Gender Equity in Music and Drama Classrooms

By

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Abstract

The following study focuses on teacher perspectives and experiences of fostering gender equity in music and drama classrooms. The study outlines the importance of gender equity in inclusive education environments, as well as the use of gender stereotypes in music and drama classrooms. The primary research aim was to investigate gender equity as an area of concern in music and drama classrooms, through an examination of research literature and participant interviews. Moreover, this study aimed to understand ways in which gender equity can be better fostered in the classroom. This study was conducted using qualitative research, and was supported by literature pertinent to gender equity in education. The findings suggest that it is imperative that teachers, school communities, and educational professionals, strive towards the goal of gender equity implementation in classrooms. This can take place through an increase of student choice, as well as teacher professional development; both which can increase equitable practices.

Key Words: Gender, Equity, Inequity, Music, Drama
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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.0 Research Context

Canadian classrooms today are becoming increasingly diverse (D’Silva & Gunderson, 2014, p.21). Being diverse includes showing a great deal of variety, or being very different (English Oxford Living Dictionaries, 2010). It is important for educators to develop teaching practices to address the diversity of the classrooms in which they work. Diverse classrooms based on race, gender and class encompass a wide range of knowledge, experience and perspectives. Research indicates that gender equity is an area of concern within schools, and these inequities are particularly evident in the subject areas of music and drama.

The implementation of diversity, equity and inclusive education in the classroom is of great importance according to Ontario’s Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy (2009) document. The document outlines three core priorities of Ontario Education, which include high levels of student achievement, reduced gaps in student achievement as well as increased public confidence in publicly funded education (Government of Ontario, 2009, p.5). The document states, “an equitable, inclusive education system is fundamental to achieving these priorities, and is recognized internationally as critical to delivering a high-quality education for all learners” (Government of Ontario, 2009, p.5). This shows the importance and dedication to a multicultural school community, where school staff support diversified needs.

The Government of Ontario places a high regard on the importance of equitable educational environments, where addressing concerns through a gender equity lens within the classroom is valued. Inequities can be addressed through the use of stereotypes created through grouping in classrooms. For example, statistics proposing that boys may be over-represented in low groups for both literacy and numeracy, while high groups are represented by girls as the
majority (Macqueen, 2013, p.302). Stereotypes such as female students being more independent than male students are present in today’s education system. Masland states that data from the National Project on Women in Education (1978) indicated that teachers give boys up to eight times the amount of instruction given to girls (Masland, 1994, p.19). It is evident that action stemming from equitable mindsets is needed in order to help open up choices for students through positive teacher attitudes or teacher-student relationships.

Though equitable teaching strategies can be found in many classrooms, standardizing gender equity rules throughout all schools is of great importance, according to UNESCO (UNESCO, 2015, p.3). UNESCO documents reveal the need for gender equity activism within school communities, in order to assist students and teachers in understanding its importance (UNESCO, 2015, p.3). Malins notes the work of the Ontario school system to implement and introduce inclusive learning. The Ontario Ministry of Education released a Policy/Program Memorandum, entitled Developing and Implementing Equity and Inclusive Education Policies in Ontario Schools, as well as a document entitled Realizing the Promise of Diversity: Ontario’s Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy (Malins, 2016, p.129-130). These documents help “educators implement inclusive pedagogy,” as well as ensure “an inclusive and accepting school climate” (Malins, 2016, p.130). It is not yet determined the extent in which these documents are made available in all Ontario schools. Not only is the enforcement of equitable education imperative, but also creating a worldwide strategy to implement this notion could lead to greater outcomes.

It is important to note that gender-based discrimination within schools affect females and males, regardless of status or occupation within the school. Bogart and Klein state examples of
diversified discrimination, explaining, “females and males continue to experience different treatment as students, faculty, administrators, and staff” (Bogart & Klein, 1987, p.114).

1.1 Research Problem

Gender inequity can be defined as discrimination or negative treatment, based on the “gender” one seems to stereotypically represent. Gender inequities can be found in music and drama classrooms through various ways, including the use of stereotypes by teachers and students. Gender inequities in these classrooms may prevent positive learning experiences for students. It is important to note that gender inequities do not exist in every music and drama classroom.

In music classrooms, stereotypes can be reinforced by teachers assigning students instruments according to their gender. For example, a teacher could assign all female students to woodwind instruments, and all male students to bass instruments. Assigning certain gendered groups with specific instruments could create stereotypes in the classroom, or gender inequity, which is then reinforced to students.

In drama classrooms, teachers often assign roles based on the gender of the play, males take male roles, and females take female roles. This is problematic because the gender identification of some students is more fluid than that. Perhaps students should have a choice in the roles they play, though this could also present gender stereotypes. The teachers are not alone in making stereotypical decisions. Students themselves because of their upbringing, media and schooling institutions for example, also direct the gender expectations for particular roles and plays. The purpose of this paper is to explore possibilities of how that might change. I ask, are there organizations or play groups that are trying to break out of established ideas about equity in drama? How could change take place?
Gender inequities presented in classrooms through flexible curricula can create stereotypes and biases for students, which may be internalized and remembered. The Ontario Ministry of Education curriculum was created to be adjusted by teachers, in order to best fit the diverse needs of their students. Canadian curriculums are not prescribed and mandatory to follow. The flexible curriculum is beneficial because it allows teachers to address the needs of the communities in which they are working in. On the other hand, this curriculum without restrictions allows for teachers who have stereotypical ideas about race, class, or gender, to wrap their work with their own personal pedagogy or stereotypes. Malins notes that, “The experiences of children with their classroom curriculum, including what they do not experience, are both “of equal significance, and can be intentional or unintentional” (Malins, 2016, p.29). The flexible or hidden curriculum can be described as “the degree to which culture and values enter into classroom curriculum, despite not always being explicitly stated in the written curriculum” (Malins, 2016, p.29).

A larger issue about gender discrimination within the classroom is the affect that this has on students’ construction of gender roles, and the little that is done by school staff to intervene. Teachers have a role in perpetuating gender stereotypes, and this role often leads to teasing and bullying. Froschl and Gropper agree, when they state, “teachers fail to intervene in ways that would be helpful to students” (Froschl & Gropper, 2006, p.48). They mention that children at the stage of learning and understanding gender roles can be influenced by adults, as adults assist in constructing gender roles for them (Froschl & Gropper, 2006, p.48).

When students take on specific roles within their drama classes, they are often reinforcing gender stereotypes. This may affect other students’ perceptions about gender, and may reinforce the wrong ideas about gender, because of the particular role. Are these gender reinforcements
coming from the playwright, teacher or the student? Drama classrooms have the potential to create negative gender stereotypes for students. Errington supports this idea, and states, “gender relations come to be constructed in the ways we portray them” (Errington, 2008, p.41). Drama teachers and students must be mindful of stereotypes brought about through dramaturgical re-enactments. It is also important to consider how students are taught to portray certain gendered roles within the drama classroom. It is important for students to be aware that although a script may suggest that a character identifies as a male or female, the student should not be acting in a certain way in order to portray stereotypical characteristics of that character.

During a drama class, stereotypes can be reinforced in many different ways, such as language, gestures, movement or clothing for example. My study asks, what are the factors that act as reinforcements? Students and teachers have choices in terms of the language they use, the movements and gestures they embrace, and in the ways in which the scripts are interpreted. There are certain features of the drama classroom, which teachers need to keep in mind. According to Lund, “gender performance is ‘always a doing and a thing done’, meaning that gender as doing is ‘a performance that puts conventional gender attributes into possibly disruptive play’ and ‘a thing done – a pre-existing oppressive category’” (Lund, 2013, p.909). Therefore, it is important to ensure body language, verbal language and actions in drama classrooms are inclusive of all genders, and that the drama literature used allows for this. This would help to reduce gender inequities in drama classrooms, as stereotypes would be less recognizable.

Music classrooms in schools also have the potential to portray negative stereotypes. Similar to the drama classrooms, music classrooms can create gender stereotypes through the use of the particular music that is chosen, the instruments that students choose for themselves, and
the instruments teachers choose for students to play. This could be through the choosing of musical instruments, which set a standard for students, as to which instrument is socially and “gender-acceptable” or “normal” to choose. Colley and Maltby support this by stating, “the underlying structures of men’s and women’s preferences contained major dimensions relating to stronger, masculine instruments and lighter, feminine ones, providing evidence for the internalisation of the gendered associations found by research in this area” (Colley & Maltby, 2008, p.178). It is possible that music classrooms reaffirm gender stereotypes for students, taught by teachers and parents. According to Marshall and Shibazaki,

Severe gender imbalances were reported to exist within the top ranking instruments being learned by pupils in schools with violin (23% male – 77% female), flute (9% male – 91% female), clarinet (23% male – 77% female), cello (23% male – 77% female) and voice (30% male – 70% female) occurring at the female end of the gender continuum, and guitar (73% male – 27% female), percussion (73% male – 27% female) and trumpet (67% male – 33% female) dominating the male end of the continuum (Marshall and Shibazaki, 2011, p.495).

This data affirms that gender stereotypes can be taught or reaffirmed through instrument association in music classrooms. This example demonstrates how teachers, parents and students themselves can help to support or reinforce musical gender stereotypes, often unknowingly.

What are the factors that are causing gender stereotype reinforcement? Marshall and Shibazaki mention in their article, “pupils choose the instrument they wish to learn according to a wide range of influences including siblings, family and the timbre of the instrument”(Marshall & Shibazaki, 2011, p.496). Changes in societal attitudes, the style of music, and the excerpt or
music literature chosen to represent the instrument may also play a factor in what instrument students may choose (Marshall & Shibazaki, 2011, p. 497).

1.2 Purpose of the Study

My research problem addresses gender stereotypes within drama and music classrooms, reinforced by teachers, students and learning materials. The purpose of my research is to look at the existence of gender stereotypes in the classroom and how these stereotypes are being addressed. My research will also consider change that could take place in the future, through suggestions posed by the interviewed teachers. Interviews can provide valuable suggestions for teachers moving forward, because many teachers are already implementing best practices within the field of gender equity. I aim to share these findings with the educational equity community, in order to further inform teachers to be aware of their biases and stereotypes brought into the classroom. This will help to create an equitable and inclusive environment for students within drama and music programs, through research stemming from current teaching practices. The uniqueness stemming from my research includes potential solutions for gender stereotype reinforcement. The exploration of these solutions could improve the educational environment students are taught in today, aiming for equitable education in all classrooms.

