as explored in both the literature review and in the data analysis. Also important is the overall lack of choice students have in whether or not to engage in given activities.

**A Music Education that Embodies the Radical Exterior: Some Work of Elizabeth Gould**

The work of Deleuzian music education scholar Elizabeth Gould is instructive here as she plays with the concepts of the war machine, the radical exterior, and the nomad. Gould (2005) wonders how it might be feasible to come to each tradition as a nomad—viewing it from different perspectives and destabilizing the centre knowledge. The journey of a nomad in its continual relocation fosters the possibility of multiple perspectives over a shifting terrain. The decentring of tradition is crucial here, for the movement and continuous relocation of the nomad does not allow for the fixing or naturalization of dominant knowledge.

In a later writing, Gould (2009b) discusses the role of women in music education as nomads—people who traverse borders and boundaries. She works with the idea of women and the feminists in music education as the war machine—a radical exterior. For Gould, nomad thought is the war machine and it exists beyond borders. In seeking a terrain for this war machine, she puts forward the desert. In the desert, she proposes, there are no borders. The desert also constantly shifts. The object of the war machine here is “creative responses to material problems” (p. 132)—multiple possibilities and never just one potential solution. Concepts exist in difference or relationally for in nomadology, it is the connections between them that matter.

Gould (2009a) also applies four models of literacy to music education and proposes a fifth. I reiterate her work as cited earlier here:

In terms of music education, *functional literacy* focuses on basic skills necessary to function in traditional general, instrumental, and choral school music programs. Typical curricula are based on pre-packaged materials, such as music series books, beginning band, orchestra, and choral method books, and the U.S. National
Standards. With a “pedagogical focus [that] is individualistic, behaviourist, and competitive,” students typically learn in structured environments valuing efficiency and time on task. Cultural literacy is based on a moral imperative of teaching the musical canon and aesthetic sensitivity in order to induct students into the world of great music and enhanced awareness. The curriculum is both elitist and restrictive while pedagogy is “authoritarian, humanist, and universalizing,” based on the notion of the power of music to improve human life. Progressive literacy focuses on discovery and development, and is supported by assumptions related to student growth and expressivity through music. With an open and diverse curriculum including musics of many cultures, its pedagogy is centered on students and their active engagement with music. The primary goal of critical literacy is to transform society as it acknowledges the inherently political nature of educational content and context. Students’ and teachers’ everyday (musical) world and its deconstruction comprise the curriculum. Pedagogical approaches associated with it are “situated, interrogative, and counter-hegemonic,” taking into account difference and power. (Gould, 2009a, pp. 47-48, embedded citations from Kelly, 1997, p. 10)

This discussion of multiple models of literacies highlights a number of key elements of schooling. First, it points to the largely liberal nature of the institution or dominant narrative. The first three forms of literacy are individualistic, merit-based, and focus on ideals of “progress,” whether that entails personal growth and development or academic development against a set of “benchmarks.” Some interesting ideas emerge when we reread Gould’s (2009a) application of these literacies to music education through Bakhtin (1981).

The first three literacies she identifies—functional, cultural, and progressive—are closed forms—epics—albeit in different ways. Functional literacy resonates well with Allsup’s (in press) ideas of the problematic musicianship, as mapped by Elliott (1995). The musical “challenge” set for the students by the teacher requires the development of specific skills to accomplish the end goal, which is rooted, for the most part in the past steeped in “national [European] tradition” (Bakhtin, 1981). Cultural literacy, as Gould contends, is also grounded largely in the “absolute past” (Bakhtin, 1981). However, it is a particular past. The canon Gould points to is, of course, the Western European canon and the aesthetic “ideal” is that of Western classical music—a closed form once again, as it is “finished.” Students have a specific aesthetic to which they aspire, but the “zone of contact” (Bakhtin, 1981) that a novelistic music education
would suggest is absent. Gould’s *progressive literacy* is a closed form in a different manner. Although progressive literacy implies connection to the present, the goals or “benchmarks” of progressive literacy are singular in nature rather than multiple. Students’ “progress” then is defined narrowly toward a predetermined end goal.

*Critical literacy*, however, functions differently. Rather than a closed, predetermined form or one firmly rooted in the past, critical literacy reads as a novel. It interacts and adapts to its environment and actively engages its readers in the story. Rather than one defined “correct” approach or goal, critical literacy contains many possible routes and a multiplicity of approaches. Thus *critical literacy* is an open form—novelistic in nature. However, Gould contends that critical literacy does not necessarily aspire toward a liberatory agenda. Gould (2009a) offers a response to critical literacy and proposes what she terms a *performative literacy* as discussed in the literature review:

> [Performative literacy's] curriculum focuses on local musics and people in social and educational contexts, using pedagogical approaches that not only account for difference but are inhered in and as difference as they elide power relations characteristic of the teacher/student dyad, enabling teaching and learning among people and in places as appropriate and necessary within and (often) without schools and schooling. Pedagogy, then, occurs everywhere and is understood in an expansive materialist, feminist sense as “an activity integral to all learning, all knowledge production” (Gore, 1993, p. xii as cited in Gould, 2009a, p. 49) that because it is material it is neither neutral nor innocent, but always already “enable[s] or constrain[s] literacy practices” (Flannery, 2005, p. 15 as cited in Gould, 2009a, p. 49). (Gould, 2009a, p. 49)

*Performative literacy* is therefore an engaged literacy. It is novelistic in that it is polyvocal and occurs without distance between “reader” and “text.” It is grounded in the present and acknowledges the multiplicity of music and musical epistemologies.

Finally, in her 2007 work, Gould (2007a) contends that normative systems such as whiteness and heteronormativity render bodies beyond their borders “illegible” by dominant bodies. She advocates not for the inclusion of those people rendered illegible into music education, because that simply amounts to different exclusions. Instead she advocates for a
Deleuzian becoming that looks to become-minoritarian and move away from the majoritarian perspective. In other words, she essentially puts forward a music education that embodies the radical exterior.

Now, to consider this group of works as a whole, a number of elements emerge. In *Nomadic Turns*, Gould (2005) proposes taking up the position of a nomad, viewing all traditions from multiple perspectives—as a traveller. She proposes that in so doing, music education will destabilize the centre. In *Women Working in Music Education*, she reveals once again the multiplicity of perspectives and possibilities, advocating for “creative responses to material problems” (Gould, 2009b, p. 132). Her critical and performative literacy also emphasize the importance of multiple perspectives. Engagement with “text” is at the centre here, and critique is fundamental. The performative literacy she puts forward is one of open forms. Finally, in *Legible Bodies in Music Education*, Gould (2007a) suggests a Deleuzian “becoming-minoritarian”—embodying the outside or the exterior in music education. What she effectively calls for is a nomadic music education that is located in the radical exterior.

However, it is important to acknowledge the privilege inherent in the mobility of nomadism which can be understood both as the act of travelling and of the subversion of conventions (Ahmed, 2000, p. 82). Both definitions apply to this research, as the curriculum in the four programs of this study was nomadic in terms of studying diverse musics and in doing so, subverting conventional music education. For Ahmed, the privilege comes with the possibility of choice; when one chooses to be homeless or “become minoritarian,” the circumstances and inherent power is different from being forced to the outside. In theorizing a nomadic music education, considering the privilege inherent in travel and subverting conventions is important. Could teachers of colour practice nomadic music education or would they be criticized and resisted for subverting conventions? These four teachers did not face opposition in their implementation of these practices. It seems that a teacher of colour would
likely have to fight to apply critical pedagogy in his or her classroom. If teachers of colour are more likely to face opposition when practicing critical pedagogy in music education, what work must we do as a profession to change this restriction?

There is also the question of the encounter in nomadism. What happens when these nomads who are indeed privileged in some ways encounter the Other through music? Ahmed (2000) argues that encounters with the Other actually remake the subject and reinstall the Other as “stranger.” Multiculturalism often acts to reinscribe difference. Ahmed (2000) contends that consumption (an act particularly relevant to any discussion of music education), becoming, and passing create a transformation in the person who engages in these acts. The “Other” then serves as the vehicle for this transformation and is relegated to a relational status in terms of the way s/he produces the dominant subject. As Razack (2002) argues, transgression into racialized space is an “identity-making process” (p. 144). Considering these power relations in any question of nomadic music education helps to maintain a critical lens on nomadism. However, with these caveats in mind, I wish to engage nomadism for what it might offer music education. Gould does not elaborate on what this radical exterior might look like in the lived experience of the music classroom. Using the work and experience of the four music educators in this study, it is the practical application of this philosophical thinking to music education that I attempt to elucidate.

**Working Within the State: The Practical Reality of the Institution**

I now bring this discussion into the realm of the practical. In thinking about both the appropriative nature of the institution and the desire for music education as radical exterior or war machine, it becomes obvious that due to both the striated space of the institution and the fact that it is a representative of the State that any form of musicking appropriated from the outside can exist only in altered form within the institution. However, romanticization of life
beyond the institution aside, school, in its present form, is a reality with which we must engage. While imagining education that occurs beyond the limits of the four walls may be desirable, to simply critique the institution without engaging it is not ultimately helpful. Music exists in a different form in school, and the institution in general is largely liberal in nature. Some of what I identified in the emergent themes in the data analysis fits quite well into a liberal framework. However, these same themes can be reread within a radical paradigm. What Gould proposes can actually occur in school, although perhaps not quite as she envisions it. In the next section, I consider discourses commonly put forward within a liberal paradigm when music educators discuss change in music education.

