WHAT PRESERVICE MUSIC TEACHERS LEARN ABOUT DIVERSITY DURING STUDENT TEACHING

BY

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DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

Music teacher educators have been called to work toward diversity, an ambiguous term. Preparing teachers to work toward diversity and more importantly, equity, requires action in every aspect of teacher preparation. Because of its professional and personal significance, student teaching has been implicated as a site for change (Abramo & Campbell, 2016; Conway, 2002, 2012; Draves, 2013). To what extent are student teachers prepared to address issues related to diversity and equity? How do student teachers conceive of diversity during such a complex experience? How do they learn to respond to student diversity in equitable ways? Paine (1990) offers four possible orientations toward diversity: individualistic, categorical, contextual, and pedagogical.

In this multiple case study (Thomas, 2016), I examined how four student teachers’ orientations toward diversity (Paine, 1990) changed during semester-long field experiences. I explored the ways that cooperating teachers, the edTPA—a standardized evaluation of the preparation to teach, and school placements influenced the participants. Data collection took place in Illinois during the fall of 2018 and included five observations and follow-up interviews with each participant as well as interviews with the cooperating teachers. The participants taught general music, string, and choral classes at the elementary, middle, and high school levels.

The student teachers discussed a variety of what they named as “typical” or even “stereotypical” categories of diversity; conversations with the participants about P-12 student diversity were dominated by discussions of age, grade level, and musical abilities. The student teachers mostly viewed diversity as individualistic, randomly occurring, though personally significant (Paine, 1990). These views were associated with normative responses to difference including issues of classroom management and lesson planning in which the student teachers
focused mostly on the unsubstantiated category of learning styles diversity. Furthermore, the participants were surprised when P-12 students discussed race or sexuality.

Notably, one student teacher did articulate diversity as socially constructed and significant. With mentorship during her first placement, this student teacher built relationships with her P-12 students that helped her respond to their diverse needs and strengths. Broadly, the student teacher learned about the salience of social forces such as race and racism directly from her students and through reflection with the cooperating teacher. These experiences led the student teacher to construct more complex understandings of diversity and to develop equity-oriented pedagogical practices. However, during her second placement, the importance of these practices waned as completing the edTPA overshadowed her contextual orientation toward student diversity.

Meeting the learning needs of diverse students in inequitable schooling contexts (Banks et al., 2004; Cochran-Smith, 2004) requires discussing diversity, privilege, and oppression explicitly. Implications from this study include a need for preservice educators to be challenged by supervisors and mentors to apply, test, and revise their conceptions of student diversity during the complex, formative, and capstone experience of student teaching. In the final chapter, I describe how music teacher educators can make student teaching a site of action toward equity and justice.
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Described as a “capstone experience” (Draves, 2013), student teaching is a time when educators transition from preservice to in-service teachers, applying the knowledge, skills, and pedagogy they studied in college coursework to the practice of school teaching (Silveira & Diaz, 2014). Student teaching is a vital and ubiquitous field experience for preservice music teachers along their path to degree completion as well as certification (Schmidt, 1994, 1998, 2010, 2013). During student teaching, a preservice teacher works as a mentee, apprentice, or co-teacher with one or two cooperating, master, or mentor in-service teachers. Juchniewicz (2018) found in his survey of faculty from a nationally representative sample of colleges and universities that 96.9% of U.S. music teacher preparation programs required student teaching. The remaining 3.1% of institutions reported that they did not require student teaching, offered a two-month internship between the fall and spring semesters of a student’s senior year, or failed to answer the question. Of the music teacher preparation programs that required student teaching; 83.9% percent of schools utilized one-semester placements, while around 15% used two semesters.

The Structure and Purposes of Student Teaching

Today’s student teaching paradigm is a continuation of nearly two centuries of practice. In a historical review of the literature on teacher education, Coleman (1999) noted that colleges and public schools engaged in student-teaching-like partnerships in the 1800s. Coy (1976) established through a national survey of student teaching practices that colleges in every state built student teaching experiences into their music education certification programs. For at least 40 years, student teaching programs in music education have assumed a fairly regular profile as a constant feature of teacher education (Juchniewicz, 2018). Their importance and omnipresence are so unanimously accepted that in a study of student teaching seminars, Baumgartner and
Councill (2017) did not ask whether music education certification programs in their sample required student teaching; the researchers simply asked, for how long? This similarity among music teacher preparation programs in varied contexts and with different programmatic focuses is notable. It is hard to imagine that music teacher education programs across 50 states might require another aspect of coursework or fieldwork with near total uniformity. Neither the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) nor the Council for the Accreditation of Educational Professionals (CAEP) explicitly requires student teaching (Juchniewicz, 2018, p. 28). In the absence of explicit national standards, it seems fair to infer that student teaching is so common because music teacher educators deem it important.

Indeed, student teaching is considered to be critical to the socialization of music teachers into the profession (Baumgartner, 2019). However, the ends to which student teachers are socialized are less uniform than the structure of student teaching. Draves (2013) highlighted four areas in which student teachers develop via personal, pedagogical, musical, and contextual knowledge and skills. The culminating experience can engender subskills such as building community, establishing professional practices such as timeliness and preparation, advancing musical knowledge and an understanding of how to create educative musical experiences, and how to teach in complex school and community contexts (Draves, 2013). Student teaching can develop student teachers’ occupational identities (Isbell, 2008), beliefs about classroom management (Brand, 1982), and/or pedagogical content knowledge (Draves, 2013), but can student teaching help preservice music educators develop a caring orientation toward students?

In his classic text, To Teach, Bill Ayers (1993) posited:

Good teaching requires most of all a thoughtful, caring teacher committed to the lives of students…good teaching is not a matter of specific techniques or styles, plans or
Teaching is primarily a matter of love…Of course, we cannot love what we neither know nor understand. Nor can we teach someone entirely outside our capacity for empathy or comprehension. No one can teach someone they hate, or despise, or find unworthy; someone completely alien or apart from some sense of a shared humanity. On the other hand, sustained interest in and deep knowledge of another person is in itself an act of love, and a good preparation for teaching. (p. 18)

The ability to love or develop sustained interest in students seems a tall order during student teaching given the many responsibilities that preservice teachers manage during their culminating field experience. If so, does student teaching fail as a “good preparation for teaching” (Ayers, 1993, p. 18)? How might student teaching function as a good place for the development of these idealistic dispositions?

Svengalis (1992), a music coordinator of the Des Moines, Iowa city schools, described student teaching as a chance to provide early career teachers with experiences in new contexts. The student teaching site, she advocated, could be a place where teachers learn how to work with students with diverse identities and experiences. She described student teaching as “the vital link bridging the formal music education program and the real world of music teaching” (p. 31).

Svengalis noted:

We are a nation of diverse classes and cultural groups. Potential teachers must experience teaching diverse groups of students in schools that reflect a wide variety of situations…frequent experiences in various cultural and socioeconomic settings throughout the university preparation would help make the transition from university to public school more positive by providing opportunities for modification of attitudes toward such groups. (p. 34)
The article from which these quotes are excerpted was written in the early 1990s and yet this goal remains critically relevant to national discussions around music teacher education nearly three decades later. Svengalis called for more diverse student teaching placements as well as opportunities for preservice educators to work with diverse groups of students before student teaching. Some research has addressed issues of culture and diversity during student teaching in music education specifically (Abramo & Campbell, 2016; Krueger, 2006; McKoy, 2009, 2013). However, in a comprehensive review of research on the subject, Silveira and Diaz (2014) found that “articles in which culture, specifically non-Western culture and/or diversity, was the primary theme” (p. 97) accounted for only 2% of the extant literature (n = 2) on student teaching. The majority of the research on student teaching focused on student teachers’ perceptions of their experience; the relationships among cooperating, supervising, and student teachers; and socialization into the profession (Silveira & Diaz, 2014). The complexity of the discourses surrounding “diversity” may point toward one reason why this work has been seldom undertaken.

**Defining Diversity**

Defining diversity is complex and hard. Squire (2015) wrote that diversity could be understood as a discourse. Discourse, as described by Hall (2001) in a discussion on Foucault, includes written or spoken language as well as the practices that construct an object through social meaning-making. Diversity as a discourse includes written definitions of diversity, including the iterative cycle through which diversity is repeatedly defined and noticed and performed and redefined. The discourse also includes the social norms and rules surrounding discussions of difference including talking about race, sex and gender, nationality and borders, language, ability and disability, and many more ways in which humans are distinguished from
one another through personal, familial, political, policy, and educational structures. Squire (2015), in his study of college admissions administrators, wrote that there are “two main discourses of diversity in higher education” (p. 18), though these discourses extend beyond colleges and universities. The first discourse stems from legal definitions of racial or other identity groups which were formulated and defined during the Civil Rights Movement to address historical and ongoing inequality in the representation of marginalized people. The second discourse is a set of beliefs, attitudes, actions, and experiences that structure how humans learn about each other. Squire observed that in both discourses or in the discursive field, diversity is often named to advertently or inadvertently draw attention away from racism, sexism, ableism, and other patterns of marginalization, oppression, and violence against marginalized people. “Diversity is simply a word with no teeth…reify[ing] White supremacy in education” (Squire, 2015, p. 20).

Diversity, as a discourse, involves the action or conception of naming difference and sameness among people. This includes naming difference and sameness between groups, difference between persons within a group, and difference within a single person—including the ways in which they change and identities shift over time or across contexts (Richerme, 2016). Today, diversity may be construed as differences of race, ability, gender, sexual identity, religion, size, age, class, language, phenotype, geographic location, culture, ethnicity, cognitive traits, hair, and nationality (Grant & Agosto, 2008). This list of possible categories of difference is not exhaustive and these categories overlap and intersect in meaningful ways.

Seemingly beneath the surface of diversity, or woven into the discourse surrounding the topic, is difference or sameness. As noted by Hall (2001) (rearticulating Foucault) and Squire, difference is a social construction that is reproduced through actions, writing, speech, and rules,
norms, policies, and/or laws that establish distinctive categories among people. Difference is malleable and context-dependent. In a study of how student teachers in general elementary education conceived of diversity, Rose and Potts (2011) wrote “if we presume that cultural groups exist, there must be some kind of group ‘sameness’” (p. 15). Cultural, social, and identity groups are defined through the construction, recognition, performance, and reconstruction of characteristic traits. As a group is formed, others that are “different” emerge. In a treatise on the production of difference, Currie (2004) wrote, “most [categories] involve this double process of saming and differentiating, of positing a common essence between members of the set and at the same time marking the differences that give the set its identity” (p. 4). As the definitions and edges of what it means to be of one group are clarified, new cases that are not of that group are established. These cases, in which the social criteria for inclusion into a normative group are not met completely or at all, require re-defining, and between these two categories, difference is constructed and perceived. As mentioned earlier, these group formations are culturally contingent and arise within certain social contexts. Becoming ever more complex, single groups or conceptions of difference and sameness interact and intersect with other groups. Collins and Bilge (2016) wrote, “people’s lives…are better understood as being shaped not by a single axis of social division, be it race or gender or class, but by many axes that work together and influence each other” (p. 2).

Due to this complexity and difficulty, it is easy to see how diversity might present a challenge to researchers studying student teaching, let alone for student teachers themselves who must wrestle with so many competing issues and educational agendas. Delpit (2006) explained that schools are sites of ongoing power struggles between dominant cultural groups, (e.g., White English-speaking teachers and administrators) and marginalized groups. As part of these
struggles, members of the dominant cultural group establish codes and rules for engaging issues of privilege, marginalization, and oppression. “The codes or rules…[include] communicative strategies, presentation of self, that is, ways of talking, ways of writing, ways of dressing, ways of interacting” (Delpit, 2006, p. 25). These rules of engagement within ongoing power struggles are overwhelmingly unspoken and create unfavorable conditions for teachers who wish to develop sustained interest in others. More often, they may, as Ayers (1993) noted, position students as “someone completely alien or apart from some sense of shared humanity” (p. 18).

Student teaching, given the fluctuating relationships between the student teacher, cooperating teacher, and university supervisor and within a context of ongoing power struggles, privilege, and oppression, creates a hazardous place for preservice teachers to learn to love their students. To reiterate, diversity is a discourse in which difference and sameness are constructed within social structures and institutions, given meaning, used to differentiate groups and individuals, and ultimately, in Squire’s (2015) opinion, to justify White supremacist ideologies or practices.

**Research Orientations to Diversity in Teacher Education**

As noted by Squire (2015), there are multiple discourses surrounding diversity in education; as such, diversity in teacher education has been studied in many ways and from many different angles. In a critical review of literature, Grant and Gibson (2011) coalesced and differentiated between three possible orientations used by theorists and researchers to study diversity in teacher education. Research in Grant and Gibson’s (2011) first orientation was predominantly occupied with:

The nexus of racial discrimination, the effects of living in ghettoized poverty, the lack of adequate material support for schools, the centralized and bureaucratic nature of large
urban districts, the prevalence of ‘street culture,’ and the high turnover rate of urban teachers. (p. 24)

Referring back to Squire (2015), this first orientation toward diversity in educational research aligns with the discourse developed during and after the Civil Rights Movement. In education, Grant and Gibson’s first orientation is associated with what is known as the “demographic imperative.” Cochran-Smith (2004) explained:

Evidence for the demographic imperative includes statistics and other information in three areas—the diverse student population, the homogenous teaching force, and “the demographic divide,” or the marked disparities in educational opportunities, resources, and achievement among student groups that differ from one another racially, culturally, linguistically, and socioeconomically. (p. 7)

Scholars and practitioners in music education often cite this confluence of issues to justify the need for studies of diversity, culture, and social justice in education. Schools are becoming increasingly diverse, researchers argue, which necessitates changes in preservice teacher education. While the logic behind the imperative is clear, it tends to erase a critical issue—namely, that the differences in opportunities, resources, and achievement are not a result of student diversity. They are the result of systems of privilege and oppression which limit the opportunities, resources, and achievement of marginalized students.

In the second orientation identified by Grant and Gibson (2011), researchers focused on how culture impacts learning, how culture is misunderstood or undertheorized, and what teacher education might do to expand preservice teachers’ knowledge of specific types of diversity. An underlying assumption of research in this orientation is that culture does impact teaching, and that knowledge of specific cultural student groups can improve teachers’ practices. Examples of
this orientation toward diversity in music education research might include studies of how mariachi ensembles influence feelings of agency in students who identify with Mexican or mariachi culture. Similarly, research on popular music pedagogy as a resource for working with school-age youth in the 21st century and a multitude of cultural, multicultural, world music, or identity/genre studies might fit in this area. According to Grant and Gibson, this research in general teacher education explored how teachers learn to reject deficit views of students, but did little to resist essentialized notions of diverse identities or cultural groups, regardless of how positive the essentialized notions might be.

In the third orientation identified by Grant and Gibson, researchers explored the potential for schools to become pluralistic and democratic by addressing how teachers and teacher educators might broaden their attention to student diversity, and toward conversations about oppression and equity. Research in this orientation “asks teachers and teacher educators to move beyond simply naming the ‘demographic imperative’ and demographic differences in achievement, retention, and engagement” (p. 25). This orientation focuses instead on addressing systemic privilege and oppression alongside students’ culture. This orientation frames preservice teacher education and student teaching as places for learning to address inequity and injustice in American schools and schooling.

**Inequity and Injustice in Education**

Schools are sites in which the most dramatic disparities in wealth, health, and representation of different identity groups play out. Researchers at UCLA’s Civil Rights Project group found that in 2016, 18.2% of American schools served student populations in which less than 10% of students were White; in other words, one fifth of schools have student populations in which students of color make up more than 90% of the school population. Additionally, “the
typical student of each race (except for the typical Asian student) attends a school in which the largest share of [their] schoolmates are same-race peers” (Frankenberg et al., 2019, p. 22). The typical or average White student attends schools where more than two-thirds (69.3%) of their peers are White. Frankenberg et al. point out that while schools in the southern United States were rigorously desegregated, eastern, northwestern, and midwestern states were able to successfully resist the enforcement of desegregation legislation. As a result, the most segregated states according to the Civil Rights Project’s 2016 report were New York, Illinois, and Maryland (Orfield et al., 2016, p. 4). In New York, for example, 65.8% of Black students attended schools in which less than 10% of students were White. These predominantly non-White schools are typically found in the central city of metropolitan areas while suburban schools are predominantly White (Frankenberg et al., 2019). Orfield et al. wrote in their 2016 report that “the ironic historic reality is that the decisions of the U.S. Supreme Court supported very demanding desegregation standards for the South” while ignoring “residential segregation, itself a result of a myriad of governmental policies and private decisions like segregative school and teacher assignments” (Orfield et al., 2016, p. 4).

Racial segregation continues to increase (Frankenberg et al., 2019) and is compounded by the double segregation by race and socioeconomic status. Frankenberg and colleagues wrote “segregation by race usually means segregation by concentrated poverty as well. This means that most students of color attend schools which reflect the problems of poverty” (p. 25). Half of predominantly non-White schools, with less than 10% White students, also served student populations in which 90-100% of students came from low-income households. “If students were only segregated by skin color or Latino ethnicity, it would still be a serious problem but less devastating if the segregated children came from families and communities with equal resources.
They do not” (p. 25). These overlapping issues of race and socioeconomic status continue to intensify in American schools, and in non-Southern states in particular.

In addition to racial and socioeconomic segregation, “schools nationwide are hostile environments for a distressing number of LGBTQ students, the overwhelming majority of whom routinely hear anti-LGBTQ language and experience victimization and discrimination at school” (Kosciw et al., 2018, p. xviii). In their biennial report, researchers at the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) found that 87.3% of LGBTQ students “experienced harassment or assault based on personal characteristics, including sexual orientation, gender expression, gender, religion, actual or perceived race and ethnicity, and actual or perceived disability” (p. xix). Incidents of harassment and assault have recently begun increasing after initially declining between 2003 and 2013. These incidents increase the likelihood that LGBTQ students will experience chronic absence from school, lower self-esteem or feelings of belonging, and increased depression. Additionally, according to a policy brief authored by the American Educational Research Association (2013), students with learning disabilities were found to be the subjects of bullying and harassment as well as social rejection from peers at disproportionately high levels. These data also overlap with issues of privilege and oppression based on linguistic, gender, ability, religious, and other types of differences in schools.

Among all these issues of identity-based discrimination, harassment, representation, and segregation, student teachers are inducted into the teaching profession while juggling the demands of planning, instruction, and assessment; participating in teacher evaluation; and completing graduation and certification requirements. To counter racism, economic inequity, and other forms of marginalization and oppression, Nieto (2000) suggested that in addition to acknowledging the changing demographics of American schools, teacher educators need to “take
a stand on social justice and diversity, make social justice ubiquitous in teacher education, and promote teaching as a life-long journey of transformation” (p. 182). Nieto argued that teacher education courses “need to change to include content about racism and other biases, about [preservice educators’] attitudes and values concerning students of various backgrounds” (p. 184).

Helpfully, frameworks for addressing social inequities in music education are readily available. Since the 1970s, Gay has been writing about a theory of culturally responsive teaching. Gay (2013) defined culturally responsive teaching as “using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them” (p. 49). Along with Gay, Ladson-Billings (1995) has led the field through her work on culturally relevant pedagogy since the mid-1990s. In fact, Ladson-Billings continues to propel and energize the field through her work on culturally sustaining pedagogy—what she calls “culturally relevant pedagogy 2.0” (Ladson-Billings, 2017, p. 141). This work, as well as that of others, focuses the attention of educators on the individual students in front of them and, more specifically, these students’ cultural identities. In music education, Lind and McKoy (2016) have explored culturally responsive teaching and considered its implications for teaching music. Blending the fields of ethnomusicology and multicultural education, music education has also explored the inclusion of diverse musics in schools. More specifically, Campbell (2018) and others have developed approaches and methods of multicultural music education, or “world music pedagogy.” These typologies presume that “teachers’ instructional behaviors are strongly influenced by their attitudes and beliefs about various dimensions of student diversity” (Gay, 2013, p. 56). Gay wrote that in order to enact culturally responsive teaching, teachers must interrogate their beliefs
about diversity and diverse students. “It is futile for educators to claim that they can attend to the needs of students (for academic learning or otherwise) without engaging their cultural socialization” (p. 61).

Building on these strands of culture-centered education, Hess (2019) developed an approach to anti-oppression education in her book *Music education for social change: Constructing an activist music education*. Hess’s approach begins with building community to “foster mutually supportive space…to encourage youth’s musicking” (p. 151), then connects music to lived histories, and explores new music and histories that help students make connections between culture and identity and music. After making these connections in community, music educators work with students to develop their expressions of identity, desire, community, and culture, and then notice and respond to oppression and privilege in the students’ lives.

Yet, despite the significant contributions of educational theorists, preservice teachers may struggle to incorporate the culture-centered lessons from their coursework into practice during student teaching (Ballantyne & Mills, 2008). Several problems may arise during this time. A student teacher’s understanding of culture in education may be limited in a number of ways. They may have limited experience interacting with others of different cultural groups (Garmon, 2005). Teachers must resist stereotyping their students as well as consider the power relationships that make some differences within student populations invisible or, conversely, hyper-visible (Silverman, 2010). Ballantyne and Mills (2015) wrote “‘real life’ experiences of diversity…combined with guided reflection [did] enable preservice teachers to confront their own predispositions” (p. 656). Student teaching is a poignant example of this kind of “real life”
experience facilitated by a mentor, but remains an otherwise unexamined site for action or change.

**Addressing Inequity and Injustice in Music Student Teaching**

In student teaching, emerging educators learn how to enact the principles of their field in a formative and enculturating experience (Draves, 2013). This experience is a vital educative place. Student teachers could learn how to incorporate multicultural or culturally responsive education into their teaching; they might explore new ways of thinking about diversity and diverse students; they could practice honoring their students’ strengths and addressing their students’ individual needs. Typologies of culture-centered and diversity-centered education (Campbell, 2018; Gay, 2013; Hess, 2019; Ladson-Billings, 1995) emphasized in coursework might be contextualized; student teachers could learn to use these theories as potent avenues toward changes in their pedagogy and curricular thinking. But, will they? Do they? Student teaching is a complex experience and preservice teachers must juggle many responsibilities while phasing from student to teacher. It is possible, and perhaps likely, that the possibilities for student teaching listed above could be replaced with administrative tasks or a too-intense focus on management or controlling student behavior, for example. After all, the difference among students is only one issue that student teachers could consider when engaging their students in music making. When juxtaposed with high-stakes standardized tests and administrative responsibilities, or a cooperating teacher’s obvious investment in an already-crammed curriculum, does student diversity matter and to what degree?

In music education, preservice teachers are prepared to work with students in multiple content areas and across multiple age/grade levels. Yet despite the many kinds and types of students music educators must be prepared to teach, music teacher education has a number of
problems related to diversity, privilege, and marginalization. In a study of preservice teachers taking the Praxis exam, Elpus (2015) found that White preservice music educators are disproportionately represented in their cohort. The preservice music teachers in Elpus’s study were Whiter than the students in American public schools, in-service teachers in subjects outside of music, and in-service music educators. To simultaneously meet the needs of increasingly diverse students (Banks et al., 2005; Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005), while remaining overwhelmingly White and middle-class (Elpus, 2015), requires complexifying profession-wide understandings of the intersections of personal and professional histories. In addition to the overwhelming Whiteness of preservice music teachers, discussions of equity and diversity-centered teaching are still gaining traction in the discourse on teaching and learning music (Hess, 2017; Lind & McKoy, 2016). As a field, music teacher education needs better and more detailed studies in which teachers and their experiences with diversity are examined in holistic ways. This study fills a need by identifying opportunities for preservice educators to broaden their knowledge and deepen their relationship with diversity during student teaching. There is a gap in knowledge on student teaching (Grant & Gibson, 2011; Silveira & Diaz, 2014; Sleeter & Owuor, 2011) and equity-oriented scholars have demonstrated a need for developing student teachers’ relationships with diversity (Gay, 2013; Goodwin, 1997; Silverman, 2010). Researchers have explored culturally responsive teaching in music and music education (Lind & McKoy, 2016). Yet despite the ways in which student teachers may be challenged to learn about diversity in their preservice coursework, it remains to be seen how diversity influences the music student teacher and their professional development.

This research study clarifies and articulates the contours of a multi-faceted problem and works toward clearer understanding of how student teachers conceive of diversity, a complex
topic incorporating multiple discourses, as they learn to develop “sustained interest in and deep knowledge of another person, [which] is in itself an act of love, and a good preparation for teaching” (Ayers, 1993, p. 18). This dissertation explores the tapped and untapped potential for preservice teachers to learn about diversity during student teaching, particularly for music teachers who often student teach in two contexts in one semester (Juchniewicz, 2018) and work with many students in short iterative bursts over multiple years at the elementary school level and in secondary school classrooms where their cooperating teachers have developed multi-year connections with their students.

In this project, I explore how, what, and when student teachers learn about diversity during student teaching. Furthermore, I seek to uncover and elucidate the connections between student teachers’ shifting conceptions of diversity and their teaching practices. Through the use of a multiple case study (Thomas, 2016) design and interviews paired with observations of four student teachers, I examine how student teacher participants’ conceptions of diversity develop over the course of a semester. By placing a theoretical framework of conceptions of diversity (Baxan, 2015; Rose, 2005; Rose & Potts, 2011) in dialogue with the experiences of four student teachers working in multiple school contexts across the state of Illinois, I explore how their settings and mentors influence what these preservice teachers learn about diversity during student teaching.

**Purpose and Research Questions**

The purpose of this case study is to articulate what preservice music teachers learned about diversity during student teaching. This project works toward better understanding how the experience of student teaching corroborates or/and nullifies the efforts of music teacher
educators to prepare music teachers to meet their school-age students’ diverse strengths and needs. The research questions are:

1. How do the student teachers in this study define diversity?
   
a. How do these definitions change over time?
   
b. Under what influences do the student teachers’ definitions change?

2. What orientations (Paine, 1990) to diversity do student teachers articulate during interviews and demonstrate in observations of practice?

3. In what ways does student teaching prepare these preservice music educators to notice, name, and address their own conceptions of diversity as well as identity, privilege, and oppression in music education?

**Chapter Organization**

In Chapter 2, I provide a review of the literature on diversity in teacher education and music teacher preparation. Chapter 3 is a detailed account of the methods and methodological foundations of this study. In Chapter 4, I explore the cases of four student teachers and their conceptions of diversity. Finally, Chapter 5 includes a cross-case analysis of the four data sets as well as a discussion of the findings, implications, and directions for further research.
CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The literature in this chapter comes from a wide variety of fields, epistemological paradigms, and academic epochs to meet the needs of this holistic study. In this chapter, I weave together studies of student teacher and preservice teacher learning from general teacher education where calls for attention to diversity have sounded for a longer time than in music teacher education, while attending to the special nature of preparing preservice music teachers. This weaving builds a more solid base for the study at hand than either music or general teacher education could provide alone. To orient and guide readers through this chapter, I have tried to provide connections between seemingly disparate ideas and approaches.

I begin the chapter by exploring various calls for attention to diversity in general teacher education. These include descriptions of how researchers have named the problems related to increasing diversity in American schools and the homogenous, White teaching force (Banks et al., 2005). I will explore two literature reviews on how research has connected diversity to action toward social justice (Grant & Gibson, 2011) and, then how social justice has been construed (Grant & Agosto, 2008). This is followed by theorizations of these sweeping views (Nieto, 2000; Sleeter, 2001).

In chapter one, diversity was conceived of broadly and defined as comprised of multiple discourses (Hall, 2001; Squire, 2015) of difference (Currie, 2004; Rose & Potts, 2011); a wide view to fit the scope of this project. After exploring how general teacher education has set up the problems related to diversity, I address how and in what ways music education has taken on these issues by discussing edited collected works (Benedict et al., 2015; Talbot, 2018). Next, I explore some theoretical tensions in diversity-centered preservice music teacher education
Diversity has been explored in teacher education from multiple stances, but research on preservice teachers’ conceptions of diversity is a common topic between and among these stances (Anderson & Stillman, 2013). After turning from music teacher education back to the general field, I discuss a number of studies on and theories of preservice teachers’ conceptions. This discussion winds from theoretical framings of conceptions (Castro, 2010; Milner, 2010; Paine, 1990); to what influences these conceptions in teacher education (Garmon, 2005; Mills & Ballantyne, 2010); to scholarly insights in this area derived from related quantitative research (Dedeoglu & Lamme, 2011; Enterline et al., 2008); and finally, to the study of diversity in preservice teacher education using conceptual change theories (Baxan, 2015; Larkin, 2012).

In this study, I explore preservice teachers’ conceptions of diversity in the context of student teaching. As explained in chapter one, student teaching is a complex component of teacher preparation. This section explores the many intersecting aspects of student teaching that have bearing on student teachers’ learning about diversity. These aspects include the programmatic coherence between the university and field placement (Cochran-Smith, 1991a, 1991b); the institutional conceptions of diversity embedded in the field placement (Cornbleth, 2010; Popham, 2015; Rusznyak & Walton, 2016); the influence of the field placement on student teachers’ learning (Anderson & Stillman, 2010; Ronfeldt, 2012); and the pedagogical possibilities of “culturally responsive supervision” (Zozakiewicz, 2010), and “culturally responsive professionalism” (Abramo, 2015).

After exploring the literature related to the influence of the student teaching placement and other environs on preservice teachers’ diversity-centered learning, I turn toward what kinds
of diversity student teachers notice among their students (Adler, 2011; Goodwin, 1997). Finally, I look at two studies which come closest to addressing this project’s questions: Britzman’s (2003) critical examination of student teachers’ learning in the context of their complicated placements, and Rose’s (2005) study of student teachers’ experiences in a multicultural school.

**Connecting Teacher Education to Diversity through Social Justice**

Teacher education has been working to address systemic injustice, oppression, and privilege for decades. As discussed earlier, scholars in teacher education have long noted that the demographics of students in American public schools are changing; schools are becoming more culturally pluralistic as racial diversity increases due to changing patterns of immigration, among other factors (Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005). Exploring the implications of these demographics, a team of researchers (Banks et al., 2005) reflected on how the teacher education profession might prepare future teachers to work with an increasingly diverse public. In their chapter from the edited volume, *Preparing teachers for a changing world* (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005), the researchers described a need to empower teachers to work against the oppressions which affect their students. Their reflections represented an encapsulation of inclusive and equitable education.

Structural systems of privilege and oppression, such as racism, classism, ableism, and other social phenomena perpetuate barriers to academic and personal growth for students of non-normative identities. Banks et al. (2005) asserted that preservice teachers must learn to understand both the differences among their students and how, because of the phenomena of social oppression and privilege, these differences impact education. Furthermore, teacher educators must provide preservice teachers with the tools, dispositions, and knowledge they need to do this important work. The co-authors of this chapter wrote about the need for teachers to
“learn to learn” (p. 247) about their students; for preservice teachers to adapt their pedagogy, curriculum, and assessment to their communities; for preservice teachers to become critically conscious of how their own worldviews are constructed; and for preservice teachers to understand how those worldviews then effect their practices. In their overview of the responsibilities of teacher education, the authors issued a call for rethinking traditional practices and applying social theories of power, culture, and identity to teaching and learning.