I would like to learn about how gender inequities can be avoided in the classroom, and the repercussions students face due to gender inequities presented in music and drama classrooms. I would also like to learn more about how stereotypes affect students, and the steps that can be taken to work towards achieving gender equity in music and drama classrooms.

1.3 Research Question

The primary question guiding this study is: How is gender inequity prevalent in music and drama classrooms, and how could it be addressed by teachers, to promote gender equity?
1.4 Subsidiary Questions

Subsidiary questions to further guide this inquiry include:

- What types of gender inequities are prevalent in music and drama classrooms?
- Do students respond to gender biases or stereotypes?
- What types of trainings do teachers receive for the implementation of equity within the classroom?
- What additional gender equity training is available for teachers?
- In what ways are students influenced?
- What are best practices being implemented in music and drama classes now, addressing gender inequity and stereotyping?

1.5 Reflexive Positioning Statement

As someone who has had the privilege of completing my undergraduate education at the University of Toronto, majoring in Equity and Diversity studies, I am concerned that students in schools may be affected by gender inequities brought into the classroom through teacher and student influences, specifically in drama and music classrooms. It is important that attention is brought to classrooms where teachers are grouping students based on gender biases and stereotypes, as this influences students to believe that gender stereotypes are not negative. It is possible that experiencing gender inequity while in the classroom impacts students’ experience of schooling negatively, as well as the beliefs and norms these students hold in their minds. It is important that teachers receive proper equity training in order for gender equity to be existent in classrooms.

1.6 Preview of the Whole
To respond to the research questions, I have conducted a qualitative research study in order to better understand the teaching strategies teachers use in order to implement equity and inclusivity into their classrooms. I have interviewed 3 teachers, based on their instructional approaches on grouping students. I asked teachers questions about their equity implementation tactics, previous equity trainings and how they choose to group the class or assign roles/instruments. In Chapter 2, I have reviewed the literature in the areas of equity, diversity and inclusive pedagogy. This gives an overview of research stating the importance of gender equity in inclusive education, the use of gender stereotypes in music classrooms, as well as the use of gender stereotypes in drama classrooms. In Chapter 3, I explain the research design. In Chapter 4 I report my research findings and discuss their significance to gender equity in education today. Chapter 4 makes clear the ways in which teachers, students and learning resources play different roles in creating the level of gender equity in a classroom. In Chapter 5, I identify the implications of the research findings for my own teacher identity and practice, and discuss how I can utilize my findings to help create an equitable classroom. I also discuss how my research can benefit the teacher education community. A series of questions follow, to discuss future equity thinking and research, and how to continue to make our classrooms equitable on all levels of the spectrum. The issue of gender inequity is still prevalent in schools today. This study, looking through the lens of drama and music classrooms, will help provide some insight into teacher practices.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

In this chapter I review literature in the areas of gender equity, inclusive education, and gender stereotypes presented in music and drama classrooms. More specifically I review themes related to conceptualizing gender equity, its impact on inclusive education, its appearance within music and drama classrooms through stereotypes, and the influence these stereotypes may have on students. I start by reviewing literature about the importance of gender equity for inclusive classroom environments. Next, I consider conceptualizing gender equity, as well as its impact on inclusive education. Next, I review research on the use of gender stereotypes in music classrooms, in order to understand the stereotypes presented, as well as the influence they have on students. It is important to consider the source of these stereotypes, such as teachers, students, home life or learning materials, in order to combat inequities that may arise in the classroom. From there, I review the research on the use of gender stereotypes in drama classrooms, to understand the gender stereotypes that are present in drama classrooms, as well as the influence they have on students. Finally, I relate the gender stereotypes presented within these two art classrooms, to present attention to the idea of gender inequities within specific classrooms in schools, and to raise further questions about the topic of inclusive education.

2.1 The Importance of Gender Equity for Inclusive Educational Environments

Gender equity within music and drama classrooms is an area of research that is current and crucial to the success of students in schools today. Research suggests that certain stereotypes in the classroom may obstruct an inclusive classroom environment, and may have negative effects on students.

2.1.1 Conceptualizing gender equity
According to UNESCO, gender equity is a priority for the educational development agenda of schools, and gender equity is related to the role teachers play in the classroom, through their transmission of values and knowledge to students (UNESCO, 2015, p.3). The term gender is used to define “a socially constructed category (i.e., man and woman) and is distinguished from “sex,” the biological category of one’s birth (i.e., male and female)” (Koskoff, 1995, p.114). Working towards gender equity in classrooms would mean working towards equitable treatment of all students. Global Affairs Canada agrees, as they define Gender Equity as being “fair to women and men” (Government of Canada, 2014). It is possible that all genders may require different treatment in order to achieve similar, equal and fair results (Government of Canada, 2014). Inclusive education is important for a positive learning experience for students. UNESCO agrees, stating that an inclusive education system is fundamental to achieving learning goals (Government of Ontario, 2009, p.5). Inclusive education is the importance and dedication to the embracement of a multicultural school community, where school staff supports diversified needs (Government of Ontario, 2009, p.5).

2.1.2 Gender equity’s impact on inclusive education

Gender equity is crucial in achieving an inclusive education environment for students in schools. It is important to note that gender-based discrimination within schools affects females and males, regardless of status or occupation within the school. Bogart and Klein agree, and state examples of diversified discrimination. “Females and males continue to experience different treatment as students, faculty, administrators, and staff” (Bogart & Klein, 1987, p.114). It is evident that student experiences alter their actions and behaviour. Gray and Leith indicate a review of classroom textbooks by McAuliffe (1994), which reveal that “women were generally portrayed as mothers, nurses or shop assistants, while men were portrayed in a range of exciting
and dangerous occupations such as firefighters, steeple jack and train drivers” (Scott, 1988). The influence of gender-typed books on behaviour has been reported by several writers, who claim that exposure can affect children’s play preferences and their perceptions of the gender appropriateness of a task”(Gray & Leith, 2004, p.5). These stereotypical gendered roles are associated with the need to conform to traditional gendered roles and stereotypes. Possibly, a greater need for gender equity education and promotion is required within school systems, stemming from teachers and other school staff as role models. Enforcing gender equity within the classroom through teachers as role models, will decrease the idea of gender stereotypes for students, such that ‘males must be tough to be male’, and will increase the feeling of an inclusive classroom, through equal opportunity. Teachers can be negative role models for students, by sharing their own stereotypes in the classroom, although teachers with alternative gender bias’ could persuade students’ attitudes and behaviours in a positive manner as well (Masland, 1994, p.19).

Gender inequities are often addressed through the use of stereotypes. These stereotypes affect the way students perceive themselves, others around them, and the way they strive to learn certain subjects. The role of gender stereotypes when teasing or bullying, when children are at the stage of understanding gender roles that are constructed for them, is explained by Froschl and Gropper as crucial (Froschl & Gropper, 2006, p.48). Inclusivity is difficult to achieve if gender inequities are presented through forms of stereotypes, and are used in forms of bullying or teasing. The following discusses the use of gender stereotypes in music and drama classrooms specifically.

2.2 The Use of Gender Stereotypes in Music Classrooms

2.2.1 Gender stereotypes presented in music classrooms
Gender stereotypes are presented in music classrooms through the choosing or assigning of instruments, as well as through the use of music chosen. These stereotypes are presented not only through teacher influence, but through family and student influence as well. Marshall and Shibazaki mention that, “pupils choose the instrument they wish to learn according to a wide range of influences including siblings, family and the timbre of the instrument”(Marshall & Shibazaki, 2011, p.496). Changes in societal attitudes, the style of music, and the excerpt or music literature chosen to represent the instrument may also play a factor in what instrument students may choose (Marshall & Shibazaki, 2011, p. 497). Within Chapter 1, Marshall and Shibazaki listed imbalances that exist within the top ranking instruments being learned by pupils in schools (Marshall and Shibazaki, 2011, p.495). This data shows gender stereotypes are presented within music classrooms through the choice of instruments, or assigning of musical instruments, to students who identify with various genders. Therefore, gender stereotypes can be taught or reaffirmed through instrument association in music classrooms. These gender stereotypes mold the minds of students in their musical instrument preference, making them believe that one instrument is more acceptable than another.

Colley and Maltby state that men’s and women’s preferences contain associations with male students to stronger, masculine instruments and associations with female students to lighter, feminine instruments (Colley & Maltby, 2008, p.178). This information provides evidence for the internalisation of gendered associations that some teachers may carry with them (Colley & Maltby, 2008, p.167). It is also important to address the selection of music being played in music classrooms. Are teachers choosing musical pieces for their students to play, composed of primarily male dominated composers? This is an example of gender inequity within music classrooms. There is, for example, very limited music available in schools, written by female
composers. Teachers should work to have an equal balance of musical material, to make sure that they are not presenting a bias to students with their selection of music.

Work has been done to decrease gender equity issues within Ontario schools, as Ministry documents released in 2009 raised awareness for teachers, about the importance of equitable teaching in the classroom (Malins, 2016, p.129-130). Through the release of Ministry documents promoting equitable teaching, culturally relevant pedagogy and critical reflection can be implemented in classrooms. Gender stereotypes may not be present in each and every music classroom, although it is important to be mindful that gender stereotyping through the assigning or choosing of musical instruments is a possibility, not only through the influence of teachers but through students as well.

There is controversy that has been raised over the study of gender inequities within music classrooms, based on the idea that not all teachers create an inequitable musical experience for their students. This is because many teachers allow students to choose their own instruments, without instilling a biased opinion on which types of instruments fit certain students or genders. Some students may gather gender inequities and associations through family, peers, past teachers or media influences, which they then bring into the classroom and share with their peers, which may result in gendered-instrument selection. Gender inequities do not exist in every music classroom, and it is possible that the stereotypes which students hold, come from multiple sources.