**Challenge and Change in Music Education: Understanding the Liberal Paradigm**

The characteristics of liberalism as put forward by Goldberg (1993) and Bonilla-Silva (2006)—individualism, universalism, the belief in the rationality of humans, and meliorism—are evident within the current paradigm of education. Schooling often functions meritocratically, is steeped in notions of “progress” and the “rational,” and privileges the individual over the collective. Vague notions of equality are also embedded in schooling, and difference is understood not within an equity model, but rather through misrecognition, or cloaked in ideas of “sameness” or, in the case of race, “colourblindness.”

With the call to change music education, a number of discourses emerged as prevalent. These same discourses also comprised the primary emergent themes in this study. Moving from a teacher-centred ensemble paradigm to a student-centred music education emerged as important, as did an expansion of the content of the curriculum, contextualization of material, and social justice education. Keeping the main characteristics of liberalism in mind, it is possible to read these themes through a liberal framework. Understanding student-centred

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2 See Bonilla-Silva (2006) for an extensive discussion of colourblindness.
education at first glance reveals a focus on group needs. Upon closer inspection, however, student-centred education can simply foster the sense of individualistic meritocratic competition that is fundamental to liberalism. An expansion of content can be additive as opposed to integral in nature and ultimately reinscribe the dominant paradigm. Contextualization, if not applied relationally and across all forms of music, can also easily reinscribe any (dominant) naturalized content as the centre, serving to exotify “Other” material. Even social justice education can be read in a liberal framework. Liberal social justice embodies discourses of charity or salvation among others (see Meiners, 2002 for discussion). The “State” then is not simply the institution of school, but the institution constituted through a liberal framework. However, it is possible to read these liberal discourses another way—through a radical framework. I now explore the ways in which the music educator participants in this study fostered radical versions of these discourses within the call to change music education.

**Toward Radical Musicking: Understanding the Discourses of Challenge and Change through a Radical Paradigm**

**Centring the student.** I now reread the four discourses I highlighted in chapters five, six, and eight within a radical framework to consider what a radical music education might entail. I begin with centring the student. Discourses about centring the student discussed in a liberal paradigm often include notions of “student success,” “differentiation,” and the idea of a “safe environment.” Superficially, these discourses seem unequivocally positive, but when read through a liberal framework, their individualistic and universal nature becomes apparent. As liberal discourses, they are grounded in notions of equality, the individual, and merit. They do not acknowledge the unequal playing field upon which students are situated due to gender, race, class, immigrant and refugee status, language, religion, age, disability, and sexual orientation. Where centring the student in a liberal paradigm makes the assumption of an even playing field,
centring the student in a radical paradigm understands that students are situated on uneven terrain, or, as black feminist Collins (2000) terms it—a “matrix of domination”—where a combination of systemic factors comingle and influence what is understood liberally to be a student’s so-called “merit” or “ability.” A radical paradigm understands that students have or lack various degrees of privilege in relation to other students, and that recognition of the distribution of privilege is fundamental to the act of centring the student in education. A radical music education does not foster competition in centring the student, but rather fosters the sense of the collective and the relationships between all participants in education.

To illustrate this idea, I offer the following example from Susan’s class. As already discussed, Susan ran a diverse guitar program for her intermediate grade seven and eight students. She always offered at minimum two possible versions of any activity and the students self-selected their level. Students also had the choice between performing their activity on guitar or performing it on an Orff instrument. In chapter six, I explored the nature of this differentiation fairly extensively; however, I now take it one step further. The choice between an Orff instrument and guitar is important. The class disparity within the school was extreme. The majority of students came from households of privilege. They participated in afterschool activities every night of the week and had many opportunities. School fundraisers were overwhelmingly successful, and the school had many resources at its disposal. The school was also located near a housing project. In every class, there was a small minority of students, largely students of colour, who lacked the financial security of the majority of their classmates.

Susan’s guitar class already offered at least two choices of activity in every class. However, she assessed the socioeconomic disparity in her class and evaluated what that meant in her guitar class. She realized and articulated that any number of students of privilege received private guitar lessons or outside music lessons of some sort. She also acknowledged that the

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3 In Canada, students in grade seven and eight range from age twelve to fourteen.
mere half-hour a week allotted for guitar within the school timetable meant that achieving any
degree of real proficiency on the instrument was effectively impossible without outside help—
help which only students of privilege could access. She understood her class represented a field
of inequity—a field where only certain students could succeed when measured using liberal
standards of merit. So Susan changed the rules of the game. Success in guitar class did not
necessarily mean playing the guitar at all. She recognized the systemic factors influencing
students’ access—factors that had no bearing whatsoever on “merit,” “ability,” or “success.”

This recognition provides a significant shift in notions of centring the student.
Discourses of “student success” are now considered in relation to where students are situated in
the “matrix of domination” (Collins, 2000) and “differentiation” is not the mere provision of
multiple activities based on so-called levels of “ability”, but rather is grounded in the idea that
“ability” is a social construction controlled by systemic factors, all of which need to be taken
into account for a true and radical differentiation to occur. The “safe environment” then, that is
heard so often in educational discourse, is no longer grounded in liberal notions of equality,
merit, and sameness, but rather in difference. When teachers consider how gender, race, class,
immigrant and refugee status, age, language, disability, religion, and sexual orientation affect
the students in their classrooms and account for it in their teaching through an understanding of
privilege, as Susan did with guitar, they create a very different “safe environment” in their
classrooms. Teachers can also work with students to understand privilege, so as to remove the
stigma attached to students who lack privilege. In Susan’s class, in the eight weeks I observed, I
never saw a student on guitar question or laugh at someone who chose to work on an Orff
instrument or anyone belittle someone who chose a simpler activity over one that was more
complex. Rather, students simply accepted the choices others made and worked generally in
small collectives toward the project of the day.
However, there are further questions that arise in this type of initiative. What is the reaction in the parent community and society in general such democratic initiatives? Such a direct challenge to the elites surely comes with resistance. I did not see this type of resistance in any of the schools; parents were largely grateful for the programs. However, it also seemed that the parent community at Amanda’s school did not yet have a firm grasp on the content of her program. There is also a question of whether or not offering flexible options could also limit what students can do in the future. If students do not play an instrument well, can they still participate in high school programs? The answer to this question is currently in flux as the terrain of high school programs shifts from an ensemble paradigm to include classes in production. A number of high schools in Toronto now have class sets of iPads, and the phenomenon of the iPad band is proliferating around North America. However, within the push toward a radical differentiation, there is a responsibility to ensure that such differentiation does not put other limits in place.

The other fundamental component to a safe environment is the work educators can do to ensure that students understand their inherent value. To explicate this idea, I look to Anne’s practice. As I explored in chapter six, one of the remarkable aspects of Anne’s relationship with the students was the degree of trust she had in every child. Students in her class, no matter how small, knew that they would be taken at their word without question. Through this trust, students learned they were of value. Even in kindergarten, when a student made a statement, Anne believed it, and students knew within that space that she would respect them. Instilling a sense of value within children coupled with the differential understanding of their positionalities within the system creates a different “safe environment” from the typically liberal safe environment that assumes equality. The overriding assumption here instead is difference and inequity and the importance of countering it when creating a classroom environment.
The inclusion of a wide range of musics and musicking activities. Since the Tanglewood Symposium of 1967, music educators have called for an expansion of the content of music education. Common liberal discourses consist of “including popular music,” “including world music,” and “composition or creativity in the curriculum.” As previously discussed, liberal understandings of such discourses often take an additive approach to the expansion of the curriculum. As I illustrated earlier in the discussion of nomadology, the inclusion of popular or “world” music in the curriculum, as well as composition, generally consists of an appropriated version of the way it exists in the exterior (beyond school settings), and this altered version often serves to reinscribe the ensemble paradigm as the dominant centre.

However, Dei (2003) puts forward a multicentric curriculum. Such a curriculum opens up a wealth of possibilities in music education. In a multicentric curriculum, multiple musics and musicking activities occur not as additive in relation to the dominant (Western classical) body of knowledge, but rather as integrative. Each music is important, and students (nomads) can view and engage with them from shifting perspectives, as Gould (2005) suggests, noting the privilege associated with that kind of mobility. Like the above understanding of students having varying degrees of privilege in relation to one another, a multicentric music curriculum acknowledges the privilege granted to various musics and the manner in which privilege is reflected materially within music education. Such a curriculum includes not only multiple musics, but also many orientations toward music. Students come to understand music through multiple epistemologies, recognizing that there is more than “one way” to know music.

For an example, I consider Sarah’s Javanese Gamelan program. Sarah’s program integrated multiple musics, including among others, Javanese Gamelan. Unlike other oral and written traditions students learned in her class, Gamelan uses an entirely different style of numbered notation, a technique unlike other techniques they used in class with the exception of some similarity to the Orff instruments, and a tuning system distinct from the major and minor
tonalities of Western music. Gamelan also orients toward the end of the phrase. Rather than the first beat receiving emphasis, a large gong accentuates the end of each phrase. The epistemology for Javanese Gamelan is significantly different than one for Western classical music, and the students in Sarah’s program moved seamlessly between multiple epistemologies, adapting their orientations toward the music as necessary. The nature of the inclusion of the Gamelan then, was far from an additive approach. Instead, it was integrative and relational allowing students to recognize the multiplicity of ways it is possible to know music.