Banks et al. (2005) named the ways in which teacher education might address changing student demographics and reform preservice teacher preparation to meet the needs of a changing school-age population. Their work built on a long research tradition, which has been carried on by others through a variety of types and foci of research. To make sense of a complex body of empirical and theoretical scholarship, Grant and Gibson (2011) reviewed research on diversity in teacher education, identifying three ways this literature has been or might be oriented. They aimed to identify how the large body of research had addressed “enduring questions” (p. 20) about pluralistic teachers, students, and schools. In a historical, conceptual literature review which sought to answer “why don’t we know more?” (p. 21), Grant and Gibson found that their field had addressed research on diversity in teacher education from three stances or “orientations.”

First, they noted that a significant portion of the research on diversity dealt with preparing preservice teachers to work in urban settings. Studies in this area focused on students who live in poverty, among violence, and without traditional social and family structures that support student learning. This literature often addressed the ways in which teacher education fails urban schools, suggesting alternative practices or certification programs that might better meet urban needs. The second strain of literature explored by Grant and Gibson focused on how
teachers can better serve specific student populations such as those with disabilities or those of distinct cultural backgrounds. Examples of research in this area include how teachers can more effectively work with African American, Latinx, or White students. Teacher educators were implicated as responsible for helping preservice teachers develop culture-specific knowledge and then connect that knowledge to schooling and teaching.

In addition to research on urban schooling and other specific student populations, Grant and Gibson (2011) identified a third area of emphasis of research which connected diversity more directly to social justice. Research in this orientation attends to visions of schooling that honor and accommodate diversity; it advocates for teacher educators to focus on promoting social justice. Researchers in this orientation reframe the metanarratives surrounding the demographic imperative. Rather than posing increased diversity as the problem of teacher education, persistent oppression is the central concern. According to this literature, teachers and learners must acknowledge how education can amplify a community’s strengths. Teachers must learn to work against the oppressions which prohibit students of marginalized social identities from participating fully in their education. Yet social justice, the twin focus of research in Grant and Gibson’s third orientation, is a term at least as complex as diversity (or teacher education, for that matter).

In another historical literature review, Grant and Agosto (2008) traced a history of the term, social justice, from its original utilitarian definitions to those related to identity-based equity. Over time, social justice has changed its meaning from notions of the greatest good for the greatest number of people. It has come to connote fairness, safety, and the elimination of domination and oppression for all and particularly for socially marginalized identity groups. Grant and Agosto noted that varied meanings of social justice can shape teacher education in
varied ways. For example, if justice is about the equitable distribution of resources, then teachers should be prepared to determine the needs of their students. And if social justice implies the elimination of societal oppression, teachers should be prepared to name and confront the types of oppression that affect students.

Grant and Agosto noted that civil rights struggles in America shaped the discourse on the social responsibility of teachers in the 1960s and 70s. Movements for African American, gay, and women’s rights informed the ways in which teachers framed social justice-oriented education. Anti-Black racism, heteronormativity, and patriarchy were among the oft-cited forms of oppression addressed by teachers. Working against these kinds of systemic problems became a vital concern in education and, in turn, teacher education. Teacher education for social justice, Grant and Agosto write, has come to mean addressing the privileges and marginalization associated with broad societal inequities.

Grant and Agosto (2008) found that common characteristics emerged among the research on social justice in teacher education, including emphases on (a) critical pedagogy, (b) community and collaboration, (c) reflection, (d) social (critical) consciousness, (e) social change and change agents, (f) culture and identity, and (g) the importance of power. Preservice teachers in this literature were often portrayed as potential change agents who might use their political and social consciousness to combat inequality through the reform of professional practices. Some researchers in the literature reviewed by Grant and Agosto explored how a teacher’s identity influences their ability to work toward social justice goals. This literature, built on considerations of power relations and derived from writings by Foucault, fosters discussion of the interaction of identity, culture, agency, and the ability for teachers to affect social change through education.
Theorizing Diversity-Centered Teacher Education

Like the researchers above, Nieto (2000) suggested that teacher education make social justice a central focus of teacher preparation in response to increasing cultural diversity in American schools. Though she attended most specifically to differences of race, language, and culture among students, Nieto felt that attention to equity in teacher education could prepare teachers to meet the needs and strengths of a diverse public. For Nieto, emphases on equity and social justice were intended to combat deficit conceptions of minoritized students and to address the racial homogeneity of the teaching force, which had increased at the time of her writing. Nieto proposed that teacher education programs should (a) take a stand on social justice and diversity rather than making grandiose but meaningless proclamations about the purposes of education, (b) make action against inequity ubiquitous in teacher education rather than simply celebrating difference, and (c) promote teaching as a life-long journey of transformation. This last component of Nieto’s plan for teacher education included having preservice teachers assess and name their own cultural identities, helping teachers learn about their students and learn with their students, guiding teachers in developing strong relationships with their students, creating institutional requirements for becoming multilingual and exploring other cultures, teaching preservice students to name and challenge oppression, and showing preservice students how to cultivate learning communities of “critical friends” (p. 185). These changes in teacher education, Nieto suggested, might support the individual efforts of justice-minded teachers and organize collective efforts for social change.

Of the approaches and suggestions made by Nieto, several have been implemented in teacher education programs. Sleeter (2001) reviewed the literature on preparing teachers for culturally diverse schools and synthesized findings on the effectiveness of a variety of
interventions in teacher education. These interventions included changing the demographics of preservice teachers through select recruitment and attention to the retention of diverse preservice educators, providing community-based cultural immersion experiences, and offering classes and seminars on culture- and diversity-centered education. Teacher educators have found community-based cross-cultural immersion experiences to be highly influential on preservice educators’ beliefs about diversity as well as their conceptions of teaching. Multicultural education coursework, including stand-alone courses, courses with a fieldwork component, and program-level interventions where diversity-centered content and pedagogy are woven throughout multiple semesters or years have been effective to varying degrees. However, Sleeter found that this research nearly exclusively focused on the attitudes and beliefs of White preservice teachers. She noted that different approaches to diversity-centered education may be needed when working with students of marginalized or minoritized identities. For example, if teacher educators create coursework or field experiences designed to make their students culturally uncomfortable, different contexts will be needed for White and non-White students. Diversity-centered course content on working in urban schools may be important for students from suburban schools and redundant for students who have already lived those experiences. In general, Sleeter noted that a variety of approaches to social justice teacher education ought to be developed and studied and that these approaches should not exclusively center the needs of White preservice teachers.

**Summary**

Teacher education has made evocative claims about the need for social justice to permeate professional theory and practice (Banks et al., 2005; Cochran-Smith, 2004; Nieto, 2010; Sleeter, 2001). Teacher education must not simply address the differences among students,
but more importantly, confront the ways in which those differences affect justice, equity, and education. In this work, I acknowledge that diversity is made significant by social forces that privilege and oppress. The combination of the problems of oppression (Grant & Agosto, 2008), Whiteness (Sleeter, 2001), and the changing demographics of school-age students leads scholars to call for social justice in teacher education. Diversity, the differences among students, can be addressed in isolation (Grant & Gibson, 2011), but to work against injustice, diversity must be recognized as the target of larger systems of oppression and privilege.

**Diversity-Centered Music Teacher Education**

Music teacher education, too, has addressed diversity and social justice. The same issues which scholars in general teacher education have explored, such as the growing diversity disparities between P-12 students and music teachers, have sparked contemplation and new lines of research in music. But music teacher education must address tensions that are particular to its field. In this section, I address some of the issues specific to music education. I begin by exploring the scope of the field of diversity-centered music teacher education and try to locate the types of diversity that have been identified as significant sites for study.

**Theoretical Tensions**

**Issues of Scope and Type.** In 2018, music education scholars composed and compiled stories of marginalization (Talbot, 2018). This collection was framed as a response to systemic oppression and privilege in its many forms, including racism, homophobia, transphobia, misogyny, xenophobia, and the unequal distributions of power and cultural capital between social groups. The volume’s editor wrote,
The authors and I offer this book as a rupture to the grand narrative of music education. It is a collection of contrapuntal stories designed to thicken the texture of our music education imaginary and counter the built-up habits of coloniality in our field. (p. 6) Framed in this way, the authors demonstrated that the problems in music education (and in turn, music teacher education) are systemic. In this critical book, the authors address issues of race, class, culture, gender, cisnormativity, sexual identity, and ability. While not all research on diversity in music education makes the connections between student/musician diversity and systemic marginalization, this volume provided readers with a clear sense that addressing issues of equity, inclusion, and access means working against societal injustice.

Along similar lines, the publication of the *Oxford Handbook of Social Justice in Music Education* (Benedict et al., 2015), provided a compendium of relevant conversations about social justice in music education. In this edited collection, social justice was theorized from a number of epistemological perspectives, connected to issues of educational policy, situated within historical contexts, addressed through suggested practices, linked to interdisciplinary issues, extrapolated to broader concerns such as neoliberalism and authoritarianism, and examined at the intersections of race, class, gender, sexual identity, heritage, ability, culture, and place. The types of diversity which were made important in these conversations about social justice sprawled across multiple fields of research and scholarship.

**Defining Social Justice.** Salvador and Kelly-McHale (2017) surveyed collegiate music education faculty to determine how music teacher educators conceived of social justice. Their national survey of 361 full-time tenure track faculty investigated how teacher educators framed their practices and perspectives on this topic. In a justification related to other work in the field (Ballantyne & Mills, 2008; Banks et al., 2005), Salvador and Kelly-McHale cited the changing
demographics of American public schools and the disparities between the school population and the music teacher population as the major catalysts for discussions of social justice in music education. Furthermore, they worked from a stance in which social justice was inextricably tied to student diversity and its effects on educational access, opportunity, and outcomes.

Salvador and Kelly-McHale (2017) about participants’ demographic information and their teaching positions, about participants’ opinions of the coverage social justice topics received in their schools’ curricula, and about social justice and its place in music education. Respondents’ descriptions of social justice were grouped by the researchers into five categories or lenses. Fifty percent of the music teacher educator respondents conceived of social justice in terms of equal treatment, access, and opportunity for students. Yet, without a focus on broader social structures of privilege and oppression, responses in this category might be described as meritocratic or color-blind. Second, 12.9% of respondents described celebrating difference, or fostering acceptance of diversity. Third, 22.2% of respondents described having critical perspectives of social justice which focused on institutions, power systems, actions, context, morals, and ethics as the main issues of diversity and social justice. Fourth, 3.3% of teacher educators were unaware of the term, “social justice,” but interested in learning more about it. Alternately, some respondents in this category reported that they had heard of social justice but could not describe its components. Finally, 5.6% of respondents challenged or dismissed the researchers’ invitation to define social justice, saying, “I would have liked for you to [define] it,” (p. 9) or “I don’t have time to teach this and music too—I hear sociology is an interesting field for those who are so inclined” (p. 9).

Teacher educators who did feel that social justice was important to include in preservice music teacher preparation felt that there were limited resources, time, and information to
implement social justice topics fully in their curricula. They noted that field work in diverse environments was a significant pedagogical tool, as were course readings, modeling social justice practices for preservice students, and personal experiences. Respondents felt that music teacher education was hampered by a lack of diversity in the music teaching profession at the secondary and post-secondary levels. Based on their findings, Salvador and Kelly-McHale (2017) surmised that additional research was needed on the influence that music teacher education faculty and coursework exert on teachers in practice. But the researchers’ categories of conceptions of social justice offer essential insights into the state of the field of diversity-centered music teacher education.

**Pragmatic Concerns.** The connections between diversity and social justice in teacher education described above have been theorized and applied to music teacher education as well. Music teacher education shares many problems with teacher education, while requiring specific considerations to apply generalized knowledge to music education’s particular nature. First, music teaching is structured differently than most academic subjects at both the elementary and secondary levels. Before students join ensembles and specialize in one or more forms of music making, they are engaged in general music. From kindergarten on, most states require students to take music classes. These classes are often taught by a musical specialist, though this is not always the case (Abril, 2016). When schools do have music specialists on their faculty, those teachers may work with every student in the school, seeing each student in each grade one or more times per week. At both the elementary and secondary levels in which music teachers offer music electives such as band, choir, orchestra, electronic music, and other special classes, teachers may see the same students over the course of several years. While middle and high school students may take English or Language Arts with a new teacher each year, an orchestra
student may develop their relationships with music teachers over the course of four years. If the same teachers work at the elementary, middle, and high schools, they may get to know students for five or more years. These issues of breadth and depth of teacher-student relationships certainly influence diversity-centered preservice teacher education. Music teacher education’s application and adaptations of social justice ideals are cause for specialized study.

Ballantyne and Mills (2008) studied the application of social justice ideals in their music teacher education program and provided several key guidelines for practice. Like scholars in general education (Banks et al., 2005), Ballantyne and Mills began from the notion that changing student populations requires updated teacher education curricula. Inequity in educational outcomes, they write, “has largely been attributed to the failure of teachers to respond to the needs of students in culturally sensitive and appropriate ways” (p. 78). In their study of preservice music educators, Ballantyne and Mills explored preservice teachers’ conceptions of inclusive education at the time of their graduation and again six months into their first teaching placement. After learning about multicultural education in a university course with a fieldwork component, preservice teachers felt that the most salient differences among students were their musical abilities. The participants paid attention to how their students’ technical skills and musical knowledge affected their education. It was the particular musical nature of their students that preservice teachers felt was most important to address. Reflecting on their findings, Ballantyne and Mills noted that their participants were only interested in diversity-centered coursework that provided practical steps toward implementing inclusive teaching practices. In other words, the general principles of culture-centered education outside of music had little relevance to the preservice teachers. The preservice teachers’ perceptions of the special nature of music teaching prohibited them from seeing ideas about multicultural education from the field of
general education as meaningful or relatable. Participants overwhelmingly reported that they favored a practical approach to inclusive education and they tended to ignore information about inclusive education when the transfer of skills from general education to a music context was not made explicit in course readings. They did not or could not learn from engaging with the theoretical tenets of inclusive, culturally responsive, anti-racist, or multicultural general education. Preservice teachers’ extreme preference for practicality without regard for conceptual or theoretical issues hindered the young professionals’ progress toward inclusive teaching.

**Naming and Typifying Diversity.** In response to systemic inequities, social justice educators might practice naming the disparities between students of different races, genders, sexual identities, or cultural backgrounds. Richerme (2016) took up the complex problem of naming inequities using philosophic inquiry. Naming inequity may “bring about an awareness of longstanding, systematic [oppression], [and] positively affirm the identities of oppressed individuals as they work toward more equitable futures” (p. 87). Richerme argued that this common practice can be problematic. Naming oppression, diversity, and difference can imply uniformity, suggest stability, and limit creative possibilities. For example, naming diversity among students can calcify the disparities between them by making socially constructed differences seem stable or essential. The act of naming can establish these differences as unchanging. Yet not naming differences, diversity, or disparities can lead to the erasure of the significant strengths or needs of individuals. When “womanhood,” for example, is not parsed into the experiences of the womanhood of Black, Latina, White, trans, or queer persons, it can take on a monolithic and oppressive structure. Richerme suggested that these problems of naming and not naming can arise together or individually. The problems of naming and not naming make doing the work of social justice complex and challenging. Naming may appear to
prohibit progress, as it leads to essentialized notions of difference while not naming may obscure inequity to which teachers could otherwise attend. To counter tendencies toward erased (not named) or essentialized (named) differences and to provide a way forward for music teacher educators, Richerme suggested adding layers of nuance to conversations about diversity and social justice. Richerme drew on Braidotti’s (2011) *scheme of feminist nomadism* to theorize three levels in which differences might exist. These include differences between groups, differences within groups, and differences within an individual over time or in different contexts. These levels of difference, Richerme offered, may assist music teacher educators in challenging stereotypes about differences between groups, may highlight the differences within groups, and/or may allow individuals to imagine new possibilities for themselves or others. These important contributions to the discourses around social justice and diversity in music teacher education lead the field toward more complex conversations. I would add that naming the experiences of others can be treacherous. Without substantial representation of marginalized persons in music teacher education, how can the experiences of these persons be ethically named or not? Paradoxically, without naming the experiences of marginalized persons in music and music teacher education, how can the field move toward inclusion, equity, access, and diversity?

**Diverse Persons and/or Diverse Musics.** Diversity-centered music teacher education revolves around teachers, students, and music. Musical traditions and individual songs, compositions, or works, like students and teachers, have diverse histories and heritages. In addition to naming or not naming identities and oppressions, music teacher educators have embraced the use of diverse musics in their curricula and coursework. Howard et al. (2014) described how music teacher educators have introduced diverse genres and traditions of music in preservice courses in response to the demographic imperative for social justice. Building on
multicultural education (Banks et al., 2005), Howard et al. (2014) discussed examples of how world music has informed music teacher education. The researchers reported that world music pedagogy and content was implemented in teacher education in response to the “long history of dominance by Western European art music” (p. 29). This history of domination not only erased other musics, but also the cultural norms and assumptions that underpin them. Toward this end, the researchers noted that mere content integration misses the point of social justice teacher education. It fails to change the underlying pedagogical approaches to music education. Rather than merely adding music to their classes, the researchers showed how teachers in six vignettes engaged students in diverse musical practices, performances, and cultural experiences. They wrote,

> In each case, preservice or practicing teachers experienced significant encounters with musical cultures outside their own. It is the belief of the authors that these in-depth encounters are the catalyst for meaningful exchanges of multicultural music with students. (p. 35)

The accounts of multicultural music teacher education provided by the researchers were overwhelmingly positive and students were described as thoughtful about the musics being included. Yet the notion of an “exchange” of multicultural music needs further problematizing. The use of exchange language begs questions of worth and value. When teacher education trades one cultural music for another, what do students and teachers feel that they have lost or gained? How are these perceptions of value, gain, or worth informed by unchallenged cultural assumptions?

Like Howard et al. (2014), Sands (2004) connected multiculturalism to responses to diversity and social justice in music teacher education. In her theoretical paper, Sands explored
how social justice and equity may be salient in multicultural music education. At the heart of her argument is a call for teachers to address fair representation of musics. Sands recommended that the inclusion of diverse musics be augmented by explicit inquiries into the cultural assumptions of particular musics and how these musics are perceived. She wrote, “teaching that is rooted in principles of social justice and equity must emphasize that quality is not the possession of a single musical tradition” (p. 47). Conversations about quality and fairness, the author suggested, should then be extended to broader conversations about diverse persons and cultures, using music almost as a proxy for culture, traditions, and beliefs.

One of the ways that the higher education music curriculum can empower prospective teachers is by deepening their knowledge and enlarging their understanding of what music is, and of what music means to the peoples who make it and receive it—the many forms and meanings music has assumed across time, social circumstances, and cultural milieus. (p. 55)

This critical take on multiculturalism in music teacher education is an example of how preservice teachers can be introduced to ideas of acculturation, enculturation, and questions of value, assumptions, and relative/essential worth. Sands noted that she had proposed only one step toward addressing justice and equity in music teacher education, but in the predominantly White field of music education, conversations about musical or occupational identity may be highly relevant first steps toward conversations about larger social structures and systems.

**Programming Diversity-Centered Teacher Education.** Reflecting on preparing preservice music educators to teach in urban schools, Robinson (2017) described a critical design for social justice and diversity-centered music teacher education. In an article written for music teacher educators, Robinson outlined three steps toward engaging preservice teachers in
conversations about culturally responsive teaching. This study explained her process, outlined the three steps, and provided accounts of student reactions to these ideas after she presented them as a guest lecturer in a class for preservice music teachers. Describing her orientation to the project, she wrote:

I wanted to structure an educational opportunity that would yield a degree of critical consciousness among preservice music teachers around issues of teaching socioculturally diverse children in their future music classrooms. (p. 12)

Robinson connected individual students’ abilities to social systems of privilege and oppression for teachers attending her presentations. Hands-on experiences transferred theory into practice, and participants were guided through reflection on these experiences. She noted, “teacher preparation programs have acknowledged that diversity training should be a critical component of teacher preparation” (p. 13) (a point which reiterates the implicit connections between diversity and social justice in music teacher education). Robinson’s program focused on three key learnings for preservice music teachers: (a) understanding access to education and the effects of power and cultural capital on P-12 students, (b) understanding intersectionality and how multiple oppressions or overlapping systems could affect individuals in important ways, and (c) understanding the myths and misconceptions of teaching in urban schools and settings. Robinson’s descriptions of her program illuminated how preservice teachers were helped to recognize their own cultures and social positionalities. She helped connect these to preservice teachers’ ideas and beliefs about teaching as well as culturally different students.

Summary

Music teacher educators have considered the ways in which calls for social justice might alter existing models of teacher preparation (Ballantyne & Mills, 2008; Sands, 2004). However,
teacher educators disagree about whether preservice music teachers ought to spend their time and resources engaging in these ideas (Salvador & Kelly-McHale, 2017). Even among those who agree that social justice should be included in coursework and field experiences, the ways and extent to which this work is done is contested (Richerme, 2016). More research is needed to say which practices of diversity-centered music teacher education might be influential or effective. Music teacher education must also continue to theorize the relationship between diversity, social justice, music, and teaching. For instance, does increased student diversity increase the urgency with which we call for social justice orientations in teaching, research, and music making? What kinds of diversity can social justice teacher education prepare teachers to work within? Are the practices of responding to students’ racial or cultural identities the same as those of responding to differences in sexual identity among students? Can culturally responsive pedagogy, for example, address diversity of size or age within a class? Do students of different sizes and ages have cultures that require responding to? These questions remain only partially answered while still more have yet to be asked.

**Preservice Teachers’ Conceptions of Diversity**

Researchers and scholars have repeatedly called for teacher education to address the growing diversity in American schools and for preservice teachers to be prepared differently than they have before (Banks et al., 2005; Grant & Agosto, 2008; Grant & Gibson, 2011; Nieto, 2000), though the ways in which teacher educators might best prepare future teachers vary. Researchers and theorists have reiterated that a teacher’s beliefs about their students are actualized in their curriculum, practices, and pedagogy (Banks et al., 2005; Gay, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 1995). Thus, for teachers to be prepared to teach differently, teachers need to learn to think differently. As diversity in American schools evolves, diversity-centered teacher education
must evolve as well. To facilitate this evolution, clinical experiences have been highlighted as a place for potent change (Ballantyne & Mills, 2008; Nieto, 2000). Clinical experiences, including fieldwork across coursework, practicums, school observations, and student teaching can engage preservice teachers in contemplating, critiquing, or changing their relationships with student diversity. This section seeks to describe and synthesize the research and theories of preservice educators’ relationships with diversity in general teacher education.

**The Place of Conceptions of Diversity in Teacher Education Literature**

In a critical review of research on student teaching’s contribution to diversity-centered teacher education, Anderson and Stillman (2013) identified trends, strengths, weaknesses, gaps, and needs in this field of study. The researchers analyzed literature published between 1990 and 2010 about how student teaching contributed to teachers’ work in urban and high-needs contexts. This literature, though, included not only the one-to-two semester field placement with a cooperating teacher, but also field experiences lasting more than six weeks at any point in a preservice teacher’s preparation. This expansion of their literature base led the researchers to compile and collect a great variety of research and articles. Though their analysis, Anderson and Stillman found that the extant research focused primarily on preservice teachers’ conceptions or beliefs about diversity. More specifically, it focused on White middle-class preservice teachers’ conceptions. There was a critical disconnection between the study of student teachers’ conceptions and their actual practices, and the research generally assumed that White student teachers lack cultural competence or consciousness and that teachers of color were naturally adept in this area. Most of the literature on student teaching in diverse settings or with diverse students only loosely defined terms such as “diverse” or “culture” and rarely described the setting of the research in much detail. In general, the research compiled by Anderson and
Stillman glorified positive changes in preservice teachers’ conceptions of diversity but failed to critique the degree or extent of change. Even when the contexts in which student teachers worked were described and the authors were critical of their participants’ conceptions, the multiple influences on preservice teachers’ experiences were undertheorized and oversimplified. With multiple persons responsible for working with student teachers and with student teachers’ many jobs, classes, and students, the complex networks of influences on student teachers’ learning were almost never fully articulated or explored. Anderson and Stillman noted, following their review, that future research should focus on how student teachers learned about diversity and culture. They noted that researchers should use theory to describe and explore processes of student teacher learning in addition to providing interesting examples of practice. And finally, research on student teaching toward diversity-centered teacher education should employ multiple methods to corroborate student teachers’ accounts of their learning with descriptions and observations of their practice.

**Theoretical Framework of Conceptions**

A teacher’s conceptions of diversity include their beliefs about, assumptions of, and dispositions toward diversity. A conception of diversity comprises not only what one believes about diversity but also why one believes it. Milner (2010) defined conceptions as “the collection of thoughts, ideas, images, and belief systems that teachers build to more deeply understand diversity and its multiple relationships to teaching and learning” (p. 118). Milner (2010) described five “conceptual repertoires” that preservice teachers may bring to their coursework. Based on his review of the scholarship on diversity in education, he classified these conceptions as (1) color-blindness, (2) cultural conflict, (3) a myth of meritocracy, (4) deficit conceptions, and (5) low or no expectations for culturally different students. Milner’s first conception, color-
blindness, holds the view that while differences may exist between persons, or students in particular, these differences should be ignored in favor of equal treatment for all students. A cultural conflict conception of diversity proposes that diverse students may experience a conflict between their cultural ways of knowing and those developed in school. Teachers, in this view, may affirm these ways of knowing but work to adapt and assimilate their students into the dominant school culture. The myth of meritocracy, according to Milner, leads teachers to believe that high-achieving students have earned their status and positions. This conception includes the belief that all people are born with the same capacities for success and that if students would only put forward equal effort, they would achieve equal results. A deficit conception of student diversity includes the belief that student difference may necessarily impede academic or social progress in school and life. This view may engender sympathy in teachers but prevent action as the differences among students are immutable and their challenges are insurmountable. This conception and Milner’s fifth, that of lowered expectations, are interrelated. For example, teachers may believe that because of “natural” deficits in students’ ability, the best response to difference is for teachers to adjust their expectations, rather than teaching or testing. Teacher educators, Milner says, are responsible for problematizing these conceptions in coursework and field experiences to “assist teachers in developing the mindsets and practices to address diversity” (p. 128). Milner’s five “conceptual repertoires” focus on how individuals think about difference. They elucidate the repercussive nature of thinking about diversity; thinking of students or other teachers in meritocratic, deficit, or color-blind terms is intrinsically associated with teacher responses based on partial information about those students or teachers.

Paine (1990) provided four additional layers of meaning that might pervade preservice teachers’ conceptions of diversity. As opposed to conceptual repertoires, these layers denote the
degrees or types of social relationships among persons that an individual might conceive of as “diverse.” Paine identified these layers as individual, categorical, contextual, and pedagogical.

An individual conception of diversity frames difference as between and among people who are different in as many ways as one can image. For preservice teachers who think of diversity at an individualistic layer of meaning, difference is a human condition and best understood by coming to understand the unique psychological and biological nature of each person. The problems of diversity, according to an individualistic view, are the problems that each student brings to school with them. An individualistic conception of diversity does not account for societal explanations of or the social construction of difference.

A categorical conception of diversity sees diversity as mostly random, assigned at birth or structured by personal traits and histories. However, as opposed to an individualist conception of diversity, a categorical view sees patterns within human diversity. These patterns include classifications according to race, class, gender, and other differences. A categorical conception associates these patterned differences with essential qualities or attributes. Still, no attention is paid to the social nature of categories of difference.

A contextual conception of diversity views differences as socially constructed. Differences, according to this view, are not essentialized. “Diversity,” in this view, is established and sustained through social interactions. The “causes of difference” (p. 3) are a vital component in a contextual conception of diversity.

Finally, a pedagogical conception of diversity “assumes that differences are not simply random and interesting, they are understood as having pedagogical implications—consequences for both teaching and learning” (p. 3). A pedagogical conception of diversity frames a teacher’s understanding of student difference as a teacher’s responsibility to explore and respond to. In this
conception, the recognition of difference cannot be separated from a recognition for teacher action.

Within this typology of conceptions of diversity, there are overlaps between the categories. Preservice teachers who embody individualistic differences between their students may perceive pedagogical implications that result from that diversity. A contextual conception of diversity may similarly incorporate a categorical perspective. The layers in Paine’s typology acknowledge the complexity of conceiving of social differences in a complex and changing world.

As noted above, preservice teachers’ conceptions of diversity may change over time, even within a single semester or field experience (Powell, 2019). But, broadly, preservice teachers’ conceptions of diversity have undergone shifts in the past few decades. In a review of literature on preservice teachers’ views of cultural diversity, Castro (2010) found that between 1986 and 2007, the way that teachers’ beliefs about diversity were discussed in research studies changed. In a discourse analysis of the empirical research on preservice teachers and diversity, Castro analyzed 55 studies published between 1986 and 2007. These articles were then divided into three historical epochs to look for trends in the discourse. Between the mid-80s and 90s, researchers reported that preservice teachers held uncritical and shallow views of diversity in general. The discourse about these preservice teachers’ conceptions of diversity suggested that they lacked “complexity in understanding multicultural issues” and “tolerance for different cultural groups” (p. 200). The notions of tolerance and understanding were of central importance; cultural differences were ascribed to specific othered groups; there was little critical reflection on the culture of normative or dominant groups.
In the second zone identified by Castro, teacher education explored the literature on students’ prejudices and stereotypes. Preservice teachers before the year 2000 expressed meritocratic notions of diverse persons and emphasized individualism. Discourse in this epoch suggested preservice teachers held “deficit views/prejudice regarding students of color” and focused on the “importance of personal background on attitudes, beliefs, and multicultural concepts” (p. 200). Since the new millennium, in Castro’s third zone, preservice teachers’ conceptions of diversity have become more complex, and beliefs about the role of teachers were explored in additional depth. However, Castro noted, these observed changes in beliefs, views, ideas, and perspectives have not been supported by critical inquiry into their underlying assumptions. A belief in exceptionalism, or the idea that stereotypes about a group or culture may hold true despite examples that disprove those views, limits the effectiveness of experiences with diversity in courses or fieldwork. Most importantly, Castro noted that the changes that he observed in the discourse on preservice teachers’ views of diversity was a product of both the historical moment in which they were studied and the research methods and questions used by the researchers. Additionally, he noted that preservice teacher’s language for discussing issues related to diversity may have become more sophisticated, but merely better concealing problematic conceptions of diversity. Castro reported

In the contemporary time period (2000-2007)…preservice teachers expressed very positive views about cultural diversity but still held minimal understandings of what cultural diversity means and requires…This tendency toward oversimplification can make multicultural ideas less threatening, less political. Preservice teachers may readily advocate and clamor for multicultural education that supports a tolerance approach to diversity without achieving the critical consciousness necessary to dismantle structural
inequity and interrogate dominant cultural assumptions embedded in these structural arrangements. (p. 206)

**Preservice Teachers’ Developing Conceptions of Diversity**

Many factors may lead to changing conceptions of diversity among preservice teachers. In the studies above, history and social context were identified as key factors which influence how preservice teachers speak, write, and think about diversity. In a philosophical piece about how preservice teachers come to change their views about diversity, Garmon (2005) suggested that six factors are most culpable for these changes. These factors are divided into two categories: dispositions “referring to a person’s character traits and tendencies” (p. 276) and experiences. The dispositions which influence changing conceptions are openness, self-awareness, and a commitment to social justice. The three experiential factors are intercultural, educational, and support group experiences. Garmon noted, however, that these three types of experiences often overlap. Intercultural experiences may be educational and a student’s support group may be a source of continuing educational or intercultural experiences.