2.2.2 The influence of gender stereotypes in music classrooms on students

Gender stereotypes are presented in music classrooms in a number of different ways. This can be through the choosing of musical instruments, the encouragement from adults or other students to choose specific instruments, and the music selected by teachers to be played by
students. These stereotypes pose a pressure for students, as they feel they must play the instrument deemed “socially acceptable” or “acceptable for their gender.” It is evident that the choices students make are altered due to their need to conform to societal norms, and their fear of being bullied or left out. Marshall and Shibazaki mention in their article that pupils choose the instrument they wish to learn according to a wide range of influences including changes in societal attitudes, siblings and family opinions (Marshall & Shibazaki, 2011, p.496-497).

Gender stereotypes presented in music classrooms can influence students and their mindsets on gender conformity. Doubleday explains the relationship between humans and instruments, stating that it is often through social practices where a cluster of clear associations with either masculinity or femininity may emerge through the sound of instruments (Doubleday, 2008, p.9). Due to this, students may grasp the idea of gendered instruments through exposure to inequitable music classrooms and practices, and these stereotypes will eventually be engrained in their minds and thought process throughout their future. It is crucial for teachers and students to understand the importance of eliminating gender stereotypes in the classroom, and the negative, long lasting effects associated with these stereotypes.

**2.3 The Use of Gender Stereotypes in Drama Classrooms**

2.3.1 Gender stereotypes presented in drama classrooms

Gender stereotypes in drama classrooms can be presented through student biases, teacher biases and the selection of drama learning resources that the teacher has chosen for their classroom. Through the selection of playwrights teachers choose for their students, stereotypes may be introduced. Teachers must be careful to choose various playwrights throughout the year, which include female and male roles equitably. Teachers should also be cautious that they are not teaching students to act in order to portray certain gendered roles. When choosing the drama
literature that will be covered in a classroom, Gray and Leith discuss that “exposure to non-traditional texts and readings that challenge traditional stereotypes provide opportunities for classroom debate” (Gray & Leith, 2004, p.5). Addressing gender equity and dissecting non-traditional and traditional texts would help to benefit the learning experience for students. In drama classrooms, teachers often assign roles based on the gender of the play, where males take male roles, and females take female roles. This could be problematic because the gender identification of some students is more fluid than that. Giving students a choice in the roles they play could also present gender stereotypes in the classroom, as teachers are not alone in making stereotypical decisions. Students themselves because of their upbringing, media and schooling institutions for example, also direct the gender expectations for particular roles and plays. Gray and Leith mention two various directions that can be taken when addressing gender stereotypes in the classroom. First, they discuss that stereotypes are often a product of the home, formed before a child starts school, and therefore, schools should remain neutral while allowing children to make their own gender choices (Gray & Leith, 2004, p.5). On the contrary, they also mention, “by challenging stereotypes, teachers free children from traditional restrictions (Gray & Leith, 2004, p.5). Teachers should ensure that they are educating youth to become responsible citizens, through addressing misconceptions in order for students to be accepting of various genders.

There is controversy that has been raised about the study of gender inequities within drama classrooms, because not all teachers create an inequitable drama experience for their students. Many teachers allow students to choose their own roles, without expressing a biased opinion on which types of roles fit certain students, based on their gender. Research suggests that the process of creating, preforming and responding in drama classrooms, can create an open interrogation space (Olliff, 2001, p.225). Students who enter a classroom with previously learned
gender stereotypes, can create this inequitable space. This is not only for subjects such as gender, but also for race, class and sexuality for example (Olliff, 2001, p.226). Students with preconceived gendered stereotypes may use drama class to poke-fun at these stereotypes, through actions that portray male or female identified roles. Unlike gender stereotypes presented within music classrooms, drama classrooms can be used to re-enact these stereotypes. These stereotypes can be re-enacted through the way that students choose to present characters, based on their stereotypical gender characteristics.

2.3.2 The influence of gender stereotypes in drama classrooms on students

The careful re-enactment of various people and situations within drama classrooms can affect students and their mindsets. Errington agrees, stating, “gender relations come to be constructed in the ways we portray them” (Errington, 2008, p.41). The inequitable portrayal of a character has the potential to create negative gender stereotypes for students, which they may apply to other situations in their lives. It is important to counter gender biases in the classroom as educational leaders, in order to help students create a moral perspective of gender identity.

There are also occurrences within the drama classroom where gender stereotypes are brought into the educational space, and are positively addressed through re-enactments. Carter and Sallis agree, and discuss the positives that emerge from re-enacting family or cultural experiences. Carter and Sallis state, “educational drama can affirm cultural and linguistic diversity and support inclusive education especially through the use of process drama and participatory storytelling (Carter & Sallis, 2016, p.79). Encouraging students to share their experiences and tell their own stories in the classroom is a positive way for teachers to work towards the celebration of diversity and the dissection of gender stereotypes.
Analyzing drama literature is another way for students to learn about current gender equity issues, and how to overcome and address stereotypes and biases. Analyzing text provided in scripts can also help students address issues with roles that they are playing, whether chosen or assigned. This will help students understand and be aware of any type of discrimination associated with their character, presented in the script itself. Myhill and Jones suggest that the predominant discourse in education, which makes reference to the creation of femininities and masculinities, is the underachievement debate (Myhill & Jones, 2006, p.100). “Within the literature that seeks to account for differential achievement by gender, the genders have been variously polarized: boys have been pictured as victims and girls as winners within a feminized education system (Hannon, 1996; Patten, 1999). Alternatively girls are constructed as the good student while boys are viewed as the interesting person (Kruse, 1992)” (Myhill & Jones, 2006, p.100). Teachers should work to prevent the reinforcement of these types of gender stereotypes in the classroom through drama literature and drama roles assigned or available to students. It is also important to note that drama classrooms presenting gender stereotypes through the use of learning materials are not always negative classrooms. This is because, when taught appropriately, a positive learning experience for many students can prevail. This positive learning experience can exist in a drama classroom, whether or not students are educated about gender stereotype topics, prior to the class.

2.4 Conclusion

In this literature review I analyzed the research available on gender inequities within music and drama classrooms, as well as the stereotypes that create these inequities. I have also looked at research discussing how students are affected by gender stereotypes in the classroom, and the access students have to inclusive education. This review looks at the amount of attention
paid to gender inequities in the classroom, how gender stereotypes can be created, and whom can bring in gender stereotypes into the class. This review shows a need for further research in equity training or implementation programs for staff working within school boards. This research also raises questions about the amount of gender equity stereotypes presented within classroom environments, in comparison to the amount of negative representations presented at home by family, through peers, or through media influences. In light of this, the purpose of my research is to learn about how gender inequities are being addressed in music and drama classrooms, as well as how addressing these issues will provide a more equitable and gender-neutral classroom. The purpose of my research includes the various ways stereotypes can be enforced in classrooms, such as through teachers, students and learning materials. My research is conducted to consider change for the future, in hopes to create gender equity for all classrooms.
Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.0 Introduction

In this chapter, I describe the research methodology for my study on gender inequities in music and drama classrooms. I begin by reviewing the general approach, procedures, and data collection instruments, before elaborating more specifically on participant sampling and recruitment. I explain data analysis procedures and review the ethical considerations pertinent to my study on gender inequities in music and drama classrooms. Relatedly, I identify a range of methodological limitations, but I also speak to the strengths of the methodology. Finally, I conclude the chapter with a brief summary of key methodological decisions and my rationale for these decisions given the research purpose and questions pertaining to my study on gender inequities in music and drama classrooms.

3.1 Research Approach and Procedures

My research study on gender inequities in music and drama classrooms was conducted using a qualitative research approach, incorporating existing literature, Ministry documents, as well as semi-structured interviews with teachers.

According to Drummond, Jackson and Camara, qualitative research refers to a way of conducting research to understand “human beings’ experiences in a humanistic, interpretive approach” (Drummond, Jackson & Camara, 2007, p.21). Through my research journey collecting data on the topic of gender inequities within music and drama classrooms, I gained an understanding of how and why stereotypes and inequities are presented within classrooms, and where the problem may stem from, based on shared teacher experiences. Maxwell’s reasoning behind the importance of qualitative research affirms my goals of understanding how gender inequities are presented within the classroom. Maxwell mentions the importance of qualitative
research in education, based on classroom experience, stating “educational research desperately needs qualitative approaches and methods if it is to make valid and useful claims about what works” (Maxwell, 2012, p.655). Maxwell’s thoughts pertain to my study because he explains that educational research requires a qualitative approach in order to “credibly identify the actual causes that influence a particular outcome,” such as the causes of gender inequities in music and drama classrooms (Maxwell, 2012, p.658).

Qualitative research is of value to my study on gender inequities in music and drama classrooms, because it can lead to the creation of solutions for gaps within the education system. My research may provide opportunities for learning and/or improving the school system, in order to create inclusivity and implement gender equitable teaching strategies. Maxwell agrees, mentioning that gathering information through qualitative research can help educators to understand “what works and why” (Maxwell, 2012, p.659). This information can therefore be used to make beneficial and equitable adjustments to school systems and teaching practices. Given my research topic of gender inequities within music and drama classrooms, the qualitative research approach is a suitable and appropriate approach for this study.

3.2 Instruments of Data Collection

The primary instrument for data collection used in my study on gender inequities in music and drama classrooms, is the semi-structured interview protocol. According to Martins, Mojitahed, Nunes and Peng, semi-structured interviews “foster an environment where the ideas and meanings conveyed by informants could be developed and further discussed in order to achieve a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under investigation” (Martins, Mojitahed, Nunes & Peng, 2014, p.87). According to Johnson, Kallio, Kangasniemi and Pietila, “the use of semi-structured interviews requires a certain level of previous study in the research topic area
(Wengraf 2001, RWJF 2008, Kelly 2010) because the interview questions are based on previous knowledge. The questions are determined before the interview and formulated using the interview guide (Mason 2004, Rubin & Rubin 2005, RWJF 2008)” (Johnson, Kallio, Kangasniemi & Pietila, 2016, p.2955). I prepared questions ahead of time, to allow for an organized interview, where all aspects of gender inequities in music and drama classrooms are addressed. Johnson, Kallio, Kangasniemi and Pietila also mention that one of the main advantages of the semi-structured interview method is that it “has been found to be successful in enabling reciprocity between the interviewer and participant (Galletta 2012), enabling the interviewer to improvise follow-up questions based on participant’s responses (Hardon et al. 2004, Rubin & Rubin 2005, Polit & Beck 2010) and allowing space for participants’ individual verbal expressions (RWJF (Robert Wood Johnson Foundation) 2008)” (Johnson, Kallio, Kangasniemi & Pietila, 2016, p.2955). The semi-structured interview protocol allowed for participants in my study to elaborate on questions I asked, and room was left for the conversation to become lengthy. Using this specific protocol was beneficial because it allowed me to gather additional information, although the questions I prepared ahead of time allowed me to guide the participant back to the study topic, if the participant went off-topic.