The other component in this expansion of music education to include myriad musics and ways of musicking in music programs is ensuring students can take ownership of the means of cultural production. Within this expanded curriculum, students would have a place to talk about issues that affect their social reality and to literally music about them. To make this education truly radical, once students take control of the material of the classroom, they could then connect their work to social movements beyond the classroom. This expansion of content then moves far beyond genres and epistemologies to recognize and put forward a music education that truly belongs to the students.

I look to the activities created by Amanda and Susan in relation to blues lyrics to provide examples. Both teachers explored the blues in various forms with their older classes, and students in both schools had the opportunity to write lyrics. After giving them many examples of blues forms, Amanda asked the students to consider what troubled them in the world and/or in their lives while Susan asked them to identify an issue of concern. There is much potential within the blues form to speak to social issues and students’ own social realities. Some students in both schools rose to the challenge. To take this activity further, there is perhaps a possibility to link students’ identified issues with parallels in the community. When students give voice in the classroom to issues that concern them, connecting those concerns to people in the community with similar concerns is potentially both powerful and radical. While in this project,
some students pursued the challenge, it is also important to recognize that some students did not. To create a situation where students’ concerns are heard beyond the institution is both potentially empowering and motivating. The institution itself often limits, but when connections are forged beyond its four walls, students may find they have something to say, and, more importantly, they may find others within the community with whom their concerns resonate. They may learn quite young the meaning of solidarity.

**Contextualization of all musics.** Within a liberal paradigm, contextualization of all musics usually translates to contextualization of all *Other musics*—musics *Other than* Western (classical) music. Liberal “equality,” as understood musically, does not extend beyond mere inclusion. In a liberal paradigm, the differential privilege of different musics need not be addressed. The absence of context in discussions of Western classical music generally normalizes it or naturalizes it, thus reinscribing it as the dominant and privileged centre with Other musics arranged around the periphery. Conversely, a radical music education contextualizes all musics, not only situating musics in their contexts, but also drawing relationships between musics and exploring influences, systemic factors, and connections to current musics.

To further extend the work of these four teachers, it would be interesting to not only contextualize classical music in the historical sense of composers and places and dates, but also, as mentioned previously, critique its privileging in the hierarchy of musics. As Said (1993) contends, we can read Jane Austen alongside Fanon in order to achieve this contrapuntal understanding. To throw out Jane Austen or the Western classical canon is not necessarily ultimately useful. Rather, we need to situate it. Such a relational approach explores material realities reflected in and through different musics. Additionally, rather than fostering distance between the students as musickers and the music as one might do in an “epic” version of music education, this novelistic music education connects any music studied to familiar musics,
expanding the realm of the familiar while making frequent links to the present and the life of the “reader.”

I look to Amanda’s unit on African diasporic musics in order to illustrate this relational contextualization. Amanda began the unit by inquiring in each class how “everything we hear on the radio” could conceivably be connected to Africa. The classes considered possibilities; some arrived quickly at the history of enslavement and the transatlantic passage. For other classes, those with younger students in particular, making this connection was difficult. Like the novel’s relationship to the reader, Amanda clarified that all music studied connected to the present; while there was distance, musics did not exist in a space apart. Over the course of the time I observed, Amanda traced different passages across the Atlantic to ports in South America, North America, and the Caribbean. With each tracing, the students explored the resulting music with their teacher not only in relationship to the West African (Ghanaian) music they studied in the fall, but in relation to the related descendant music and popular culture of the present. Students and teacher together wove a complex narrative from present to past to present across multiple places. Students learned of artists in Toronto, the connection of musics studied to popular television shows, and great artists from the past from various times and places in a range of styles and genres.

A radical reading of contextualization then is relational and truly does consider all musics. It takes privilege into account when examining relationships and explores factors such as oppression, structural and material inequities, and their relationships to various musics. Such contextualization connects the musics of the students and their own musical and lived realities and experiences to the musics in the classroom if they are not already the same. Through this kind of contextualization, students and teacher understand not only how musics relate to each other, but also the larger scale political implications of such relationships. In tracing diasporic musics for example, students in Amanda’s class began to understand a host of oppressive
colonial relations and the violence inherent within such relationships. They also learned about the diverse musics that emerge from such intense trauma, perhaps giving them tools to deal with trauma as it occurs in their own lives (see Bradley, 2012 for discussion). This contextualization is fundamentally different from that which effectively reinscribes the centre and does nothing to expose underlying power relations.

**Equity and social justice education: attempts at active subversion.** Finally, as explored in chapter one, two, and three, embedded in the call to change music education is the discourse around equity and social justice in and through music education. One might wonder how what appears to be an attempt at active subversion of the dominant paradigm might be read through a liberal framework. Considering principles such as equality and freedom inherent in any understanding of liberalism, what is absent once again is the differential understanding of why inequality is present in the world. Structural and systemic factors disappear into the background and any inequality is understood in terms of merit rather than the material realities of factors such as racism. A social justice that understands inequality in terms of merit looks to remedy it through discourses of charity, salvation, and benevolence. Rather than turning the gaze on privilege and attempting to dismantle it, it instead tries to “help the needy.” Such discourses are not particularly helpful precisely because of their lack of attention to the systemic factors that structure the playing field into a differential “matrix of domination” (Collins, 2000). However, it is possible to conceive of a radical social justice in music education—one that actively works to subvert dominant power structures.

In thinking about dismantling privilege in music education, I turn once again to Amanda’s class for illustration. Within the grade five and six exploration of diasporic musics, Amanda spent significant time on the blues. One afternoon, her grade five/six class worked

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4 See Vaugeois (2007) for a discussion of Enlightenment ideals and the ways in which they manifest in music education.
through some listening. She played multiple artists and provided them with extensive context for each—contexts which she told as stories. The room was silent as she told these stories. The historical realities of blues artists in the United States were often dark and the music emerged out of significant oppression. Bessie Smith was among the artists Amanda played that afternoon. Like Susan, Amanda was in a school of privilege with a predominantly white student population surrounded by two million dollar homes. The students were oversubscribed in their afterschool activities. The afternoon she told Bessie Smith’s story, the students were shocked into complete silence. Famous black blues singer Bessie Smith performed actively in the 1920s and 1930s. Amanda told the students the following story:

Bessie Smith was a famous blues singer. She was in a single car accident really badly hurt. The person with her went to get help. While he was gone, a car with white people in it hit her car. When the ambulance came, it took the white people to the white hospital right away. By the time the ambulance came to take her to the black hospital, it was too late. She died in the ambulance. Even though slavery's over, there's still segregation. There's still major, major, major, major racism. (Excerpt from observations, February)

With this discussion, Amanda challenged privilege. In each of the three classes in which I observed variations on this discussion, the class was shocked and silent—confronted directly with racism and their own ancestral histories of oppressing people of colour. Amanda engaged in explicit equity talk and pushed students to notice their privilege and question it—a tactic that worked to varying degrees. In that moment, however, not a student moved. In such a blatant example of some lives being inhered with more value than others, students were forced to look at race and privilege and the (often fatal) havoc such systemic oppression wreaks. In that moment, students could not hide from race. Discourses of colourblindness fell away to expose the racism upon which the United States and Canada were founded.

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5 I note here that although the majority of students were white, not all of them were Western European and many had family histories of marginalization.
Such music education is radical; it provides a possible methodology for engaging in equity and social justice. Not only did this music education consider the inequities and oppression that structure the world into hierarchies, it aimed to reveal them to students. This pedagogy worked to both reveal and dismantle privilege.

**A radical rereading.** Gould theorized the radical exterior of music education—the nomadic multiplicity of perspectives (Gould, 2005), the destabilizing of the centre, the “creative responses to material problems” (Gould, 2009b, p. 132), and the becoming-minoritarian (Gould, 2007a). All four of these discourses—centring the student, the inclusion of a wide range of musics and musicking activities, the contextualization of all musics, and equity and social justice education—when read in a radical manner address Gould’s proposals in various ways. The multiplicity of perspectives accompanies Sarah’s introduction of different epistemologies—different ways of knowing musics and the inherent understanding that different people have different orientations toward music. These orientations are also fluid, allowing for multiple possibilities, perspectives, and responses. When students own the means of cultural production and mobilize it to speak to their own social realities, the students themselves open up the possibility of creatively addressing material problems. With the relational contextualization of all musics, this radical music education destabilizes the Western classical centre. Finally, its social justice orientation aims to dismantle privilege and reveal oppression. Dismantling privilege is also a first step in becoming-minoritarian as Gould (2007a) defines it. However, exploring the work of these four music educators pushes the notion of radical music education even further.

**Radical Musicking: Toward a Pedagogy of Social Change**

In the title of this final chapter, I proposed that this pedagogy was one of social change. I now begin to explore the reasons why I believe that is the case. At this time, I remind the reader
of my anti-oppression theoretical orientation in order to reveal my own agenda in this work.