Building on Garmon’s theoretical model, Mills and Ballantyne (2010) explored the ways in which preservice teachers change their conceptions of diversity and social justice over time in an empirical study of 48 preservice teachers’ autoethnographies. The researchers analyzed the autoethnographies, which took the form of artistic and literary representations of students’ gendered, raced, and classed identities. The researchers were the instructors in an undergraduate course, the participants were students in this course, and the autoethnographies (in the form of television guides, restaurant menus, and CD covers) were a major assessment in the class. Through their analyses of the autoethnographies, Mills and Ballantyne found that students demonstrated dispositions toward diversity that could be categorized as either self-aware/self-
reflective, open to ideas/receptive to diversity, and/or committed to social justice. These three dispositional categories were drawn from Garmon’s work. But, through their analyses, the researchers found that these dispositions were structured in a developmental sequence. In the developmental model developed by the researchers, self-awareness led to openness which led to a commitment to social justice. Self-awareness was found in the largest number of artifacts and seemed to lead to students’ openness to new ideas, which then led to a commitment to social justice. The researchers noted:

Our hierarchical model suggests that…some students will not be able to demonstrate a commitment to social justice, or even the first steps towards this in the form of self-awareness/self-reflectiveness, despite the best intentions of their lecturers and the incorporation of a course that asks them to critically reflect on their own and others’ circumstances. (p. 453)

**Quantitative Approaches**

Coming from a very different epistemological paradigm, Dedeoglu and Lamme (2011) studied preservice elementary educators’ beliefs about diversity using Personal and Professional Beliefs about Diversity Scales. The quantification of beliefs requires the researchers and readers to make different assumptions about what and how we can know what preservice teachers believe. Yet despite the seemingly contradictory nature of this study (and the next), they offer valuable insights into preservice teachers’ conceptions of diversity. In their study, Dedeoglu and Lamme explored how demographic variables affected beliefs about issues related to diversity. Using statistical procedures, the researchers found that positive beliefs about cultural diversity were strongly correlated with being non-White, living or learning in urban contexts, and having cross-cultural friendships. Interestingly, religious identity was found to be highly relevant to a
preservice teacher’s beliefs about diversity. More than a preservice teacher’s racial or gender identity, religious identity was found to correlate strongly with beliefs about diversity. More specifically, preservice teachers’ Catholic and Protestant religious identities were predictors of individualistic/meritocratic beliefs about diverse students. Dedeoglu and Lamme noted, however, that researchers “must go beyond [participants’] responses to see the deeper constructs that determine the attitudes and beliefs of future teachers” (p. 490). Looking beyond their study, they also noted, “the lack of research on the impact of religious beliefs on diversity attitudes and issues, make[s] the issue of religion more critical for future researchers in the field of education” (p. 481).

To examine the constructs that determine teachers’ attitudes toward diversity, Enterline and a team of researchers (2008) developed a quantitative measure for assessing preservice teachers’ beliefs about social justice. This research team’s instrument, the Learning to Teach for Social Justice Scale, focused on the assumptions that undergird conceptions of diversity in education. Enterline and their team used notions of retributive justice as the bases for their beliefs about social justice; retributive justice being the idea that teachers should hold high expectations for all pupils, that teachers should work from asset-perspectives of students’ ability, that critical thinking was essential for all students, and that teachers should advocate for their students while challenging notions of a meritocratic society. The team arrived at several key observations through the development and testing of their instrument. First, they noted that beliefs about teaching for social justice and beliefs about diversity are separate but related constructs. They posited that what teachers believe matters and that teacher education was responsible for addressing beliefs about diversity and teaching for social justice. Additionally, in testing their instrument, the research team found that participants ($N = 125$) regularly endorsed
the idea that incorporating diverse cultural knowledge and persons in their teaching was important but did not believe that addressing cultural inequities perpetuated by society and schools was a teacher’s job. Finally, the researchers added that their scale “told only part of the story about learning to teach for social justice” (p. 283).

**Conceptual Change Model in Diversity-Centered Teacher Learning**

A conceptual change model was originally developed by Posner et al. (1982), then revised after substantial critique (Strike & Posner, 1992). Developed in and used extensively in science education, the conceptual change model suggests that new ideas or concepts attain statuses relative to other existing or incoming concepts.

The status of a particular idea held by an individual can be described by three related measures…intelligibility, plausibility, and fruitfulness…An idea is intelligible if the learner can understand it, even if one does not agree with it or believe it. An idea is plausible if it seems likely to be true or is at least consistent with what one already knows. An idea is fruitful if it seems to have broad explanatory power. For any given individual, an idea must be intelligible before it can be considered to be plausible or fruitful. Generally, ideas must also be plausible to an individual before they can be considered to be fruitful, but there are cases…in which the broad explanatory power of an idea can be appreciated before its plausibility is accepted. (Larkin, 2012, p. 10)

An idea is intelligible if learners can understand it, regardless of whether one agrees with it or not. An idea is plausible if it seems likely to be true. An idea is fruitful if it seems to have explanatory power, or generativity. The status of an idea, including intelligibility, plausibility, and fruitfulness, is interrelated with all the knowledge a person links in some way. This interrelated web of concepts is called the conceptual ecology. The conceptual change model
“assumes that learning takes place in a conceptual context. [Existing] conceptions and candidates for their replacement [or change in status] are understood and appraised by learners in terms of concepts they already possess” (Strike & Posner, 1992, pp. 149-150).

Larkin (2012) adapted the theory of conceptual change to tell a complex story of how preservice teachers develop their conceptions of diversity. Larkin suggested that conceptual change models may be potent for analyzing how preservice teachers learn about teaching diverse students or how they learn to teach toward social justice. However, he noted that this model must be applied only to individuals, may encompass ideas beyond those that the researcher or a priori theories of learning expect to be interrelated, and requires the use of multiple forms of evidence to confirm that shifts in conceptions have indeed occurred. To demonstrate the potential of the conceptual change model in the study of diversity- or social justice-centered teacher education, Larkin applied the model to analyze a case study of a student teacher in science education working in a racially diverse urban high school. Tyler, a White male teacher in his early 20s, began his placement strongly relating the discussion of racial identity with conflict. He felt that to explicitly discuss race in his classes would be to instigate racial conflict and thus ignored issues related to race in all his classroom teaching. Over time, he observed his students discussed their racial identities in humorous or casual manners. This, for Tyler, changed the plausibility of his conception of race as intrinsically tied to conflict. This concept was replaced over time with other race-related concepts though he ultimately maintained an individualistic and essentialized conception of racial identity, and never connected racial identity to a need for pedagogical response or action.

Larkin noted that the application of conceptual change model has several implications for diversity-centered teacher education. Teacher educators, Larkin wrote, must not only help
students to reflect on their existing conceptions of race, culture, diversity, social justice, etc., but must then provide intelligible, plausible, and fruitful conceptual alternatives. To replace or change colorblind conceptions of diversity, for example, preservice teachers must consider alternative concepts. Yet, teacher educators must resist transmissionist tendencies that simply tell students what to think. Because race- and diversity-related concepts have personal, epistemological, educational, ontological, and perhaps cosmological consequences for preservice students, these concepts must be co-constructed to prevent resentment.

In a complex, systematic, and sophisticated examination of conceptions of diversity, Baxan (2015) studied preservice educators in the Canadian context. Baxan explored her participants’ conceptions of diversity as well as the influence that coursework, personal history, identity, and education exert on those conceptions. To facilitate this exploration, Baxan drew on Paine’s (1990) four layers of the meaning of diversity and Larkin’s (2012) adaptations of conceptual change theory to diversity-centered teacher education. Baxan asked students in their third, fourth, and fifth years of their teacher preparation program about their conceptions of diversity. Choosing to look at the topic holistically, she also conducted follow up interviews with some undergraduate volunteers after they completed her survey as well as fifteen teacher educators and six program administrators. Using data collected from the questionnaire, semi-structured interviews, the researcher’s post-interview reflections, and documents about the teacher preparation program and certain individuals’ teaching, the researcher developed portraits of six teachers’ conceptions of diversity. These portraits provided examples of the rich array of responses and provided context for the survey and interview data. This comprehensive project produced several findings as well as implications for practice.
When preservice teachers began their program, their conceptions of diversity were relatively simple. Some described diversity in terms of class, race, gender, or ability. Most noted that when moving to the metropolitan area surrounding their university, they experienced new kinds of diversity. Throughout their program, the preservice teachers’ conceptions of diversity became less clear but more thoughtful. Some of the major influences on this change in thinking included coursework as well as faculty and instructors, personal history and identity, field experiences and the reflections which followed. Program focuses, course readings and material, personal values, and faith or religion were also noted as influencing factors. Throughout the teacher preparation program, a liberal notion of sameness and an emphasis on individuals’ control over their circumstances prevented most participants from discussing the relationship of diversity to social structures or systems of privilege or oppression. Religious, sexual, and cultural diversity were some of the most challenging and controversial aspects of diversity for participants. Teaching and learning, as construed by the participants, was about meeting individuals’ needs but these areas of diversity complicated the teachers’ responsibilities to respond to diversity in schools. Interestingly, student participants reported that diversity was overemphasized in their coursework, despite their positive attitudes toward course content related to diversity. Baxan noted that questions like, “why does race matter?” implied that the preservice teachers might require clear and explicit rationales for the inclusion of diversity content in teacher preparation coursework. Diverse placements in field experiences had a strong influence on preservice teachers’ conceptions of diversity, though invisible and visible diversities had different effects on students. Finally, the preservice educators’ emotional responses to diversity were powerful catalysts for changing beliefs and ideas, but only when engaged by
professors and instructors. In Baxan’s portraits, empathy for diverse students alone was not enough to alter participants’ conceptions of diversity.

Summary

Research and theory in teacher education have explored conceptualizations of the beliefs, attitudes, perspectives, and dispositions of preservice educators toward diversity and social justice. Paine (1990) described four levels at which teachers may conceptualize diversity while Milner (2010) provided five “conceptual repertoires” of preservice teachers. Garmon (2005) outlined six factors that affect teachers’ beliefs about diversity, which Mills and Ballantyne (2010) found constituted a developmental structure. Castro (2010) studied how teachers’ conceptions of diversity have changed over decades while others studied how these conceptions change across one course (Adler, 2011), experience (Dedeoglu & Lamme, 2011) or degree program (Baxan, 2015; Enterline et al., 20). Larkin (2012) applied a conceptual change model to the study of changes in teachers’ conceptions of diversity. Given these complex and sometimes conflicting findings, how will future researchers proceed? What important threads can be picked up and woven together?

First, the strength of conceptual change model (Larkin, 2012) appears to offer a potent path forward. In Baxan’s (2015) application of Paine’s (1990) levels of diversity and the conceptual change model, teachers’ conceptions of diversity were found to develop over time. Coursework and personal experiences in culturally, linguistically, and racially diverse settings did appear to change her participants’ conceptions. Yet, this research during coursework focused primarily on teachers’ beliefs about their imagined future practice. Despite advancing their conceptions of teaching for social justice, preservice teachers may revert back to the conceptions of diversity, teaching, and learning that they brought to their teacher preparation (Enterline et al.,
Furthermore, given the difficulty of detecting changes in beliefs (Larkin, 2012) and the fact that teachers may simply learn how to speak in more socially desirable ways that mask deficit, meritocratic, or other problematic conceptions of diversity (Castro, 2010), finding ways forward may be difficult. In the next section, research on preservice teachers’ perceptions of diversity and responses to differences among students will augment the findings in this section. By marrying the study of conceptions of diversity with teachers’ perceptions of and responses to diversity, I hope to further illuminate meaningful paths for this research.

**Learning in Context: Complex Influences on Student Teachers**

As discussed in chapter 1, student teaching has been a constant component of teacher education for more than a century (Coy, 1976) and has included many of the same elements as it does today (Coleman, 1999). The perpetuation of traditional practices and structures has been perceived as having great value to the field of music teacher education (Conway, 2002, 2012; Draves, 2013). Recently, teacher education has been called to rethink how best to prepare preservice teachers to meet the changing needs of a changing public (Ballantyne & Mills, 2008; Banks et al., 2005).

**A Critical Study of Learning in Student Teaching**

Britzman (2003) wrote about two student teachers, Jamie Owl and Jack August, who she observed, interviewed, contextualized, and narrated in her study of learning to teach. In her study and the narratives of both student teachers, the researcher explores how personal educational biography, the experience of student teaching, and other environmental and interpersonal factors affect how educators learn. Jamie Owl was described as a small White female teacher. She grew up in a small town and struggled to succeed in school. Her family was working class and her experiences with teachers were disappointing in general. For Jamie, it was not until an English
teacher in high school addressed her as an intelligent person that she could develop a vision of herself as a student. Britzman explores these tensions in Jamie’s narrative and wrote,

Jamie was involved in that messy process of rejecting normative visions of what it means to be a teacher…the poignant question—can one become a teacher and hate school?—is one that is hardly asked. But it is from this question that Jamie began to negotiate the contours of her identifications in teaching. (p. 88)

The narrative that Britzman wrote about Jamie Owl was a story of conflict between a deeply thoughtful individual and the circumstances of school teaching. School teaching, in this narrative, involved describing and depicting information to students. It involved becoming a teacher, who acted like a teacher, who said teacherly things. However, Jamie lacked the pedagogical knowledge to engage her students in the kinds of philosophical inquiry that she found valuable. When she presented her students with challenging and complex questions, she was met with silence. She interpreted this silence as a dismissal of her interests and fell into a perpetual state of personal unrest. Compounding this tension with Jamie’s multiple developing senses of self, several environmental factors challenged her throughout her student teaching including personal issues with a cooperating teacher she did not choose and then teaching alone when the cooperating teacher went on sick leave for the rest of her student teaching semester. Jamie received poor and infrequent feedback from her university supervisor. The story of this student teacher’s struggles to connect with her curriculum, her sense of self, her cooperating teacher, and her students is difficult to process. The confluence of these many factors led to repeated personal crises, though Jamie finished her student teaching with certification. Given the complexities of the field of education, not to mention the professional discourses on student teacher and teacher education, this case speaks directly to the highly personal and unpredictable
nature of these compounding situations. As Britzman noted, “these student teachers built and rebuilt their identities with small and contradictory details because they were caught in an oxymoron called student teacher” (p. 250).

In Britzman’s second narrative, Jack August, a student teacher in secondary social studies, came to terms with what it means to identify as a teacher and wrestled with what he could do for his students. Britzman and Jack met once a week and she observed his lessons and reflected on both her personal accounts of what she saw during observations as well as how these personal accounts differed or affirmed what Jack reported after his teaching episodes.

Jack, like Jamie, had come to teacher education after receiving other post-secondary degrees. Jack first attended a community college after graduating high school then enrolled at State University as a psychology major. After finishing his second degree, he got a job as a full-time case worker at a residential school for children with autism. This was a difficult time for Jack professionally and personally and led him to return to school yet again as a master’s degree student working toward a degree in history education. Through his program, he learned about history in a vivid and person-centered way. He was attracted to studies of civil rights struggles and wanted to bring these stories to school-age students.

As a student teacher, Jack tried to channel his educational coursework but felt that there was no way to connect the theory he had studied in school with the experience of student teaching. He felt that practice was the best way to become a teacher. Jack worked with two cooperating teachers: one taught using lectures and quizzes and the other brought the curriculum to life through games, discussions, and projects. When Jack began teaching he hoped to help students think critically about history and understand struggle, oppression, and social action through personal engagement with historical characters and events, but Jack was ultimately too
deeply invested in hands-on and uncritical experience. What he saw and experienced became truths about teaching.

The tensions within Jack’s story, like those in Jamie’s, are difficult to work through without adequate guidance. In both cases, the casual commentary that the university supervisors and cooperating teachers offered was insufficient to guide these student teachers through the struggles of their experiences. Britzman’s narrative of student teachers’ complex experiences and problems provide rich accounts for considering the complex nature of learning to teach, especially when teaching as a student and learning as a teacher. What, then are the implications for working with student teachers to address the complexities of human diversity in the context of a brief encounter with teaching? What factors lead student teachers to consider the diversity among the students in front of them? If teaching happens in someone else’s classroom, conflicting explicit and implicit values may be provided to students without time, space, or guidance for necessary critical reflection.

Programmatic Coherence

Cochran-Smith (1991b) theorized three ways in which student teaching might foster positive and productive student teacher dispositions toward social justice and diversity. These approaches to student teaching include consonance, critical dissonance, and collaborative resonance between university and school-based programs of teacher preparation. Each of the three approaches Cochran-Smith proposed is undergirded by different assumptions of the roles of university coursework, school-based fieldwork, and the intentions of collegiate faculty and inservice teachers. Student teaching programs based on consonance seek to develop teachers as good decision makers and who adopt practices that their field recognizes as justifiable educational judgments. This approach prepares teachers to speak their field’s language and to
observe and take up their cooperating teachers’ practices. In this model, cooperating teachers are clinical instructors who receive preparation to observe university-determined patterns of practice in their mentees. Programs guided by visions of consonance seem harmonious or collaborative, but a more critical investigation of consonant programs led Cochran-Smith to identify implicit messages or hidden curricula within these programs. These messages dictate that teaching is guided by university-verified knowledge, that teachers’ professional practices are generated by those standing outside of the classroom, that the role of the university is to train preservice teachers to reproduce their practices, and that teacher educators train their preservice students to use university-generated language to discuss the problems of their practice. In essence, consonance implies that the university is in hegemonic control of teacher knowledge, and the need for teachers to make genuine decisions has been circumscribed.

Cochran-Smith’s second category of teacher preparation is critical dissonance. University-school partnerships and student teaching placements in this category seek to show preservice teachers the disconnections between their preparation and teachers’ conservative practices. Programs of critical dissonance assume that in-service teachers have simplistic understandings of diversity that must be challenged by radical university coursework. These programs intend to be transformative and develop student teachers’ ability to critique and reinvent their dispositions toward teaching, learning, diversity, and social justice. However, Cochran-Smith suggested that student teachers may, in fact, be taught that those outside of school are responsible for developing critical perspectives on teacher practice in order to liberate students, and that the wisdom of practice held by in-service teachers is predominantly or totally conservative and in need of exposing. Critical dissonance may perpetuate a university/theory and
practice/school divide and fail to show student teachers how in-service teachers could actively reimagine their own practices.

Instead of consonant programs that predominantly serve the interests of university faculty, or critically dissonant programs that subvert the importance of in-service teacher perspectives on teaching, Cochran-Smith suggested that student teaching be construed as partnerships between schools and universities which are collaborative and resonant. Collaborative resonance works to link what student teachers learn about teaching, diversity, and social justice in their university coursework with their school-based fieldwork. Student teaching in this paradigm aims to capitalize on the potency of reform-centered teaching culture to show student teachers models of practice in which teachers construct professional knowledge. In these programs, student teachers learn that theory and practice are connected through teacher inquiry and reflection, that inquiry occurs in individuals’ practice as well as collaborative communities, and that the power to reinvent teaching can be shared by multiple stakeholders in education. Cochran-Smith’s three approaches to diversity-centered student teaching illustrate multiple ways that teacher education might attempt to work toward equity and against oppression. It is important to note that these models of student teaching are not the only possible paradigms. But Cochran-Smith’s analysis of the messages that each conveys added significantly to theoretical understandings of the role of student teaching in diversity-centered teacher preparation.

In an empirical follow-up to her theoretical exploration of university/school partnerships, Cochran-Smith (1991a) studied the experiences of student teachers co-laboring with cooperating teachers in collaborative resonance. In four schools, four sets of cooperating teachers and their student teachers explored the problems and dilemmas of teaching together. In each school, student teachers learned alongside practicing educators how to generate their own knowledge of
teaching in critical inquiry and reflection. In this study, the researcher observed and interviewed the student teachers and in-service teachers to explore how critical resonance might influence student teacher learning. In each case, student teachers learned to “rethink the language of teaching—a collaborative process of uncovering the values and assumptions implicit in language” (p. 289). The programs in Cochran-Smith’s study fostered images of teachers as builders of knowledge and theory involved in the process of transforming the social lives of their schools. Student teachers were invited to question their cooperating teachers’ practices and raise issues related to teaching, writing, language, planning, and curriculum. Together, the cooperating/student teacher pairs explored the dilemmas of teaching. Dilemmas, Cochran-Smith writes, are questions with no answers or solutions. They are about deeply affective issues such as race, class, gender, equity, and diversity, which cause teachers to wrestle with problems that present multiple, though contradictory, paths forward. By learning to work through the dilemmas of teaching, student teachers in this study were introduced to the moral and ethical bases of teaching and learning. They were made to feel responsible for the personal well-being of their students, and to develop commitments to reforming their practices. Based on their work in communities that co-labored to understand teaching and learning, student teachers in programs of critical resonance connected their university coursework with school-based teaching.

**Institutional Conceptions of Diversity**

In the post-Apartheid South African context, Rusznyak and Walton (2016) conducted qualitative investigations of the effects of diverse practicum placements on undergraduate preservice teachers’ dispositions toward cognitive and physical diversity and (dis)ability. In their study, preservice teachers both in schools that made accommodations for differently abled students, as well as those that did not, encountered deficit views of student ability and diversity
over the course of their field placements. For some preservice teachers, exposure to these detrimental perspectives on student ability strengthened preservice teachers’ resolve to teach inclusively. In other cases, despite a program-wide vision of inclusive teaching and coursework centered around inclusive pedagogy, preservice teachers re-adopted deficit perspectives of children with disabilities that they had held prior to their university coursework. In their summary, the researchers recommend that for preservice teachers to envision progressive models of inclusive education, continued university support and purposeful, guided reflection on diversity and inclusive teaching are essential.

Cornbleth (2010) explored the “de facto diversity curriculum” of an urban school used for student teaching placement. To analyze the messages about diversity that the school sent to student teachers, Cornbleth applied Bourdieu’s notion of habitus, Mill’s history-biography-social structure framework, and Archer’s notion of the internal conversation as a form of mediation between the environment and one’s experiences of that environment. In developing this theoretical model, the researcher posited that the messages that a student perceives about diversity, students, teaching, and/or learning are transmitted through practices, formal school communication, and personal interactions; as “school sites also teach” (p. 295). These messages then interact with a variety of persons with different histories, biographies, and social networks which lead to individualized interpretations. Finally, given the messages that one perceives, the influence of history-biography, and social network, people have internal conversations about those messages which mediate the messages and experiences of them. The participants in Cornbleth’s study were student teachers placed in an urban high school with a reputation for being difficult or unruly, but which was struggling to integrate students from new neighborhoods due to the school district’s developing school choice program. In this changing school setting,
the cooperating teachers paired with the participants had developed strong and opposing opinions about their school. The student teachers referred to their cooperating teachers as either “negative” or “positive” teachers. Negative teachers felt that their students were often hard to control or motivate and that it was mostly not worth their effort to think of creative lesson plans. This group preferred to focus on classroom management strategies, the use of handouts/worksheets, and putting in the minimal amount of effort necessary to do their job. Positive teachers saw the differences among their students as a source of inspiration and talked about how their school community felt like a family. Cornbleth noted, “constituent messages both reflect and communicate or sustain a particular habitus—its collective dispositions, practices, and effects…attention to institutional habitus unmasks key ways in which the status quo and its inequities are maintained or modified” (p. 295). In all, the student teachers in Cornbleth’s study learned not only from their cooperating teachers’ discussions of pedagogy and practice, but from their informal conversations with other teachers and administration about what their lives as teachers might be like.

**A Quantitative Approach**

In addition to the challenges of practice and program coherence, Popham (2015) explored the degree to which teaching in a diverse school or classroom affected student teachers’ performance on their evaluation items related to working with diverse student populations. Overall, Popham reported, the “findings of this study indicate that the diversity within the field placements had no effect on candidate performance” (p. 69). Additionally, on the Clinical Practice Assessment System items (a student teaching evaluation item in the Utah context), student teachers were reported to be less effective teachers of diverse students when they taught more beginning English speakers. Similarly, increased proportions of students from racial or
ethnic minorities correlated with a decrease in the student teachers’ perceptions of self-efficacy and of professional preparation to teach in general. Despite these findings, Popham suggested that the validity of the evaluation tools, rather than the professional benefits of teaching diverse students in student teaching placements, ought to be more carefully examined. For instance, it is likely that preservice teachers may feel less sure about their abilities and less prepared to teach after working in an unfamiliar setting. Similarly, lowered feelings of self-efficacy may be a developmentally appropriate response to the tension surrounding issues of race, equity, justice, fairness, and privilege in American schooling rather than a detrimental effect of teaching predominantly non-White students. When considered through the lens of critical anti-racist theory, the production of negative effects of teaching in diverse settings holds significant implications for the analysis of the cooperating teacher selection process. These supposed negative effects of teaching diverse youth can easily be misconstrued as examples of the ways in which issues of race ought to be suppressed institutionally, either for sake of the p-12 students or the preservice teachers’ “own professional good,” rather than as the by-product of incomplete or culturally irrelevant evaluative tools.

**Learning about Diversity in Urban Schools**

In a study of the relationship between student teaching placement sites and new teacher performance and attrition/retention, Ronfeldt (2012) found that field and student teaching placements in easier-to-staff schools (schools with a high teacher-retention rate, high administrative support, high staff collegiality and clean/adequate facilities) had positive effects on teacher retention and student academic achievement. In the author’s words, “the main findings suggest teacher education programs should avoid placing prospective teachers in difficult-to-staff schools” (p. 21). Though this study uses clear criteria to describe difficult-to-
staff schools in an effort to avoid more generic terms such as “high-needs,” “urban,” or “underserved,” the author simultaneously noted that though not a measure of racial segregation or representation, difficult-to-staff schools had a statistically significant correlation with schools in which the students were predominantly non-White.

In the case of six student teachers working in two high-needs urban school districts (Anderson & Stillman, 2010), participants overwhelmingly reported learning far more often from potentially miseducative experiences rather than from teaching episodes which mirrored or enacted the culturally responsive and socially just pedagogy their undergraduate curriculum had proffered. Despite a clear programmatic focus on equity, diversity, and social justice throughout their undergraduate coursework, six preservice elementary educators reported that in their urban student teaching placements, their teachers’ workload and teaching responsibilities were dominated by a school culture of assessment, accountability, and scripted curricula. In their analysis, Anderson and Stillman reported that working in these teaching contexts (a) reproduced a perceived theory/practice duality in the young teachers’ perceptions; (b) engendered an appreciation not for curricular creativity, but for an ability to adhere to a district or state instructional schedule; and (c) consistently diminished the preservice teachers’ curricular imaginings. While these experiences may be read as overwhelmingly negative, the researchers suggested that several key learnings emerged. In their opinion, university student teaching coordinators ought to consider (a) the importance of selecting cooperating teachers who enact the pedagogical visions of the teacher education program in a variety of teaching settings, (b) the importance of appropriate and effective teacher modeling and engendering informative apprenticeships through university remediation, and (c) the importance of the university supervisor and student teaching seminar in helping young teachers bridge their work from theory
into practice. Finally, the authors recommended developing practices for strategic resistance to negative and problematic school cultures and policies, and a specialized knowledge base which might help teachers meet the needs of their local schooling contexts.

Culturally Responsive Supervision

Zozakiewicz (2010) proposed that university supervision was one area where culture and social justice had yet to be centered in the research literature on student teaching. To meet the needs of student teachers in her program, the researcher developed a model of student teaching supervision she termed culturally responsible supervision. Built from the theoretical tenets of culturally responsive teaching and based on reflective supervision, culturally responsible mentoring helps student teachers to connect their diversity-centered coursework with their school-based practice. In this supervision paradigm, mentors are responsible not only for developing student teachers’ practices, but also for ensuring that the communities in which early career teachers are placed are well-served. In addition to describing the tenets of culturally responsible mentoring, Zozakiewicz studied two student teachers who were supervised in this paradigm. In her case studies, the researcher found that students reported being constantly reminded of their university’s theoretical coursework. In her study, the researcher acted as a participant-observer, conducting her research and the student teachers’ supervision. Participants reported that her work was helpful for keeping multicultural education issues central in their teaching, and that they learned from the suggestions and examples that Zozakiewicz was able to provide in group meetings and seminars. Future research on the effectiveness or influence of university supervisors might use more sources of data beyond interviews and observations, and might include comparisons between multiple student teacher/supervisor pairs in multiple school
settings. Yet the influence of the university supervisor is a potent area for student teacher learning and new models of practice may find innovative and important paths toward progress.

**Culturally Responsive Professionalism**

The studies above focus on student teaching in general education and what student teachers learn about culture, diversity, and social justice through their experiences. In an interesting case that sits apart from the scholarship described above, Abramo (2015) explores what preservice teachers learn from a *post*-student teaching internship in *music* education about school, music, and educational policy. This study, like few of those above, studies what teachers learn from their placements. In Abramo’s case study, five preservice music teachers worked in an urban school after student teaching and before obtaining their first full-time job. All five student teachers had grown up and student taught in suburban schools with large music programs. In this intriguing case, the interns did not work with cooperating teachers; they taught alone. They developed their own curriculum and worked as teachers with nearly complete autonomy. Through their experiences teaching in this post-student teaching internship, the interns reported learning the following about teaching in high-needs, urban schools. First, in these school districts, music was considered an extra in the curriculum; it was a second-tier part of students’ coursework and treated so by administrators. This status was sharply juxtaposed with the highly valued music programs in which participants had grown up and student taught. In their post-student teaching placement, music classes were often moved to accommodate testing and other school functions. Second, participants developed new self-doubts about their efficacy as teachers or their ability to become teachers at all. One noted, “there were definitely things in the internship that we saw that was just like—it contributed to me not wanting to be a teacher anymore” (p. 52).
Abramo reflected on his participants’ decreased self-efficacy and remarked that the negative effects of teaching in a high-needs school might be mitigated through the work of a skilled mentor or cooperating teacher. Abramo also noted that the shock that accompanied the interns’ moves from well-supported suburban programs to high-needs settings could be meliorated by addressing the systems that advantage or disadvantage schools during preservice coursework. Lastly, participants did report that they learned valuable lessons by working alone. Student teaching, they felt, did not adequately prepare them for working alone or making administrative choices. In his conclusion, Abramo noted that the participants in his study let go of their “high ideals of wanting to make change for disadvantaged students” (p. 55). Abramo advocated for the development of culturally relevant professionalism, a “framework for navigating the systems of high-needs schools” (p. 56).

Student Teachers’ Perceptions of Diversity

Goodwin (1997) studied the instances in which student teachers in his seminar noticed diversity in their teaching settings. Seventy-five participants in Goodwin’s study filled out “critical incident” forms for their seminar. These forms asked participants to record an incident that raised concerns or questions related to diversity, to identify the persons involved, and to describe their reactions. Goodwin sorted the data by the category of diversity involved (race, gender, etc.) and then grouped the student teachers’ responses into six categories. Student teachers’ critical incidents most often revolved around issues related to race and racism. Other types of diversity involved in the critical incidents included language, sexual identity, gender, religion, class, and ability identity. The critical incidents described by the student teachers in this study involved the following types of interactions between students, teachers, or parents at the student teachers’ school: rejection, suspicion/attack, internalization of prejudice/marginalization,
and derision. In instances of rejection, individuals were excluded from groups or avoided based on their identities. Suspicion/attack mostly involved adults, one of whom was usually European American (White) and another was a “visible racial/ethnic group member” (p. 128). Incidents of internalized prejudice or marginalization included nine occasions when children of color apparently adopted the negative attitudes that were directed at them in peer or adult interactions, or through classroom media such as textbooks or other resources. Derision incidents involved students making fun of or teasing their peers about race, language, class, or ability.