My research questions created for my study on gender inequities in classrooms are questions that require discussion. For example, one of my research questions on teacher practice asks, “Do you give students a choice in the drama role that they choose, or do you assign which roles suit the student best? And, why?” This question sparks rich discussion, as participants discuss why they choose to make certain choices in their classroom. My choice in using the semi-structured interview protocol, gives the participant the chance to expand and elaborate on their interview questions. I feel confident that this data collection technique is of value to my
study on gender inequities in music and drama classrooms, as I was confident and competent, in the semi-structured interview protocol I followed.

3.3 Participants

In this section of the chapter, I review the sampling criteria I established for participant recruitment, when conducting my study on gender inequities in music and drama classrooms. I review my methods for teacher recruitment, specifically music and drama teachers. I also include the biographies of my participants.

3.3.1 Sampling criteria

For this study, I interviewed teachers on their experiences with gender inequities in their classrooms, who have the following experience:

- Teachers being interviewed must have experience teaching in music and drama classrooms
- Teachers must be teaching in non-private, public or Catholic school boards, in order to eliminate gender-specific classroom experience
- Teachers being interviewed must not demonstrate any biased opinions in gender equity/implementation - they should be neutral
- There is no minimum amount of years teaching that I require from teachers being interviewed

In order to reveal accurate research information, I identified criteria I had created, which was used in order to gather the proper teacher participants for this study. I interviewed teachers who have experience teaching in drama and music classrooms specifically. These are teachers who teach drama or music aside from other subjects in their own classroom, or teachers who specialize in teaching only drama and music. These teachers were needed for my study because
drama and music educators directly relate to my research in those specified subjects areas. These teachers were able to speak specifically to gender stereotypes or inequities that arise within their music and drama classrooms.

A second requirement for the participants that I interviewed for my study on gender inequities in music and drama classrooms, was that the teachers must have experience teaching in non-private, public or Catholic schools. This experience is needed, in order to eliminate teaching experience in gender-specific private schools, such as “all boys” or “all girls” schools. Teachers who have experience teaching in non-private schools, where classrooms include male and female students, are able to speak to my topic on gender inequities presented in the classroom. These teachers are able to answer my teaching practice questions best, on the sorting and grouping of students in these classrooms.

My hope at the beginning of my gender inequity study was that the teachers I interviewed would not have any strong biases in the areas of gender equity, or equity implementation in the classroom. I had also hoped that the teachers would be aware of equitable teaching strategies. I did not require a minimum number of years teaching from my participants, as gender equity issues or strategies in the classroom can be assessed in any classroom at any time.

3.3.2 Sampling procedures

To recruit participants to be interviewed for my study on gender inequities in music and drama classrooms, I used a purposeful approach. When using the purposeful approach, I looked to interview an intentional audience, who would fulfill the correct teaching requirements of my study on gender inequities. I contacted individual schools and principals to provide them with an overview of my research study. When contacting schools, I provided the participant criteria, and
ask that these individuals/organizations distribute my information to teachers they believe may fulfill the criteria. These will be drama and music teachers specifically.

Purposeful sampling during my qualitative data collection process was most efficient, considering my topic on gender inequities in music and drama classrooms is so specific. If I did not interview the correct participants, who could not speak directly to my topic on gender stereotypes that might arise in music and drama classrooms, my research would not have been as specific and informative as I would have liked it to be. Palinkas, Horwitz, Green, Wisdom, Duan and Hoagwood would agree that purposeful sampling during qualitative research on a specific topic is most accurate. They state, “purposeful sampling is widely used in qualitative research for the identification and selection of information-rich cases related to the phenomenon of interest” (Palinkas, Horwitz, Green, Wisdom, Duan & Hoagwood, 2015, p.533). It is clear that drama or music teachers were the best-fit candidates to interview for my study, in order to gather accurate research on my specific topic of gender inequities in music and drama classrooms.

I also provided my information to schools and principals, in order to gather contact information of suitable participants, rather than asking individuals to reach out to me. This helped to ensure that the teachers I interviewed were interviewed on a volunteer and research-interest basis, as opposed to feeling obligated or pressured to participate. This helped to ensure that I had positive, fascinated and energetic participants in my study, whom were interested in the research I conducted.

3.3.3 Participant biographies

Zenon has been a music teacher at four schools, over the span of 4 years. He primarily teaches grades 6, 7 and 8. Zenon’s philosophy on gender inequities that may arise in music classrooms is to address the issue, then educate students, by enforcing an appropriate and
equitable example. He believes that modelling and addressing to students the importance of gender equity in the classroom will work as a preventative measure. Zenon imagines professional development opportunities of the future, that are self-directed, hands-on and engaging, when learning about gender equity issues in the classroom.

Tracy has been a teacher in grades 4-8 classrooms, and is currently teaching grade 5/6. She has been teaching since 2011, as an occasional teacher, LTO, full year, and now permanent teacher. She has also taught summer school programs, and has always taught drama as it is incorporated throughout the curriculum. As a homeroom teacher, she enjoys incorporating drama through cross-curricular activities, with Language Arts, History or Social Studies. Tracy implements equitable practices daily in her classroom, and believes that the needs of students must be met in order for them to learn to the best of their ability. Tracy’s philosophy on gender inequities that may arise in drama classrooms is that students must be able to identify these inequities in the classroom, and have open conversations about them. Tracy believes in giving students the right tools to identify stereotypes in the world, in order to act as equitable leaders.

Ron has been a teacher for 24 years, and has taught drama as part of the curriculum within grades 4, 5 and 6 classrooms. He is currently teaching grade 4, and believes that the implementation of equitable practices is the key to being a great teacher. His attitudes towards implementing equitable teaching strategies are positive, as he believes that all children are individuals and that they should be taught that way. He believes that gender inequities that arise are a great teaching opportunity, and can make for great class discussion, depending on the maturity of the students. Getting to know the students in his classroom on an individual level, and being able to have conversations as a class, is Ron’s key to implementing equitable teaching practices.
3.4 Data Analysis

When analyzing my data on gender inequities in music and drama classrooms, I took a number of steps to ensure accurate results. Prior to analyzing my data, I transcribed my interviews, and coded my transcripts, to identify categories of data and themes within categories. Coding is the most effective data analysis technique for my qualitative research on gender inequities in music and drama classrooms. This is because it assists me in sorting my findings in a quick and efficient manner, in order to reveal the most important, common information participants have shared. Qualitative coding and analysis presents accurate analysis results, as it looks specifically at the themes present in the interview transcripts, and narrows down important concepts mentioned by participants. Once I completed the coding process, the later stages of my analysis consisted of the meaning-making process, where I speak to what matters most about my findings, given what existing research has already found.

When I analyzed my data, I also looked into “null data.” “Null data” is data that participating teachers did not speak to, although would have been relevant and important to the contribution of my research on gender inequities in music and drama classrooms.

3.5 Ethical Review Procedures

When I conducted my research on gender inequities in music and drama classrooms, it was important to take into consideration several significant aspects when reviewing my ethical review procedures. As a researcher, it was important to be mindful of confidentiality, consent, right to withdraw, risks of participation, member checks and data storage.

When I contacted my participants, I notified them of the ethical review procedures, prior to them engaging in the study. Participants were notified that they will receive a pseudonym, and that the school they represent will not be identified in the study. This is important for my study
on gender inequities, especially if a participant makes a stereotypical comment in the interview. This ensures that identity of the participants remain confidential. I also notified participants that they have a right to withdrawal from the study at any time. This is important because if participants feel uncomfortable answering questions about their own practices of grouping students by gender, they may not want to answer any further questions. Participants also had the opportunity to review the transcripts after the interview, and before I conducted analysis, in order to clarify any misunderstandings. Participants were also notified that I would be the only one with access to the data, along with my research Professor, as it is stored on my password-protected computer. The participants were asked to sign a consent letter, in order to give their consent to be interviewed and audio recorded. The participants were also provided an overview of the study on gender inequities in music and drama classrooms, prior to participating. Corti, Day and Backhouse would agree that my ethical review procedures are important to my qualitative study on gender inequities in music and drama classrooms. They state that it is important to “explain fully and meaningfully what the research is about and how it will be disseminated” (Corti, Day & Backhouse, 2000, p.1). They also mention, “participants should be aware of their right to refuse to participate” (Corti, Day & Backhouse, 2000, p.1).

3.6 Methodological Limitations and Strengths

While conducting my study on gender inequities in music and drama classrooms, it was clear that I have encountered methodological limitations and strengths throughout my research process. An example of a methodological limitation that I encountered was being able to interview only 3 participants for my data collection. I do feel that interviewing 3 teachers does limit my collection of findings and research to analyze. While my findings can inform my topic of gender inequities in music and drama classrooms, I do believe that they cannot generalize the
experience of teachers. There are many music and drama classrooms where various experiences occur, and though it would be impossible to assess each of those, I feel that it would be of value to attain more than 3 teacher experiences.

A methodological strength that I had encountered during my experience researching gender inequities in music and drama classrooms is the research benefits of interviewing teachers face-to-face. I felt that when speaking with someone directly, and in-person, honest opinions were more likely to be shared, and a deeper and more trusting connection would be made between the interviewer and the participant. Interviewing teachers in person allows the researcher to gather more information, including personal stories and experiences, through teacher reflections. There are many advantages of face-to-face interviews when collecting data, which cannot be achieved through other methods of data collection, such as body language and cues. It is evident that face-to-face interviews would prove to be a more successful research data collection tool than other data collection methods, such as an online survey for example, which would simply allow for data collection with no specific scenario detail.

3.7 Conclusion

In conclusion, my specific research methodology for my study on gender inequities in music and drama classrooms was crucial to the success of my data collection and analysis process.