What does a radical rereading of well-worn strategies in liberal education do for music education? In the analysis of these four discourses, what emerges as most significant is the differential recognition of the placement of students within the “matrix of domination” (Collins, 2000)—stratified across uneven terrain with varying degrees of privilege and lack of privilege. Liberal notions of equality and sameness fade as recognition of difference and inequity replace them. What is significant in this education is not only the recognition of structural inequity, but the active engagement of teachers in the work involved to counter such injustice. Inherent in this work then is Vaugeois’ (2009) very definition of social justice as the “work of undoing structures that produce raced and gendered oppressions and systemic poverty as well as the work of challenging discourses that rationalize these structures” (p. 3). I add to her definition oppressions that occur not on the basis of race, class, and gender, but through a combination of factors including race, class, and gender as they intertwine with each other and with disability, immigrant and refugee status, age, marital status, language, religion, and sexual orientation. A radical music education then first and foremost recognizes difference, positionality, and degrees of privilege and works to counter structural inequities.\footnote{These goals are reflective of feminist pedagogy (hooks, 1984; Lorde, 1984/2007).}

Second, in addition to this recognition, in this radical music education, students understand that they are of value. As I discussed earlier, Anne’s school was identified as a \textit{Model School} for the Toronto District School Board, designating a high degree of socioeconomic need. The larger community routinely marginalized students from the school, but in Anne’s class, each student knew their word was trusted and that they were important—something that no doubt had a profound psychological impact on them. The inclusion of the students’ music in music class also sent a clear message to the students that they were of value.
Third, the expansion of content beyond an additive approach allows students to know music in a multicentric manner, from which they understand that music has multiple orientations and epistemologies. A liberal view of expanding the curriculum may allow students to know more than one music, but in this radical music education, students learn that there are multiple ways to think about music—that some musics require entirely different epistemologies, and that it is possible to consider the world from more than one orientation.

Fourth, this expansion of content also includes the potential for students to own the means of cultural production. It enables them to speak from their social realities to issues that matter to them from a personal to a global level. It allows them to connect with others beyond the walls of the institution and put their voices in solidarity with those who share similar concerns.

Fifth, in such a music education, students also gain a relational understanding of the subject. Rather than the hierarchical thinking inherent in a liberal contextualization that naturalizes Western classical music and reinscribes it at the centre, students begin to recognize how the present relates to the past, how oppression and privilege affect music, and the manner in which each music informs every other music and emerges from a context that is not only musical, but sociopolitical and historical in nature. Rather than hierarchical thinking, students consider musics more laterally—rhizomatically as opposed to arboreally (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987).

Finally, they learn in no uncertain terms that charity is not justice. These four schools were at polar ends of the spectrum. Sarah and Anne taught at schools identified as Model Schools on the list of Model Schools for Inner Cities. In both communities, the schools were at the centre. The population at Anne’s school was predominantly black while the population at Sarah’s school was largely East Asian. Both schools had a significant number of students newly immigrated to Canada, as well as many first and second generation Canadians. Many families
struggled financially; Sarah’s and Anne’s schools both subsidized students for field trips when necessary. Conversely, many students at Susan’s and Amanda’s predominantly white schools had many opportunities associated with privilege. They participated in multiple afterschool activities and often travelled abroad. The resources at the schools were extensive and the very active Parent Councils fundraised significant amounts of money.

How might a radical music education address such disparity? The first point in this section explored the differential understanding of the placement of students within the matrix of domination (Collins, 2000) and the work of actively countering inequity inherent in such positioning. This recognition is important in the work of a radical music education toward social justice. However, this discourse is more complicated when considering students situated in polar opposition on the socioeconomic spectrum. As Anne’s work demonstrates, in this system, marginalized students were taught their inherent value. In a school where students lacked privilege and the greater community readily marginalized them, students learned that they were worth something. At the other end of the spectrum, the teachers at the two privileged schools worked to dismantle privilege, to reveal oppressions. They actively worked to uncover with their students the ways in which they were privileged—Vaugeois’ (2009) work of undoing structures of oppression (p. 3).

The ensemble paradigm of music education as it was, and is currently, is an epic. It is a closed form—finished, monologic. It is a world of “firsts” and “bests” where greatness occurred in the past and the best we can hope for in the music classroom is replication—to “read” the epic and recount it. With the call to re-envision music education, the polyphony of voices that make up the novel become a possibility. This music education is interactive, playful, rooted in a history that weaves in and out of the present, and most importantly, polyvocal in its recognition of multiple narratives. This music education does something. It is Freire’s (1970) praxis in the true sense of the word—reflective action toward transformation.
The radical exterior and performative literacy Gould proposes cannot ever be fully realized within the walls of the institution, simply because of the nature of school.\(^7\) Certain aspects of choice disappear within schools. Students, for example, do not choose to engage in composing activities. They may make all of the decisions about what they create, but the decision to create in the first place is not theirs alone. However, it is possible to create problem-based learning, as Gould suggests, in which there is more than “one way” to realize a possibility. It is possible to offer several choices and even choices of assessment (which is organic, not arbitrary). It is possible to acknowledge the presence of multiple narratives and orientations—even those narratives that contradict each other. There were moments within this research where teachers reinscribed dominant power relations; in many ways reinscription on occasion is almost inevitable. However, they also challenged these same power relations in profound ways. Within this project, I observed the realization of all six points identified above, and students learned to negotiate this radical rereading of discourses in the institution—not as an internalized, appropriated simulacrum of the radical exterior, but rather the radical exterior within the school.

The six elements fostered by these discourses offer tremendous potential not just to music education, but to the future. When these discourses circulate among teachers, students first observe teachers modeling differential recognition. In observing this recognition and their teacher’s commitment to opposing structural inequity, students begin to understand that all participants in education and in the world are situated upon profoundly uneven terrain. They also learn quite young, as commonly heard in initial teacher education classrooms and posted on a sign on Anne’s board, that “fair does not equal same.” Students also learn that they are of

\(^7\) The “nature of school” is a theme long explored in sociology. (See for example Jackson, 1968; Waller, 1965.) Acker’s (1999) book provides a detailed ethnographic account of the realities of teachers daily lives in two schools in southwest England. This literature on the nature of schooling provides an account of external factors that place restrictions on the possibilities teachers have to innovate. The factors Acker describes include administrator philosophies, the involvement of parents, hectic teacher timetables, and overall school culture.
value and that this value is intrinsic. We cannot underestimate the psychological impact of such recognition. While bullying remains a significant problem in elementary schools, perhaps the combination of differential recognition with the teaching of the inherent value of each student may begin to shift the manner in which students treat each other as well. As discussed in the context of Sarah’s classroom, students also learn that there are multiple orientations and epistemologies involved in understanding music. However, this learning extends far beyond the music classroom. When students learn that there is more than one way to understand music, they also learn that there is more than one way to understand the world—that different people understand and approach the world through different epistemologies. This recognition is quite significant learning for children. When they take ownership for the means of cultural production, they also begin to develop their voices, potentially connecting to those in the community who are “singing the same song.” Further, through contextualization and relational understandings of music, students begin to comprehend the impact of oppression, history, and other sociopolitical influences on culture and music. Finally, within this radical music education, students learn tools to dismantle privilege, first and foremost through its revelation. They learn, as Vaugeois (2009) encourages, the work of undoing structural oppression.

In response to Gould’s call for a radical exterior, relying on the work of the four music educator participants in this study, I put these significant learnings forward as a curriculum for music education. As previously discussed, the nature of schooling is such that students lack a certain degree of choice of the subject matter, although, as a curriculum, these six understandings are certainly applicable across a whole range of material, much of which students can choose. In many ways, this education is the problem-posing education of Freire (1970), and it has transformative potential.

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8 This practice is consistent with feminist philosophy in music education which reveals and critiques effects of music education practices and then provides alternatives (Gould, 2011, p. 135).
If this agenda is the curriculum, how might we, as music educators, employ a pedagogy to push these ideas forward? What would this pedagogy look like? As I did in the literature review and in the data analysis, I want to separate content from pedagogy for a moment, while acknowledging that they are intrinsically linked. I engaged the work of four philosophers thus far—Deleuze and Guattari (1987), Bakhtin (1981), and music educator Gould (2005, 2007a, 2009a, 2009b). Relying on their work, what I put forward was a novelistic music education located in the radical exterior. Such a music education is polyphonic—resplendent with multiple narratives and possibilities, fully contextualized in relation to the present and to the students’ lived realities, and oppositional in nature to the oppressive character of the State apparatus. In the curriculum I just proposed, what does the pedagogy look like? What can pedagogy look like in a polyphonic, contextualized, connected, and anti-oppressive music education? Turning back to the war machine of Deleuze and Guattari (1987), what is perhaps most remarkable about such an apparatus is its ability to respond in the moment within the terrain of smooth space. This apparatus reacts to circumstances and adapts accordingly. It also has no limitations on the manner in which it can react. The war machine is creative; when faced with a problem, it is restricted only by the limits to its imagination. Bakhtin’s (1981) novel also emphasizes its relationship to the reader. The interaction is fundamental; it is an open form and dialogue is fundamental. Is it possible to have a music education whose or in which the response is in the moment? Ideally, the act of teaching is improvisatory. Teacher-as-facilitator reacts to the students and the conversation moves forward. In a sense, this response to environmental factors is nomadic. Rather than the regulated and homogenous nature of striated space, this manner of conversation and problem-posing education (Freire, 1970) moves into the heterogeneous terrain of smooth space.9 A nomadic pedagogy then is one that is willing to travel—to follow the

9 I remind the reader that the discussion of smooth and striated space is from the work of Deleuze and Guattari (1987).
conversation, sometimes in the lead, sometimes from behind, weaving through multiple perspectives on any given problem through the openended nature of the novel in a world where there is no “one right perspective.”