Across the incidents in Goodwin’s study, student teachers expressed a variety of responses. Some expressed surprise at their students’ behavior, some could not decide whether what they saw was a problem related to their students’ diverse identities or just childish behavior. In most incidents, participants reported feeling concerned for the victims in their situation—first for their feelings and then for helping the victim to fit in so that they would not draw their classmates’ negative attention again. In every case, the student teachers perceived only negative issues related to diversity. Goodwin noted that teacher educators must be active in their student teachers’ experiences, helping them to contextualize their students’ interactions in larger historical patterns of privilege and marginalization, and to interrogate the times when they notice diversity among their students. This study is an important exploration of student teachers’ perceptions of diversity. Yet, the researcher’s use of “critical incident forms” to elicit information from his participants certainly could have focused their attention on negative interactions. Future research might augment these findings by providing neutral or negative and positive prompts.

Conceptions of diversity require careful and thorough exploration by researchers and teacher educators. Adler (2011) studied graduate students in her class, Epistemology, Diversity,
and Teaching, and described their conceptions of diversity using a three-dimensional narrative inquiry. In this course, graduate preservice teachers described their conceptions of diversity in weekly writings, self-reflection, and final papers. Additional data included field notes from class observations of in-service teachers as well as musings and anecdotal notes from the class’s time together. In general, the participants’ narratives revealed very different conceptions of diversity. Some felt that colorblindness was the “golden rule” of teaching diverse students, while one participant found her recognition of privilege empowering. This student hoped to change her practices and use her privilege to do good work in the world. One student was relieved to find that there were no “minorities” in the class, giving her the ability to speak freely. Another participant, who was working in a school at the time of the class, described seeing a White colleague berate a homeless Black mother over a missing library book and her child’s lateness. The class, hearing this story, was angry at the White teacher. Their emotional response was powerful and led to deep discussion of the situation. Adler wrote that for her students’ experiences with diversity in fieldwork and readings to change their conceptions, they required a broader awareness of the socio-political context in which teaching occurs. To challenge their deeply held assumptions about teaching and learning with minoritized students, their personal epistemologies needed to be uncovered and examined.

Closely Related Studies

In this section, I will explore a study (Rose, 2005) that comes closest to addressing the problems that I hope to address in this project. This study uses different methods in different settings, but shares a focus on student teachers’ conceptions of teaching and learning. They study the experiences of student teachers holistically. They consider the thoughts and perceptions of the student teachers in conjunction with their practices. By connecting student teachers’
conceptions of diversity with their actions, and response to diversity, they strive toward completely representing the student teachers’ experiences. Additionally, in both studies, the researchers employ deep and nuanced analytic thinking to generate meaning from these stories.

**Learning About Diversity in a “Multicultural School”**

Rose (2005) studied the experiences of four student teachers working in an urban, multicultural school. Additionally, her study combined a multiple case study design with a participant-observer component. Over the course of one school year, the researcher worked in the school in two capacities. During the fall semester, she spent three days each week assisting one classroom teacher and acting as a “student teacher” to study her problem and setting from an emic perspective. After meeting a teacher with whom she felt an immediate connection while observing student teachers as part of her university responsibilities, she asked whether she could learn in this setting as a “student teacher.” Though she had previously taught in an elementary classroom, Rose took on the responsibilities associated with student teaching including observing and gradually taking over one classroom at a time. She made copies, attended faculty meetings, and went to student teaching seminars. Rose described this fall semester as luxurious. She student taught three days a week, watching and learning from her cooperating teacher and students. After school she would write about her experiences. In the spring following this experience, Rose worked with four student teachers placed at the same school as a researcher/supervisor while continuing to “student teach.”

Data collection occurred in three phases. During the fall, Rose student taught and reflected on her experience as a student teacher in an urban, multicultural school. In the spring, she studied her participants’ experiences in individual interviews, focus group conversational interviews, at student teaching seminars, in classroom observations, and through the continuous
cultivation of artifacts related to the school and the student teachers’ work. Rose’s third phase took place across the entire year. During the fall, Rose journaled regularly and wrote specifically about her research and emerging themes three nights a week. In the spring, she continued to journal, and to collect data, analyzing her findings using a constant comparative method. Through her work as a student teacher and with student teachers learning about multicultural education, Rose found that several themes emerged through her work.

First, Rose found that she and her participants described both simple and complex understandings of culture and diversity. In their conversations about students, participants used race, ethnicity, and location to describe their students’ different cultures. Living in the “city” was a significant marker of diversity for the student teachers though as they came to know their school better, their understanding of the “city” evolved.

The student teachers simplified ‘diversity’ or ‘culture’ often as a single factor and I did not hear them mention any ‘deep meaning’ of culture which means we look beyond those visual aspects of culture such as food, holidays, or dress. (p. 192)

Conversely, when the student teachers explored culture in more depth or described the significance of their students’ culture, they made stereotyped assumptions about their students. For example, when describing their students’ culture in terms of their home life, the student teachers made assumptions about what having one parent at home might mean for those students. However, in order to speak meaningfully about students’ culture, Rose found that her participants needed to use simple categorical descriptions to begin a conversation and then were able to explore the problematic associations that they had developed.

Another theme that arose in Rose’s study and analysis was what she called the paradox of diversity. Throughout their conversations and interviews, the student teachers used words such as
diversity, diverse, multi-cultural, race, and ethnicity to describe their students. Over time and even within single interviews, these words slipped together and their meanings became blurred. The words, *same* and *different*, in particular, revealed the participants’ tangled thinking. Two teachers described one class in opposite terms, one noting how different the students were while seeing them all as the same. They evidenced the use of multiple levels of difference.

Looking for other examples like these, Rose noted four distinct ways in which difference/sameness were construed by student teachers. These included the sameness/difference within cultural groups, sameness/difference between an “I” and an “other,” sameness/difference between two “others,” and sameness/difference of all people. To illustrate this last construction, Rose pointed to two statements: we are all alike; we are all individually different. While temporal aspects of sameness/difference within “I”s and “others” were not explored in this study, the multiple layers of complex sameness/difference was a recurring theme all three phases of the study.

The other themes that arose in Rose’s research included the student teachers’ perceptions of the significance of raced, classed, or gendered identities; and student teachers’ difficulty understanding why identifying as Black, African American, or Latinx might be important to their students. While working to understand how cultural identities might be important to students or teachers, the student teachers often found themselves drawing on stereotypical notions of identity. Furthermore, the student teachers struggled to name and be conscious of the effects that the stereotypes that they had developed had on their teaching. One participant described that she felt that she should teach her Black students differently based on what she knew about culturally responsive practice. Another participant acknowledged that she thought culturally responsive practice might be useful but that students living in one small urban city were of the same culture,
regardless of their race, gender, ethnicity, or other personal identities. The first student implemented lowered expectations when working with her African American students to account for their cultural needs while the other ignored differences of race, treating her students as the same. The complexities of teaching in a culturally responsive manner were grappled with by all the participants in Rose’s study, but all came up with very different responses.

**Synthesis and Summary**

*Problematising the Diversity Imperative*

Looking across the literature discussed in this chapter, several themes emerge. These themes have implications for both this study and for research at the nexus of student teaching, diversity studies, and music education. First, it is astounding to note the uniformity of the problem which research in this review described. The “diversity imperative” (Banks et al., 2005) is cited as the impetus and cause for almost all the research on diversity and social justice in teacher and music teacher education. However, it is interesting to note that many of the studies begin by talking about the problem of growing diversity, then go on to state that diversity must be connected to issues of privilege and oppression (Abramo, 2014; Adler, 2011; Anderson & Stillman, 2010; Baxan, 2015; Cornbleth, 2010; Enterline et al., 2008; Grant & Gibson, 2011; Larkin, 2012; Milner, 2010; Nieto, 2000; Robinson, 2017; Rose, 2005; Salvador & Kelly-Mchale, 2017; Sands, 2004; Sleeter, 2001).

Without connecting increasing diversity to social inequities, and then to social justice, one could hypothetically read the diversity imperative as a need to protect White spaces from deleterious change. Given the tenets of the imperative—that students are becoming more diverse while teachers remain predominantly White and middle class—one could logically assume that we must simply learn to protect and preserve White educational or musical practices. In this
view, the entry of many more non-White students into American schools is seen as threatening the status quo. Hess (2018) observes that until researchers, scholars, and teacher educators must respond to systems of privilege and oppression, talk of addressing diversity remains disconnected from social justice. Otherwise, what bearing does the increase in student diversity have on teacher education? When American schools were only 30% non-White, was there little to no need to react accordingly? Without explicitly connecting increasing student diversity and a racially stagnant teaching force to social justice and equity, there is not sufficient cause for curricular action. Pointing out that schools are becoming more diverse does not necessarily require a response from teacher educators. It is only by further positing that preservice teachers being prepared in the current model of teacher education will be unable to teach more diverse students, that one arrives at an imperative for change.

What, one wonders, would change in our field if we began our future research by citing the authors above and framing the problem as an “oppression imperative” or a “racism imperative?” In other words, it is racism, sexism, ableism, heterosexism, and other systemic forms of oppression that induce the need to act toward social justice in the field of teacher education? The “oppression imperative” would support calls for change in music teacher education, of which student teaching is a critical part. In this study, I hope to explore what student teachers learn about diversity and how that changes their thoughts and actions.

**Connecting Diversity to Teacher Education**

Anderson and Stillman (2013) made the case that research on teacher education has explored what preservice teachers think about diversity extensively. Researchers have studied the conceptions that student teachers hold about diversity (Enterline et al., 2008; Milner, 2010; Paine, 1990), how coursework affects those conceptions (Ballantyne & Mills, 2008; Castro,
2010; Mills & Ballantyne, 2010; Sleeter, 2001), and how school-based experiences influence changes in conceptions of diversity (Anderson & Stillman, 2010; Cochran-Smith, 1991a; Garmon, 2005; Rusznyak & Walton, 2016; Sleeter, 2001). However, despite the extensiveness of this research base, significantly less research has paid attention to how these conceptions affect preservice teachers’ practice and pedagogy (Larkin, 2012; Popham, 2015; Rose, 2005). Student teaching is a place where theory meets practice, where preservice teachers test and develop their pedagogical ideas, stretch their curricular imaginations, and develop the skills and dispositions that allow them to teach to their potential (Britzman, 2003; Cochran-Smith, 199b). Student teaching, then, is a place where the connections between preservice teachers’ conceptions of diversity and their culturally relevant practices should be clearly displayed. Anderson and Stillman (2013) noted that most empirical studies of student teaching study teachers’ descriptions of their practices or conduct pre- and post-experience surveys to measure student teachers’ change. The formative experience of student teaching seems to call for constant and continuous reassessment of how student teachers’ conceptions and practices change. In this project, I will work to think recursively and reflexively about participants’ developing conceptions and practices.

Along similar lines, there is, I think, tension between the study of conceptions and actions. To deduce how teachers conceive of diversity, researchers have asked questions during teaching (Cochran-Smith, 1991a; Cornbleth, 2010; Rose, 2005); after teaching episodes (Adler, 2011; Goodwin, 1997; Rose, 2005); and after the entire student teaching experience has ended (Abramo, 2015). To gather data about teachers’ practices, teachers have been observed, have been interviewed, and have responded to videos of their own teaching. However, synthesizing the dynamic relationship between thought and action is complex. In this project, I think that I
will be challenged to make meaning from and between these two forms of data: thought and action.Interestingly, thought implicates practice or action, and action provides a partial window into thought. This is a complicated notion, but throughout this project, I will be using observed behavior to infer and explore the conceptions of diversity that lie behind the observed practices of student teachers. Similarly, knowing what student teachers think about diverse groups of students will, I think, influence their practices, in part. This complex relationship, explored by few researchers in this literature area (Anderson & Stillman, 2010, 2013; Ballantyne & Mills, 2008; Cochran-Smith, 1991a; Cornbleth, 2010) will prove to be a continuous source of empirical and theoretical tension for studies in this area.

Finally, there is significantly less research on diversity in student teaching in music than in general teacher education. Yet there are differences between music and general education that are sure to have implications for this project. Multicultural education, for example, has been construed as the inclusion of world musics into music classrooms for some time (Howard et al., 2014; Sands, 2004). Questioning the assumptions behind these practices has generated more critical conversations, but the genealogy of multicultural education in music has been shaped by its traditions. To address the diversity of persons in student teachers’ classrooms and what that might mean for practice will be a complex undertaking. In addition to the differences in diversity- and culture-centered pedagogies, student teaching in music is structurally different than in general education. The transition between placements, the chance for elementary student teachers to see every student in their school or for secondary teachers to see only particular subsets of the student population both effect the experience greatly. Naming the elements, pedagogical influences, and other factors that make learning about diversity in music education
special is an emergent and undertheorized area of study. This dissertation takes steps to address the tensions which this literature review has illuminated.
CHAPTER 3: METHODS AND DESIGN

This chapter describes the foundations, methods, and process of meaning-making that I used in exploring how Cara, Flora, June, and Brittany\(^1\), four student teachers studying music education, conceived of and responded to diversity during student teaching. This study was a holistic exploration of what these student teachers learned about diversity from their cooperating teachers and students; their school environments; and national, state, city, and local area contexts. Toward these ends, I use multiple analytic frames to make meaning of the observation, interview, and material culture data. My sometimes-patchwork whole-cloth approach was informed by Thomas’s (2016) typology of case study and a critical realist paradigm (Cochran-Smith et al., 2014; Danermark et al., 2002).

**Foundations and Paradigm**

**Case Study**

While discussions about diversity might be couched in a module, unit, seminar, or course that occurs before or during student teaching, the problem of applying academic knowledge about diverse learners and the related curricular issues permeate every aspect of the student teaching experience. Student teachers learn about teaching from their cooperating teachers’ actions, words, and influences, the school and its other actors and stakeholders, and from their students. The same may be said about how student teachers learn about diversity. They learn about diversity as people who experience the effects of privilege and marginalization. They learn about diversity from their students’ parents and families. They are influenced by the social and political systems in which teaching, music making, and learning are embedded. Case study, a

\(^1\) All personal names used in this study are Pseudonyms.
holistic exploration of a conceptual problem within a bounded experience working toward
generating local and cross-contextual meaning, was a useful schema for the pursuit of the
problem and research questions of this study. Barrett (2014) wrote, “case studies lend themselves
to central issues of teaching and learning, schools and subject matters. Their highly contextual
nature lends itself well to education settings, in which there is likely to be considerable
entanglement of phenomenon and context” (p. 114).

Thomas (2016) distinguished between two parts of a case study, the object, or theoretical
framework, and the subject, the bounded context, content, and situation of the thing being
studied. The object of this study is student teachers’ learning about diversity. This learning may
be experiential or theoretical, it may confirm their collegiate beliefs or ideas, or dispel the
notions of social justice and culture developed during their pre-student teaching coursework. The
subject can be a person, a place, or a situation, but is defined by its boundaries. The subjects of
this study were the student teachers in context. The subject, in this case, included what student
teachers experienced as “student teaching.” This case study, then, was a study of student
teachers’ learning about diversity (object) within their experience of student teaching (subject).
Furthermore, this study was both explanatory (theory-building) and exploratory (theory-testing)
as it aimed to explain something which teacher education researchers have studied to some
extent, but in fuller detail. This study utilized Thomas’s (2016) typology of case study to frame
the research design, methods of data generation, and analysis. Case study was chosen due to its
methodological fit with the research objectives including: conceptualizing the connection
between the beliefs, experiences, and practices of student teachers in particularistic contexts;
facilitating a dialogical relation between beliefs and action; and honoring the holistic nature of
the problem at hand.
Case study displays the uniqueness of a subject and explores the subject as a case of the object (Thomas, 2016). Additionally, working with case study facilitates the exploration of emergent objects within defined boundaries. Case study researchers constantly ask, “what is this a case of?” within the boundaries of the inquiry. They may reassess their questions, their purpose, and their methods given the needs of their case(s) and the phenomena of the subject. Finally, case study is interpretative. It seeks to “understand the perspectives and positions of those who live through the [experience]” (Thomas, 2016, p. 115).

**Critical Realism**

This work was conceived within a critical realist paradigm (Danermark et al., 2002; Maxwell & Mittapalli, 2010; Scott, 2010). This paradigm is characterized by ontological realism and epistemological relativism (Maxwell & Mittapalli, 2010). Critical realism acknowledges that the knowledge produced through research is subjective and theory-laden (Danermark et al., 2002). Yet theory-laden and subjective though it may be, this knowledge is of an ontologically “real” world (Danermark et al., 2002). The social world and our interactions in it are real, but only made so through interactive construction. The world in which our lives play out is shaped by social performance. It is in constant flux and the relationships and social situations that researchers hope to understand are enmeshed within a continuously changing landscape. Critical realism also accepts that knowledge of the material social world is always contextually contingent and fallible (Scott, 2010). Researchers may aspire to describe social interactions and relationships, but their results or findings are inextricably linked to the processes that yielded them (Scott, 2010). Knowledge of our world can be checked with others—it can be verified and made trustworthy through standards of research practice; and verification and trustworthiness are important for developing conceptualizations of the social world (Maxwell & Mittapalli, 2010),
but these conceptualizations can only ever partially describe the world. Paradoxically, we can only ever see the world through our human and contextualized lens. Without this lens, the significant meanings of our social theories and concepts would lack relevance. Being a social human gives us both an appreciation and need for research and theory, but forecloses our ability to say that we know the world absolutely (Scott, 2010).

In this study, I worked with student teachers who were as different at the start and end of the project as they were from their peers. Critical realists “place high importance on perspectives—that is, taking new perspectives, understanding different viewpoints, and representing diverse voices” (Shannon-Baker, 2016, p. 330). The changes in voice, perspective, and relationship that the student teacher participants in this study developed were of central importance. I explored what these student teachers claimed to know and believe to be true about diversity and how this affected their interactions with students.

Critical realist methodologists posit that the social world is governed by mechanisms, “which can cause something in the world to happen” (Danermark et al., 2002, p. 55). These mechanisms structure the social world and our experiences within it. In the context of this study, the mechanisms of interest included changes to the student teachers’ conceptions of diversity caused by, in part, the influence of interactions with students, mentor relationships with cooperating teachers, practice teaching, completing the edTPA portfolio, and more. The influences on the change in student teachers’ conceptions of diversity were many. They were also only ever partially observable. It is crucial to note that these mechanisms are not always already concepts. They are socially constructed as well as pluralistic; as the mechanisms of the social world are created and reproduced through human interactions, they are subject to change. Additionally, “there are many mechanisms concurrently active. The outcome of this…is
therefore a complex compound effect of influences drawn from different mechanisms, where some mechanisms reinforce one another, and others frustrate the manifestations of each other” (Danermark et al., 2002, p. 56).

Learning about the nature of social mechanisms is “a matter of empirical endeavor, and thus consists of fallible knowledge claims” (Maxwell & Mittapalli, 2010, p. 61). Critical realism “foregrounds social actors’ descriptions of their experiences, projects, and desires” (Scott, 2010, p. 20), but accounts for the partial nature of these descriptions. Critical realism points to social science and research as important for understanding the social world. The particularities of our social contexts and the significance of our social identities are essential to understand context-contingent mechanisms of reality.

**Case Study and Critical Realism**

Case study, then, is particularly well aligned with the tenets of critical realism (Wynn & Williams, 2012). Case study allows a researcher to look at the gestalt of a social case. It seeks to understand the interconnections between actors in a situation, a situation in its particular context, and how a system is reproduced, as well as what the system produces. “A critical realist case approach is particularly well suited to relatively clearly bounded, but complex, phenomena such as organizations, interorganizational relationships, or nets of connected organizations” (Easton, 2010, p. 123).

In this study, I sought to describe and understand how the student teacher participants conceived of diversity. This included describing the student teachers’ definitions of diversity, exploring their feelings regarding the topic, and their experiences as diverse persons. I sought, then, to connect these conceptions of diversity to the student teachers’ instructional and pedagogical practices. Naming connections between conceptions of diversity and teaching
practices with diverse learners involved seeking to uncover this unobservable and illusive/elusive relationship. A critical realist paradigm prompted me to consider that the student teachers were working in a real social world in which they encountered diversity and in which they simultaneously named, noticed, and reconstructed discourses of diversity. The student teachers sought to understand their students while simultaneously constructing their students as “diverse.” Critical realism allowed me to acknowledge this reciprocal relationship between the real social world and the student teachers learning in it. Tangentially, but importantly, the student teachers were placed in new teaching contexts that existed before and after their arrival. They had to name and understand those places while also acting on those places to varying degrees. This complex relation is tied up in the connection between preservice teachers’ beliefs and practices as well as the constant (re)formation of diversity as a lived and constructed concept.

**Participants and Setting**

This research study hinged on working with preservice teachers during their student teaching experience. Student teaching, however, is a complicated field experience coordinated by student teachers, university faculty, school teachers, building and district administrators, and state teacher certification programs. Because of the complexity of student teaching, I utilized a participant recruitment process in multiple phases. After defending my dissertation proposal, I completed the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Institutional Review Board’s research application. Following two rounds of revisions to my data generation protocols, I was approved to begin contacting participants. The approval letter can be found in Appendix A.

**Participant Recruitment**

First, I contacted the student teaching coordinators at six universities in Illinois with music teacher preparation programs. These included three private and three public institutions of
varying sizes. I explained my project in the body of my email and attached a recruitment letter for the coordinators to distribute to their student teachers. The student teacher recruitment letter (see Appendix B) described my project, my research interests, the purpose and significance of this study, the time required for participation, and included information about consent, privacy, and compensation (none). At the end of the letter, there was a link to a digital form for student teachers to indicate their interest in participating. I gathered student teachers’ contact information, major areas (band, choir, orchestra, general music, technology, etc.), school placements, cooperating teachers’ names, and a place for comments, questions, and concerns. The coordinators all responded to my request; two declined to forward my letter to their student teachers. Of the four student teaching coordinators who responded and agreed to forward to my request for participation to their student teachers, one invited me to speak with their student teachers in person. I was allowed ten minutes to describe my project during the first student teaching seminar of the semester. After meeting with the student teachers, I sent a follow-up email with a link for student teachers to volunteer to participate. I then contacted two individual student teachers who had expressed interest in participating in my project in person. After meeting with the student teachers, six volunteered to participate in the study and filled out the recruitment Google Form confirming their interest in volunteering to participate. All six volunteers were from the same institution, Midwestern University, where I was able to present in the student teaching seminar.

Midwestern University is a large, land-grant, R1 (very high research activity) university with a robust music education program. The program allows preservice music teachers to explore music teaching and learning broadly as first- and second-year students before choosing courses and field experiences that more closely align with their teaching goals as band, choir, orchestra,
general music, or music technology specialists. Midwestern University’s music education degree and faculty place special emphasis on preparing preservice music teachers to work with diverse elementary and secondary school students.

After identifying six potential participants, I used the information from the recruitment Google Form to contact the cooperating teachers of each participant. I searched online for contact information for the cooperating teachers. In two cases, I was unable to find an email address or phone number online and called the cooperating teacher’s school. Two student teacher participants had one cooperating teacher each and the other four participants had two cooperating teachers. I contacted all 10 cooperating teachers, describing the study, the interview and observation schedule, and my request to interview them—the cooperating teachers—once during the semester. I received affirmative responses from nine cooperating teachers; one cooperating teacher did not reply, leaving five possible student teacher participants. After receiving verbal or written commitments from the cooperating teachers, I reached out to the building or district administrators at each placement through the Office of School University Research Relations at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Through this avenue of contact, all nine building administrations approved of me working with their teachers and the student teachers on the condition that I would not make recordings (audio or video) of students or gather data on students in any way. In the case of several placements, I was required to request approval for the project from the school district administration. At this stage, I was unable to continue recruiting one potential participant because their cooperating teacher’s school district, Chicago Public Schools, required an extraordinarily long time to review my request to work with the teacher in their district. At the end of this process, I was able to successfully recruit four student teachers and received written consent from each as well as from their cooperating teachers and building
administrators. Table 3.1 shows the pseudonymous of the student teachers, the names of their cooperating teachers, and the names of their schools. Every school was located in Illinois.

Table 3.1

Student Teacher Participants, Cooperating Teachers, and School Placements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Teachers</th>
<th>Cara</th>
<th>June</th>
<th>Flora</th>
<th>Brittany</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cooperating Teacher 1</td>
<td>Ms. Penn</td>
<td>Ms. Brady</td>
<td>Ms. Lee</td>
<td>Ms. Austin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Placement 1</td>
<td>Prairie Elementary, Middle, and High School</td>
<td>Bernard Middle School</td>
<td>Plains High School</td>
<td>Lowe Primary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperating Teacher 2</td>
<td>Mr. Chen</td>
<td>Ms. Fair</td>
<td>Ms. Duncan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Name 2</td>
<td>Scott High School</td>
<td>Lake Junior High and River Middle School</td>
<td>Graye Middle School</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Selecting Participants

When initially structuring this study, I anticipated working to recruit around 10 potential participants. From those potential participants, I said that I would “look for the ways in which these persons, placements, and schools are different and diverse and use maximal variation sampling (Patton, 2002; Suri, 2011) to choose student teachers who are placed in a diverse array of settings and who are, themselves, diverse” (Fiorentino, dissertation proposal). Patton (2002) described the purpose of maximum variation sampling thusly: “to document unique or diverse variations that have emerged in adapting to different condition [to] identity important common patterns that cut across variations” (p. 243). Ideally, I would have had a variety of potential participants from which to select four. In the end, I was thankful to have four participants interested, willing, and able to volunteer at all.
**On the Race of the Participants**

Reviews of literature on diversity and teacher education have noted that researchers have overwhelmingly focused on White preservice teachers’ conceptions and practices (Anderson & Stillman, 2013; Grant & Gibson, 2011; Sleeter, 2001). Anderson and Stillman (2013) noted “to be fair…the decision to focus on White [preservice teachers] is not an inherently problematic one” (p. 42). Yet they also write,

Not addressing the development of [preservice teachers] of color risks reinforcing similarly problematic assumptions—for example, that they already and ‘naturally’ possess the requisite beliefs, attitudes, and motivations for successful urban teaching or that their beliefs, attitudes, and experiences are somehow less worth of study given their minority status in the profession. (p. 41)

In this study exploring how preservice teachers learn about diversity during student teaching, I hoped to broaden my perspective beyond normative visions of preservice teachers as White, middle class, or from the suburbs. That said, I wanted to avoid tokenizing any one participant; particularly participants of color. I did note that there were many other categories of difference that deserve this attention. Yet, because of a history of racial oppression and privilege in America and in American teacher education, specifically, race deserved this careful consideration. That said, three of the willing and able volunteer participants identified as White and one (June) identified as Asian American. With each, I named race explicitly and we discussed their identities as raced teachers with ethnic, cultural, and personal identities.

The participants worked in schools all across Illinois. Some student taught while living near their university, others lived at home and taught in schools near their parents’ home. I drove from central Illinois across the state for each observation and interview, as described in the next
section. Additional descriptions of each participant including the student teachers and cooperating teachers, as well as the schools in which they taught are located in chapter four of this document at the start of each individual case analysis.

**Data Generation**

Data generation took place over 15 weeks in the fall and early winter of 2018. Thomas (2016) noted that case study may use multiple methods, that “case study has broad and capacious arms: it loves all methods” (p. 38). In this study, sources of data included observations and interviews, commentary on teaching written by the participants as part of their edTPA project, and interviews with the student teachers’ cooperating teachers.

**Observations**

I conducted five observations of each participant over the course of their semester and following each, I interviewed the participants asking questions about what I saw as well as about their ongoing thoughts regarding diversity. My observations took place at the student teachers’ schools. For June, Flora, and Brittany who were assigned two cooperating teachers and placements, I observed them in their first placement twice, and in their second placement three times. For Cara, who was working in only one placement during the fall of 2018, but worked in three schools: an elementary, middle, and high school, I observed her at the high school twice, and at the middle school three times. Flora taught at two schools, but for undisclosed reasons did not invite me to observe her at the middle school. See Table 3.2 for a schedule of the observations and interviews.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Cara</th>
<th>June</th>
<th>Flora</th>
<th>Brittany</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>9/19 Ob. 1</td>
<td></td>
<td>9/26 Ob. 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9/19 Int. 1</td>
<td></td>
<td>9/26 Int. 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>10/2 Ob. 2</td>
<td>10/4 Ob. 2</td>
<td></td>
<td>10/5 Ob. 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10/2 Int. 2</td>
<td>10/4 Int. 2</td>
<td></td>
<td>10/5 Int. 1</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10/8 Int. 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10/9 Ob. 2</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>10/10 Ob. 1</td>
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<td>10/14 Int. 1</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10/16 Ob. 2</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10/17 Int. 2</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>10/19 Coop 1 Int. 2</td>
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<td>10/30 Ob. 3</td>
<td>11/8 Ob. 4</td>
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<td>10/22 Int. 3</td>
<td>10/30 Int. 3</td>
<td>11/8 Int. 3</td>
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<td>11/13 Ob. 4</td>
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<td>11/27 Ob. 4</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11/27 Int. 4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>11/8 Ob. 4</td>
<td></td>
<td>11/29 Ob. 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11/8 Int. 4</td>
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<td>11/29 Int. 5</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Observations focused on student teachers’ practices, and the ways in which their responses to diversity might manifest in the classroom. I observed the student teachers and recorded field notes on their practices in general; on their interactions with students—taking care not to record data on the students themselves; and on the instances in which I noticed the student teachers responding to diversity in the classroom. During these observations, I recorded ethnographic jottings, then before my interview with the student teacher, I converted those jottings into a field record (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011). However, I type quickly and using my laptop, I was able to create detailed accounts of what I saw in the classroom. Because my field jottings were quite complete—including verbatim dialogue—the process of converting jottings into field records focused mostly on adding some simple interpretations of the events in the classroom to the jottings.

As noted earlier, I was limited to taking notes on the student teacher and cooperating teacher, rather than students. Another limitation of my observations was the “visible” and “invisible” natures of diversity. There were situations in which I could reasonably name or anticipate that a student teacher would consider their interaction with a student of color or with
apparent special learning needs as a response to diversity. However, there were many times when
I would wonder whether the student teacher’s interactions with a specific student were
influenced in any way by diversity, privilege, marginalization, or oppression. There were also
instances in which I took no detailed notes on an interaction between a student teacher and a
student only to later find out that the student teacher considered that interaction to be a key
example of their ability to respond to diverse students. In general, my observations were a
relatively ineffective way to generate data on how student teachers responded to diversity, and
even less useful for generating data on their conceptions of diversity. They were most useful in
helping me understand the student teachers’ workloads and working relationships with their
cooperating teachers. I was also able to describe the normative classroom practices at each
school. For generating data on the student teachers’ conceptions of diversity or perceptions of
their practice, I relied heavily on the follow-up interviews with the student teachers and their
cooperating teachers.

**Semi-Structured Interviews**

Following my observations of the student teachers, I conducted follow-up interviews to
explore how participants described their practices and their definitions and conceptions of
diversity. These interviews were organized around a series of issues (Thomas, 2016) and
facilitated dialogue between myself and the participants.