My quantitative research approach and procedures may lead to the creation of solutions for gaps within the education system, by addressing particular gender issues in music and drama classrooms. I used the semi-structured interview protocol as my primary instrument of data collection, as this provided me with accurate results, specific to the experience of teachers working in music and drama classrooms. The teachers interviewed, which I later identify, were
able to speak to gender equity issues in music and drama classrooms specifically. I have created sampling criteria specific to the needs of my study on gender inequities in music and drama classrooms. This was to ensure that results would not be skewed, with biased opinions on gender inequity. For my sampling procedures, I used the purposeful approach, in order to ensure that I was interviewing an intentional audience, who had certain backgrounds and past experience in drama and music classrooms. For my data analysis, I used qualitative coding, to piece together similar feedback from participants. For example, music teachers may have a similar take on gender inequities presented through musical instrument choice. Coding assists me with sorting through my data collection. I have also created ethical review procedures to ensure that all participants of my study understood their rights and responsibilities under the U of T Research Ethics Board Protocols. I have also stated methodological limitations and strengths to my study on gender inequities in music and drama classrooms.

Next in Chapter 4, I report the research findings on my topic of gender inequities in music and drama classrooms.
Chapter 4: Research Findings

4.0 Introduction

This study examines whether gender inequities are present in music and drama classrooms, and how teachers use pedagogy and resources to provoke or combat these inequities. In this chapter, I provide a thorough overview of the data I have collected.

The findings collected for this study have emerged from three interviews that were conducted with experienced teaching professionals. Previsions have been taken to ensure that participants remained anonymous, as pseudonyms have been given for the names of teachers. All three participants incorporated empathetic and equitable practices in their classrooms and were willing to speak genuinely about their experiences. I begin by introducing the participants.

4.1 Participant Identities

Ron is an experienced teacher who has been teaching in the classroom for 24 years. He currently teaches grade 4, although he has taught previously in grade 4, 5 and 6 classrooms. During the interview, Ron spoke to the experience of teaching drama curriculum to students in grades 4 to 6, and gender inequities that might arise in drama classrooms. Ron’s teaching philosophy is centered on the idea that the key to being a great teacher is the implementation of equitable practices in the classroom at all times.

Zenon is a music teacher who has been teaching for 4 years, with the experience of teaching at 4 different schools simultaneously. Zenon primarily teaches grades 7 and 8, although also teaches 6/7 split classes. Zenon spoke to the experience of teaching music curriculum to intermediate students, in classrooms where gender talk and ideas take place. Zenon’s teaching philosophy includes the modelling and demonstration of equitable practices, and addressing any issues that may arise in the classroom.
Tracy is a teacher with 6 years of experience educating grades 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 students. Tracy spoke of her experience teaching drama, incorporated into her curriculum, and gender inequities that might arise during drama classes. Tracy enjoys taking a cross-curricular approach when teaching drama, by incorporating it with subjects such as language, history and social studies. Tracy’s teaching philosophy is centered on meeting the individual needs of students, and accommodating or modifying her lessons based on student needs, in order to help students understand content.

4.2 Overview of Themes

After analyzing the three transcripts, I grouped them into categories based on common themes. Seven major themes emerged, which include some subthemes:

- Gender inequities arise in the drama classroom through a variety of ways. These include:
  - The assigning of drama roles
  - Role-play
  - Drama literature

- Drama teachers work to combat gender inequities in the classroom through various strategies. These include:
  - Student choice in drama roles
  - Providing a disclaimer
  - Division of students

- Gender inequities can be found in the music classroom through a variety of ways. These include:
  - Gendered instruments- Unequal distribution of instrument assigning
  - Music literature
• Music teachers work to combat gender inequities in the classroom using various strategies. These include:
  - The trickle down effect
  - Assigning instruments without gender bias- Giving students choice
  - The division of students
  - Discussing gender inequities as they arise
• Gender inequities and stereotypes brought into the drama and music classroom are influenced by various factors. These include:
  - Home life influence
  - Peer pressure/peer influence
  - Media influence
• Teachers need various professional development opportunities. These include:
  - “Practical” professional development
  - Higher frequency of equity-based professional development trainings required
• There are recommendations for new teachers in order to assist them with equitable teaching practices. These include:
  - Awareness of the world
  - Understanding who your learner is

The themes reflected commonalities and differences between the teachers, related to both teaching styles and the experiences of each participant in this study.

4.3 Theme One: Gender Inequities Arise in the Drama Classroom

4.3.1 The assigning of drama roles
According to Tracy and Ron, both educators in a drama classroom, gender inequities can often arise in a drama classroom through the assigning of roles. Tracy notes that gender stereotypes can definitely arise within a drama classroom when a teacher chooses to assign roles to students, rather than having students choose the roles they would like to take on themselves. Tracy mentions, “If you are a teacher who is assigning a character, skit or scene, sometimes that hinders from what a student would actually do or choose.”

Ron mentions that if a teacher assigns a role, it is likely that gender inequities will arise. He argues that, “if you have a script, slot the students into groups, and let them choose their own roles- students do not care. Students will try to do different roles.” Ron emphasizes that it is important for teachers to let students choose their own roles within the classroom, as gender inequities can often stem through the assigning of roles to students by teachers.

4.3.2 Role-play

Ron and Tracy also voiced concerns over gender inequities arising in drama lessons through role-play activities. Ron mentioned that teasing in the classroom is a large component of role-play. He remarked, “When a girl or boy wants to play the opposite role, you’ll get snickers from classmates, trying to make fun of the students.”

Despite this example, Ron also mentioned that over the years, the difficulty in encouraging students to try various roles during role-play activities has changed. He notes that “more kids are taking risks, and trying other roles,” now more than ever before.

Tracy noted that “students have a perception of what should be female and what should be male,” although she adds that students do not treat each other negatively based on those perceptions, outside of their drama roles. Tracy mentioned that gender inequities and stereotypes could be shown through role-play activities in the drama classroom, although not outside of the
drama classroom. She also gave the example of when males choose to play a female role: “they would get their hair done, talk in a high pitched voice, all because they chose to.” Tracy added that these actions were not teacher directed, suggesting that students attend their drama class with knowledge of pre-existing gender stereotypes.

The significance of my research in light of the literature in Chapter 2, is the connection to Olliff’s thoughts on gender inequities and stereotypes presented during role-play creation activities. Research suggests that the process of creating, preforming and responding in drama classrooms, can create an open interrogation space (Olliff, 2001, p.225). This may be due to student freedom in role-play creation activities, where an open interrogation space may result from creativity based on stereotypical assumptions previously learned. An open interrogation space may be considered positive, as students might question stereotypical actions or biases presented. This interrogation space may also be considered negative, as students may interrogate, question or criticize students who choose to creatively perform outside of their “gender normative” role. This relates to the examples Tracy mentioned in her classroom, as some students who enter a classroom with previously learned gender stereotypes, can create an inequitable space themselves, based on the pre-existing stereotypes they hold.

4.3.3 Drama literature

Both Tracy and Ron touched on the impact drama literature has on children, as over the years it has sent stereotypical messages to students through the ways in which some of the dialogue is formatted and presented. This is a message that students may be receiving over the years of their drama education. Tracy mentioned that gender inequities might arise within her classroom through drama literature. She mentioned that much of the drama literature is dated, and might include terms such as “the ditsy girl, but not the ditsy boy.” This comment supports
my research. Myhill and Jones suggest that the predominant discourse in education, which makes reference to the creation of femininities and masculinities, is the underachievement debate, through literature that seeks to account for differential achievement by gender (Myhill & Jones, 2006, p.100). This relates to Tracy’s examples of language used in drama literature, and suggests the need for current, equitable drama literature to be available for educators.

Ron spoke of drama literature in a similar way, stating that in a religion textbook, gender inequities are present through female and male roles which students find difficult to identify as interchangeable. In the Catholic curriculum, teachers are educating about the roles told in religious stories, which create clear gender identities. Ron mentioned that slowly new material is being released, where “boys and girls can play either role.” He also mentioned that it is becoming more prevalent to have this material in the classroom, in comparison to when he first started working as a teacher 24 years ago. Thus, dated drama literature seems to be an issue, which suggests that there is a need for school boards to provide current drama literature and resources to teachers.

4.4 Drama Teachers Work to Combat Gender Inequities in the Classroom

4.4.1 Student choice in drama roles

Tracy and Ron’s experiences combatting gender inequities within their own drama classrooms revolve largely around the implementation of student choice. Tracy mentioned that a great way to combat gender inequities in her drama classroom is to let students have choice in the drama role they take on, or to assign roles randomly. “I often have students choose their drama roles by picking through a hat, or I might present all of the possible scenes and let them choose.” Tracy also adds, “when you give students a choice, it becomes authentic and they are more interested in what they are doing.”
Ron believes in letting students choose their own roles in the drama classroom as well. He believes that students should be prompted with an idea, and should be placed in mix groupings during drama activities. Ron added that students should be able to come up with a script themselves through working together, which will enhance creativity in the classroom. Student choice seems to play an essential role in achieving authentic and creative performances, which can combat gender inequities in the classroom.

4.4.2 Providing a disclaimer

Tracy and Ron added that another way to combat gender inequities within their own drama classrooms is by providing a disclaimer for students. Tracy mentioned the disclaimer technique she uses. Tracy states,

I do not avoid stereotypes, because as long as you implement a consolidation piece, students are aware of the stereotypes. Sometimes, half the battle is giving students the tools to identify stereotypes in our world. If they don’t have the tools, you are not teaching them or guiding them through.

Tracy mentioned that this is very important, because it is difficult to avoid stereotypes. She also argued that utilizing literature in a drama classroom that is dated can provide a teaching opportunity, as she can ask students to present and deconstruct the piece. Tracy shared the importance of providing a disclaimer to students, as she believes that it helps students critically understand stereotypical messages presented through literature, regarding male or female gender stereotypes or norms, for example.