Within this reactive, adaptive, shifting nomadic pedagogy, teachers still require a curriculum. Employing the work of the four music educators of this study, I put forward what I consider a radical curriculum—one rooted in anti-oppression with significant transformative potential. It is the pedagogy that enacts that curriculum to create the novel. It is the pedagogy that creates the interplay between the “text” (music) and the “readers” (students and teacher). However, with such a curriculum at the centre, it is necessary to engage in pedagogy from a particular orientation. For this work, I choose a critical anti-oppressive framework. Teaching is improvisatory, situated, responsive, and, ideally, playful. However, without a critical theoretical orientation, this responding in the moment does not necessarily further the work of social justice as undoing structural oppression (Vagueois, 2009)—work that I consider intrinsic to any notion of radical music education.

I draw one further example from the classroom (drawn from chapter eight) to demonstrate this improvisatory pedagogy from a critical orientation. On an afternoon in January, Amanda taught a grade three class who were just beginning the unit on African diasporic musics. In this particular discussion, students were horrified by her descriptions of the transatlantic passage and enslavement. The connections they made from this exchange, however, were both interesting and disturbing. As students of privilege, they immediately associated themselves with the plantation owners, and a conversation ensued where students discussed buying slaves and “setting them free”—that if they found themselves in that situation, they would not own slaves. As the classroom discourse shifted in this direction, Amanda immediately said, “But what if

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10 The instant association with the plantation owners is interesting and disturbing, but for the purposes of this conversation, I do not extend this discussion.
everyone else was doing it?” She pointed to the financial discrepancy and loss plantation owners without enslaved people would experience if all of the other plantations used slave labour. To approach the act of improvisation that is teaching from a nomadic, but non-critical perspective would allow this conversation to venture into discourses of charity and more significantly benevolence. Amanda did not allow the students to take up this position. Employing a critical framework, she followed the conversation, but pursued an anti-oppressive agenda.

It is important to note that one might argue that when a teacher or person of influence mobilizes such a strong orientation that some of the implications of such pedagogy are almost fascistic in nature (see Bradley, 2007a for further discussion); however when couched in the significant learning that all students are of value, and that the world contains people with many different orientations and epistemologies, students will hopefully begin to understand different orientations, particularly if teachers make their particular philosophy plain to the students.

**The Paradox of Whiteness**

In thinking through these ideas, a major paradox comes to light. In considering this pedagogy, I note again that not all teachers have the same freedom of movement. While teaching is, in fact, improvisatory, teachers with greater degrees of privilege can pursue conversation and issues more freely than teachers who lack privilege. Racialized teachers, for example, are likely to face resistance when centring issues of race in the classroom. This study investigated the discourses, practices, and philosophies of four white, female teachers. These four teachers, in many ways, work to dismantle structural inequity as anti-racist educators. However, paradoxically, it is their race that in fact allows them to do this work. It is, thus, a double bind. Not only do white teachers have more freedom to engage in a radical pedagogy, but their resistance to inequity actually works through their race.
I digress from music education for a moment to consider the work of Gada Mahrouse. Mahrouse (2007) explored the work of largely white activists who deployed their whiteness in accompaniment/observer/human shield roles in organizations mainly based in the Middle East (most were in Palestine, specifically). Peacekeeping organizations requested the presence of these Western (white) activists specifically because of their whiteness. The work these Westerners did in these areas to counter injustice and racism worked precisely because of their whiteness, thus reinscribing racial hierarchies at the moment it worked to undo them.

While the link may not be obvious, there is a connection here. When white teachers do anti-racist work in their schools that teachers of colour cannot as easily do because of opposition or resistance, whiteness is reinscribed precisely because of this dynamic. Mahrouse (2007) opens her ninth chapter with the following epigraph: “What difference does it make where the antirace is performed, by whom, and in whose company?” (Ware & Back, 2002, p. 14, as cited in Mahrouse, 2007, p. 202). She then proceeds to argue “that ‘the who,’ makes antiracist practice possible, while paradoxically and simultaneously limiting its very possibility” (Mahrouse, 2007, p. 225). It seems a sad state of affairs when anti-racist work can reinscribe racism in this manner. However, in her conclusion, after questioning whether or not activists simply should not go to areas of conflict, she concludes the opposite, but with a caveat. She asks poignantly:

> [W]hat might be gained if those who participate in this activism “go in” with the clear but difficult understanding that their encounters will unequivocally be over-determined by whiteness? Or, put differently, how might the activists narrate their

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11 In making this argument, it is not my intent to minimize the agency of teachers of colour in any way. There is no question that teachers of colour have been on the front lines of critical pedagogy and anti-racism despite opposition they have faced for their efforts. Ladson-Billings’ (2009) book *The Dreamkeepers*, for example, reminds us that despite the paradox I identify in this section that occurs when white teachers are able to do anti-racist work *because of* their skin colour, that teachers of colour regularly employ their agency to fight to do this work. The paradox lies in the opposition or lack thereof. The four teachers in this study largely ignored the canon and were not challenged for doing so. A teacher of colour engaging in similar strategies is perhaps more likely to be challenged by the community. A black, female teacher who makes race the centre of the discussion in the manner that Amanda did, for example, could face dismissal or resistance from students or parents for simply being “angry” or “having an agenda”.

experiences and their self perceptions differently if they entered into the solidarity relationship fully knowing that it is a colonial encounter? Might an unwavering conscious grasp of our colonial histories bring with it the possibility that the encounter will someday take a new form? (Mahrouse, 2007, pp. 267-268)

Mahrouse thus concludes with a hopeful possibility. The kind of work these four music educators undertook is exemplary in many ways in its efforts to subvert inequity. Together, they put forward that a radical music education is possible. Paradoxically however, because teachers of colour often face opposition and dismissal when doing similar work, these anti-racist efforts in many ways reinscribe race. As it currently stands, white teachers have more freedom to engage in “radical pedagogy.” If, as Mahrouse suggests, teachers use this freedom with the explicit understanding that their race does over-determine the teaching relationship (and all relationships), then perhaps a different encounter will become possible. When white teachers continually engage in pedagogy that aims to dismantle privilege, this approach may play a small role in shifting power relations.

**Into the Future**

In thinking toward the future, I identify a number of key issues to address. The paradox of whiteness I described relying on the work of Mahrouse (2007) is the foremost issue still to be confronted. When anti-racism can reinscribe race, as music educators, we need to find another way—perhaps the beginning of which I point to in this document. In addition, one significant issue that arises from this project is the question of whether or not there are any so-called “casualties” of critical pedagogy. When the canon is dismissed, do students lose in some way? Will they be limited later in life, perhaps even in high school, if they do not have knowledge of the canon or knowledge of certain instruments? Susan’s guitar program, which I argued leveled the playing field for her student population, can be viewed another way. There were students in her guitar program who did not learn guitar. They played Orff instruments instead. In reflecting further on this practice, I wonder if perhaps by leveling the playing field by providing multiple
options, she actually created uneven future positioning. Students on Orff instruments would likely be streamed into beginner music classes in high school—or would simply elect to bypass music altogether, noting that this so-called “choice” would be effectively predetermined by their lack of knowledge. By differentiating as such, Susan addressed student feelings of success, but perhaps limited later opportunities. If, as music educators, we choose to engage in critical pedagogy, ensuring the students are not at a disadvantage later is important.

Further, I also discovered a shift in my thinking throughout the writing process. At the beginning, my thought process was actually fairly polarized. As I mentioned, in the construction of my initial framework, I strongly opposed the dominant paradigm of music education. Because that opposition and the framework I constructed around that opposition was so strong, in reflecting on the document, I feel there are places where I created a binary—instances where the “anti-” of the anti-oppressive framework divided the possibilities firmly into two camps. As I moved through the writing, however, I began to work with multicentric possibilities and the idea of decentring or destabilizing the Western classical centre. I shifted from polarized thinking toward “both/and” constructions and stopped looking to replace a “traditional” music education simply with its opposite. In considering future work, I recognize from the inside the limits of polarized thinking and will look to address the two issues I identified from a more fluid perspective.

Conclusion: A Transformative Music Education

To conclude, the anti-oppressive curriculum I propose coupled with an improvisatory and nomadic pedagogy truly brings transformative potential to music education. However, teachers must employ it only with the full knowledge that it is possible to reinstall hierarchies despite one’s efforts to the contrary. In fact, though undesirable and actively countered, this result is, in fact, likely. However, borrowing from Mahrouse (2007), the answer is not to
withdraw from the work. It is to do the work with a full recognition of the power dynamics involved while engaging in continuing efforts to counter them. The radical music education I put forward through the work of these four music educators teaches students about inequity, unmasks privilege and works to dismantle it, reveals the possibility of multiple orientations and epistemologies toward the world, puts the means of cultural production in the hands of the students, considers musics relationally and without hierarchies, and above all teaches students that they are of intrinsic value despite whatever else the world tells them. Employing a critical nomadic pedagogy with such a curriculum furthers the anti-oppression agenda, encouraging a multiplicity of perspectives and ways of knowing the world. This work is crucial. Coupled with the vigilant knowledge that it may produce the opposite effect from that desired, this music education holds the potential to work toward a very different encounter than those fostered by a traditional paradigm of music education.