My intention was to interview student teachers on the day of their observation, but Flora
and Brittany both needed to reschedule most of their interviews. To accommodate their
schedules, I called them a few days after their observation and began our interview with a
description of what I saw during their observation. We reconciled my account of their teaching
with their own descriptions of the lessons I saw and then began to discuss their teaching. Brittany
often travelled to Chicago after school, as I will describe in more detail in Chapter 4, so my observation/interview pattern with her became convoluted.

In addition to interviewing student teachers, I also interviewed the student teachers’ cooperating teachers. The purpose of interviewing the cooperating teachers was two-fold. First, cooperating teachers are a major (if not the major) influence on what student teachers take away from their experience (Conway, 2002, 2012; Draves, 2013). Understanding how these cooperating teachers conceived of teaching, diversity, and their work in schools was useful in describing the educational contexts in which the student teachers worked. Second, the cooperating teachers were asked about their student teacher’s changing conceptions of diversity as far as they were able to understand or perceive them. Each cooperating teacher was interviewed once with the exception of Ms. Lee—Flora’s first cooperating teacher, who was interviewed twice to accommodate her teaching schedule (we covered approximately half the interview content in each interview). It is also noteworthy that Cara was placed with only one cooperating teacher and that she, Ms. Penn, was only interviewed once.

These interviews were based on a constructionist interview paradigm. Roulston (2011) described it thusly:

In the constructionist conception of the interview, data provides situated accountings on research topics—that is, particular versions of affairs produced by particular interlocutors on specific occasions. (p. 61)

By framing these interviews as constructionist, I acknowledged that what I noticed during classroom observations or in other forms of generated data informed the questions that I choose to ask, as well as the responses that my participants provided. Together, in our interviews, the
participants and I co-constructed meaningful descriptions and interpretations of the student teachers’ conceptions of and responses to diversity.

Interview protocols can be found in Appendix C. The questions participants and I discussed were based on the Teacher Candidate Questionnaire used by Baxan (2015) as well as the interview protocols developed by Rose (2005) as part of their dissertation to explore student teachers’ learning surrounding diversity in their teacher education program. Additionally, in the fourth interview, student teachers were asked to name an instance or two in which they felt that diversity impacted their teaching. They were asked to describe the persons involved in these instances and the sequence of events, as well as their reflections and responses based on Goodwin’s (1997) Critical Incident Forms. Finally, I sought to repeatedly acknowledge that student teaching is an incredibly complex time during my interviews. I asked the participants questions like, “how is it going?” “what’s new?” “what are you concerned or excited about?” at the start of each interview. These conversations led to discussions of important aspects of the participants lives such as their own mental health, the pressures of applying for jobs, the influence of divisive political issues and events on their well-being, and strife or trauma in their home or family lives. While these conversations did sometimes lead the participants to diverge from topics that clearly related to student teaching, it enabled me to maintain an expansive and informative view of their field experience.

**Material Culture: edTPA**

In addition to the observations and subsequent interviews, a third prominent component of data generation was the edTPA portfolio project (Pearson Education, 2019). As part of their state certification and university requirements, the student teachers were required to complete a teaching project and then write about their experiences. The students taught a sequence of three
lessons in which they addressed a central focus in their teaching. They recorded their lessons, reflected on their teaching, and wrote commentaries describing their planning, instruction, assessment, and the contexts in which they taught. As part of this portfolio project, the student teachers identified three focus students for whom they provided specific accommodations in their instruction or assessment. I collected the commentaries from the participants and used them to triangulate my ongoing analysis. However, while the student teachers were required to submit video recordings of their lessons as part of their project, I received and analyzed only their written work. Additionally, their commentaries on the students were masked to remove identifying information on specific students.

Data Analysis

In case study, the analysis of data involves the subject of the study being placed in dialogue with the object (Thomas, 2016). The object can include a theoretical framework which helps to organize the data in ways which reveal meaning and yield interpretation or it can include a theoretical lens through which multiple forms of data are examined and explored. It is key that the subject of the study, the historical unity or the bounded case, is examined as the case of the object. This process, Thomas noted, must honor the wholeness of the case. In this multiple case study, student teachers’ experiences were examined as the cases of preservice teachers’ learning about diversity.

Analytic Framing

The object in this case study was a composite, multi-faceted compilation of student teachers’ orientations to diversity (Paine, 1990), conceptual changes (Baxan, 2015; Larkin, 2012), the influences of the persons among and environments within which student teachers worked and learned (Cornbleth, 2010), and student teachers’ practices along with what they
implied about student teachers’ conceptions of diversity and their relationships to teaching. I came into this project with a toolbox of theoretical frameworks and concepts that I planned to utilize as needed. These theoretical tools included Paine’s (1990) four orientations to diversity; Larkin’s (2012) description and Baxan’s (2015) use of a model of conceptual change; and Cornbleth’s (2010) notion of institutional habitus. Each of these frameworks has been explored at length in Chapter 2.

**Orientations to Diversity.** Paine (1990) described four orientations that preservice teachers might take toward diversity: individual, categorical, contextual, and/or pedagogical. These orientations denote the degrees or types of social relationships among persons that an individual might conceive of as “diverse.” An individual orientation toward diversity frames difference as between and among people who are different in as many ways as one can image. The problems of diversity, according to an individualistic orientation, are the problems that each student brings to school with them. A categorical orientation toward diversity views diversity as assigned at birth, or structured by personal traits and histories. A categorical orientation recognizes patterns within human diversity including race, class, gender, and other randomly and naturally occurring differences. A contextual orientation to diversity views differences as socially constructed yet not essentialized; the “causes of difference” (p. 3) are a vital component of a contextual orientation toward diversity. Finally, a pedagogical orientation toward diversity “assumes that differences are not simply random and interesting, they are understood as having pedagogical implications—consequences for both teaching and learning” (Paine, 1990, p. 3).

Within this typology of orientations toward diversity, students may occupy all four orientations in mixed measure and sequence. They may express one orientation or all of them and the typology is descriptive rather than prescriptive. I drew on Paine’s orientations framework
most often, using it to describe and parse the data generated during interviews and observations. Throughout my analysis, I sorted the data into Paine’s (1990) four orientations and considered the researcher’s writing on each orientation as criteria for inclusion.

**Conceptual Change Model.** A conceptual change model of learning, as described by Larkin (2012), posits that both the status of a preservice teacher’s conceptions of diversity and their conceptual ecologies matter. To evidence the changes in one preservice teacher’s conceptions concerning student diversity, Larkin (2012) used a chart to map how participants’ conceptions changed. Evidence from interviews and observations were used to name salient ideas in participants’ conceptual ecologies. In Larkin’s chart, the waxing and waning of different conceptions were indicated with up and down arrows. In contrast, Baxan (2015) used quotes, narratives, and thick ethnographic descriptions to illustrate her participants’ conceptual change. In this project, the most relevant idea about conceptual change was the web of conceptual ecology. I asked student teachers to define diversity, to discuss issues of identity, representation, privilege, and oppression, and to describe their practices and the influence of diversity on their teaching. In all of this, I considered how the student teachers’ ideas and practices existed in a tenuous balance. This project was organized around the study of conceptions of diversity. As stated in Chapter 2, conceptions include “the collection of thoughts, ideas, images, and belief systems that teachers build to more deeply understand diversity and its multiple relationships to teaching and learning” (Milner, 2010, p. 118). Holding all of these complex aspects of conceptions in relationship was a consistent and ongoing challenge in this study. Because Paine’s (1990) orientations framework suggested that teachers might hold multiple, overlapping, or even contradictory orientations to diversity simultaneously, this framework prompted me to think through how seemingly opposing views of diversity might be in play within a student teacher...
during a single, but complex, student teaching experience. Larkin’s (2012) and Baxan’s (2015) uses of conceptual change modelling prompted me to continually consider how the student teachers thought about diversity within a web of understanding.

**Institutional Habitus.** The third facet of my analytic frame drew on the work of Cornbleth (2010). Cornbleth explored the role that institutional habitus played in shaping preservice teachers’ relationships to difference and diversity in schools. The idea of institutional habitus, a notion originally conceived by Bourdieu, suggests that a person’s orientation to the social world “emerges from one’s socio-structural location” (Cornbleth, 2010, p. 281). Cornbleth noted that preservice teachers learned about diversity from their college coursework, their families, and their autobiographical experiences before entering their field placement. In the context of their placements, preservice teachers came to know diversity through the rules and regulations of their school, advice from colleagues, explicit and implicit messages from cooperating teachers and building administration, and from interactions among community members. I drew least on Cornbleth’s notion of institutional habitus in this study, but the author’s ideas influenced my decisions to interview and observe the participants in their schools or local neighborhoods; with institutional habitus in mind, I interviewed the cooperating teachers about their own beliefs and practices, and I repeatedly asked the student teachers about their lives “outside” of student teaching in order to create a space for the relationships between the outside and inside of their student teaching experience to be brought to light.

**Student Teachers’ Practices.** The fourth facet of my theoretical frame was the connection between student teachers’ conceptions of diversity and their practices. The first two facets of my theoretical framing were primarily used in theory-testing, but this facet will be explored through theory-building. While prior empirical literature had explained preservice
teachers’ conceptions of diversity (Baxan, 2015; Larkin, 2012) and the influences of the school and other teachers on preservice teachers’ learning about diversity (Cornbleth, 2010), the connection between conceptions of diversity and student teachers’ practices was less well theorized. In a review of literature on this connection between beliefs and practices, Schmidt (2013) noted, “cultural and musical diversity is [an] area in which research on preservice teachers’ beliefs and practices is needed” (p. 40). This dissertation focuses on drawing connections between conceptions of diversity and practice. Toward this end, I did as Schmidt advised. I enacted “research that develops complex, situated, and holistic views of preservice teachers’ developing beliefs and practices” (p. 41).

Data Reduction and Interpretation

Interpretative inquiry seems made for case study. It’s like love and marriage, because the starting point of the interpretative inquirer, like that of the case inquirer, is the indissolubility of the situation to be studied. The interpretative inquirer starts with the view that situations cannot be fractured into variables. We have to study the meanings that people are constructing of the situations in which they find themselves and proceed from these meanings in order to understand the social world. (Thomas, 2016, p. 204)

In the quote above, Thomas explains why case study and interpretative thinking work so well together. In his typology of case study, the relationship between the subject and object allows the researcher to explore the particular nature of the subject using the object, and to refine the object’s explanatory potential through a nuanced and holistic investigation of the subject.

My interpretative and analytic process was recursive and reflexive (Saldaña, 2015); I analyzed my data repeatedly, using emerging themes and ideas to inform the generation of interview questions and to focus my observations. Some researchers have described this process
as a “constant comparative method of analysis” (Merriam, 1988). This process involved examining data at regular intervals using both within-case and cross-case thinking. First, I came to the data generation process with theories of how student teachers might conceive of and respond to diversity as well as an acknowledgement that I also believed how student teachers ought to respond to diversity. Second, I created interview protocols that reflected my own ideas as well as the research and theoretical literature, but intentionally worked to leave room for critical dialogue with the participants. Third, after each interview, I reflected on the emerging themes or ideas and used these to generate the next interview protocol. Fourth, in addition to responding to the emerging themes, I created opportunities for the participants to reflect on, address, and revise their previously stated beliefs or responses to diversity. I asked the student teachers to define diversity in every interview with follow-up lines of questioning that dug deeper into the underlying or related beliefs and ideas.

After completing the interviews, I coded two hard-copy collections of the interview, observation, and material culture data. I annotated codes in the margins of the data and then reflected emerging themes at the top of every or every other page. At the end of this process, I wrote lists of possible themes. After hand-coding the data generated with Flora and June, I used an online qualitative research software, Dedoose, to draw codes and themes from the data generated with Brittany and Cara; in this, I followed the same steps that I did with the hand-coded data. Throughout coding, I wrote descriptions of the data and the beginnings of Chapter 4 of this document. After finishing my first coding of all four cases, I went back to the data from Flora and June and analyzed it for codes and themes in Dedoose. Finally, I conducted a cross-case analysis in Dedoose using similar processes with new emergent codes and themes.
**Researcher’s Positionality**

In this dissertation, I situate myself as a co-creator of knowledge and a partner in inquiry with my participants. I acted primarily as an observer, but acknowledged that there were times when my questions about diversity, students, teaching, culture, or social justice influenced my participants’ actions or answers. To the greatest extent possible, I removed myself from the action of teaching and student teacher supervision at my interview sites. I strived to be a student, learning from my observations and interviews with my participants.

**Mental Model**

To further situate myself and name my positionality, I used Greene’s (2007) notion of the mental model. A researcher’s mental model includes multiple dimensions of their identity and acknowledges how these dimensions affect every phase of the research process. I framed my mental model in terms of my social, occupational, and researcher identities. As a White, cisgender, able-bodied, neurotypical, middle class, gay male I occupy a social position of privilege. I am the benefactor of social systems that assume that I am responsible, perhaps knowledgeable, and capable. I am allowed into multiple racialized spaces and have the autonomy to remove myself from spaces in which I feel uncomfortable. Yet, as a gay male, I maintain these privileges while being marginalized by heteronormative assumptions in my field and society at large.

My occupational identity also informed this study in key ways. First, I was a school music teacher for several years. I value music and education in particular ways and contexts that are informed by my life both inside and outside of schools. I can speak the language of school music and have been embedded in music programs for more than 20 years. I have been a student teacher and cooperating teacher, and before and after this study, I supervised student teachers.
across Illinois. I have come to expect certain patterns in student teacher behavior and in their relationships with students and other teachers. Finally, I was a graduate student working on developing my ideas about diversity, education, and the social world. I was also focused on certain topics such as race and racism, attempting to deepen my understanding and establish new knowledge. I was caught in simultaneous currents of learning and unlearning. These currents led me to question what I knew and what I saw, while also leading me to potentially overemphasize the small or the seemingly miniscule details of the social world (the material used in constructing school doors, for example).

Finally, as discussed earlier in this chapter, I identified my epistemological position as critical realist (Danermark et al., 2002; Maxwell & Mittapalli, 2010; Scott, 2010). In this paradigm, there is a real social world that can only be partially perceived. The social world, temporarily and partly perceived, is affected and constructed by our interpretations and perceptions of it. This paradigm has been described elsewhere as a mixture of ontological realism and epistemological relativism (Maxwell & Mittapalli, 2010). This paradigmatic position led me to seek what lay beneath the surface interactions in education and schooling. Additionally, my understandings, theories, and findings are already always affected by my perceptions and as well as the theories and perceptions of my participants.

**Trustworthiness**

Thomas (2016) explained that case study is generally unconcerned with validity and reliability. The markers of scholarly importance in case study, he offered, are intelligibility (a term borrowed from Foucault’s idea of polyhedron intelligibility), also known as triangulation, and analytic interpretation. By using multiple methods and a recursive and reflexive analytic process, which are both described earlier, I worked toward these two criteria. However, Yin
(2009) described the characteristics of high-quality case study research as being significant, being complete, considering alternative perspectives, displaying sufficient evidence, and being composed in an engaging manner. Given the impact of social systems of privilege and oppression that enmesh teaching, learning, and schooling (Anderson & Stillman, 2013; Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Nieto, 2000; Sleeter, 2001), it is clear that research on equity-centered education is significant. The lack of research on student teaching and in music education, in particular (Abramo & Campbell, 2016) only adds to the significance of this research. Yin’s second criterion, completeness, is difficult to establish with certainty given the incomplete nature of any single project’s perspective on data or experience. Yet, this project used multiple methods (observation, interview, journaling, systems mapping) to work toward completeness and a multi-faceted perspective. Sufficient evidence, too, was difficult to completely articulate because of the contingent definition of “sufficiency.” One asks, sufficient for what? And sufficient for whom? But, through prolonged engagement in these cases (a semester of data cultivation) and analytical thinking (a year of reflection), I strove to sufficiently describe student teachers’ learning about diversity. Finally, regarding being composed in an engaging manner, I hope that the following chapters demonstrate a commitment to such engagement.
CHAPTER 4: THE CASES AND ANALYSES

In this chapter, I introduce Cara, Flora, June, and Brittany, the settings of their placements, and their cooperating teachers. I describe the student teachers’ conceptions of diversity, beginning with their definitions of the term followed by descriptions of how they exhibited Paine’s (1990) four orientations to diversity: individualistic, categorical, contextual, and pedagogical. Following the four individual cases is an exploration of cross-case themes and findings. Since the purpose of this dissertation is to examine the preservice teachers’ changing conceptions of diversity, I will focus specifically on events and discussions that center difference or uniformity, diversity and assimilation, while acknowledging that student teaching is a complex and multi-faceted experience. In this chapter, I will focus on how the practices and statements of the participants exemplify and sometimes reveal how the student teachers conceived of diversity. I will also describe the work of the cooperating teachers, including their conceptions of diversity and the values or cultures of their programs. Because the cooperating teacher is a major influence on the thinking and development of the student teachers with whom they work, these values and beliefs are illustrative of potentially key influences on the student teachers’ conceptions of teaching and learning and related issues of equity and diversity. Parents, friends, commutes, job application processes and interviews, and personal interests of the student teachers certainly had strong influences on how conceptions of diversity were shaped and reshaped, but I only discuss those elements as they relate to the research questions.

Cara

Cara described herself as “very White,” passionate about music, and deeply connected to her religious identity as a Catholic and a church musician. She grew up in Texas with two parents who were supportive of her enthusiasm for music. “I started church choir when I was 4
and have done choir my entire life,” she told me, adding “music was always my biggest passion.”

Teaching choir was a secondary goal for Cara. Before moving to Illinois, Cara earned a degree in vocal performance from a college music conservatory in a large midwestern city, hoping to sing opera professionally. However, when Cara’s husband, Chris, entered veterinary school at Midwestern University, Cara took a job as an administrative assistant at the MU College of Education. While working full-time, Cara took the opportunity to return to school to seek teacher certification as a master’s degree student. She took courses in music education, cantored at a local church, and conducted a community children’s choir at a local university.

In the fall of 2018 toward the end of her certification program, Cara was placed with Ms. Penn, the choir director and teacher at Prairie Elementary, Middle, and High Schools. While continuing to work part-time at the university, Cara taught with Ms. Penn in her fourth- through twelfth-grade choirs and two extracurricular ensembles. “I am different than the traditional undergraduate student teacher,” Cara explained, “who’s just in another semester of college. It’s been really nice that Ms. Penn, my cooperating teacher, and the university, and my job have been super understanding of everything.” Early in the semester, she said, “it’s been good—crazy, but good” and by the end, she admitted that she was tired during all of our meetings and ready to move on to her second placement. In the spring of 2019, Cara student taught at an elementary school in the nearby town of Phippston. This study focuses on her time in the Prairie schools.

**Prairie Schools and Ms. Penn**

The Prairie School District is located 25 miles from Midwestern University. At the time of this study, the school was made up of five schools: a school for students in pre-K and kindergarten, a school for second- and third-graders, Prairie Elementary School for fourth- and
fifth-graders, and Prairie Middle and High School. Altogether, the district serves just over 1,600 students from the town of Prairie (Illinois State Board of Education, 2019), which has a population of just over 5,000 people. The students in the Prairie schools are around 95% White. Additionally, less than 2% of students identify as two or more races, less than 2% as Black or African American, 0.2% as Pacific Islander, 0.1% as American Indian or Indigenous, 1% as Asian, and 1% as Hispanic (Illinois State Board of Education, 2019). In addition to the mostly White student population, the teachers across the Prairie School District identify as 95% White, with one teacher identifying as American Indian or Indigenous and one who identified as Pacific Islander. Four teachers did not report their racial or ethnic identities. Additionally, across the small district, 23% of students come from low-income households or live in substitute care, and 1% are experiencing homelessness.

Prairie High School sits in the center of an established residential neighborhood in the town of Prairie. The high school was built at the end of the 19th century and is connected to the elementary school. Prairie Middle School, built less than 10 years before the start of this study, has a modern architectural style, is large and spacious, and is perched on the edge of expansive cornfields.

Cara’s cooperating teacher, Ms. Penn, had taught for 13 years and had hosted several student teachers. She taught choir classes in fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth grade as well as a concert and chamber choir at the high school and two extracurricular ensembles. Across fourth- through twelfth-grade, Ms. Penn taught around 300 students.

Ms. Penn worked to create a sense of belonging for her students. In the high school choirs, she wanted students “feeling comfortable, being themselves, caring for their voices—singing, but also sharing their voice—respecting who they are.” Toward these ends, Ms. Penn
told me that she reminded students, “this is your home,” adding, “that’s something that I say a lot, especially to new students.” Belonging was accentuated by an emphasis on “treating students as a human first [sic].” Prairie choir students were greeted cheerfully at the start of their class and usually asked about some aspect of their home or personal lives. The environment in the classroom was very warm with Ms. Penn often sharing stories about herself or her family.

Outside of choir, Ms. Penn worked to make her students feel safe, seen, and accepted. “I would say that I’m very open about certain things,” she told me. “I very openly express my support for the gay-straight alliance here in Prairie at the high school.” Ms. Penn placed a strong emphasis in her work on getting to know students. Her longstanding relationships with students who stayed in choir from elementary school to high school aided her in these efforts. When asked to describe the students in her classes, she was unsure how to answer such a broad question. She said, “I know each student individually. I don’t think of them as a pie chart.” She qualified this by adding, “I’m not that, ‘I do not see color’—I don’t know, each one of them’s different.” With only around 5,000 inhabitants she said, “I feel like Prairie is kind of a village,” adding “I feel like teachers know students, teachers know each other, and teachers know parents.”

Ms. Penn addressed diversity during our interviews by initially pointing out that “the first thing that comes to most of our minds would be racial diversity” and that diversity was commonly used as a replacement for race. However, she added, “I don’t see racial divisions as an issue…I think economic diversity is a giant elephant in the room that doesn’t get addressed as often.” Ms. Penn noted that some of her students came from wealthy families and others lived in poverty.

Ms. Penn focused on meeting the needs of individual students through differentiated instruction in class. She also emphasized this in her work with student teachers, encouraging
Cara to focus on individual students when planning lessons. She used a seating chart and verbal prompts during planning periods to help Cara attend to the needs of individuals. She suggested, “go out and find anybody…and say, ‘how’s your day going?’ or ‘Emily, I like your shoes, where’d you get those?’…Get in there and talk to them because the biggest thing you can do is form relationships with the kids.” She emphasized the background of each individual student saying, “everybody starts their day with a different deck of cards.”

**Conceptions of Diversity**

In the following section, I will present Cara’s definition of diversity; explore her individualistic, categorical, contextual, and pedagogical orientations toward diversity; and discuss some related tensions within these conceptions.

At the start of student teaching, Cara defined diversity as predominantly broken down into types or categories of differences and as experience dependent. She said, “there’s all different kinds of diversity,” including race/ethnicity—which she combined into one category—religion, sexual orientation, and ability. Cara believed that diversity was a rich part of life saying, “there’s a lot of types that make the world an interesting place to live—if everyone was the same, it would be super boring.” Despite her positive attitude, Cara felt that she could define the concept better than she could understand it.

Cara felt that as a White woman, it was difficult or uncomfortable to talk about diversity given that her family identified as only Northern European. Cara said, “there was nothing interesting” in her ethnic background and that it was “terrible” her father found nothing but Scandinavian and English genetic markers in an ancestry test he had taken. This tension led Cara to feel conflicted when discussing diversity. Just before leaving our first interview, she said, “It’s hard for me because of being a White person. I feel like sometimes I’m uncomfortable with
“It makes me a bit uncomfortable,” she confessed, “because I don’t understand how it is to live in their shoes.” In a follow-up interview, Cara elaborated that her perspective as a person with privilege—and White privilege in particular—made it difficult for her to speak with any authority on difference or diversity. This perceived limitation in her understanding caused Cara to feel hesitant during our ongoing discussions. Cara said that while she studied the concept in college, she felt that her academic knowledge was insufficient, noting, “especially considering racial and ethnic diversity, there’s only so much that you can really learn, versus having experienced it.” Understanding, as she put it, might include “a mixture of learning and interacting…but you can’t 100% see what’s going in their brain.” Interestingly, when Cara confronted the limitations of her understanding, her definition became broader in scope, but somewhat ironically, more individualistic. In our third interview she said, “honestly every student is diverse in their own way because nobody thinks exactly the same way…no student looks the same, acts the same, or thinks the same.” Cara correlated diversity with possibly infinite perspectives for individuals, adding:

It’s like twins—twins are still different. They don’t think exactly the same, they don’t share the same opinion on everything just because they may look exactly the same. It may be genetically exactly the same, but they’re not the same person.

Even among identical twins, Cara focused on lived experience as the roots of diversity, and on diversity within a group.

Cara initially described Prairie High School as homogenous at the start of the study and diverse by the end. At first, she said, “it’s 96% White, it’s very Christian, it’s had generally a lot of parental involvement and is generally middle-class in a rural area…Is Prairie racially and ethnically diverse? No, absolutely not.” Coming into the last month of her placement, Cara’s
attention to diversity shifted as she became more aware of and attentive to individual difference. After working with her students for four months, Cara felt that she could not discount the wide array of individual experiences among Prairie students, despite their racial, religious, or socioeconomic similarities. When asked about this change in her thinking, Cara supposed that “spending time with the students…just getting to know them on a more individual basis,” led her to view diversity within schools differently. As part of an ongoing realization that students could be diverse in many different ways, Cara came to believe that even homogenous groups such as identical twins or almost all-White schools like Prairie could be considered diverse if seen through a finely focused interpersonal framework.

My definition has definitely shifted over the course of the semester…there’s a way of thinking about diversity where everybody has unique characteristics and personalities and likes and dislikes and hobbies and ways of dealing with stress and learning styles.

**Individualistic Orientations.** When asked to describe a critical incident in which diversity was at the center of a student interaction, Cara said that she had witnessed a notable encounter on the day of our fourth interview. In mid-November, Cara told me about a student disagreement in her extracurricular treble ensemble. Two students started to pick on a third student named Annette. The students fought during class about their preparation for a disappointing concert performance. Annette was blamed by the other two for the majority of the mistakes their choir had made. The conflict went unresolved and Annette left class suddenly after the fighting subsided, and was sent home later that day. Annette had a 504 plan for anxiety and depression. She was often in and out of the school counselor’s office and during the previous school year, Annette had disclosed having suicidal thoughts to her family. Cara explained that Annette was different from her classmates and that the disagreement was “not a big deal if
you’re thinking about it rationally,” but that Annette “can’t rationalize it…She doesn’t handle things like this well.” Cara explained, “mental health stuff is hard because it’s an invisible illness. You can’t see and you don’t know and there’s only so much that people want to tell you about how they’re feeling.”

The incident with Annette highlighted that Cara saw diversity as difference between students, especially during conversations about cognitive diversity. In follow-up conversations, Cara described creating accommodations for individual students with IEPs and learning disabilities including Claire, a student with Down Syndrome, and Brit, another student with a 504 plan for her anxiety. Cara discussed issues related to diversity in College of Education courses as a master’s student and in a music education class on differentiating instruction for students with special needs or disabilities. In her music course, Cara had learned about working with students with special needs using a Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework (Darrow, 2016). Fresh from her coursework, Cara began the semester saying, “[my college courses] emphasized meeting your students where they are and what is the best way for them to learn—adapting your lessons, not necessarily for one student, but to benefit everyone.” However, the concepts of UDL were replaced with a repeated focus on single students with special needs and a teacher’s responsibility to create unique and appropriate accommodations.

By the end of her placement, Cara felt that teachers needed to understand their students as best they could and then incorporate those understandings in their lessons. However, given her individualistic view of diversity, she was unsure that teachers could accommodate every learner’s needs and strengths in their planning or teaching. “I feel like you can’t write a lesson that accommodates every single person into their own learning style ‘cause that would be impossible.” When three students in her extracurricular treble choir fought about an
unsatisfactory group performance, Cara noticed that “drama” among different kinds of students was a major issue in her classes. Even in this case, where students’ diverse personalities were at play, Cara said, “honestly, we can’t get in the middle of every disagreement because we would never do anything else,” and when thinking about how to connect with her students, Cara said, “nobody likes everybody, but you’ve just got to deal with it.” Despite hoping to teach every student as an individual, Cara spent her student teaching experience narrowing rather than expanding the limits of what teachers could do toward their goals of reaching every student.

From our first interview, Cara’s conceptions of diversity mirrored Ms. Penn’s focus on building relationships with individual students. After working with Ms. Penn for several months, Cara echoed specific strategies for connecting with students used by her cooperating teacher. Cara said teachers should “remember that they’re doing a specific activity or that they’re going somewhere,” and added “even going to athletic events…can be beneficial.” This view echoed Ms. Penn’s insistence that teachers should “bring attention to those students that they might not ordinarily know or just try to make sure they know the kids, period.” Ms. Penn showed Cara seating charts and encouraged her to get to know her students personally.

In her own schooling experience, Cara had a music teacher who was also her church choir director; he was meaningfully involved in her personal and family life. Like Ms. Penn, Cara believed that identity categories such as race were meaningful to teachers in an abstract sense while relationships with and knowledge of individual students provided concrete understandings of student diversity. She discussed talking to students about their clothes, or sporting events, or other classes, but stopped short of facilitating conversations about the relative privilege of participating in these activities or how students felt about school or their wants and
needs. Cara felt that the purpose for developing personalized and individual relationships with students was to create a basis for building students’ trust and buy-in with teachers.

**Categorical Orientations.** An important construct in Cara’s orientations to diversity was learning style. While gender, race, religion, and ethnicity were all distinctions that Cara described when defining diversity in an abstract sense, learning style diversity was the most salient category of difference in Cara’s practice. For her edTPA project, Cara taught “And the Glory of the Lord” from Handel’s *Messiah*. In her commentaries on planning and instruction, Cara repeatedly referenced learning style diversity. She created multiple ways for her students to engage with their music aurally, visually, and kinesthetically.

I’m doing a lesson sequence about baroque music and oratorio and about motifs. I’ll mark in their scores and they’ll listen to a recording of [the piece] and try to pick out where the different motifs are and they can kinesthetically react, showing which motif is when. I’m trying to incorporate the different forms of learning…With my edTPA, I’m trying to give visual, aural, and kinesthetic learners something that they can be like, ‘yes, I got this!’

Cara described learning style as a trait inherent to groups of students. She rarely spoke about how she conceived of the styles as overlapping or mutually exclusive, but generally tried to reference all three styles in each lesson. When prompted to discuss language supports in her edTPA project, Cara wrote, “students will analyze motifs through three different forms of learning. By offering different modalities of learning in this lesson, students will be able to reinforce their knowledge in different ways.” (edTPA commentary)

The emphasis that Cara placed on learning styles was surprisingly disproportionate to other categories of difference that she discussed. When asked about how she might engage
students of different cultural backgrounds, Cara spoke with less pedagogical specificity. She said, “I think it’s important to pick up on their likes and dislikes and their hobbies and if they have a really supportive family or a really tough family environment.” Cara was dismissive of the need to learn about ethnicity or race specifically.

My Hispanic students, my Asian students, my Black students, my whatever students—if we had Native American students, which I don’t think there are, but I might be wrong—I won’t go ask them, ‘where are you from?’ because that’s not important. Unless they want to share that that’s an important part of who they are and maybe if they request—I’ve had a couple of students, not this semester, but in other things, request to do a piece of music that they know from their own family background, which is cool to know that, but I don’t know—I don’t look at—you see the colors of skin and the differences or not differences, but I also don’t, I don’t care. Just because they have this color skin, I don’t have an assumption about you based on that. I don’t mean—I don’t care—not in a flippant way like it doesn’t matter to me. I care about the students, it just doesn’t matter what their background is; I can still teach them.