Like Tracy, Ron mentioned that he works to combat gender inequities and stereotypes through addressing student misconceptions. Ron believes that presenting drama literature in various ways, through negative and positive outlooks, may assist in helping students to
understand stereotypes. This is because the material and storylines can be discussed and dissected through a “debrief period” after each presentation, by asking students their thoughts on the meaning behind biases presented. Working to provide discussion on challenging topics allows students to view drama literature from various perspectives, and allows students to visualize other sides to a story through discussion. Ron stressed the importance of challenging students to think about their thoughts, actions and words in a critical manner. He does this by questioning students on their choice in drama actions, and by encouraging the sharing of opinions on literature. Providing disclaimers and engaging students in rich discussions about existent stereotypes in drama literature can help students understand the importance of gender equity, and can help teachers combat gender inequities in their own drama classrooms. Similarly, Gray and Leith mention the importance of addressing gender stereotypes in the classroom as educators: “By challenging stereotypes, teachers free children from traditional restrictions (Gray & Leith, 2004, p.5). Teachers can address misconceptions in order for students to feel that they are in an accepting and equitable classroom environment, free from stereotypes.

4.4.3 Division of students

Tracy and Ron both work to prevent gender inequities through the way they construct their group activities and divide students in the classroom. Tracy mentioned that in order to combat gender inequities in the classroom, she will not group students based on gender within her drama classroom. Instead, Tracy will group students with varied abilities together in order for different ideas to arise, or will number students off.

Ron mentioned that he works to create groups with equal ratios of females and males, and will often number students off when creating groups. Ron also gives students the option of choosing their own groups on occasion. Ron also mentioned that diving a class by gender does
not present students with real-life situations. The participants seemed to suggest that an equitable division of students in the drama classroom is an asset to the teacher experience of combatting gender inequities in classrooms.

4.5 Gender Inequities Arise in the Music Classroom

4.5.1 Gendered instruments- unequal distribution of instrument assigning

Zenon believes that gender inequities can be found in the music classroom through gendered instruments, stemming from the unequal distribution or choosing of musical instruments, based on gender stereotypes. Zenon mentioned that each instrument group in his music classroom includes both females and males. This is aside from the trumpet group, which seems to be male dominated each year. Zenon mentioned that this may be because the female students might see that the male students dominate the trumpet, and so the females might “try to avoid the instrument,” in fear of being bullied or looking out of place. The participants seem to suggest that too many male or female players in a specific instrument group can cause gender inequities and instrument stereotypes in the music classroom. Marshall and Shibazaki’s thoughts on gender inequities support the teacher’s statements, as they relate to the gendered distribution of instruments. Similar to Zenon’s thoughts on too many females or males playing a certain instrument, these imbalances were referred to by Marshall and Shibazaki in Chapter 1 (Marshall and Shibazaki, 2011, p.495). Thus, the participants seemed to suggest that it is clear that students deem instruments as “girly,” or “boyish,” due to their association with groups of gendered students who play a certain instrument.

4.5.2 Music literature

Zenon mentioned that music literature can also create gender inequities in the music classroom. When asked about the music pieces he chooses, Zenon stated, “I have never
intentionally tried to choose female composers, and it is something I don’t put much thought into.” All the music they play is by male composers.

Zenon stated that when looking back at festival lists his classes take part in, they consist of “primarily male composers” as well. Zenon believes that the gender inequity seen in the composition of music is engrained into the current music culture, as it is difficult to locate popular music written by a female composer. Zenon added, “I cannot recall the last time I went to the music store and picked up a piece and said, “Oh cool, this is a female composer, let’s buy this chart and do it.”” Zenon believes that pieces by female composers are available, although they may be a “2% filler on the shelf.” He also stated that the other 98% of the shelf is filled with male composers, which makes it easily accessible and available for music teachers to purchase this music. This is suggesting that music literature also adds to the creation of gender inequities within a music classroom, due to the difficulty in finding diverse composition resources.

4.6 Music Teachers Work to Combat Gender Inequities in the Classroom

4.6.1 The trickle down effect

Zenon stated that there are a number of ways to combat gender inequities in a music classroom. He argued that the best way to combat gender inequities is by breaking gender stereotypes himself. Zenon added that discussion is key when students are picking their instruments. When speaking to his students, Zenon explained how he breaks gender stereotypes: “I’ll pick up a flute and play one, I’m a male, and this is fine. You know guys, there is nothing wrong with you doing this. Girls, there’s nothing wrong with you playing the trumpet.”

The trickle down effect helps students disengage with pre-existing gender stereotypes through teacher example. Zenon believes that another way the trickle down effect could work is through older students in band, acting as an example for younger students. “When younger
students see them perform, it can be engrained in the school culture. Younger students might say, “oh yeah, there is a guy playing the flute, I would maybe want to do that in grade 8.”

Zenon believes that the example older students set for younger students will stop youngsters from holding back when they would like to pursue an instrument. Zenon also believes that this will diminish negative thoughts younger students may have, such as “I like that sound, but it’s a girl instrument so I can’t do that.”

4.6.2 Assigning instruments without gender bias- giving students choice

Zenon mentioned that another way he works to combat gender inequities in his music classroom, is through assigning instruments to students regardless of the gender they might identify with. Zenon stated that he tries his best not to stereotype while placing students onto musical instruments, although has to take into consideration what instrument a student might strongly succeed in. Zenon mentioned that if a student has bigger lips, it is easier for them to play the tuba, although he believes that in regards to gender, there should be no reason for a teacher to stereotypically choose a specific instrument for a student. Zenon believes in the strategy of giving students choice in the musical instrument they will play. Zenon asks students to choose the top 3 instruments that they would prefer to play, and he will slot them into one of those instrument groups accordingly, depending on what he thinks the student will succeed best in.

Zenon also stated that he is the one who essentially decides what instruments students are playing, so he has some control over inequities or stereotypes in the classroom. Zenon will add female players to the trumpet group if there is a lack of female representation, and will add males to the flute group if there is a lack of male representation. Zenon will make these decisions while keeping in mind the top 3 instrument choices students had previously submitted to him. Zenon mentioned that doing this helps with the decrease of gender inequities and the combatting of
stereotypes in the music classroom. Zenon seemed to suggest that assigning instruments to students without the consideration of their identified gender will help to combat possible gender inequities in the classroom.

4.6.3 Division of students

Zenon mentioned that dividing students equitably also works to combat gender inequities that may arise in a music classroom. Zenon stated that he will not divide students by gender, but instead by instrument group. “Sometimes I’ll say, flutes and clarinets, I’ll work with you. Brass go practice individually- then I will switch it up.” Zenon believes that teachers and students should be working together in collaboration as a class, regardless of what gender students identify with. The participants seemed to suggest that implementing gender equitable division of students strategies are effective in Zenon’s classroom, to help combat possible gender inequities.

4.6.4 Discussing gender inequities as they arise

Discussing gender inequities as they arise in a music classroom is quite important to Zenon when combatting gender inequities. He believes that a teacher should handle gender inequities in the classroom differently from one another:

If I was teaching a class and the whole class heard about what was going on, I would stop the class and acknowledge the inequity, and then ask the class how we are going to move forward. If it were an issue that happened on the side or in a small group, it would be more like dealing with those one or two students privately, just because it might not be something that the whole class needs to hear. Unless you think it is an issue that the class can benefit from.
Thus, the discussion of gender inequities as they arise is an effective way for Zenon to address gender inequities in his music classroom, as he can educate students as to why the statement is inequitable.

4.7 Gender Inequities and Stereotypes Brought Into the Drama and Music Classroom Are Influenced by Various Factors

4.7.1 Home life influence

When speaking with Ron, Tracy and Zenon about their experience teaching in drama and music classrooms, they noted that many students arrive to class with pre-existing gender inequities and stereotypes. When questioning where these stereotypes are learned, all three interviewees suggest home life as the largest factor in developing negative and inequitable gender stereotype ideologies, which are then brought into the classroom.

Ron mentioned that gender inequities are often brought into the classroom through stereotypes and thoughts from home life influences, including children listening to conversations that their parents may have. Ron mentions “certain boys and girls will bring a background of information from their home lives into the classroom.”

Tracy similarly mentioned, “A lot of these stereotypes come from the home lives of children and the way that they have been raised. Depending on their culture, they may have a dominant male figure in their lives, or a dominant female figure.”

Zenon also agreed, arguing that countries children might have immigrated from before they lived in Canada, play a factor as well. Zenon stated that diversity is very important in a school, as you can learn from culture. Although he also mentioned that it is important not to learn from negative stereotypes, which might be brought from another place. Zenon mentioned
the importance of embracement when it comes to students coming into the classroom with various mindsets, although also states the importance of educating students on inequities as well.

Similar to Zenon’s thoughts on gender inequities in music classrooms, Marshall and Shibazaki discuss family and societal stereotypes, which may cause gender stereotype reinforcement, and discourage girls from learning male-dominated instruments. “Pupils chose the instrument they wish to learn according to a wide range of influences including siblings, family and the timbre of the instrument” (Marshall & Shibazaki, 2011, p.496). Changes in societal attitudes, the style of music, and the excerpt or music literature chosen to represent the instrument may also play a factor in what instrument students may choose (Marshall & Shibazaki, 2011, p. 497).

Based on Ron, Tracy and Zenon’s experiences, home life seems to have the greatest influence on students when it comes to developing gender stereotypes. There are other factors, which also play a lesser role in the knowledge students attain on gender stereotypes, including media, drama literature and peer influence.

4.7.2 Peer pressure/ peer influence

Ron, Tracy and Zenon also mentioned the influence peer pressure has on students, when it comes to stereotypical gender ideologies students bring into the drama and music classroom. Tracy mentioned the influence of peers. She states, “their peers have a huge impact on them.” Ron agreed with the effects of peer pressure when learning and utilizing gender stereotypes. He states, “there is a great need to fit in. The kids who are confident in themselves don’t care about what others think. But it’s those kids who are worried about their friendships, or what their other friends are doing.” Ron mentioned that children will often think about how their peers will perceive them if they do not act a certain way when taking on a role. “The kids that are the most
vulnerable are the ones that lack the self confidence to take risks in front of their friends or in front of their classmates.”

Zenon mentioned that gender inequities in the music classroom could be the result of peer pressure by students within their group of friends, to play a certain instrument. For example, Zenon mentioned that when students are giving their instrument choices to him, they might persuade each other to play the same instrument. Zenon quoted his students stating, “I’m doing this so you should do this too.” Thus, according to the teaching experiences of Ron, Tracy and Zenon, peer influence is also a contributing factor to inequitable gender stereotypes brought into drama and music classrooms, through students.