The four music educators in this study taught aspects of this curriculum to their students, although the emphasis on the different elements varied from school to school. Considering the combined philosophies, discourses, and practices of these four educators has powerful implications for music education. Students begin to learn the tenets of a transformative radical curriculum that incorporates an anti-oppressive framework in their elementary classes, beginning at the age of four. When they learn this curriculum from a teacher fully aware of the perpetual possibility of the reinscription of oppression, music education has the potential to move far beyond the four walls of the classroom. This pedagogy is no longer a pedagogy solely concerned with the teaching of music as music, but rather a pedagogy that focuses on what might be possible to teach through music to effect social change. For when students learn to identify, question, and oppose structural inequities in music class, and teachers understand the full range of effects of their own positionality on the classroom, there is great potential in the discipline indeed.
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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Informed Consent Form for Teacher Participants

Dear Participant,

Thank you for your interest in this study. As you know from the previous letter of recruitment, this study will examine the ways in which dominant paradigms in music education are challenged in the elementary music classroom and the ways that multiculturalism is taken up by a number of different music educators. Please be aware that you are free to decide not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time without consequence.

The study is called “Radical Musicking: Challenging Dominant Paradigms in Elementary Music Education.” The purpose of this multiple case study is to explore the way that music teachers engage in their classroom to challenge dominant paradigms. I ultimately hope to produce a dissertation that provides insights into different teaching philosophies and strategies for both teachers beginning their careers and those looking to alter their teaching practice.

Data will be collected over an 8-week period, approximately 2-3 days a week, depending on your schedule. The time commitment in addition to the normal school day will be 3 interviews of approximately an hour in length, one at the beginning, one after 2-3 weeks of observation, and one at the end. I will observe in the classroom and participate in classroom activities and support your program as a trained music teacher myself. Observation time is flexible according to your schedule. Data will include transcribed interviews (a copy provided), classroom observation fieldnotes, and a journal that I will keep, in addition to any documents (i.e. units, etc.) that you care to share.

I am happy to share my findings with you and will share all analysis with you. You will remain anonymous in the study and all identifying characteristics of the site location will be removed.

There are no known risks and/or discomforts associated with this study. In return for your participation, I will share the information produced through this research. In addition, I am happy to share any resources I have or have created that might be helpful at the end of the 8 weeks.

Please sign your consent with full knowledge of the nature and purpose of the procedures. A copy of this consent form will be given to you to keep.
Informed Consent Form

I have read the attached letter outlining the research study called “Radical Musicking: Challenging Dominant Paradigms in Elementary Music Education.” I have read the terms of the study. I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time. It is my understanding that withdrawal from the study will not affect my status. I understand the terms of the study and am willing to participate.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>Juliet Hess, PhD Candidate, University of Toronto</td>
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Appendix B: Informed Consent Form for Principals

Dear Principal,

I am a doctoral student at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto in the department of Sociology and Equity Studies working under the supervision of Jamie Magnusson. I am a certified teacher through the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) and a former elementary music teacher with six years of experience with the York Region District School Board. With the permission of the Toronto District School Board, I am currently seeking music teachers who wish to participate in a study. The study is called “Radical Musicking: Challenging Dominant Paradigms in Elementary Music Education.”

This study aims to examine the ways in which dominant paradigms are interrupted in the elementary music classroom and the ways that multiculturalism is taken up by a number of different teachers. I am looking for a number of educators to participate who feel that they challenge dominant paradigms in their classrooms and run a diverse music program. The purpose of this case study is to explore the way that music teachers engage in their classroom to challenge dominant paradigms. I ultimately hope to produce a dissertation that provides insights into different teaching philosophies and strategies for teachers both beginning their careers and those looking to alter their practice.

With your permission, I would like to include the music teacher at your school in my research. There will be no requirement on your time—only that of the music teacher if you both agree.

Data will be collected over an 8-week period, approximately 2-3 days a week, depending on the schedule of the music teacher. The time commitment for the music teacher in addition to the normal school day will be 3 interviews of approximately an hour in length, one at the beginning, one after 2-3 weeks of observation, and one at the end. I will observe in the classroom throughout the 8 weeks, but observation time is flexible and negotiable according to the teacher’s schedule. Data will include transcribed interviews (a copy provided), classroom observation fieldnotes, and a journal that I will keep, in addition to any documents (i.e. units, etc.) that the music teacher cares to share.

Please feel free to ask any questions about the study either before or during the research period. I am happy to share my findings with you and will share all analysis with you as well. The school will remain anonymous in the study and all identifying characteristics of the site location will be removed. Additionally, the teacher may also decide not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time without consequence.

There are no known risks and/or discomforts for the teacher or the school associated with this study. In return for your participation, I will share the information produced through this research. In addition, I am happy to assist to share any resources I have or have created that might be helpful at the end of the 8 weeks.
Please contact me with any questions. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Juliet Hess
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto
juliet.hess@utoronto.ca
Appendix C: Original Call for Participants and Recruitment Poster

Dear TDSB Music Teacher,

I am a doctoral student at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto in the department of Sociology and Equity Studies. I am a certified teacher through the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) and a former elementary music teacher with six years of experience with the York Region District School Board. With the permission of the Toronto District School Board, I am currently seeking music teachers who wish to participate in a study. The study is called “Radical Musicking: Challenging Dominant Paradigms in Elementary Music Education.”

This study aims to examine the ways in which dominant paradigms are interrupted in the elementary music classroom and the ways that multiculturalism is taken up by a number of different teachers. I am looking for a number of educators to participate who feel that they challenge dominant paradigms in their classrooms and run a diverse music program. The purpose of this multiple case study is to explore the way that music teachers engage in their classroom to challenge dominant paradigms. I ultimately hope to produce a dissertation that provides insights into different teaching philosophies and strategies for teachers both beginning their careers and those looking to alter their practice.

Data will be collected over an 8-week period, approximately 2-3 days a week, depending on your schedule. The time commitment in addition to the normal school day will be 3 interviews of approximately an hour in length, one at the beginning, one after 2-3 weeks of observation, and one at the end. I will observe in the classroom and participate in classroom activities and support your program as a trained music teacher myself. Observation time is flexible and negotiable according to your schedule. Data will include transcribed interviews (a copy provided), classroom observation fieldnotes, and a journal that I will keep, in addition to any documents (i.e. units, etc.) that you care to share.

Please feel free to ask any questions about the study either before participating or during the time that you are participating. I am happy to share my findings with you and will share all analysis with you. You will remain anonymous in the study and all identifying characteristics of the site location will be removed. You may also decide not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time without consequence.

There are no known risks and/or discomforts associated with this study. In return for your participation, I will share the information produced through this research. In addition, I am happy to share any resources I have or have created that might be helpful at the end of the 8 weeks.

Please contact me if you are interested in participating in this study. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Juliet Hess
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto
juliet.hess@utoronto.ca
Do you run a varied music program?
A program that challenges dominant music education paradigms?
Are you interested in participating in a doctoral research study?

Seeking music teachers
for a research study called:

“Radical Musicking:
Challenging Dominant Paradigms in
Elementary Music Education”

Please see attached letter and contact Juliet Hess if interested.

Juliet Hess
juliet.hess@utoronto.ca
University of Toronto
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
Department of Sociology and Equity Studies
Appendix D: Information Letter to Parents and Guardians

Dear Parents and Guardians,

I am a doctoral student at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto in the department of Sociology and Equity Studies working under the supervision of Jamie Magnusson. I am a certified teacher through the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) and a former elementary music teacher with six years of experience with the York Region District School Board. With the permission of the Toronto District School Board, over the course of the next 8 weeks, I will be observing in the music classroom at _________________ Public School. I am essentially observing to see the ways in which the music program may be unique. I ultimately hope to produce a dissertation that provides insights into different music teaching philosophies and strategies for teachers both beginning their careers and those looking to alter their practice.

I will generally be observing in music class two days a week throughout the school day and during extra-curricular activities. Although I will be in the classroom as an external researcher for an extended period of time, the research is focused on the music teaching and the program. No individual student information or identification will be revealed.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions you may have about the research. I am looking forward to observing in the music program.

Sincerely,

Juliet Hess
Department of Sociology and Equity Studies
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto
juliet.hess@utoronto.ca
## Appendix E: Observation Protocol

Date: ___________________________ Period: _______ Grade: _______

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<thead>
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<th>Length of Activity: _____ minutes (1 class)</th>
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<td><strong>Observations about Activities:</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Observations about Classroom Management:</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Observations about Power Dynamics:</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Classroom Layout:</strong></td>
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 Appendix F: Interview Questions

**FIRST INTERVIEW: GENERAL BACKGROUND**

*Personal*
1) Please share anything you would like about your personal background including:
   a. Ethnic background
   b. Where you were born
   c. Where you have lived since you were born
   d. Languages you speak
   e. Educational background
   f. Any family background you wish to share

*Professional (Musical Background)*
1) How would you describe your musical background (formal and informal education, listening tastes, performance experience)?
2) Can you discuss your experience learning through notation and through oral tradition?

*Professional (Educational Background)*
1) Can you describe your music teaching (and teaching) career?