When compared with the specific and repeated attention that Cara paid to learning style diversity, her categorical thinking was clearly oriented toward one type of diversity in specific. The quotation above illustrates that while Cara was thinking categorically, the categories themselves were sometimes conflated in her mind; race and culture and “background” were floating groupings with indistinct boundaries.

**Contextual Orientations.** Contextual orientations toward diversity include considering how society reproduces categories of difference that stem from associated privilege and marginalization. Cara never managed to articulate her contextual views on diversity concisely.
When first discussing diversity with me, Cara said, “I feel like sometimes for me, White privilege is definitely a thing and you don’t realize how much White privilege is a thing until—White male privilege, White male straight privilege.” While explaining privilege, she seemed distracted by multiple competing thoughts regarding power and privilege and marginalization. She referenced the President, Donald Trump, and then-nominee to the Supreme Court of the United States, Brett Kavanaugh, when discussing how immense privilege could be (as well as how unfair). She described diversity as differences that deviate from a “straight White male” identity to which she later added “protestant.” Later in that interview, Cara described Catholics as a marginalized religious group.

Religious discrimination against Muslims after 9/11—it wasn’t—just because they’re Muslim doesn’t mean they’re a terrorist. I understand that, but there are people [who think that]. Actually, my grandma did a bunch of genealogy, so I know a lot about my mother’s side of the family and we have some relatives who were persecuted by what was basically the Ku Klux Klan before it was the Ku Klux Klan for being Catholic in a very Protestant area.

Adding to the complexity, she expanded her thinking to incorporate the socially constructed nature of power relationships and the material harm that comes to people identified as diverse or who lack power. Cara said, “it’s also just part of the societal—…but you do recognize that there are others would not feel comfortable [walking alone at night].” Cara pointed to all of these normative identities as privileged positions in society even if Cara did not know why this was. She asked, “male-dominated fields: why are they male-dominated?”

Despite the complex thinking that Cara struggled to put into words, she equivocated when it came to how people of non-normative identities should be treated. She explained, “you
can do whatever you want and believe whatever you want, but I also feel like just because someone is not the quote-unquote norm doesn’t mean that they should be favorited. I don’t think favorites should be played either way.” Cara described diversity as deviation from a norm and qualified that it was a social phenomenon that she hoped would not matter to teachers or students. She added, “I really don’t mean that to sound offensive at all, but I feel like it’s important to learn about where people come from but to not let that influence any type of favoritism.” Cara was thinking in terms of power and privilege, but had trouble naming them with clarity or describing how contextual issues might affect teaching or music education. She seemed overly concerned with favoritism, but that may have been a temporary stand-in for another related concept such as privilege or tokenism.

**Pedagogical Orientations.** Cara’s individualistic orientations toward diversity led to individualized responses to student difference, particularly differences in ability or neurodiverse students. For Claire, a student with Down Syndrome, Cara described “creating modified formal assessments” in her edTPA project, “simplifying both word choice and the number of questions I ask her to complete.” Cara provided Claire with additional prompts to redirect her focus during class and placed her between strong singers to help support her developing sense of pitch and rhythm. For Brit, who had a 504 plan describing her needs as a student with social anxiety, Cara connected with school counselors to learn about supporting this student. She gave Brit time and space in class to take brief breaks in order to prevent her from becoming overwhelmed. In the case of Annette, had a history of anxiety and suicidal ideation, Cara responded to her student’s needs when she was targeted by two peers as the cause of a poor choir performance by talking in private with Annette after class. Cara told Annette, “don’t let controlling members of the group ruin your experience” adding, “you guys really sound nice when you are blending.” Cara gave
Annette tips on how to calm down when other students escalated interpersonal “drama.” Cara did not describe talking with the other students. She focused her discussion of the incident on how she worked with Annette. Her response to diversity was individualized and accommodated her student’s anxiety, but otherwise, Cara ignored the situation that had initially elevated Annette’s anxiety.

Over the course of her time at Prairie, Cara taught a variety of choral works affiliated with Christianity. She worked in a predominantly Christian school and neighborhood and Ms. Penn picked most of the choirs’ repertoire. Cara explained that she used her own identity as a Catholic to discuss music in class and connect with her students. Cara used knowledge of Catholic and Christian history in her student teaching placements to teach “And the Glory of the Lord” from Handel’s Messiah as part of her edTPA teaching evaluation. While she focused on the composer’s use of multiple musical motifs in her lesson plans, she also addressed the repeated passages of biblical text. Cara wrote,

The community is fairly conservative with a large Christian population. The district is open to including sacred music in the classroom. Because of this prior knowledge, I included a discussion about the historical background of the text (Biblical)…I expect students to know that the text for the piece is Biblical, but students may not be able to answer why the text for the piece is only four lines, and why it is repeated throughout the piece. I aim to resolve this weakness by offering several ideas about why the text may be repeated. By offering my own thoughts, I hope to spark different opinions from members of the class, who will then continue the discussion. (edTPA commentary)

Cara felt that her ability to explain the theological underpinnings of the text along with her musical and historical knowledge would add depth to her classroom teaching and her students’
performances. Additionally, Cara was involved with running rehearsals for a madrigal dinner at which choir students performed a short play about the birth of Jesus Christ. That performance also included Christmas carols such as “Silent Night” and “We Saw Three Ships.” In addition to her edTPA lessons, Cara was responsible for rehearsing pieces chosen by Ms. Penn such as “It’s Christmas,” “Merry Christmas,” and other songs associated with or explicitly about Christmas in her ensembles. In addition to holiday concert music, she rehearsed “Cantate Hodie,” and she taught the spirituals “Gospel Train/The Promised Land,” and “Ring Dem Bells.”

Cara discussed issues of representation and propriety as she reflected on the abundance of Christian music performed by Prairie choir students. Regarding representation, Cara noted, “it’s a lot of Christmas music,” but pointed out that the kids liked singing the holiday music. The winter concert did include a song about the Jewish holiday, Hanukkah, but Cara told me that programming a balance of holiday music from multiple religious heritages was hard because Hanukkah music was “usually so bad.” However, she noted that there was “a lot of crappy Christmas music,” too, and that her approach to programming was based on choosing good music first.

When asked to discuss her decision to include religious text in a public-school music classroom, Cara said, “the nice thing about [the Prairie School District] is that it is a very Christian area. It’s easy to talk and the schools are cool with talking about [religious music].” She acknowledged a push in public schools “for the separation between church and state,” saying “it is fine; that’s the law.” Cara emphasized that her repertoire selections reflected the demographics of her students. Cara discussed the Christian demographics of her school district in her edTPA portfolio saying, “because the community is largely Christian, I feel that discussing biblical texts will connect to many of the students.” Cara did suppose that she would approach
her programming differently if she had students who identified as Jehovah’s Witnesses and would not be able to sing holiday music. Similarly, if she worked in a school district that was less welcoming to religious texts in musical performance, Cara said that she would alter her winter concert repertoire. Even outside the context of the Christmas concert, Cara felt that the inclusion of pieces with religious meanings and associations was appropriate and beneficial to students. She said, “I think it does students a disservice to not share the wide wealth of music that exists and sacred music is an important part of [the Baroque era] and ours.”

Yob (1995) wrote that to ask students and teachers to “check their personal history at the school gate” (p. 76) was “in effect, demanding the impossible” (p. 76). The values that Cara ascribed to her religious identity and culture were deeply intertwined with those she associated with her role as a teacher. Cara’s values as a Catholic and a teacher were deeply intertwined. When asked how she might delineate these identities, she said, “I don’t even think I can answer that right now…it’s hard to answer because that’s part of my identity…But, I also want to be a more liberal Catholic.” For Cara, this meant, “treating people with kindness and trying to be compassionate.” Cara could not imagine what it would feel like to isolate her Catholic identity strictly in her private life. She felt that her Catholic identity called her to show grace and understanding to students, but that the same should be true of any teacher.

However, Cara’s response to being allowed to apply her religious knowledge to her school music instruction was relief. She made little to no effort to adapt her instruction or deeply inspect how the Christo-centric lessons might affect her students, both of non-religious and other religious cultures. Yob (1995) concluded that because of the inability to teach outside the influence of religion or religious beliefs, a fine solution might be to “[allow] dissenting views to
be expressed” (p. 79) even in a classroom where the majority of learners are of the dominant cultural group.

Beyond merely becoming aware of differences…and learning to live with them in positive and affirming ways when they are irresolvable, [teachers should learn] how to negotiate differences between groups of people. In a democratic society, this is an ultimate objective of multicultural education. Negotiation depends on listening and communicating skills, the ability to compromise where appropriate, and the formulation of just codes of behavior that give due respect to all (p. 79).

Cara allowed herself to teach without critically examining the inclusion of religious texts and theological discussions about their meaning and significance. She could have addressed the possible difference in religious identity present in her classes as she noted in her interviews, or even gone further toward creating spaces for dissent and reconciliation. However, Cara’s sometimes-shallow contextual orientation toward education corresponded with an inconsistent pedagogical orientation toward religious diversity among other categories of identity.

**Summary**

Cara taught in a predominantly White school in an area that Ms. Penn said many called “Old Money.” The student body was fairly homogenous and Cara did not think of the students as diverse when she began her student teaching placement. In the primarily homogenous context, and with Ms. Penn’s guidance, Cara did develop a personal approach toward working with students in her teaching. Ms. Penn and then Cara both strived to get to know each individual student. They wanted to know about students’ interests, likes, home lives, and hobbies or interests in sports. They both responded to the kinds of diversity that became salient to them in their teaching contexts. Ms. Penn was aware of a need to address economic disparities within her
community and Cara worked to differentiate her teaching particularly for students with special needs. In the time and ways in which a student teacher is able, Cara drew upon her predominantly individualistic orientations toward diversity to connect with students and to develop the kinds of relationships that Ms. Penn valued in choir. She worked to understand each student. An ongoing tension inherent in Cara’s conception of diversity was the impossibility of truly understanding students or other individuals whose experiences were different than her own.

Cara did not work in two placements as she was only student teaching part-time and moving to a new district in the spring, but each day, she and Ms. Penn visited three schools. However, Cara experienced very little change in demographics while moving from the high school to the middle school each day. The consistent demographics amid a near completely White student body may have contributed to the influence of her cooperating teacher, Ms. Penn. Ms. Penn discussed economic diversity and told me about accommodations she made for students who might not be able to afford to travel to Chicago for a musical theater trip. Racial homogeneity, however, was an underdiscussed issue, overshadowed by conversations about how to see students as individuals.

Cara took courses in her music teacher education program which introduced and explored UDL (Darrow, 2016), forwarding principles for developing accommodations for students with special needs that would “benefit all.” Evidence of her exposure to UDL principles were partially evident in Cara’s approach to teaching toward learning style diversity. For example, Cara’s lesson plans included multiple types of instruction including movement, visual representations of core musical concepts, and repeated listening to recorded examples of the choirs’ repertoire. However, her approach to teaching students with special needs remained mostly individualistic, departing from a central principle of UDL, namely, that instruction should be free of barriers to
participation and education, rather than having teachers address those barriers only when students need them removed. So, while Cara did plan and execute lessons which taught toward specific learners with the whole class in mind, that work was focused on a debunked (Pashler et al., 2008) conception of learner diversity.

Regarding religion, Cara drew on her personal identity to fuel her understanding of marginalization and privilege when she compared her grandmother’s persecution as a Catholic to the discrimination Muslims faced after 9/11. Cara thought of the influence of her Catholic identity on her teaching as wholly positive, if not mostly unremarkable. She felt that her religious beliefs encouraged her to teach with grace and understanding. Furthermore, Cara viewed her knowledge of Christian history and belief systems as a benefit to her students. When teaching the music of the Baroque era, Cara was able to draw on her knowledge of scripture to interpret texts and teach her students. Finally, Cara drew on her Christian identity indirectly to connect with her students. Because she saw her community as mostly Christian, she felt comfortable teaching Christian music and music associated with Christianity in school. She felt that these musics drew upon students’ cultural backgrounds and would be a useful curriculum for teaching with culture in mind.

Cara’s responses to her students’ diversity included attention to and planning around both categorical and individual differences. Cara thought about diversity as highly localized, particularly after the first few months of her placement at Prairie. However, she did discuss categorical differences in two ways: within classes or grades by part/section and learning style, and by classes as a whole (e.g., Grade 6, Prairie schools). Cara discussed issues of power and normative representation in our interviews, but showed no signs of a contextual orientation to diversity in her teaching or planning. Pedagogically, Cara maintained an individualistic
definition of diversity while crafting responses to student difference—even when that difference was categorical. Her focus on individual students such as Claire with Down Syndrome, Brit with anxiety, and Annette with depression was paired with a differentiation structure that accommodated their needs. Mostly, Cara spoke with these students outside of class. In her configuration of response to diversity, *accommodations* were made for individual learners, she *differentiated* her instruction for groups, and *responded* monolithically to Prairie students’ White and Christian culture.

**June**

June student taught in orchestras during the fall of her senior year. Describing herself, June said, “my primary instrument is the violin and I also play a little bit of piano. I am a Suzuki kid… I would not say I am the strongest performer, but I do really enjoy interacting with kids.” She added, “being introverted would sum up a lot of me in general.” June preferred working in one-on-one settings such as private lessons adding, “I’m very soft-spoken.”

June is Taiwanese-American and felt a strong connection to her Chinese identity. She was fluent in Mandarin Chinese. “Whenever I get homesick—even though I was born [in the United States], I consider Taiwan my home—I listen to the music a lot because that brings back memories. That’s just something I identify as part of home.” June felt that she differed from other orchestra teachers because of her interests and experiences performing outside of contemporary Western music idioms. “I don’t know,” she said, “I’ve always been interested in the traditional Chinese music and the instruments that they use, but also their pop music, which is not exactly the same as American pop music.” June was enmeshed in a Chinese and Christian community in her suburban neighborhood as a child, attending a predominantly Chinese church,
and teaching English in Taiwan in the summers. June had attended a private Christian school as an elementary and middle school student and then matriculated into a large public high school.

Many of June’s teachers growing up and throughout her music schooling were Asian or Asian American, too.

My private piano teacher…she’s Korean, but her being Asian never meant much to me since we were in a private lesson setting and I know a lot of Asian private teachers…[At Midwestern University], my professor was Asian and then there was one year where…my freshman-year music theory teacher, she was Taiwanese…I thought it was cool that she was Taiwanese. In a way, I connected with her a bit and I know a lot of other students hated her teaching style, but to me I was like, ‘I don’t care, she’s Taiwanese!’…I’ll be working with Mr. Chen, who is Taiwanese…he does incorporate his culture with his class and I think he uses, I know he has played Oriental-style\(^2\) music…I think [students] like it, so it’s cool…particularly those who are of that culture.

In our conversations about diversity, June’s Asian identities came up repeatedly. She was proud of her family’s cultural traditions. “I try to be as connected to that side of myself and my culture/my ethnicity as possible by knowing the language, different traditions, and the music, obviously.”

June was placed in two schools within District 1, a large school district serving the community of Blaine Center in the west suburbs of Chicago. At her first placement, Bernard

\(^2\) June’s use of the term “Oriental-style” to describe music of Korea, Japan, and/or China could and likely should be problematized. However, it was the term that she used \textit{in vivo} while being interviewed and encouraged to speak candidly.
Middle School, June taught seventh- and eighth-grade orchestras as well as the extracurricular ensembles with her cooperating teacher, Ms. Brady. At her second placement, Scott High School, June worked with seven curricular orchestras, four extracurricular string ensembles, and three cooperating teachers: Mr. Chen, her official cooperating teacher; Mrs. R, and Mr. M, part-time high school teachers who also worked with June throughout her second placement. June had graduated from Whaite High School, another school in District 1 and would have gone to Bernard except she went to private school instead. She was placed in District 1 so that she could live at home.

**Bernard Middle School and Ms. Brady**

Both Bernard Middle School and Scott High School are located in Blaine Center, a suburb west of Chicago and a city in its own right. With around 150,000 residents, a growing population, and a commuter train that runs through the suburbs and into the Chicago city center, Blaine Center is firmly established as a stable and relatively affluent community. District 1, the school system that serves the residents of Blaine Center, is comprised of 33 schools with more than 20 elementary schools, seven middle schools, and three large high schools. The district serves 28,000+ students and those students are supported by per-student expenditure of around $12,000 compared to a state average of around $8,000. According to district records, less than 1% of students experienced homelessness. District-wide, White students made up less than half the school population (44%) and Asian students made up around a third of all students (30%). Additionally, the district reported students identifying as 12% Hispanic, 9% Black, 4% multi-racial, .2% Native American, and .1% Pacific Islander (Illinois State Board of Education, 2019).

Bernard Middle School sits at the center of the large district, but south of the city center itself. Students attending Bernard are some of the wealthiest in the large district compared to the
other middle schools. The building is relatively new with abundant signs of financial support. In front of the visitor’s entrance, a sign denotes Bernard Middle School as a nationally recognized Blue Ribbon School. The orchestra classroom is organized and neat; the walls are covered by instrument lockers and bass/cello racks. There are sound-dampening plates around the room and a stylish wave design in the dropped ceiling.

At the time of this study, Bernard Middle School students, like those in the Blaine Center district in general, were majority White, socioeconomically well-off, and housing-secure with less than 1% of students experiencing homelessness. District-wide, White students made up less than half the school population (44%) and Asian students made up around a third of all students (30%). Additionally, the district was 12% Hispanic, 9% Black, 4% multi-racial, .2% Native American, and .1% Pacific Islander (Illinois State Board of Education, 2019). At Bernard, specifically, White students remained the racial majority, representing 60% of the student population and Asian students represented 30% of students while 5.9% of students identified as Hispanic and 2.8% identified as Black. When asked to describe the students at Bernard, June said, “I don’t know if I’m speaking too plainly, but this is a White-dominant community.” She added, “some classes have no African American students, in some classes, we have one…We have a handful of [East Asian] students in each class: Chinese, Korean, but mostly Indian or South Asian.” Ms. Brady, the cooperating teacher said, “we have students from a lot of different backgrounds, but they all kind of live in the same world in the sense that socioeconomically, they are all very much alike—American preteens of 2018.”

Ms. Brady was one of three teachers working at Bernard Middle School and the only one who stayed at the middle school throughout the entire school day. With 15 years of teaching experience at Bernard, Ms. Brady had established herself as the program leader. Before student
teaching at Bernard, June was familiar with Ms. Brady as Bernard fed into June’s high school. Many of her friends had said nice things about Ms. Brady. June said, “everyone says she’s really nice, even the kids who ended up dropping out of orchestra. I think, beyond music, she’s been an impactful figure for many kids.” Ms. Brady described her orchestra program as a place where she hoped to foster a sense of community among students. Her work focused on helping students from a big school district and a large school feel that they had a place to belong.

Nevertheless, as Ms. Brady sought to cultivate a stronger sense of community, she worked through shifts in the broader Blaine Center community. From the beginning of her 15-year tenure, Bernard Middle School had “always had a population that is very parent-need driven.” Ms. Brady explained, “I have parents who talk to me about their child getting into college in sixth-grade. It’s always been driven by sort of the parents’ vision for the student. The school tends to be driven by whatever the parents want, they get.” The parent community had strong ideas about what they hoped their schools and orchestras should look like. The Bernard Middle School principal had the faculty watch “a video about the Disney Service Model,” according to Ms. Brady. They learned “how the Disney Service Model is that the customer is always right and gets whatever they want. We were told that this is how we should treat the parents…I cannot say that I have adopted that by any means, but that is the environment that we are currently living in.”

Ms. Brady taught a demanding schedule:

We have seven orchestra classes each day; we have two eighth-grade classes in the morning, three [beginning] seventh-grade classes in the middle of the day, and two seventh-grade at the end of the day, which you’ve seen. We have about 170 orchestra students between the three grades. We also have an extracurricular alternative styles
ensemble that my colleague teaches and I teach the extracurricular honors group, Chamber Orchestra.

The program provided large group instruction and technical instruction for solo instrumental performance facilitated by a technique specialist who also worked at a district high school. June took on every aspect of her cooperating teacher’s schedule. She said, “I get to school by 7:30 am and then…I leave around 4. On Tuesdays and Fridays, we have Chamber rehearsal and on those days, I get to school at like 6:30 am.” During June’s student teaching, the Bernard Chamber Orchestra was performing at the Midwest Band and Orchestra Clinic. June said, “on some days, we have rehearsal after school in addition to before school so that would be 6 am to 5:30 pm. Long days, but I think the kids enjoy it, so that’s good.” June worked with Ms. Brady’s four classes, conducting the eighth-grade and seventh-grade ensembles as well as playing along with or helping to tune the chamber orchestra. During the middle of the day, June also took on some responsibility in the beginning groups taught by her cooperating teacher’s colleague. “I’m not in charge of [the sixth-grade classes], but I am kind of hands on helping out wherever I can.” At Bernard, June was engaged as a co-teacher, helping her cooperating teacher in all three grade levels and participating where she was allowed during the extracurricular ensembles—during Chamber Orchestra, she mostly just played in the first or second violin section. Overall, June was enmeshed in the Bernard Middle School program as a co-teacher and worked with both orchestra directors in every ensemble. She taught her edTPA lesson at Bernard. She developed a good relationship with Ms. Brady; they talked about June’s teaching, June’s dispositions as an educator overall including how to interact with students, and about June’s goals and ambitions in the field. With mutual respect and shared dedication, the two helped each other in multiple ways.
Scott High School and Mr. Chen

Scott High School is a large public high school located in the northwest quadrant of District 1. The high school incorporated slightly less than 3,000 ninth- to twelfth-grade students at the time of this study. Opened in the late 2000s, the high school was the newest high school in District 1, intended to alleviate over-enrollment in the district’s two previously existing high schools. Serving a growing South Asian immigrant population, Scott High School has the fewest students who identified as White of the schools in District 1. At the time of this study, state reporting data described the students at Scott as 40% White, around 15% Black, 15% Hispanic, 26% Asian, and 4% students of two or more races (Illinois State Board of Education, 2019). According to the same data, there were no students who identify as Native or Indigenous, or Pacific Islander students. This section of District 1 also serves around twice as many students (20% of the student body) from low-income families as the district’s southernmost high school.

Despite their representation across the high school, African American students were not well-represented in Mr. Chen’s orchestra program. When asked to describe the program, June noted, “I would say that the majority of the music program is East Asian, or a good chunk I mean. It seems that way.” Mr. Chen had pointed out this disparity in representation to June on one of her first days. “When he was giving me a run down on the classes, he did bring up that the eighth period class has the most African American or Black students. It’s interesting that he would bring that up.” The Scott High School orchestra program was majority non-White—predominantly South and East Asian with very few Black and African American students overall.

In a program that Mr. Chen called “comprehensive,” the Scott orchestras included seven curricular ensembles, and four extracurricular groups. “Each orchestra ranges from 40 kids to 60
kids,” June explained. The seven orchestras included Concert ensembles for freshmen, Symphonic ensembles for 10th to 12th graders who could not or did not join the Chamber groups, and Chamber ensembles for students who performed successful auditions. Each level was further divided into Orchestra and Strings (i.e., Chamber Orchestra and Chamber Strings); the strings ensemble was for the most advanced musicians at each level. Altogether, this system created six levels for students to move between and seven orchestras—the freshmen class was too large for just two classes. Among the extracurricular ensembles, two had audition requirements and participated in competitions; two were casual come-all ensembles that lasted for only part of the fall semester. These groups rehearsed after school and performed at community events and school concerts. Initially, Mr. Chen’s guiding idea about orchestra teaching was that each student should have a place where they fit in. Instead of placing weaker students in the back of an ensemble of moderately high expectations, he crafted a graduated program where students of all high school playing abilities could work toward appropriate goals. June further elucidated Mr. Chen’s leveled expectations:

We’ve been talking about this article [in class] about “paths to becoming an artist,” something like that written by a professor in Colorado. Basically it [explains] different levels of artists. There’s the participant, player, musician, and then the artist. And [Mr. Chen’s] like, “right now you guys are all participants and we’re trying to get to the artist level” and then he links the artist level as Chamber Strings and orchestra so it comes off as…you want to keep progressing to the next level, physical level.

As students moved from concert to symphony or chamber, Mr. Chen envisioned that students would be educated at their level with the chamber ensembles, chamber strings and chamber orchestra, working toward the “artist” category. However, June explained that despite his best
intentions, his students might not always understand his intentions. She said, “what he really means is like, a Chamber level of thinking, not that you have to be in Chamber.”

At the time of this study, Mr. Chen had worked at Scott High School since 2009 when the building opened and became the third high school in District 1. The rehearsal and practice spaces at Scott High School were large and dedicated entirely to orchestra. A poster of YoYo Ma is signed by the artist with a message for Mr. Chen and other posters advertised orchestra performances in German and French. There were three archival shelves for storing hundreds of scores. The spacious room was outfitted with windows, thin carpet, bass stools, Wenger orchestra chairs, with a hallway of practice rooms adjacent to the main room. The room also had a large office for the three string teachers.

Having worked at another large suburban high school from 2001 to 2009, Mr. Chen came to Scott with strong ideas about the scope and aims of his program. The program focused on the goals of strong musicianship, an emphasis on string technique, and a dedication to a growth mindset—a sense of moving up a ladder of ensembles and ways of being a great orchestra student. Since opening the building, Mr. Chen had been joined by two co-directors who taught part-time at the high school. “There are three orchestra directors and they all teach very differently,” said June. June described their shared work load during our fourth interview.

[Mr. Chen] teaches chamber strings, symphonic orchestra, and concert orchestra period two. Mrs. R teaches chamber orchestra, concert strings, concert orchestra period one.

And then Mr. M teaches symphonic strings only and then he goes to the middle school.

We have two [extracurricular orchestras]: one is varsity and one is junior varsity. Mrs. R teaches the varsity. Mr. M teaches the junior varsity.
In addition to teaching their own ensembles, Mrs. R and Mr. M (whose full names June did not use) taught private or group technique classes while the large orchestras rehearsed. They reviewed playing test materials, scales and other methods work, and excerpts of orchestra repertoire. Finally, all three teachers took part in leading extracurricular ensembles. June worked with all three directors during her time at Scott with Mr. Chen serving as her primary cooperating teacher.

Mr. Chen envisioned his work as that of moving students across levels of performance and through curricula and repertoire at each of these levels. He was insistent on delivering his content and tried to control student behavior and focus in class. He often insisted that students looked at him. Mr. Chen could sometimes be intense. Mr. Chen rehearsed a student performance of the slow movement of “Winter” from The Four Seasons by Antonio Vivaldi and during a slow and repetitive section, he said, “Cellos, if you are bored, see if you can tell the difference between the baroque and the normal trill. It’s so interesting.” While working with the violins, he reminded a student to put down their phone saying, “put that away—and you wonder why you sit last chair!” Mr. Chen worked from a vision of string orchestra that involved a hierarchy of ensembles and student advancement toward the highest and most artistic iterations of their idiom. This disposition resonated with some students, according to June, but she noted, “I feel like when he expresses things, it comes off one way…I think he comes across as very tough love, a very tough love kind of guy.”

At Scott, June jumped into teaching quickly. She began teaching some of Mr. Chen’s concert and symphonic orchestra rehearsals during her second week at Scott and by her fourth week, she was teaching even in the ensembles directed by Mr. M and Mrs. R. Her work with the three teachers was intense at this time. She said,
I guess Mr. Chen is my official written cooperating teacher and the one who’s going to be doing my evaluation, but he always says, “isn’t this great, you get three teachers for the price of one, and you can get three references, too!” Which I guess is nice but it’s like—I guess they’re not aware of what I’m doing for the other teachers so they pile more work on me and it’s like, okay. It’s a bit much at times, but I think it’s nice to experience difference; to experience different teaching styles.

At the end of her fourth week at Scott, June’s began to lose teaching responsibilities to her cooperating teachers. She said:

I think the first month of being there, the month and a half or so, I did a lot. Again, I was involved in all the orchestras. At one point, I was teaching five out of the seven orchestras in one day. And then, after that week, it was like, it’s crunch time on this Christmas concert, so I was totally stripped of everything…I guess they were lifting the burden on me? I guess that is a better way to describe it…I thought it would be a good time to get to edTPA, but I was just so bored that I was falling asleep in the office and I was like, “I need something to do.”

Mrs. R, Mr. M, and Mr. Chen began intense preparation for their winter concert in early November which shifted June’s role from occasional co-teacher to only staying in the rehearsal for part of each period because she seldom taught and had very little to do. After a week in which June was teaching in all seven periods a day, June was suddenly only conducting short run-throughs of Leroy Anderson’s “A Christmas Festival,” a piece that combined all seven orchestras with the choir and band classes. On the Christmas concert, the big finale was being conducted by a choir teacher at Scott and June’s coops used her as a way to prepare students to work with
another conductor. June was not responsible for conducting any pieces on the final concert and so she taught very little.

While June did not conduct on the winter concert, she did conduct a performance by the junior varsity extracurricular strings group at a performance for a local nursing home. During the last two weeks of June’s placement, June gave music theory lessons for Mrs. R’s students to prepare them for their final. June’s work at Scott was often auxiliary to the main music-making at Scott. June said, “These last few weeks, I feel like I’m just—I don’t know how to describe it or what’s the word. I’m just there for the hours, but not actually learning much.”

In my observations of June at Scott High School, I saw Mr. Chen teach several lessons, Mrs. R rehearse twice, and Mr. M run students through their final concert music. June taught about one fifth of the time that I was at Scott High School. Accordingly, I wondered whether I would learn anything about how June conceived of diversity or how her teaching might reflect those conceptions. In the following section, I explore the big ideas that June explored during her time at Scott and Bernard as well as how her conceptions of diversity changed over time.

Conceptions of Diversity

Over the course of 14 weeks at two schools in District 1, the changes in June’s thinking were negligible. She began the semester by defining diversity as “the obvious boy/girl ratio or ethnicities, age level or age in general.” She added, “the stuff that I don’t really see is their playing level, socioeconomic background…[Diversity is] uniqueness but not entirely.” At the end of the semester, June said, “It’s—diversity is differences between groups of people… I don’t know, I guess my answer’s still the same. I would say the differences can be very wide as well, not just small changes between—they’re not just different, there’s also very different.” June’s definitions were simplistic and remained mostly unchanged. Despite her initial references to
gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and differences in students’ playing ability, these ideas faded in importance over time leaving only “different” kinds and degrees of “difference.”

**Individual Orientations.** In her first placement, June was focused on addressing the individual needs of students and their ability/playing levels. She said that “everyone’s different in various ways” but that “I feel like when I’m teaching, I’m more focused on their ability whether it’s physical abilities or skill level—how fast they can pick things up.” This was characteristic of June’s work in the classroom throughout the semester. She focused on addressing students’ skills and abilities, addressing students by their instrument or as “beginning” or “advanced” players. At Bernard, the students were grouped by grade level and at Scott, the students were grouped by ability.

At Bernard, perhaps because of her work with whole grades, the diversity of student skills within a group influenced June’s approach to teaching to accommodate the many varied skill levels in class. She said, “I have been thinking about diversity while I’m lesson planning…I’ve always had to consider how [students within] each class are different, how this person is going to respond to that.” June said that she saw students’ abilities as “unique” and defined uniqueness as “very different and special in its own way.” She said, “some kids are just slower than others; they don’t learn the same way as others. They require something that’s different than other people. I try to meet that need to the best of my abilities.” Through working with Ms. Brady and based on her own comfort in one-on-one or small group settings, June fell into a comfortable orientation in which students were individually different and at many “unique” skills levels with many different needs.