4.8 Media Influence

Media is a large factor influencing students when it comes to pre-existing gender stereotypes. Ron mentioned that media students view in their homes play a role in pre-existing gender stereotypes students bring into the drama classroom. “Students are greatly influenced by TV and video games, based on the way males and females are depicted there.”

Zenon touched on the negative impact past and current Rap songs have had on younger students, and the lyrics within some of these tracks. Zenon stated, “rappers in general... a lot of women have been degraded through Rap songs. It’s an interesting and important discussion to bring up to students.” Zenon gave the example of an LL Cool J song, known as “Phenomenal,” from the 1990s, that he used as a tool to educate students. Zenon believes that students will listen to Rap music regardless, and it is important for them to be able to understand what is inequitable about the song, and to dissect and learn from it. He explained that the LL Cool J song includes slander, and is inappropriate in regards to how most schools would want to function. Zenon would use this song to make comparisons to the lyrics in current Rap songs, and would have
conversations in the music classroom with his students, based on whether the lyrics are harmful in today’s society. Zenon also mentioned that the radio and TV are impossible to completely avoid in today’s society, as media is engrained into the culture of our youth. He believes that it is important to address issues we can see today, as well as issues we can see in past media, and to give students a sense of how far we have come as a society. It is also important for students to see what else we need to do to achieve gender equity.

Thus, the participants seemed to suggest that it is important to take into account that students may hold pre-existing gender stereotypes, due to media influences. Some students will enter the classroom with these stereotypes in mind, and it is important to be able to address and talk about these influences with students.

### 4.9 Need for Professional Development

#### 4.9.1 “Practical” professional development

Many of the teachers I had interviewed agreed that hands-on professional development opportunities would be helpful to implement the change they believe is needed, in order to attain gender equity in music and drama classrooms.

When teachers were asked how they could be further supported by the education system in order to better implement gender equitable teaching practices, both Ron and Tracy mentioned that “practical teaching” workshops for educators would be an asset. Ron mentioned that watching short videos of inequitable situations arising in classrooms, and discussing how to respond or approach these situations would be beneficial to educators. He believes that not only new teachers would benefit from these workshops, but also educators who have been teaching for a number of years. Tracy mentioned that instead of content and theory based trainings, it would be beneficial to learn about what theory looks like, and how it works in a classroom.
environment. Tracy too, believes that being asked to identify where inequities appear in a lesson would be a great practice for teachers.

Similar to Ron and Tracy, Zenon believes that innovative professional development trainings are needed, as most professional development trainings he attends are geared towards teachers with many years of experience. He finds that the material is repetitive, especially for teachers who have recently graduated. Zenon believes more choice should be given to teachers as to which professional development opportunities they believe they could benefit from personally.

It is clear that there is a need for practical and innovative professional development opportunities, which are perhaps less theory based and more hands-on, allowing teachers to practice the inclusion they aspire to implement in their own classrooms.

4.9.2 Frequency of equity-based professional development trainings required

The teachers I had interviewed expressed similar beliefs on professional development training opportunities in their workplace, and agreed that rarely are equity-based professional development opportunities offered.

Ron mentioned that he had completed one equity-based training at the start of his career, which was mandated by his school board, although has rarely heard about any equity-based professional development opportunities since. Similar to Ron, Zenon mentioned that in his first year of teaching there was talk of equity and diversity, within required professional development trainings, although it was not continuously enforced throughout his teaching career. Zenon believes that there are most likely optional equity-based professional development workshops offered by his school board, although nothing that is mandatory.
When Tracy was asked about the frequency of equity-based professional development trainings offered in her school board, she mentioned her extensive experience learning about equity implementation through her teacher education. Tracy mentioned that equity implementation comments might arise in some form throughout a professional development opportunity, although there are no mandatory equity-based trainings for staff.

The participants seemed to suggest that attending equity-based trainings does not seem to be a requirement of one working within a school board education setting. It seems that equity-based trainings are often unheard of, other than at the start of one’s teaching career.

### 4.10 Recommendations For New Teachers

The educators I interviewed made numerous recommendations for beginning teachers, on how to proceed with the current curriculum and with professional development opportunities, in order to provide a more equitable classroom of their own.

#### 4.1.1 Awareness of the world

A recommendation for new teachers who are committed to providing an equitable classroom, which all three interviewees agreed upon, was to be cognisant and aware of the world around you. Ron mentioned that because society is changing, it is very important to understand and to be aware of what is happening in the school community surrounding you. Ron also mentioned that with change in society, various questions and issues are being introduced in the classroom, and it is very important to address these issues rather than to turn away from them.

Similar to Ron, Zenon also noted the importance of being aware of changes in society as an educator, while working to promote equity in the classroom. Zenon takes the approach of “mindfulness,” and being “open-minded and aware of things that are going on” around the school community. Zenon also believes that with changes in society, it is also important for
teachers to understand that they may not have the answer to everything, although it is important to create an environment where everyone can learn from each other.

Tracy took a different approach to the importance of awareness of the world, as a recommendation for new teachers committed to providing an equitable classroom. Tracy believes that being conscious about not only change in the world, but the material that you are choosing to use and present to students, as well as the language you use in the classroom as a teacher, is important. Due to change in the world, it is important for educators to make material relevant to students, in order for students to learn to the best of their ability.

Thus, being aware of changes in the world and the community surrounding you, as well as adjusting curriculum material, are common recommendations from the three teachers interviewed. These recommendations can be taken into consideration in order to help new educators who are committed to providing an equitable classroom.

4.1.2 Understanding who your learner is

Another recommendation for new teachers, suggested by the participants was for teachers to understand their learners. Ron mentioned that in order to achieve equity and inclusivity in the classroom, a teacher must take the time to talk to their students, have discussions with them, and must get to know them for who they truly are. Ron also mentioned the importance of a teacher-student relationship, where it is crucial for the student to see the teacher as an individual human being, not only as a teacher figure. Similar to Ron, Zenon believes that getting to know your student is helpful in creating an equitable classroom. Zenon gave the example of allowing students to choose which instrument they play in his music classroom, in order to help combat gender stereotypes, and to let students express themselves.
Tracy takes the approach of adjusting curriculum materials, topics and language use in the classroom, in order to accommodate diverse learners. Tracy mentioned that as a new teacher there are many expectations to meet, although it is very important to remember to include the implementation of gender equity. She mentioned the importance of understanding who the learner is, and thinking about each student as an individual, in order to achieve an equitable environment for students to learn in.

Thus, it is clear that a recommendation to new educators from experienced educators is the importance of understanding who the learner is, and where they come from. This understanding is necessary in order to be able to teach students to the best of your ability, and to accommodate to their individual needs.

4.11 Summary

Educators were asked about their implementation of gender equity practices in music and drama classrooms, and in which ways they find gender inequities to arise. The responses were powerful. Ron and Tracy, both drama teachers, agreed that the most common way for gender inequities to arise in their drama classrooms is through the assigning of drama roles, stereotypes presented in role-play activities as well as dated drama literature. Ron and Tracy both agreed on similar strategies to implement an equitable environment in their classrooms, including providing students with choice in drama roles, providing a disclaimer to students, and equitably dividing students.

Zenon, a music teacher, finds that the most common way for gender inequities to arise in his classroom is through gendered instrument assigning and gendered music literature. Zenon believes strategies to implement an equitable environment in a music classroom include being a great role model, dividing students equitably, and discussing inequities as they arise.
Overall, educators expressed the belief that for a variety of reasons, inequities are presented in music and drama classrooms, and it is important for teachers to use strategies to combat these inequities, in order to provide inclusive education.

In Chapter 5 I present implications based on the literature provided in Chapter 4, as well as conclusions on my research. I also present recommendations and reflections based on the findings of my study, as well as areas that require further research.
Chapter 5: Implications

5.0 Introduction

The goal of this study was to explore the experiences of music and drama teachers, and the links to gender equity implementation in the classroom. In this chapter, I review my key research findings and draw on the significance of the themes examined in the previous chapters. The chapter outlines various implications from my findings, recommendations for educators and the teaching community, as well as areas for further research. I also provide concluding comments on the significance of this research.

5.1 Overview of Key Findings and Their Significance

Following an analysis of the data collected from the three participant interviews, seven main themes were revealed. The first theme explored the ways in which gender inequity plays a role in drama classrooms. Teachers agreed that the assigning of drama roles, student led role-play, as well as drama literature were factors which contributed to gender inequities arising in classrooms. The second theme reflected how drama teachers work to combat gender inequities in the classroom. Teachers agreed that student choice in drama roles, division of students and providing students with disclaimers were incredibly important. Similarly, the third theme explored the ways in which gender inequity plays a role in music classrooms. The interviewed participants suggested that gender inequities could be found through gendered instruments, music literature as well as the unequal distribution of instrument assigning. Theme four suggested how music teachers work to combat gender inequities in the classroom. The interviewed participant mentioned that in order to work to combat inequities, it was important to implement the trickle-down effect, the assigning of instruments without gender bias, allowing student choice, proper division of students, and discussion of gender inequities as they arise. The
next theme suggested the influences of pre-existing gender inequities and stereotypes brought into drama and music classrooms. Teachers agreed that home life influence, peer pressure/peer influence and media influence were main components, which added to the influence of pre-existing gender stereotypes for students. Theme six explored the need for professional development, where teachers agreed that practical professional development and a higher frequency of equity-based professional development trainings should be implemented more often. Recommendations for new teachers included the need for a greater awareness of diverse student learners, in order to ensure the implementation of equity in the classroom.

5.2 Implications

5.2.1 Broad implications for the educational community

This study has significant implications for various teachers and members of the education community. Broadly speaking, this study has shown that there are a number of ways gender inequities arise in music and drama classrooms, as well as various ways to combat these inequities. Educational professionals that use these suggestions in their own classrooms can help increase equitable and meaningful learning experiences for students, by preventing inequities to arise, or by addressing and combating them if they do arise. Implications for new teachers are also included in this study and recommendations are suggested by all of the interview participants. Teachers can learn to create equitable classroom environments through learning about the experiences of other teachers.