*School*
1) Please describe, in as much detail as you can, the history and present dynamics of the school (demographics, atmosphere, community involvement, school events, special programs, school policies, student interactions, etc.).
2) Are there special efforts made to educate the students about different cultures?
3) Has the school engaged in any specific education initiatives to educate students about different cultures or about racism or other equity issues?

*Music Program*
1) Please describe, in as much detail as you can, the history and present dynamics of the music program at the school (emphasis, educational philosophy, etc.).
2) How do you see yourself as challenging dominant paradigms?
3) Do you make any special effort to educate the students about different cultures? What does this look like academically in your classroom? What does this look like musically in your classroom?
4) What role do Western notation and oral tradition play in your classroom?
5) Does the students’ music have a place in the class? Can you discuss this?
6) Have there been shifts in your teaching practice over the years? Can you describe the changes and the motivations behind them?
7) Do equity issues arise in your classroom? How do you address them? Can you share a few examples?
8) Can you share a few examples where you feel that your approach to music education made a difference to the students or to a specific student?

*Other*
1) Is there anything else you would like to add?
2) Do you have any questions for me?
SECOND INTERVIEW: PROGRAM SPECIFIC BASED PARTIALLY ON OBSERVATIONS (AFTER 20-30 HOURS OF OBSERVATION)

- The second and third interview will be based on observations. I have included several sample questions, but I will also choose several instances from the observation period to discuss in light of the research questions.

1) Can you provide some examples from the past few weeks of the ways you feel that you have challenged dominant music education paradigms in your classroom?
2) What effect do you feel your approach in your program has on your students? Can you provide some examples?
3) What do you feel is important to do when teaching a variety of musics? Why? How has that been reflected in the last few weeks?
4) What do you feel is the effect of your program on students in specialized programs in the school?

- The rest of the interview will be derived from various occurrences over the observation period.

CULMINATING INTERVIEW

- This interview will also reflect on a few key moments that have transpired over the period of observation.

1) If you could provide some advice to music teachers (particularly those at the beginning stages of their careers), what would it be?
2) How would you guide new teachers to formulate a teaching philosophy?
3) Where do goals including anti-racism, multiculturalism and interrupting dominant paradigms fit into this equation?
4) How should curriculum and program address our diverse society? What about in a rural area that is perhaps more homogeneous in nature?
5) Do you feel that teaching music can make a difference in the way students approach the world? How?
6) How do you feel that multiculturalism and anti-racism are taken up in music education and in education more generally?

Other
1) Is there anything else you would like to add?
2) Do you have any questions for me?
Appendix G: Preliminary Coding Chart

Research Questions:

1. a) What is the scope of the musical knowledge and teaching practices of four elementary music teachers who self-identify as educators who aim to challenge dominant paradigms?
   b) How do these educators define “challenging dominant paradigms?”
2. a) What discourses circulate in the classrooms of four elementary music teachers who self-identify as educators who aim to challenge dominant paradigms?
   b) How do the discourses reinscribe or challenge dominant paradigms?
3. a) How does music teacher practice reinscribe or challenge dominant paradigms?
   b) How do music teachers take up the idea of multiculturalism in their classrooms?
4. a) What are the tenets of the teaching philosophies of these four music teachers?
   b) What are the implications of these tenets for music education philosophy in general?

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<td>b. Styles: Challenge to Dominant Paradigm</td>
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<td>c. Music Education Methods: Dominant Paradigm</td>
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<td>d. Music Education Methods: Challenge to Dominant Paradigm</td>
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<td>e. Formal/Informal Learning</td>
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<td>f. Languages</td>
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<td>g. Repertoire: Dominant Paradigm</td>
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<td>h. Repertoire: Challenge to Dominant Paradigm</td>
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<tr>
<td>i. Representation (Weight of Different Repertoire Components)</td>
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<td>j. Active Musicianship</td>
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<td>k. Self-Knowledge</td>
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<td><strong>Scope: Classroom Practice</strong></td>
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<td>g. Recognition of Different Ways of Doing Music</td>
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<td>Discourses about Content</td>
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<td>i. Music and Politics</td>
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<td>j. Notation</td>
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<td>k. Learning Orally/Aurally</td>
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<td>c. Equity and Social Justice</td>
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<td>j. Music and Politics</td>
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<td>e. Recognition of Different Ways of Doing Music</td>
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f. Movement  
g. Creating  
h. Repertoire  
i. Music and Politics  
j. Notation  
k. Learning Orally/Aurally

**Philosophy about Student Needs**  
- a. Student Voice  
- b. Differentiation  
- c. Societal Social Expectations  
- d. Institutional Social Expectations  
- e. Special Needs

**Philosophy about Relationships**  
- a. Community Connections in the School  
- b. Community Connections outside the School  
- c. Equity and Social Justice  
- d. Societal Social Expectations  
- e. Institutional Social Expectations

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**Themes/Coding Scheme for Classroom Observations and Researcher Journal**

**Scope: Musical Knowledge**  
- a. Styles: Dominant Paradigm  
- b. Styles: Challenge to Dominant Paradigm  
- c. Music Education Methods: Dominant Paradigm  
- d. Music Education Methods: Challenge to Dominant Paradigm  
- e. Formal/Informal Learning  
- f. Languages  
- g. Repertoire: Dominant Paradigm  
- h. Repertoire: Challenge to Dominant Paradigm  
- i. Representation (Weight of Different Repertoire Components)  
- j. Active Musicianship  
- k. Self-Knowledge

**Scope: Classroom Practice**  
- a. Styles: Dominant Paradigm  
- b. Styles: Challenge to Dominant Paradigm  
- c. Music Education Methods: Dominant Paradigm  
- d. Music Education Methods: Challenge to Dominant Paradigm  
- e. Formal/Informal Learning  
- f. Languages  
- g. Repertoire: Dominant Paradigm  
- h. Repertoire: Challenge to Dominant Paradigm  
- i. Representation (Weight of Different Repertoire Components)  
- j. Active Musicianship

**Discourses about Pedagogy**  
- a. Critical Pedagogy  
- b. Co-operative Learning  
- c. Different Music Ed. Philosophies
d. Critical Multiculturalism  
e. Superficial Multiculturalism  
f. Equity and Social Justice  
g. Recognition of Different Ways of Doing Music  
h. Multiple Modalities  
i. Creating  
j. Music and Politics  
k. Transmission  
l. Notation

### Discourses about Content

a. Curriculum Integration  
b. Connection to Popular Culture  
c. Critical Multiculturalism  
d. Superficial Multiculturalism  
e. Recognition of Different Ways of Doing Music  
f. Movement  
g. Creating  
h. Repertoire  
i. Music and Politics  
j. Notation  
k. Learning Orally/Aurally

### Discourses about Student Needs

a. Student Voice  
b. Differentiation  
c. Societal Social Expectations  
d. Institutional Social Expectations  
e. Special Needs

### Discourses about Relationships

a. Community Connections in the School  
b. Community Connections outside the School  
c. Equity and Social Justice  
d. Societal Social Expectations  
e. Institutional Social Expectations

### Practice: Pedagogy

a. Critical Pedagogy  
b. Co-operative Learning  
c. Different Music Ed. Philosophies  
d. Critical Multiculturalism  
e. Superficial Multiculturalism  
f. Equity and Social Justice  
g. Recognition of Different Ways of Doing Music  
h. Multiple Modalities  
i. Creating  
j. Music and Politics  
k. Transmission  
l. Notation

### Practice: Content

a. Curriculum Integration
b. Connection to Popular Culture  
c. Critical Multiculturalism  
d. Superficial Multiculturalism  
e. Recognition of Different Ways of Doing Music  
f. Movement  
g. Creating  
h. Repertoire  
i. Music and Politics  
j. Notation  
k. Learning Orally/Aurally

**Practice: Student Needs**

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<td>d. Institutional Social Expectations</td>
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<td>e. Special Needs</td>
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**Practice: Relationships**

| a. Community Connections in the School |
| b. Community Connections outside the School |
| c. Equity and Social Justice |
| d. Societal Social Expectations |
| e. Institutional Social Expectations |
Appendix H: Final Coding Chart

Research Questions:

1. a) What is the scope of the musical knowledge and teaching practices of four elementary music teachers who self-identify as educators who aim to challenge dominant paradigms?
   b) How do these educators define “challenging dominant paradigms?”
2. a) What discourses circulate in the classrooms of four elementary music teachers who self-identify as educators who aim to challenge dominant paradigms?
   b) How do the discourses reinscribe or challenge dominant paradigms?
3. a) How does music teacher practice reinscribe or challenge dominant paradigms?
   b) How do music teachers take up the idea of multiculturalism in their classrooms?
4. a) What are the tenets of the teaching philosophies of these four music teachers?
   b) What are the implications of these tenets for music education philosophy in general?