I feel like usually in a normal conversation, when we talk about diversity it’s usually about someone’s race, ethnicity, nationality…more biological. I feel like when I’m
teaching, I’m more focused on their ability, whether it’s physical abilities or skill level—how fast they can pick things up. Sometimes, I see diversity between individuals or between class periods or sections. I think that’s something I talk more about when I debrief with my coop.

One other influence on the development of June’s individualistic orientation during her time at Bernard was Ms. Brady’s focus on a standard and uniform behavior and sound. Through carefully refining and reiterating the standards for behavior, Ms. Brady’s emphasis on how individual students were able to meet her standards may have affected June. In an ideal rehearsal or performance at Bernard Middle School, every aspect of the student performance would be executed in unison. From dynamics and bowings, to fingerings, shifting, and vibrato, the goal of the orchestra teaching I observed at Bernard was uniformity. The Bernard Middle School orchestra was characterized by an insistence on melding students’ various levels of playing ability to a singular standard of performance, expression, intonation, and technique. In her rehearsals, Ms. Brady explicitly and implicitly emphasized uniformity. From the very beginning of class when students tuned with the help of their teachers, their playing was winnowed and refined. With her insistence on uniformity and singularity, Ms. Brady may have reinforced a focus on individual students for her student teacher, June.

**Categorical Orientations.** One key difference between and among school-age students that the student teaching experience impressed upon June was age level. Her transition between middle and high school created a stark contrast between the age levels. This contrast led June to fret about working with high schoolers. She was apprehensive about the attitudes of more advanced musicians and how she would feel teaching high school when she was just starting to
come into a sense of herself as a teacher. As she prepared to start her high school placement and leave the middle school, June said:

I hope my transition to high school will be okay. I know middle school is much more chill in a way and students are much more new to music in general so I have more I can say to them, but then I get to high school and they’re going to be a lot more different kinds of kids.

June was nervous that her students would be too intense, or maybe too apathetic and she conflated traits specific to Scott with the general characteristics of all high school students. The Scott High School program was intense in its drive toward student artistry and technique. June, though, attributed these traits to all high school programs.

Transitioning to high school has been interesting. Not hard, it’s just different. Everything is just bigger as we talked about. I feel like, it feels more like a big corporate, a big business rather than a small community. Which is probably ‘cause I just came from middle school so I think of it that way, but I’m sure if I worked in the high school, it would grow on me somewhat.

She thought that high schoolers would be harder to win over or that they might not respect her as quickly or as deeply as her former students had. As she began her high school placement, June saw her transition to high school as a chance to see another side of teaching and anticipated meeting adversity in her placement. The transition between middle and high schools implicated the difference between age levels as a particularly salient notion of student difference for June.

At Scott High School, Mr. Chen placed a strong emphasis on sorting students into ensembles that would each meet the needs of specific groups of students. The six levels of orchestra (Concert, Symphonic, and Chamber each with Orchestra and Strings) grouped students
by ability. This grouping strategy shaped how June perceived the abilities of students and June’s orientations shifted accordingly. While June was still focused on student playing ability or musical skill level, June was thinking of students within groups. During her third interview—her first at Scott—June pivoted slightly from thinking about how to meet unique student needs to thinking of diversity as “differences between groups.” She explained, “diversity is difference living in the same environment.” Not only did June think of difference as group-bound when she began working within the ability grouping system at Scott, June also described the biggest takeaways about students as correlated with their groupings.

When teaching at Scott, June had to think about how to teach each class. Even between the Concert ensembles, June was reminded that String and Orchestra ensembles had different needs. During one observation, June provided the Concert Strings students with printed piano keyboards to help visualize the relationship between half and whole steps in a major scale. However, these students moved too quickly through her plans and were familiar with the concepts before the lesson and unfocused by the end. After a lesson in the concert orchestra class, June noted that “in the freshmen level orchestra [Concert], some of them are just, they just zone out and don’t care” after her students made their disinterest in the lesson on whole and half steps known. Then, regarding Concert Strings, a more select group of freshmen musicians, June said,

I taught the same lesson later that day to Concert Strings, which is slightly above Concert Orchestra and they’re giving me not attitude, but just talking over me—it’s a lot harder to control them, but they do move at a faster pace though so I guess that my lesson for concert orchestra did not fit quite as well with concert strings but I could tell that they
were just kind of bored and then I was making them point at the keyboard paper thing and they were just not even looking and pointing.

During the winter concert, students were put into classrooms to wait until their group was called on stage to perform. While they waited, teachers were assigned to monitor students. June walked among the classrooms and thought about what she saw. She said:

I think the most prominent differences were when I saw chamber doing Secret Santa versus the lower groups [who were playing] Cards Against Humanity—nothing wrong with either activity, but I wonder if there is a correlation between playing and musical maturity (or a lack thereof). Also, the overall culture of the classroom is different. It seems like chamber, they’re more tight-knit, they’re smaller, they can do those kind of things with each other, they spend a lot of time together with quartets and stuff whereas at the Symphonic level, it’s definitely a hodgepodge of very different people.

After the concert, June felt that students in Chamber did not just play at a different level than their Concert or Symphonic peers, but they also behaved differently. June described the students in the lowest groups as interested in having fun and playing games while chamber students were practicing, sharing Christmas gifts, or working alone on homework. It is not possible to know why the different ensembles interacted differently or whether June’s account genuinely reflected the actual classroom culture. However, it is noteworthy that when June spent time with each ensemble while walking between the warmup rooms, the cultural norms that she observed briefly became associated with each group.

**Contextual Orientations.** At Scott, June reflected critically on Mr. Chen’s teaching. As June began student teaching, she wondered how the norms that she perceived among the Scott orchestras were constructed and whether she would use the same approach in her own teaching.
She thought carefully about who these teaching styles worked for and why that might be the case.

It’s very competitive and you’re very honest about who’s better than who and whatever. So, I get it, but I felt kind of bad, but I know where he’s coming from. I just don’t think that’s the type of atmosphere that I would have wanted to set up my orchestra, but his intentions in pushing them to be better is [pause] is not wrong.

From June’s perspective, despite Mr. Chen’s explicit intention of creating a program where there was a place for each level of student musician to be provided with musical experiences that matched student abilities, June at least felt that there was perhaps a chance that his disposition and actions might alienate some students. She added, “whenever he brings up the different levels of artist...I don’t feel like the kids look motivated. I can’t tell, because they don’t say anything, but just looking at their faces—to me, they look defeated.”

In addition to noting which elements of Mr. Chen’s teaching were received well by students, June wondered how Mr. Chen’s cultural identity as Taiwanese influenced his teaching styles and methods. She pointed out that there were several elements of his program that resonated with her own upbringing in an Asian American household. In one of her first weeks at Scott, June observed Mr. Chen run seating auditions in which students were asked to perform excerpts from their orchestra repertoire in front of the class and then face off in a series of tie-breakers to determine how students who played similarly would be seated.

Yesterday, they did an open audition for first violin parts in front of the whole orchestra. That was one of the symphonic level groups and then he’s like, you know, “You play. You play.” Then, after everyone plays, he’s like, “now, we’re gonna do tiebreakers.” Then, he was like “okay, you win first violin.” And then, everyone’s like, “is he really
doing this in front of the whole class?” But I feel like I get it. It’s intense…I felt kind of bad, but I know where he’s coming from.

In our interviews, I asked June to think through complex issues. As she spoke, the relationship between Mr. Chen’s teaching and his cultural identity was particularly intricate.

I’ve been thinking about what you were saying with diversity and I don’t know, ‘cause I knew you were coming so I was trying to prepare…so I think I noticed, I started to notice more about my culture, like being Asian American or Taiwanese American because [Mr. Chen’s] was Taiwanese and raised in America, but I can tell when he teaches, that he’s emphasizing “work hard and get to the next level” whether it’s actually “move to a different orchestra next year” or it’s just an internal, a next-level mentality.

June wondered whether this emphasis on effort and hard work was a value related to Mr. Chen’s Asian identity. She wondered how these cultural emphases echoed her own upbringing and what might be shared values and what was simply situational or context-contingent.

At Scott, June worked with a preponderance of Asian and Asian American students. “I would say that the majority of the music program is East Asian. Or a good chunk. I mean, it seems that way” adding “the majority of the kids are visually some kind of Southeast Asian.” Furthermore, June noted that those students were quick to identify with the content and style of Mr. Chen’s teaching. June drew on her perspective as Taiwanese-American saying, “I’m able to understand where he’s coming from because that’s the kind of teaching that I’ve grown up with, so I don’t know.” Based on her experiences as an Asian American child and then teaching English in Taiwan, June felt that Taiwanese teachers were more regimented than their American counterparts. She said,
With parents or teachers in Asia, I notice that they are a lot more strict than I’ve seen here and that’s not good or bad, it’s just how it is…It’s intense but if I had to think about it culturally or how I’ve experienced life growing up as an Asian American, it’s very competitive and you’re very honest about who’s better than who and whatever. So I get it, but I felt kind of bad, but I know where he’s coming from.

She reflected on her own experiences in a competitive high school orchestra program where she and her Asian and Asian American friends felt challenged and compelled by the intensity of their program’s culture.

I felt very motivated by the pressure and the intense-ness and so, it pushed me to work harder, but then that’s because I’m used to something like that. And honestly, the kind of pressure that you get from school is not as bad as what we [June and her Asian American friends] would get at home. It’s like, “this is fine,” but then I guess kids who aren’t used to that end up being—what’s the word? Not repulsed—repelled?

However, despite her observations that the competitive culture of District 1 high school orchestras resonated with her and her friends and that some students did not respond as well, the connections that June drew between Mr. Chen’s cultural identity, the orchestra culture at Scott, and how Asian American students would respond to that culture were always tenuous. June did not speak to her students about how they identified culturally, racially, or ethnically. She did not ask them how Mr. Chen’s style of teaching affected them or resonated with their cultural identities. June made sometimes essentializing assumptions about how her students who were “visually” Asian might respond like she did to a competitive high school orchestra culture.

However, these assumptions were based on June’s experiences and are an example of how June
worked to reconcile the influence of culture and cultural diversity in the context of school music ensembles.

**Pedagogical Orientations.** Lesson planning was one of the main conduits through which June was made to think about student difference. She said, “I have been thinking about diversity while I’m lesson planning.” This was part of how June approached teaching before her student teaching began and during student teaching, she generated additional ideas about what students needed from her as a music educator. She explained, “I’ve always had to consider how each class is different, how this person is going to respond to that. I didn’t think of that as diversity until maybe we talked about it.” For June, this process was extremely detailed at first. She would build lessons around core concepts that she or her cooperating teacher wanted her to teach and then adjust her teaching to meet her students’ needs. “I have to know how to plan out questions and predict their answers and so half of my planning time is spent hesitating on whether or not my plan is actually going to work.” In this detailed planning model, June considered how students that she described as “the more physical or external, the outburst-y kids or kids who don’t talk at all and or are not engaged at all” would respond to her teaching. However, June did not describe her approaches to differentiation, accommodations, or lesson designs. June was most focused on playing ability.

Then there are students that are really strong players who also stand out to me so I try utilizing their skills and let them feel like leaders. Um, yeah, I think I also view sections more. I know this section is the violins and here are not as strong, how do I get them to collectively to be at the same level or be at that level. I think that when I’m lesson planning, that’s what I’m mostly thinking about: “Cellos need to work on this more.” “How can I use their strengths to help someone else?”
Playing ability, musical skill, or student experience were the most prominent differences between and among students that June noticed in teaching. Her focus on how to teach musical content was directed at students’ technical abilities. While teaching at Bernard, June said, “as I’m lesson planning I’m more concerned about their playing rather than, um, other sides of them which I think can be good and bad.” She concluded, “that’s as much diverse thinking as I’m getting to. I don’t, like I don’t think much about the other aspects of diversity that I mentioned.”

One through-line in June’s work with Ms. Brady was teaching in a quiet classroom. Throughout class, Ms. Brady insisted that students stay attentive and quiet during rehearsal. Ms. Brady reminded students to be silent verbally and non-verbally throughout all of my observations, while she or June was teaching, listening to students perform, or conducting. I observed: Ms. Brady tells the students that she wants quiet. She suggests, “maybe if I speak to you like I’m a meditation specialist, you’ll all calm down.” When students fingered their strings or made quiet comments to one another, I noted: Ms. Brady lets the students know that they should not be plucking or talking—they should have their eyes on her so that she “knows that they are paying attention.”

However, after all this quieting down, Ms. Brady hoped that her students would engage in some community-building conversation about their activities outside of orchestra and their weekend plans. I wrote, Later, Ms. Brady notes, “wow, I think the meditation voice worked too well, because now you’re not excited about anything.” This pattern was established firmly and quickly at the start of my first visit to Bernard and continued throughout my time there. In one class, Ms. Brady told her students, “Please take out Petite Tango. Do not talk about it. Just take it out.” June’s work with her students took place in a quiet classroom and extended this insistence on quiet throughout rehearsal. Throughout June’s work with the students at Bernard Middle
School, she took on the challenge of teaching a silent room. She quieted and controlled around 30 adolescent students and narrowed the model for student performance toward a refined and polished performance. June established clear guidelines for students to meet their teachers’ expectations. She provided models of correct performance and trimmed and tamed her students’ divergent practices.

Ms. Brady noted that June was often quiet around her students. June engaged with her students in conversations at the edge of the classroom or spoke repeatedly with only one or two students. Ms. Brady said, “I’ve encouraged her before and after class to talk to the kids and not to stand off in the front of the room; and I get it, because I’m an introvert, too.” June did make progress in forging connections with her students. She tried new and different ways of talking to students in more personal ways and was able to loosen up or come out of her shell. However, Ms. Brady ultimately felt that June needed to make significant progress before she would make adequate connections with students. Ms. Brady felt that June was a strong technician at the podium, but less adept at forging connections with her students. Yet, despite Ms. Brady’s misgivings about June, it seemed that Ms. Brady modeled quiet control more than a deep interpersonal relationship with students. June picked up Ms. Brady’s attention to singularity in tuning and technique and I observed her display relationship-building behaviors similar to those of her cooperating teacher. Perhaps it was the case that Ms. Brady wanted more for her program and her own teaching than she was giving of herself.

At Scott High School, an ensemble named Coloratura was created specifically to foster a sense of community among Black and African American orchestra students. June explained, It started out as—they wanted or needed a quartet of African American string players, which they did not have enough of, so we tried to advertise more and tried to get more
kids of other ethnicities to join orchestra or be a part of a music program so that’s kind of why that group was created and so they play African pieces, Indian pieces, Taiwanese pieces—in the end, it sometimes ends up as just pop. So, I mean it’s very flexible. It’s mostly for community purposes than really digging into music and style.

Mr. Chen corroborated June’s account. His assistant principal, a Black woman, had asked for a string quartet of Black musicians to perform at a Black History Month assembly. However, when Mr. Chen realized that he did not even have four Black students in his program, he created Coloratura to work on recruitment and retention.

Coloratura had effectively recruited additional African American students but over time, the group became less focused on supporting Black student musicians specifically. June told me, [The group] ended up, instead of being multiculturally based, it became more of a group of student composers. So, one student composed something, he just wanted to try it and we just kind of played his piece and another student was inspired so she wrote something and she played it so, now it’s less multiculturally based and more just a creative environment kind of thing.

There were no Black students in this group at the time of my study. June said, “we have Black students in the actual school day orchestras, but not in the extracurricular stuff. We have one, but she’s not in orchestra, she’s in choir and joining cello choir.”

When working with Mr. Chen, June and her cooperating teachers discussed how student differences might relate to motivation. Mr. Chen had studied student motivation when completing his doctorate and found that by learning about students’ backgrounds, interests, and identities, he could increase motivation to practice and perform. June picked up these beliefs and what follows is how she framed her pedagogical response to diversity.
M: What do you feel like you learned about, and maybe this is sort of a weird question, but what do you feel like you learned about cultural diversity and teaching? It’s very broad so anything that comes to mind is fine.

J: I’ve realized it’s really important to talk about [student] demographics and their family background because that says a lot to how much they do and how they would think, rather than just, ‘what are your hobbies and playing experience?’

M: What do you think student teachers should know about student and diversity?

J: The hardest part for student teaching I guess especially in high school is seeing how unmotivated students can be. And so, you have to really understand your students, but you have to motivate them sometimes in ways that aren’t related to music. And that’s when you have to really get to know your students. Um, like, I don’t know. Whether it’s figuring out the culture of that generation or figuring out like, the culture of their heritage, um, socioeconomic background. I would say we as music students are not representative of the majority of the kinds of students we see in public schools. So, maybe adjust your expectations in that way. Not everyone’s going to love music as much as you do and as much as you geek out about Mozart or even composers that [students] have never heard of, I think you need to—you have to step outside your music world to understand your students to get them to be convinced to, I don’t know, to make music relatable to them, I guess.

June adopted Mr. Chen’s ideas about the importance of learning about student diversity. By the end of her student teaching experience, after working to address individual student needs in order to meet a uniform standard at Bernard, June was most interested in motivation as the key takeaway during conversations about diversity.
Summary

June was the only non-White participant in this study and despite working with a cooperating teacher who shared her cultural identity, she felt frustrated during her experience. She had thought critically about being Asian in American public schools during college coursework; she had taken classes on differentiating music instruction for students with disabilities or special needs; she worked with a large population of South and East Asian students; and at Scott, her cooperating teacher taught Coloratura, an ensemble whose purpose was to increase representation of students of color and Black students in the Scott orchestras. Additionally, the demographics of the schools seemed to be somewhat unrelated to the demographics of the orchestra population at Bernard and Scott. In both programs, the majority of students appeared to be (and were described by Ms. Brady, June, and Mr. Chen as) South and East Asian. Most notably, despite having nearly twice as many African American and Black students in the high school student body, there were almost no Black and African American students in the Scott High School orchestras. Nonetheless, despite these potential representation puzzles and in-roads that might have led to complex conversations about race, ethnicity, and culture in string teaching, June’s cooperating teachers focused on teaching technique, running rehearsals, and other normative aspects of music teaching. Ms. Brady described her students as “American preteens of 2018” and Mr. Chen grouped his students into groups by ability while Coloratura became a space for composing and creative musicianship.

June predominantly reflected on two kinds of difference during student teaching: difference among students’ skill or playing level and differences between middle and high schoolers. The structures of her two placements emphasized these two categories of difference. First, when teaching at Bernard, June worked with sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade ensembles.
Each one was more advanced and behaved differently than the last. In her transition to high school, it was consistent with the logic of that program for June to assume that high school would be even more intense as it was just another step—a large one—in students’ progression. At Scott, the six levels of ensembles were differentiated by skill level. As June worked with each one, she had to adjust her expectations and lesson plans to accommodate their different abilities. This focus on differentiation may have precluded attention to other types of diversity. Certainly, Mr. Chen’s attention was focused on the progress of students across the Scott orchestras and he emphasized this leveled progress throughout June’s experience.

**Flora**

Flora was a fifth-year senior student teaching in choir. She described herself as a musician with a wavering sense of herself as a teacher. She said, “the thing that I talk about most . . . is how involved I am with music in my life.” However, unlike her peers, whom Flora described as “career-driven” and “cooped up in the music building doing work,” she described music as “just sort of fun for me.” She began her college career as a psychology major studying human development before matriculating into the music education program at the end of her first year. In her music program, Flora felt unorganized and said, “if you ask any of my professors, it’s a joke that I’m a hot mess…but that I’m stupid…just that it’s down to the wire…I hate lesson planning.” In college, she performed in an a cappella group and in her father’s rock band. Her voice faculty did not like the quality of her voice and Flora said, “I just hated it…I couldn’t adjust to how they wanted me to sing.” Flora saw her strength as making good connections with others.

Before student teaching, Flora had not thought much about her racial, gendered, or other identities. In fact, during our first interview, she was confused by the term “sociocultural
identity.” When asked to describe herself, she said, “Um, social? cultural? [laughs]…I don’t know how much I can speak to this, but I like to go out.” Later, Flora told me that she identified as White and female, adding without prompting, “I have pretty bad anxiety and I take a medication for it.” However, Flora said that she “definitely didn’t grow up like a privileged White girl…Yeah, I live in the suburbs, but I have a modest house.” She added, “my parents didn’t pay for all of [college], I have a ton of student loans. A lot of my friends, their parents paid their whole way through school.”

Flora student taught at Plains High School, down the street from Midwestern University, with Ms. Lee, the choir director. For her second placement, Flora moved back to the north Chicago suburbs to live with her parents to accommodate student teaching placements at River Middle School for fifth and sixth grade and Lake Junior High for seventh and eighth grade with Ms. Fair, a general music and choir teacher. In her second placement, Flora only scheduled observations with me at Lake Junior High. She taught at two schools, but rarely mentioned her work at River Middle School. According, I focus mainly on Flora’s work at Plains High School and Lake Junior High.

Plains High School and Ms. Lee

Plains High School is a public school serving the ninth- through twelfth-grade students of Plains, Illinois. Located three miles from Midwestern University, Plains is a racially, culturally, and economically diverse community. At the time of this study, the student body of the high school was more than 35% Black, more than 35% White, more than 10% Hispanic, around 4% Asian, and 1% American Indian (Illinois State Board of Education, 2019). Between 60-70% of the school population received free and reduced lunch. The school, established in the late 1800s,
is embedded at the intersection of an affluent neighborhood and one that serves low-income families.

Plains High School was loud and boisterous, energetic and full of life. When I walked through the halls on my first day, I was greeted by a door monitor and security person having a conversation with two students down the hall. When I was told to go to the office, I walked between pairs of students who were talking and laughing with each other. The music hallway was particularly noisy, with the band warming up with their doors wide open and students congregating in the doorway of the choir room talking loudly to friends on the opposite side of the classroom wall. The noise in the Plains choir room was ceaseless. During rehearsal, constant side conversations between students and even between the teacher and class accompanist added to the din.

Flora’s first cooperating teacher, Ms. Lee, had been teaching at Plains High School for 4 years at the time of the study. She taught three curricular ensembles—a treble choir, beginning, and advanced mixed choirs; a music theory and songwriting course, which were offered in alternating years; two before-school a cappella groups; and a study support class. In addition to these courses and ensembles, Ms. Lee was the music director for two musicals every year. She was a flexible musician; in her previous teaching position, she taught band, choir, guitar, and music electives. Ms. Lee ran a choral program that offered multiple ways for students to be involved and her a cappella groups, beginning mixed choir, and musicals were open to students of any skill level. Ms. Lee valued community and her relationships with students. In her classes and ensembles, she emphasized the importance of being good people over being excellent musicians. Ms. Lee had studied choral music education at Midwestern University as an undergraduate and was working toward a master’s degree in music education during this study.
Ms. Lee built her teaching around relationships with students. She worked to build trust and connection with their students through storytelling and dialogue. “I went into teaching to build relationships with people and to use that to try to make the world a better place—I know it sounds cheesy. I think I knew the medium through which I wanted to do that was teaching.” Ms. Lee’s work at Plains High School involved teaching with race and racism in mind. Her parents had moved to the U.S. from Korea before she was born. Ms. Lee drew heavily on her own experiences as a non-White teacher and musician to develop relationships with students in her predominantly Black choirs. In her master’s program at MU, Ms. Lee had discussed racism and other systems of oppression in her courses and had worked to take “a good hard look” at herself. She had written a thesis on the experiences of Korean choir teachers working in Illinois. She often asked, “am I doing as much as I can?” She said, “I think that a lot of teachers don’t understand it when kids get upset with them or call them racist…but it’s a different building depending on what color your skin is, you know?” She perceived a need for race work in music education and a need to address and counter the divide between the experiences of Black and White music students.

During this study, Plains High School experienced what Ms. Lee described as a “period of emotional unrest and turmoil” and “an unprecedented exodus of teachers” leaving the district, as well as the hiring of a new superintendent of schools and high school principal. During the summer of 2018, Plains adopted new discipline policies based on the principles of restorative justice. Ms. Lee explained the district’s intentions, saying “instead of punishing the student, you get to the root cause of why [students are] acting out and giving them the help and assistance they need to learn how to cope with their anger or their whatever.” Under the new policies, teachers and administrators were charged to “provide more additional supports and not just
prepare them for the penal system—which is what our superintendent was afraid of.” However, some parents and students perceived the district’s changes as lowered standards for behavior and more lenient punishments for students, particularly those involved in fights. Parents were concerned about what they saw as escalating student violence. Ms. Lee felt that the new behavior plan was well-founded and well-intentioned at its core despite the community push-back.

Ms. Lee recognized that there were problems across the school and helped her students address them. Ms. Lee invited district and building administrators to come to her choir classes and discuss school-wide discipline practices and their effects on students. The choirs, she said, were demographically representative of the student body—her ensembles included students in AP coursework as well as remedial classes. Unlike the bands or orchestra, the choirs were made up of more students on free and reduced lunch than even the total school population. Ms. Lee felt that this was a good opportunity for the administration to talk with a representative student group and for students to speak directly about the issues that they were facing. However, Ms. Lee’s effort to encourage student-administrator communication fell flat. On the day that the principal and other administrators visited, a student dominated the conversation to address a personal experience and half the administrators were on their phones or devices throughout the conversation. She reflected on the meanings that this talk ultimately conveyed. “To my kids, that translated into, ‘they didn’t care. They weren’t listening to us. They have all these rules about phones, but they didn’t have the ability to put their phones away for forty minutes.’” Ms. Lee was disappointed but continued to hold space for her students to speak up in class about their school environment and to comment on the ongoing grade-level assemblies held by the administration.
Lake Junior High, River Middle School, and Ms. Fair

Lake Junior High and River Middle School are part of a K-8 school district in the north suburbs of Chicago, near Flora’s home, and situated in an upper-class and affluent neighborhood. The neighborhood surrounding the school is clean and tidy with rows of brick and mid-century houses and luxury cars in many driveways. At Lake Junior High, I was greeted by a smiling secretary and buzzed in through heavy steel doors with shatterproof glass. The school was neatly laid out and the main office was right next to the choir room. The students at Lake Junior High were 75% White, around 12% Asian, 5% Hispanic, less than 1% Black, less than .02% American Indian, and 8% identified with/as two or more races (Illinois State Board of Education, 2019). Just over 3% of students came from low-income households. The district was made up of four K-4th elementary schools, one 5th-6th middle school, and one 7th-8th junior high. The demographics at the junior high listed above were representative of the district overall.

Flora’s second cooperating teacher, Ms. Fair, was in her second year at Lake and River. Ms. Fair taught fifth-, sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade choirs, one eighth-grade general music class, and one class of study support. The junior high choirs met once a day; the middle school choirs met before school twice a week. Ms. Fair’s program was growing after a few years of instability. Before she joined the faculty, choir teachers had come and gone and the program was very small. Ms. Fair characterized her program as tightly bound by district-mandated curricular restrictions. She said, “I feel the burden…I have to make sure that students are learning about dynamics and articulations and different styles in addition to choosing repertoire that [students] want.” Ms. Fair perceived a lack of commitment to choir among her students and wanted to help students feel ownership of their program. She noted that she was interested in building
community as a way of increasing student enrollment in her classes, but that her main goal was to help students perform at a high level.

Ms. Fair told me that the environment surrounding race and issues related to diversity in school at Lake Junior High was very “litigious.” “You have to be very careful about what you say, what you put in emails, and how you interact with students because the community and the parents are known to file lawsuits.” Once, Ms. Fair played a recording of a song that her students were rehearsing—one that she had edited. “The original text said ‘Christmas Eve,’ and I had a student raise their hand and say, ‘we shouldn’t be doing anything having to do with religion in class because it’s a public school.’” Ms. Fair spoke with her students about the differences between celebrating and acknowledging religious practices and cultures. Ms. Fair said that her administrators and other teachers warned her that parents in her community might sue the district. Teachers were warned not to address issues related to diversity. “Because the students are younger and because it’s less diverse, it’s just a little bit taboo…race and different cultures are not necessarily discussed as much here.” Ms. Fair attributed the lack of explicit conversations about diversity in her community to parents’ social and economic capital and their ability to threaten significant legal action in response to what they perceived as inappropriate discussions or activities.

Ms. Fair said that she had almost no students of color in most of her classes. In my observations, the few non-White students stood out markedly among the school’s largely homogenous population. She noted that she felt it was a teacher’s responsibility to teach students about privilege and to have informed and critical dialogue about their resources. However, she said, “I wish I could say that my responsibility is to have discussion about the privileges that come with being White and being affluent…I don’t feel currently that I could explore those
things without putting my job in jeopardy.” Overall, she noted that differences had to be handled, but had to be dealt with sensitively in her affluent community.

**Flora’s Conceptions of Diversity**

Flora was initially worried about defining diversity. She was hesitant to offend anyone, unsure that she had the correct ideas despite my reminders that this project was about her conceptions and that there were no “right answers.” Flora was consistently and deeply concerned about offending others. She noted that people could be ignorant without meaning to be or by spreading misinformation. She wanted me to know that she was learning and that she wanted to stay open to others and be respectful and honest.

Flora began her explanation by naming types of diversity. She started by listing race and culture as the more prominent concepts related to diversity. These concepts appeared to be synonymous in her mind, but initially mentioned as a token introduction to a complex conversation. “Diversity comes in all different forms. A lot of the diversity that’s discussed in education is race and culture, but I think diversity is boiled down to—Everybody’s different despite skin color or culture.” In one conversation about race, Flora discussed working with predominantly African American choirs as well as White students from European countries including exchange students from Germany in her choirs.

M: What are the racial demographics of the [auditioned] choirs like?

F: In my treble choir, I would say it’s primarily African American students and that in my concert choir there are exchange students from Germany, like actually from Germany. I think that there’s five White students and then I don't want to guess what their race or culture is, because I don't know 100% for each and every one of them, but I know that there’s five African American students and then a couple other students of color, so I
would say it’s pretty diverse. I know last year for concert choir—I know it was a lot of African-American students. Everyone definitely has an equal shot.

Flora’s definition of race may have been contingent on spoken language and skin color and culture. Nevertheless, these categories of difference played complex roles in her definition of diversity.

Over the course of the semester, Flora’s definitions of diversity became more terse. Initially, Flora’s first explanations were long, elaborate, and often convoluted. In our interview at the end of her second placement, Flora described diversity by saying “everybody is super different.” She said, “diversity is everybody.” Over several interviews about diversity, Flora offered truisms about difference. In our second-to-last interview, Flora said, “When I first think of diversity, I just think of people from different cultures and when you think of a more diverse school, you think of a school with people of many cultures and racial differences.” Flora started offering shortened responses when she worked with Ms. Fair. She said that while she discussed diversity often at Plains, she almost never talked about the topic or issues related to it at Lake.

Despite her shortened answers, Flora’s thinking was still somewhat complex. By the end of student teaching, and across her two placements, Flora seemed to form two competing definitions of diversity. The following dialogue captures the conflict between two definitions.

M: What do you think? What do you think diversity is?

F: I just think that diversity essentially means a bunch of people that are different from one another and it comes in all shapes and sizes and some of it is on the surface and some of it isn’t and we have to respect it and address it as best as we can. And that’s what I think.