Pre-existing gender stereotypes are a challenge for teachers. The interview participants indicated that students enter a classroom with a variety of background experiences, which influence their thought process, and this can impact what takes place in the classroom.
There are also implications for educational professionals, such as principals and ministry professionals, as the study reveals a need for the implementation of additional, and perhaps more focused, hands-on professional development equity training. The three interview participants believed that additional and more specialized professional development could help to benefit student experience in classrooms, as well as improve teachers’ equity knowledge base.

5.2.2 Narrow implications for me as a teacher and researcher

There are a number of implications for me as a teacher and as a researcher. As a researcher, I am eager to conduct more research and to gain more information about inequities present in classrooms. I have found that there is limited research on the topic of why gender inequities in music and drama classrooms continue to be present, despite decades of gender equity policies and initiatives. Further research as to what specific changes need to take place, and why these changes have not yet taken place, would be beneficial to the exploration of gender equity in the school system. This study was restricted to two or three interviews, however there is certainly room for a much larger study that could closely look at the voices and experiences of many teachers. It is important and beneficial for the voices and experiences of teachers to be heard and shared with the larger education community, to foster an environment where teachers can learn from the experiences of other educators.

As well, as a new teacher, this specific research helped motivate me to increase mindfulness within my own teaching practices and to implement suggestions made by the interview participants, which I hope will help to combat inequities that might arise in my own classroom. I hope to take preventative measures through strategies explored in this research, which will help decrease the likelihood of gender inequities in my classroom. I feel that my development as both a teacher and a researcher has helped me gain the knowledge needed to
succeed, in providing a classroom environment that is welcoming and celebratory of the uniqueness of all individuals. I feel that I have developed as a researcher, as the findings of this study have allowed me to better understand the importance of research in the education field and the importance of the implementation of positive change in diverse classrooms. These strategies can improve my own practices.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the research, there are recommendations for Ontario teachers, school boards and the Ministry of Education. The first specific recommendation is that further opportunities for professional development, based on hands-on experience, should be provided to teachers. The second recommendation is for curriculum committees to re-examine materials used in music and drama teaching. Lastly, teachers should be reflective of the decisions they make, including the assigning of instruments, the choosing of music, or the choosing of drama literature in the classroom.

The first recommendation, offered to school boards and the Ministry of Education, includes the need for further implementation of equity-based professional development trainings and opportunities for teachers. Teachers feel the need to gain a professional development experience, which includes modelling problem solving, which then can be transferred into their own classroom practices. School boards as well as the Ministry of Education can look to this study in order to understand the needs of current teachers attempting to implement equitable practices in their own classrooms. School boards can learn that a need for a hands-on professional development approach when teaching equity implementation to educators is needed, as well as a choice and higher frequency of professional development opportunities.
The information collected from this study poses a second recommendation. It would be beneficial for curriculum committees to re-examine the materials that are used in each grade level of drama and music teaching. Curriculum committees made up of education professionals could take part in a long-term study, involving a dissection of all chosen music and drama literature used in classrooms. This data can then be formulated into results, which could address inequities through music choice and drama literature choice in classrooms. A recommendation may then suggest that rules should be made in order for women to be represented as composers in music chosen for classrooms, or for women to be represented prevalently through drama literature.

The third recommendation offered to teachers, includes the importance of teachers being reflective of decisions they make. This is regarding the assigning of instruments to students, which music is played, as well as the particular drama literature that is chosen. This study provides evidence, which suggests that teachers be reflective on the ways in which they present traditional understandings of gender, race and class, in their own classrooms.

5.4 Areas For Further Research

This study has revealed areas of research that are worth exploring in order to further assist the Ministry of Education to provide equitable schooling experiences for students. Given the importance of what I have researched, and the suggestions that the interview participants have made, it is important to research and implement new ideas for professional development trainings, as well as model-based or hands-on ways to deliver opportunities to educate and assist teachers, in their journey to implement gender equity in their classrooms.

Educational research scholars should direct their attention towards further research on how to achieve other strands of equity within the classroom, surrounding disability, racism and
classism, for example. Research may suggest that improved ways for the implementation of these areas into the classroom are also needed. This may suggest that additional professional development trainings may be needed to cover all strands of equity implementation for educators, new and experienced. A larger study examining the experiences and voices of many teachers in the classroom, would be beneficial to gain a better understanding of equity implementation by education professionals.

5.5 Concluding Comments

This chapter has outlined key implications for teachers and the educational community that have resulted from my study. This includes the variety of ways for gender inequities to arise in music and drama classrooms, ways to combat these inequities when they arise, ways to prevent these inequities from arising, recommendations based on teacher experience, pre-existing gender stereotypes students may have, and the need for hands-on professional development equity-based trainings for teachers. The information presented in this study reflect teaching strategies, based on teacher experience, on gender equity implementation in music and drama classrooms.

This study is of particular importance to today’s educational world, as its findings suggest that there is a need for work to be done by school boards. Gender equity-based professional development opportunities should be developed and frequently available, in order to assist teachers with hands-on strategies for promoting equitable practices in their classrooms. Teachers must feel prepared and confident, that they can work to create equitable, comfortable and inclusive environments for the diverse students of today’s classrooms. Effective student learning can only be maximized through teacher recognition of student identity, and through student choice and decision in their educational opportunities. Therefore, it is imperative that teachers,
school communities and educational professionals strive towards reaching the goal of gender equity implementation in classrooms, through an increase of student choice, as well as teacher professional development opportunities, to better reflect equitable practices.
References


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[http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002316/231646e.pdf](http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002316/231646e.pdf)
Appendix A: Letter of Consent

Date:

Dear _______________________________,

My Name is Brittany Melo and I am a student in the Master of Teaching program at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto (OISE/UT). A component of this degree program involves conducting a small-scale qualitative research study.

My research will focus on gender inequities in music and drama classrooms, and how these inequities are created. I am interested in interviewing teachers who have experience working in music and drama classrooms, who can provide me with their opinions of gender equitable teaching strategies. I think that your knowledge and experience will provide insights into this topic.

Your participation in this research will involve one 45-60 minute interview, which will be transcribed and audio-recorded. I would be grateful if you would allow me to interview you at a place and time convenient for you, outside of school time. The contents of this interview will be used for my research project, which will include a final paper, as well as informal presentations to my classmates. I may also present my research findings via conference presentations and/or through publication. You will be assigned a pseudonym to maintain your anonymity and I will not use your name or any other content that might identify you in my written work, oral presentations, or publications. This information will remain confidential. Any information that identifies your school or students will also be excluded. The interview data will be stored on my password-protected computer and the only person who will have access to the research data will be my course instructor Dr. Rose Fine-Meyer. You are free to change your mind about your participation at any time, and to withdraw even after you have consented to participate. You may also choose to decline to answer any specific question during the interview. I will destroy the audio recording after the paper has been presented and/or published, which may take up to a maximum of five years after the data has been collected. There are no known risks to participation, and I will share a copy of the transcript with you shortly after the interview to ensure accuracy.

Please sign this consent form, if you agree to be interviewed. The second copy is for your records. I am very grateful for your participation.

Sincerely,

Brittany Melo
Brittany.melo@utoronto.ca

Course Instructor’s Name: Dr. Rose Fine-Meyer
Contact Information: rose.fine.meyer@utoronto.ca
Consent Form

I acknowledge that the topic of this interview has been explained to me and that any questions that I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I can withdraw from this research study at any time without penalty.

I have read the letter provided to me by Brittany Melo and agree to participate in an interview for the purposes described. I agree to have the interview audio-recorded.

Signature: ______________________________________

Name: (printed) ______________________________________

Date: ______________________________________
Appendix B: Interview Protocol

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research study, and for making time to be interviewed today. This research study aims to learn about gender inequities presented in music and drama classrooms, and how they are presented, for the purpose of posing a solution to create an equitable experience for students in these art classrooms. This interview will last approximately 45-60 minutes, and I will ask you a series of questions focused on gender inequities within your own classroom, as well as your own teaching practices. I want to remind you that you may refrain from answering any question, and you have the right to withdraw your participation from the study at any time. As I explained in the consent letter, this interview will be audio-recorded. Do you have any questions before we begin?

Background Information

1) How long have you been teaching music/drama?

2) How often do you implement equitable practices in the classroom?

3) Do you believe that you have witnessed gender inequities in your own classroom? Explain.

4) How often do you attend equity/diversity-based trainings?

Teacher Perspectives/Beliefs

1) What are your attitudes towards implementing equitable teaching strategies in the classroom?

2) What are your thoughts on gender stereotypes in music/drama classrooms?

3) What do you think the most common way for gender inequities to arise in music/drama classrooms would be?

4) Do you believe there are gender inequities that arise within your classroom, through music/drama literature? (drama scripts, or specific music chosen)

5) Do you believe there are gender inequities that arise within your classroom, through the choosing/assigning of musical instruments? Explain.

6) Do you believe there are gender inequities that arise within your classroom, through the choosing/assigning of drama roles? Explain.

7) Do you believe there are preventative measures to eliminate gender stereotyping in the classroom?
8) Do you believe you are provided enough resources/trainings in order to implement equitable teaching strategies?

9) If students in your classrooms hold pre-existing gender stereotypes, do you believe these have come from the influence of other students, home life, or past teachers?

**Teacher Practices**

1) How do you normally divide your class in half, or organize your class into smaller groups?

2) Do you agree with dividing a class by gender? Why or why not?

3) Do you give students a choice in the musical instrument they play, or do you assign which instrument suits the student best? Why?

4) Do you give students choice in the drama role that they choose, or do you assign which roles suit the student best? Why?

5) How do you decide what type of music will be played in your classroom?

6) How do you decide what types of drama literature will be chosen to be performed in your classroom?

7) Do you take into consideration or avoid, stereotypes that may be presented within the drama scripts you provide to your students? Why?

8) Do you believe that you may present gender stereotypes through your teaching methods? Why or why not?

**Supports and Challenges**

1) If a gender stereotype does arise in your classroom, how do you approach the situation?

2) How do you believe you could be further be supported by the education system, to help you implement gender equitable teaching practices?

**Next Steps**

1) Do you have goals for the implementation of gender equity in your classroom?

2) What advice do you have for beginning teachers, who are committed to providing a gender equitable classroom?

Thank you for your participation in this research study.