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**Themes/Coding Scheme for Teacher Interviews**

**Scope: Musical Knowledge**

| a. Styles: Dominant Paradigm     |
| b. Styles: Challenge to Dominant Paradigm |
| c. Self-Knowledge                |
| d. Representation (Weight of Different Repertoire Components) |
| e. Repertoire: Dominant Paradigm |
| f. Repertoire: Challenge to Dominant Paradigm |
| g. Popular Culture               |
| h. Notation                      |
| i. Music Education Methods: Dominant Paradigm |
| j. Music Education Methods: Challenge to Dominant Paradigm |
| k. Listening                     |
| l. Learning Orally/Aurally       |
| m. Formal Learning               |
| n. Informal Learning             |
| o. Languages                     |
| p. Context                       |
| q. Community Connections         |
| r. Active Musicianship           |

**Scope: Classroom Practice**

| a. White Privilege                |
| b. Styles: Dominant Paradigm      |
| c. Styles: Challenge to Dominant Paradigm |
| d. Safe Environment               |
| e. Representation (Weight of Different Repertoire Components) |
| f. Repertoire: Dominant Paradigm  |
| g. Repertoire: Challenge to Dominant Paradigm |
| h. Power Dynamics                 |
| i. Popular Culture                |
| j. Music Education Methods: Dominant Paradigm |
| k. Music Education Methods: Challenge to Dominant Paradigm |
| l. Music and Technology           |
| m. Movement                       |
| n. Listening: Dominant Paradigm   |
| o. Listening: Challenge to Dominant Paradigm |
| p. Learning through Notation      |
| q. Learning Orally/Aurally        |
| r. Languages                      |
s. Formal Learning
t. Informal Learning
u. Facilitation
v. Culturally Relevant and Responsive Pedagogy
w. Context
x. Composition or Creating
y. Community Connections
z. Classroom Management
aa. Active Musicianship

### Student Engagement

#### Discourses about Pedagogy

a. Transmission
b. Superficial Multiculturalism
c. Scaffolding
d. Recognition of Different Ways of Doing Music
e. Notation
f. Music and Politics
g. Multiple Modalities
h. Learning Orally/Aurally
i. Language Learning
j. Equity and Social Justice
k. Different Music Ed. Philosophies
l. Culturally Relevant and Responsive Pedagogy
m. Critical Pedagogy
n. Critical Multiculturalism
o. Critical Listening
p. Creating
q. Co-operative Learning
r. Classroom Management
s. Checking for Understanding

#### Discourses about Content

a. Superficial Multiculturalism
b. Repertoire
c. Recognition of Different Ways of Doing Music
d. Notation
e. Music and Politics
f. Movement
g. Listening
h. Learning Orally/Aurally
i. Equity and Social Justice
j. Curriculum Integration
k. Connection to Popular Culture
l. Critical Multiculturalism
m. Critical Listening
n. Creating
o. Context
p. Connection to Popular Culture

#### Discourses about Student Needs
| a. Student Voice  
| b. Special Needs  
| c. Societal Social Expectations  
| d. Safe Environment  
| e. Institutional Social Expectations  
| f. Equity  
| g. Differentiation  

**Discourses about Relationships**

| a. Teacher to Student  
| b. Student to Teacher  
| c. Student to Student  
| d. Student Leadership  
| e. Societal Social Expectations  
| f. Philosophy about Power Dynamics  
| g. Music to World Connections  
| h. Institutional Social Expectations  
| i. Equity and Social Justice  
| j. Drawing Relationships between Material  
| k. Community Connections in the School  
| l. Community Connections outside the School  

**Discourses about Goals**

| a. Validation of Students  
| b. Student Success  
| c. Social Goals  
| d. Safety/Comfort  
| e. Notational Literacy  
| f. Love of Music  
| g. Knowledge of Musical and Political Context  
| h. Individual Responsibility  
| i. Fun  
| j. Focus and Concentration  
| k. Equity and Social Justice  
| l. Ensemble Experience  
| m. Embodied Learning  
| n. Critical Listeners and Critical Thinkers  
| o. Creativity  
| p. Confidence to Continue in Music  
| q. Awareness of Community Happenings  

**Philosophy about Pedagogy**

| a. Transmission  
| b. Superficial Multiculturalism  
| c. Scaffolding  
| d. Recognition of Different Ways of Doing Music  
| e. Notation  
| f. Music and Politics  
| g. Multiple Modalities  
| h. Learning Orally/Aurally  
| i. Language Learning  

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**Philosophy about Content**

| a. | Superficial Multiculturalism |
| b. | Repertoire |
| c. | Recognition of Different Ways of Doing Music |
| d. | Notation |
| e. | Music and Politics |
| f. | Movement |
| g. | Listening |
| h. | Learning Orally/Aurally |
| i. | Equity and Social Justice |
| j. | Curriculum Integration |
| k. | Connection to Popular Culture |
| l. | Critical Multiculturalism |
| m. | Critical Listening |
| n. | Creating |
| o. | Context |
| p. | Connection to Popular Culture |

**Philosophy about Student Needs**

| a. | Student Voice |
| b. | Special Needs |
| c. | Societal Social Expectations |
| d. | Safe Environment |
| e. | Institutional Social Expectations |
| f. | Equity |
| g. | Differentiation |

**Philosophy about Relationships**

| a. | Teacher to Student |
| b. | Student to Teacher |
| c. | Student to Student |
| d. | Student Leadership |
| e. | Societal Social Expectations |
| f. | Philosophy about Power Dynamics |
| g. | Music to World Connections |
| h. | Institutional Social Expectations |
| i. | Equity and Social Justice |
| j. | Drawing Relationships between Material |
| k. | Community Connections in the School |
| l. | Community Connections outside the School |
### Philosophy about Goals

1. Validation of Students
2. Student Success
3. Social Goals
4. Safety/Comfort
5. Notational Literacy
6. Love of Music
7. Knowledge of Musical and Political Context
8. Individual Responsibility
9. Fun
10. Focus and Concentration
11. Equity and Social Justice
12. Ensemble Experience
13. Embodied Learning
14. Critical Listeners and Critical Thinkers
15. Creativity
16. Confidence to Continue in Music
17. Awareness of Community Happenings

### Themes/Coding Scheme for Classroom Observations and Researcher Journal

#### Scope: Musical Knowledge

1. Styles: Dominant Paradigm
2. Styles: Challenge to Dominant Paradigm
3. Self-Knowledge
4. Representation (Weight of Different Repertoire Components)
5. Repertoire: Dominant Paradigm
6. Repertoire: Challenge to Dominant Paradigm
7. Popular Culture
8. Notation
9. Music Education Methods: Dominant Paradigm
10. Music Education Methods: Challenge to Dominant Paradigm
11. Listening
12. Learning Orally/Aurally
13. Formal Learning
14. Informal Learning
15. Languages
16. Context
17. Community Connections
18. Active Musicianship

#### Scope: Classroom Practice

1. White Privilege
2. Styles: Dominant Paradigm
3. Styles: Challenge to Dominant Paradigm
4. Silencing
5. Safe Environment
6. Representation (Weight of Different Repertoire Components)
7. Repertoire: Dominant Paradigm
h. Repertoire: Challenge to Dominant Paradigm
i. Power Dynamics
j. Popular Culture
a. Music Education Methods: Dominant Paradigm
b. Music Education Methods: Challenge to Dominant Paradigm
c. Music and Technology
d. Movement
e. Listening: Dominant Paradigm
f. Listening: Challenge to Dominant Paradigm
g. Learning through Notation
h. Learning Orally/Aurally
i. Languages
j. Formal Learning
k. Informal Learning
l. Facilitation
m. Culturally Relevant and Responsive Pedagogy
n. Context
o. Composition or Creating
p. Community Connections
q. Classroom Management
r. Active Musicianship

**Student Engagement**

**Discourses about Pedagogy**

a. Transmission
b. Superficial Multiculturalism
c. Scaffolding
d. Recognition of Different Ways of Doing Music
e. Notation
f. Music and Politics
g. Multiple Modalities
h. Learning Orally/Aurally
i. Language Learning
j. Equity and Social Justice
k. Different Music Education Philosophies
l. Culturally Relevant and Responsive Pedagogy
m. Critical Pedagogy
n. Critical Multiculturalism
o. Critical Listening
p. Creating
q. Co-operative Learning
r. Classroom Management
s. Checking for Understanding

**Discourses about Content**

a. Superficial Multiculturalism
b. Repertoire
c. Recognition of Different Ways of Doing Music
d. Notation
e. Music and Politics
| f. Movement     |
| g. Listening   |
| h. Learning Orally/Aurally |
| i. Equity and Social Justice |
| j. Curriculum Integration |
| k. Critical Multiculturalism |
| l. Critical Listening |
| m. Creating |
| n. Context |
| o. Connection to Popular Culture |

**Discourses about Student Needs**

| a. Student Voice     |
| b. Special Needs   |
| c. Societal Social Expectations |
| d. Safe Environment |
| e. Institutional Social Expectations |
| f. Equity     |
| g. Differentiation |

**Discourses about Relationships**

| a. Teacher to Student     |
| b. Student to Teacher   |
| c. Student to Student |
| d. Student Leadership |
| e. Societal Social Expectations |
| f. Power Dynamics |
| g. Music to World Connections |
| h. Institutional Social Expectations |
| i. Flexibility |
| j. Equity and Social Justice |
| k. Drawing Relationships between Material |
| l. Community Connections in the School |
| m. Community Connections outside the School |

**Discourse about Goals**

| a. Validation of Students     |
| b. Student Success |
| c. Social Goals |
| d. Safety/Comfort |
| e. Notational Literacy |
| f. Love of Music |
| g. Knowledge of Musical and Political Context |
| h. Individual Responsibility |
| i. Fun |
| j. Focus and Concentration |
| k. Equity and Social Justice |
| l. Ensemble Experience |
| m. Embodied Learning |
| n. Critical Listeners and Critical Thinkers |
| o. Creativity |
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