M: Okay. If I asked you if Lake was a diverse school, would you say yes?

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F: [pause] Now I would, but if you asked me in my last month of college or at Plains, I would say no. When I was talking to people about my placement, I said one is really diverse and one isn’t.

M: It makes me wonder, do you stick with you definition of diversity?

F: No. [laughs]

M: So, what is diversity then? If you could—

F: I hate it [defining diversity again]! My initial sense of diversity is: are there students of color in the school? Are there students from different cultures? Are there students who speak different languages?

M: But, is your definition also true, that diversity is between all people?

F: Yes.

After working at Plains and wrestling with a surprising number of discussions about race and even incorporating race into her definition of diversity, then transitioning to Lake Junior High where conversations about diversity were stymied by administrators seemingly on behalf of parents and the community, Flora was left with a bifurcated definition of diversity. However, defining diversity is only part of Flora’s conception of the idea. The following section will address the influences and plural orientations that Flora discussed and the responses to diversity that she exhibited in practice.

**Individual Orientation.** In her coursework, Flora took a required class on teaching students with disabilities. As part of that class, she participated in a field experience working with students with severe disabilities in one-on-one or two-on-one settings. Then, during student teaching, Flora worked with one or two students with IEPs in each of her choirs at Plains and in her classes at Lake and River. Flora portrayed individualistic orientations to diversity when
discussing students with IEPs or 504 plans. In both her college field experience and student teaching, Flora’s attention was focused on working with single students and accommodating their differences. At Plains, for example, Ms. Lee had a student named Suzanne in one of her classes that Flora thought was perhaps on the Autism spectrum. Flora provided this student with occasional redirection to remind Suzanne to look at her music and with verbal feedback when Suzanne sang too loudly. Her attention was focused on accommodating and evaluating one student. At Lake Junior High, Flora worked to address the needs of another student on an IEP. The edTPA prompts required Flora to repeatedly address her use of planning, instruction, and assessment to meet the needs of individual students. Flora was asked to “explain how feedback was provided to 3 focus students” and how she “addressed their individual strengths and needs.” In her edTPA, Flora wrote, “this student’s IEP lists that she needs modified work and alternate test formats. Knowing that her general reading comprehension is low, I know that I need to decrease the amount of information to be processed on her test.” Flora went on to describe how she worked with this student and evaluated her progress. In her responses to edTPA prompts, Flora exhibited an individualistic attention to particular students when discussing students with special needs.

While the edTPA prompted Flora to focus on individual students, she discussed issues affecting students from low-income families in some similar ways. When she started teaching at Plains, her emerging awareness of her students’ lives outside of school and needs prompted Flora to reconsider her expectations as a teacher. She said, “there’s a student in one of my classes…who wasn’t willing to prepare his audition…and then you find out that his mom’s really sick, and in the hospital, and he’s working every day to save money to pay for the hospital.” Flora was shocked to find out that this student and others like him were making difficult choices
between supporting their own education or their families. While working at Plains, Flora learned about these issues student-by-student. She found out about the issues that individual students faced and focused on getting to know her students in order to better understand their needs as individuals facing difficult circumstances. Flora was guided by Ms. Lee who advocated for a relationships-based approach to education. Ms. Lee would regularly meet one-on-one with students to discuss personal issues and the stories that Flora learned about shaped her thinking about diversity. Regarding the student working to support his sick mother, Flora said, “some of the teachers were talking about this student…teachers are frustrated with his lack of participation and desire to prepare and work hard.” Groups of teachers, from Flora’s perspective, focused their attention on this individual student and others in their conversations. Guided by Ms. Lee’s focus on building relationships with students, Flora received repeated messages about the importance of developing individualistic orientations to diversity and education.

**Categorical Orientations.** Flora’s two placements created a dialectical space for Flora to think about education, music teaching, and diversity. Her two placements were a large mid-urban high school choir program including a cappella groups and musicals and a smaller suburban middle school choir and general music program. Given these differences in place and context, Flora was constantly comparing her experiences. Additionally, Flora used her own high school experiences as a basis for comparison for making three-way and same-different-same comparisons between her suburban schooling, her work in Plains, and teaching in the suburbs near her home.

After just a few weeks at Plains, Flora defined the students at Plains High School as a group and as distinct from other high school choir students generally. She described them as strong musicians, though they could not read music very well and did so rather infrequently.
Flora noted that the students were honest and open with her, and over time, began to think of the Plains High School choirs as “casual” and “not super intense” because “they’re more in it just for the enjoyment of making music.” Flora had gone to a predominantly White suburban high school and she was surprised to find such a large choir program, made up of so many African American students, defying her expectations about what such a program might entail.

Thinking through racial diversity at Plains High School, Flora described a conflict between the Black principal and her Black students. The principal, Flora assumed, had been hired to connect with Black students. She expected the principal to draw on her shared experience of racial identity or working against racism. In an interaction at a school assembly about behavior codes, Flora’s expectations for the principal-student interaction were subverted. She said,

[The principal] got up in front of all the students and she had the opportunity to be super relatable and she…she was like, ‘okay, I’m African American, but I didn’t grow up in a hard community and we were just fine, and my parents support me.’ And she was going off about how she’s always had this great life and I was like, ‘you could have totally handled that differently.’

Flora, due in part to a presupposition of a salient Black categorical diversity, expected the principal to try to connect with students through race. The principal’s individualistic approach to her discussion of race, in which her own experiences were set apart from categorical expectations, confused Flora.

For the edTPA, Flora described a focus on teaching with a variety of learning styles in mind. Flora noted that she knew that she could teach students and engage them aurally, visually, or tactilely. She wanted to include a variety of modes of teaching and incorporated these ideas
into her lesson. Flora wanted to provide instruction differentiated for as wide an array of student learners as possible. Conversely, in class, Flora worked to respond to students with special needs by answering their questions and providing alternate assessments.

Flora worked in two very different schools across two communities in which discussions of race took on very different characteristics: explicitly named and problematized and in the other, avoided because of the threat of litigious action. Flora experienced two discourses surrounding race in school. At Plains High School, Flora worked in a predominantly Black choir program at a school where racial relations were sometimes strained. Flora was surprised that her students, especially Black students, would explicitly discuss issues surrounding race and racism in their school. When the new discipline policy was rolled out by the district administration, her students spoke to the administration directly in discussions facilitated by Ms. Lee as well as at community town halls. Describing her surprise, she said, “it was like, when I was in high school, we would never attend town hall meetings. There were never issues that…were affecting us so directly that we would come together.” Flora was also surprised when students in AP Psychology studied the rates at which White and Black students were stopped in the halls for passes. “White students found that they weren’t being asked for passes as much as the African American students…and I’ve witnessed that myself!...It’s just really eye-opening.” In her own high school experience, Flora said, “when I was in high school, there was such a small population of African Americans and students of other cultures that there was a hallway…called the Black hallway, because there were so little students.” Flora was constantly reminded that diversity for students at Plains meant lived experience of and open dialogue about racial differences and disparities in schooling. In her first interview, she mentioned race and culture in passing and at the end of time at Plains, she discussed race and how students responded to racism more explicitly.
Flora’s conception of race was tied up in conceptions of the relationship between race and socioeconomic status. When Flora was pressed to discuss how issues related to race might affect a teacher’s work with non-White students, Flora repeatedly shifted her attention to issues related to class. At Lake Junior High, the racial demographics of the students were fairly homogenous and White. The community culture, which Ms. Fair described as “litigious,” impeded discussions about race. During her transition between placements, Flora said, “I think that when I was at Plains…the word diversity would be associated with low-income schools.” However, Flora did not mention low-income schools until after she had left Plains. It was perhaps in the context of the affluent neighborhood around Lake Junior High that Flora began to reframe the issues surrounding race and racism and students’ “surprising” responses. Flora redefined the issues surrounding race that framed her understanding of “diversity” as issues of class or socioeconomic status. At Lake, Flora wrote in her edTPA that “the average family at [Lake Junior High] collects an average household income of $207,000 per year.” Flora shifted her attention to issues of wealth and income after talking about race and racism for eight weeks. Her definition of diversity shifted in tandem. During her first interview at Lake, she reflected, “at Plains, a lot of the issues was just not exposed to…the go-to reason is that it’s a low-income area. Times are tough over there, but it’s like—is that the only reason? I don’t know!” She added, “it’s really hard to navigate that situation in a lower-income area.” Flora could not articulate how students of color might benefit from differentiated instruction if they were not also from low-income backgrounds. She felt that students who were not White but also not low-income should be “treated the same as a…I mean, a person.” Flora felt that teachers should be mindful of other people’s cultures and not be disrespectful of what makes students who they are. “If there’s a White student who can pay their way through the trip and who’s middle class, then they’re the
same as the African American student who is middle class and can pay their way through the trip.”

**Contextual Orientations.** Once during our conversations about diversity, Flora explored the social factors that defined and redefined “diverse” groups and addressed systemic issues related to diversity. In this instance, she went beyond thinking about how Black students were affected by institutional racism in their school, for example, and turned her attention to the circumstances that generated “diversity.”

On her last day at Plains High School, the choirs performed their final concert. Unfortunately, the students’ misbehavior during the concert was a major issue for Ms. Lee. During my observation, I watched with Flora as Ms. Lee engaged her class in dialogue about their performance. During this conversation, a Black male in the beginning mixed choir stopped Ms. Lee to ask a complicated question about why their choir was being treated unfairly. He said that the teacher had chosen more interesting music for the more advanced choirs, that they got to have more fun, and that he felt that it was not right to treat students unequally. Ms. Lee told the students that yes, she treated the students differently. She cited age and experience in choir as reasons that the more advanced groups got to sing what the less experienced students perceived as more enjoyable repertoire. The student insisted that this differential treatment was unfair. In response to this specific student, Ms. Lee invited the student to observe her advanced classes. In a follow-up conversation with the student, Ms. Lee found that the student had been frustrated by his feeling that he could do more, that he would thrive in a more interesting or demanding choir. Ms. Lee told him that he could audition for the more advanced choir in the next semester while reassuring him that his frustration made sense.
Throughout this interaction, which Flora observed but did not participate in, she wondered how this student could see Ms. Lee’s actions as unfair or unequal. “I feel like it was okay of her to say that she treats the classes differently, but I think that in a diverse school, she could have clarified what she meant.” Flora thought critically about how the conflict between Ms. Lee and her student may have represented broader tensions between Black students and schooling. “I don’t think any of the students feel any sort of racism from Ms. Lee…Unless the student has some sort of trauma and they’re being defensive because of that. That could be it.” It is impossible to say if Flora accurately named the student’s problem with Ms. Lee’s approach to differentiating choral repertoire selection. However, she considered broader issues. Flora noted that differences in student performances could be the basis for unequal treatment and that might be both fair and simultaneously unequal. And finally, she noted that in the context of Plains High School, where issues of inequity related to race were discussed regularly and were a prominent issue in the community, that any discussion of “equality” or “equal treatment” might require more careful discussion.

**Pedagogical Responses.** At the beginning of the semester, Flora felt that recognizing diversity among students was important and vital for teachers to understand students’ cultures, but that it was an impossible mission to try to accommodate every single student. Flora noted that students’ experiences and life situations were unknowable, but that she and Ms. Lee were doing their best to get to know their many students. Welcome, inclusion, and encouragement were “the best that I can do.”

While working to understand the experiences of the students whose lives were so different than her own, Flora focused on listening to and validating the stories that her students shared. In college, Dr. Boldt, a White assistant professor of music education that Flora admired,
practiced empathy and validation when listening to his students’ experiences. The continuity of Flora’s experience between Dr. Boldt’s classes and Ms. Lee’s classroom was evident in both the similarity of the ideas that Ms. Lee expressed and Flora’s descriptions of what she admired in her college courses as well as in Ms. Lee’s references to Dr. Boldt’s work at MU. Flora practiced responding to and giving voice to students in an environment that was different from her high school choir program. Flora felt that people just wanted to be heard.

In my first observation, Ms. Lee took two students into the hallway to speak with them privately, leaving Flora to begin teaching alone with the help of the class accompanist on piano. In my second observation, she ended the treble choir rehearsal by talking to two students who had not participated in a larger classroom discussion about their concert. Ms. Lee tried to speak to every student about their issues and what was going on in their lives when she considered how to respond to behavior, language, or student energy.

If I...if a kid is being crazy, I can pull him or her out in the hallway and have my accompanist keep running class and I can be like, ‘what’s wrong, what’s going on with you?’ And usually it’ll come out that yeah, it has nothing to do with me. It’s always, ‘so and so is talking about me and there might be a fight.’ Or ‘my mom this and that.’ You just learn so much… I’m like, ‘I see that you’re acting out and let’s figure out why.’

Ms. Lee modeled how to have ongoing conversations with students and helped Flora, who was constantly reevaluating her expectations for the students at Plains, rethink how much or to what extent students’ home lives and financial or social challenges should affect a teacher’s expectations. Flora was trying to figure out the relationship for her between students’ home lives and their motivation in school. For instance, she noted that students at her second placement might be held to higher expectations because they had the financial resources to meet their needs
for survival and then be expected to strive forward. Even at the end of her semester, Flora reflected on what she learned with Ms. Lee saying, “I think she was super aware of her students’ stances on how they felt about how they were being treated. And I think that she addressed it in a super respectful way.” For Flora, being guided through this connection-building contributed to her overall feeling of closeness with her students. “I feel like I mattered at Plains. What I did actually mattered… I knew every single kid’s name at Plains. And they all knew me.”

Early in student teaching, Flora was proud of her ability to teach with humor and she said, “my passion for teaching is just in being in the classroom and making connections with kids.” In the case of Flora, the edTPA was a place where she was required to get organized. As a self-described “hot mess,” the edTPA made Flora order her thinking. She said,

I’m not a bad musician…but I think I’m more passionate about connecting with the kids and that’s kind of why I chose to work with Ms. Lee…her main goals are to make good connections and to steer kids on the right path toward being better people.

She chose a single focus in her lesson plans and in contrast to her holistic and relationships-based work at Plains, her edTPA lessons at Lake Junior High were sequenced and singularly focused on addressing the performance of dynamic contrast. Completing the edTPA focused Flora’s teaching on clean and clear instruction and aligned with Ms. Fair’s approach to teaching. When the high stakes edTPA was difficult to complete at Plains and a perfect fit at Lake Junior High, Flora received the message that Lake met the edTPA’s high standards more easily. I would suggest that the embedded norms for good teaching communicated by the edTPA were a cultural fit with Ms. Fair’s choir program in a way that they could never be at Plains. Flora could certainly have completed her edTPA project at Plains High School, but would have required culturally responsive mentoring to code switch between the expectations for whole-person
development and attention in Ms. Lee’s class and the objective-specific and clearly sequenced instruction valued by the edTPA prompts, handbook, and scorers. The edTPA guided Flora’s thinking about how teachers should frame their instruction and what kind of schools are easy to teach and succeed in.

Flora tried to complete her edTPA lessons at Plains, but was unable to get organized enough to teach three classes on a single topic in sequence. At Lake Junior High, Flora was able to teach her lessons and even repeat one verbatim. Her edTPA was focused on dynamics and clear instruction. At the end of her placement, Flora noted that an important question that she was considering was about curriculum. “When I was at Plains,” she explained, “it didn’t seem like there was a curriculum in place…I felt like Ms. Lee was kind of making stuff up as we went.” Ms. Fair taught with a clear and organized plan of instruction and followed the district music curriculum carefully, discussing her choices and the required instruction with Flora in their long breaks between classes. These changes in Flora’s thinking were not directly about diversity in name, but the holistic approach to teaching that Ms. Lee modeled and taught Flora was based on the needs of the students and their strengths as individuals and on any given day. Ms. Lee was thoughtful about what she could encourage her students to do in class and changed her plans when her students’ energy was off because of circumstances in or outside of school. Ms. Fair was able to plan for her instruction with clarity and sequenced standards when her students arrived to class on time and stood quietly on the risers. These objectives were made apparent throughout Flora’s experience recording her edTPA lessons. She talked about individual students and her high expectations in response to prompts about her differentiated instruction.
Summary

At Plains, Flora was often frustrated with her students when they acted disrespectful or rude. She was frustrated when her older students did not acknowledge how their behavior during the choir concert might have been a problem for the audience or Ms. Lee. Flora was frustrated with the administration and with the way the principal wasted an opportunity to connect with her high school students. In each case, frustration was related to Flora’s expectations. She thought that older students should be more mature and that her Black principal would work to connect with her students through their shared racial identity. The relationship between expectations and frustration was never discussed by Flora explicitly, but in conversations with Ms. Lee, Flora wondered how her mentor was able to stay positive in the face of poor student behavior. Ms. Lee told her student teacher that she had worked to tune her expectations to each student’s needs and strengths.

Flora’s relationships with her cooperating teachers provided a foundation for her to learn from their perspectives on diversity. Flora had a good relationship with Ms. Lee. She had chosen to work at Plains because “Ms. Lee is an amazing musician” and because “I know that her main goals are to make good connections and try to steer kids on the right path toward being better people.” Flora felt that Ms. Lee’s goals aligned with her own. Flora said, “I always enjoyed [music]…but I think my passion for teaching is being in the classroom and making connections with kids.” During her time at Plains, Flora worked hard as her mentor’s co-teacher. She attended every rehearsal in Ms. Lee’s demanding schedule. Ms. Lee said that Flora “did a great job of listening to [students]” and that Flora was “always teachable.” Flora was open to new ideas and Ms. Lee said, “we talked about students a lot, which showed me that she was invested
in them, which was great.” With Ms. Lee, Flora learned to listen and to teach with students’ personal lives in mind.

Throughout this project, I wondered what Flora was getting out of her time. She was deeply moved by the relationships-centered teaching that she witnessed and then practiced at Plains High School. She left school exhausted but inspired. When she transitioned to her second placement, Flora wondered what her purpose was. The students no longer needed her and she felt that she was only having minimal interactions with and impact on students’ lives or learning. She was frustrated with her experience at River and Lake until she started edTPA. She was unable to complete her edTPA project at Plains because the students were too unruly and disorganized to capture clear footage of her teaching. Lake Junior High was the perfect location for streamlined and orderly teaching. I would argue that Flora began her student teaching semester with the intention of connecting with students. She saw her time at Plains as a chance to practice getting to know students and learning about teaching as a co-teacher and collaborator with Ms. Lee. However, when she could not meet the official requirements of edTPA at Plains and then succeeded in her efforts at Lake, she was happier with her experience at Lake. She forgave the lack of interactions with students because Lake was so conducive to completing her certification requirements. She felt fulfilled and empowered by the free time between classes to complete job applications. What was the purpose of her experiences at both schools? It seems to have shifted: from learning to connect with students, to finishing her certification requirements. And perhaps both of these are valid purposes for student teaching. Perhaps the two placements that are required by Midwestern University create circumstances for providing student teachers with both the chance to learn about students and the chance to complete high quality edTPA recordings.
Interestingly, when Flora transitioned to her second placement, it was perhaps her strong connection with Ms. Fair that led her to ask fewer questions about race and culture in music education. Ms. Fair was, in Flora’s opinion, a great teacher and wonderful mentor. Flora noted that Ms. Fair was able to “think with the mind of a child” and figure out what was going wrong in rehearsal. Flora said that she would talk to Ms. Fair throughout the day and that her cooperating teacher would provide her with ideas about how to approach the next class or day, with questions about what Flora thought had gone wrong, and with space to talk about Flora’s feelings about the day. Flora noted, “I feel like she’s kind of given me a better view of how I am as a teacher and my ability to respond and adjust.” Additionally, Ms. Fair provided Flora with guided mentorship as she applied for teaching jobs as well as throughout the edTPA processes. “She literally sat there with me and went through the whole thing. She totally revamped my resume, proofread my cover letter, helped me download my transcripts...she’s so, she’s so organized and knows how to do everything.” Unlike Plains, which was “kind of crazy” and where “there was not time to sit down and ask Ms. Lee for help,” Ms. Fair’s schedule included two-and-a-half hours of prep time each day. Flora felt that students at Lake were “a little more well-behaved in general” and that, in combination with all her free time, gave her time and space to apply for jobs, to organize her work, and to prepare for and reflect on her teaching. Flora never said that the emphasis on organization, clarity, concision, professional responsibilities, and lesson planning changed her view of diversity. However, it was clear that her admiration for Ms. Lee and her ability to connect with students was at least somewhat eclipsed by her strong relationship with Ms. Fair. Perhaps with a push from her college mentors and supervisors or even her second cooperating teacher to find ways to reconcile what she learned in each placement, Flora could have pieced together a powerful foundation from which to begin her career.
The change in the demographics her first to second placement was more pronounced for Flora than the other participants in this study. Coupled with discussions about culture, equity, and race in schools at Plains and nearly no conversations of the sort with Ms. Fair, the correlation between those discursive patterns and the school demographics surfaced questions. If Flora had spent her whole semester in predominantly White schools, would she have felt that River and Lake were more diverse? Would she have felt that race and culture were useful reference points in discussions about student difference at all? Flora told me in our first interview during her second placement that she, personally, would prefer a job at a school like Plains. In spite of the ease with which she acclimated to Lake Junior High and the support of the community and its abundant resources, Flora said that she would still like to teach in a school or context like Plains High School where she could make a difference, reach kids, and practice being accepting, because at Plains High School, “there was so much emphasis on treating others well even if they’re different from you.” This shared commitment left an impression on Flora and she noted, “I want that to be a huge part of my teaching.” Flora noted that at Lake Junior High there was a lack of emphasis placed on issues of equity but that the need for discussion about equity might be just as prominent there and in that space. “Maybe I could teach in a school like that and it would be super needed.”

**Brittany**

Brittany was a student teacher working in general music in her ninth semester at Midwestern University. She came from a family of musicians as a singer-songwriter who described herself as “bubbly” and “pretty energetic.” She was from California but moved to the Lowe-Shale area of central Illinois at age three. Brittany lived with her parents during student teaching in the town of Shale. During the time of this study, she was working in two schools
within 10 miles of her family’s house, but travelled to Chicago driving over an hour nearly every night of the week to perform at open mics across the city and suburbs. At Midwestern University, Brittany studied choral music education until her junior year when her conducting teacher insisted that she change her focus to general music, “because I couldn’t conduct very well and she was right…she said she also thought I would fit better in general, but also, I couldn’t conduct.”

When asked to describe her sociocultural identity during our first interview, Brittany offered the following explanation:

I would say unfortunately, in this country, I think that a lot of people are letting their identity describe who they are when it shouldn’t be like that. Or people are looking at somebody’s identity and judging them based on preconceived ideas so I feel like identity is pretty tough right now, because a lot of people are kind of questioning who they are and who other people are.

Brittany seemed to evade discussing her own identity. In fact, she began the semester resisting discussions of her identity as a White woman. She identified first and foremost as a singer-songwriter. After three interviews, Brittany did share with me that she was bipolar.

Brittany student taught at Lowe Primary School with Ms. Austin, a general music teacher, in the city of Lowe. Lowe Primary housed the district’s third grade classes and engineering magnet program. After eight weeks, she began working with Ms. Duncan at Graye Primary, a sixth- through eighth-grade building where she taught sixth-grade general music, seventh- and eighth-grade choir, a before-school bell ensemble, and pull-out lessons for the choirs. The Lowe-Shale area was stratified by socioeconomic status with the most affluent
families living in Shale, middle class/lower-middle class families living in Graye, and Lowe serving the least affluent families in the area.

**Lowe Primary and Ms. Austin**

The Lowe School District restructured their neighborhood elementary schools in 2015 to create grade-level centers “to save money,” according to Brittany’s first cooperating teacher, Ms. Austin. After the change, each of the school district’s K-5 schools became a grade-level center and also housed a magnet program. The magnet programs included one class of Kindergarten, first, second, and third grade. For example, Lowe Primary was the third-grade center and housed the engineering magnet.

Lowe Primary is located in the east end of the city of Lowe between the railroad tracks and freeway. Lowe was an industrial and manufacturing hub in central Illinois during the 1970s and 80s, but when large factories moved out of town, the city faced a steep economic decline. As the town transformed, the city population became gradually less White and in 2018, the Lowe school district was 20% White, 30% Hispanic, 49% Black, with 1% of students identifying as two or more races. Lowe Primary, specifically, was 70% Black, less than 15% White, and 15% Hispanic. Additionally, 80% of Lowe students were identified as coming from low-income households. While across the state of Illinois, 5% of teachers identified as Black or African American, these populations made up 15% of the teachers at Lowe (Illinois State Board of Education, 2019).

Driving to Lowe Primary for the first time, I pulled off the highway from Plains to Chicago and passed low-income housing—tall brick towers, gas stations with abandoned cars left in the parking lot, and people walking down cracked sidewalks. Lowe is across from an auto body store and its fenceless playground sits along the road. I was unsure where to park my car.
during my first visit. Colleagues of mine who were familiar with the city of Lowe had expressed some concern for my safety when they learned where I would be meeting with Brittany. Upon arriving at the school for the first time, however, I realized that the school was perfectly welcoming and that my hesitation was unfounded. After ringing a broken doorbell, I was greeted warmly by an administrative assistant. She welcomed me in and I found the whole building was loud and full of energy.

Lowe had gone through a difficult start to the school year in 2018. Ms. Austin told me: Right when school started, a young lady’s father was killed and she walked in right after it happened. The following week, one of our students was playing with a gun and shot himself in the head and killed himself, and a week after that, we have siblings here—one’s a first grader, one’s a second grader, one’s a third grader—their mother was killed. This string of tragedies challenged the teachers and staff to respond to the urgent needs of their students. Additionally, Brittany’s first month of student teaching was marked not only by these traumas, but classes were cancelled during most afternoons because of a two-week heatwave that swept over Illinois. Ms. Austin was starting her 26th year of teaching in the Lowe School District and assured me that this was an unusual string of tragic events.

Before coming to Lowe, Ms. Austin had taught at a neighborhood school for the majority of her tenure in the Lowe schools and moved to Lowe Primary when the district reorganized buildings. “I moved with my principal over here,” she explained when her school became a kindergarten center and the arts magnet. “It’s been very different because I’m used to—by the time kids were in third grade—I’d already had them three years…Now, it’s like every year, I’m starting over.” Ms. Austin was an impressive pedagogue working through the district’s significant challenges. She had a strong background in general music methods such as Orff and
Kodály and approached teaching with an intention to “establish relationships—that’s what you have to do.”

Like Brittany, Ms. Austin grew up in the Lowe area. She attended Lowe High School and her mom was a teacher in the district. She had even attended Lowe Primary School. She remembered the city as an industrial hub. “Lowe used to be very—I would say even middle class to upper-middle class.” After the economic downturn in the city, students and their families were less financially stable. She said “we are a primarily low-income district. We have a grant from the federal government where every student regardless of income gets fed breakfast and lunch at no cost to them.” Describing Lowe students, she added, “kids are kids everywhere. Kids have the same basic wants and needs, but the kids here don’t necessarily display it the same way…All kids want to know they’re loved.” Ms. Austin was warm and caring with her students; she asked them about their days and showed personal care to which students responded in kind. For one student whose medication made him so drowsy that he fell asleep during music, Ms. Austin set up a place for him to sleep and gently helped him lie down and then wake up again at the end of class. Despite Lowe’s tragedies, Brittany worked with a kind and talented cooperating teacher.

**Graye Middle School and Ms. Duncan**

The town of Graye is nestled between the two surrounding cities of Lowe and Shale. The town includes affluent neighborhoods at the border of Shale and some which were originally known as “North Lowe,” which included low-income housing. Originally named after the Graye manufacturing plant in the late 1900s, the city experienced the same economic downturn as Lowe in the 1980s, but was partially revived when an influx of Lowe residents established new residential neighborhoods and local retail began to grow.
The Graye Schools, a K-8 district, included Graye Middle School serving sixth- through eighth-grade students. Students at Graye Middle School were around 60% White, 15% Hispanic, 10% Black or African American, 2% American Indian or Indigenous, with around 10% of students identifying as two or more races; 50% of students came from low-income households (Illinois State Board of Education, 2019). These figures were consistent with district-wide demographics. Graye Middle School was located just off the main street. With a large band, an even larger football and sports program, and a district-wide push to teach toward student achievement in STEM subjects, the choir program was relatively quiet.

Ms. Duncan, a teacher with 26 years of experience, had taught at Graye Middle School for 22 years. When she first joined the school district, Graye included fifth-grade; at that time, Ms. Duncan taught general music to fifth through eighth grade students. “As the curriculum changed to incorporate more STEM and computers, slowly, things had to go away,” she said. “It was easy for music to be that one thing.” At the time of this study, Ms. Duncan taught sixth grade general music, a seventh- and eighth-grade choir, and a study hall with pull-out style lessons scattered throughout the day. She said, “it’s not great that they took music from eighth and seventh grade; I’d like to see it come back as electives.” Ms. Duncan had been working with her administration to reinstate music as a class that students could take on a rotating schedule alongside computers or math; however, she encountered repeated and consistent push-back and even threats of continued cuts to her program. “Last year, I walked into the principal’s office and he said something about me not having sixth-grade music next year…I walked back into my room and I nearly cried when I looked at the guitars on the walls…Everything that’s here, I built.” Ms. Duncan was focused on sustaining and retaining her programs.
Like Brittany and Ms. Austin, Ms. Duncan was born in the Lowe-Shale area. She went to Lowe High School and then to MU. Unlike Ms. Austin, Ms. Duncan never developed a deep relationship with Brittany or garnered the same mutual professional respect. Brittany, who had transferred from choral to general music education, struggled to conduct the music Ms. Duncan had programmed for the final concert of the year. Additionally, her busy performing schedule led her to arrive just as Ms. Duncan’s first class would begin so that she struggled to teach from slipshod plans, which she and Ms. Duncan were often unable to discuss before class. During her last week of student teaching, Ms. Duncan said, “I’ve not seen any kind of a lesson plan from Brittany.” She added, “I don’t get the impression that she thinks about what she’s doing when she goes home” guessing, “I think she wants to go [to LA] and discover if she can do big things musically on her own.” Ms. Duncan was sure that Brittany did not intend to teach after her placement except as a way to save up for a move to California. During her time at Graye, Brittany seemed unfocused on Ms. Duncan’s goals for her teaching. Brittany knew that she often failed to prepare lessons to her cooperating teacher’s satisfaction saying, “it was kind of an off day…and she was honest…she could have been way harder. I think she should have been. She was like, ‘it just felt like you were not prepared at all,’ and I wasn’t…I had a better connection with Ms. Austin. She understood me a lot better.” Brittany struggled to teach lesson plans out of method books, to conduct the choirs, or to engage with students on any topic except her own aspirations as a singer-songwriter. The last eight weeks of Brittany’s student teaching were a consistent struggle.

**Conceptions of Diversity**

Brittany first defined diversity as “difference in anything.” Just as she resisted defining her own racial or social identity, she was hesitant to say that categories of difference such as race
might be useful distinctions between students. “I feel like there’s a lot of ways that diversity can be that isn’t just looks.” She later went on to add, “diversity means different and not in a bad way.” Over the course of her first placement, Brittany slowly began using terms like Black and White when describing diversity. Interestingly, Brittany reflected on how she first defined the concept saying, “now I’m like…you’re not one way because you’re Black; you’re not one way because you’re White.” She resisted essentializing narratives, while working to understand how each student was different and shaped by their community contexts and relationships.

Brittany attributed her shifting ideas about diversity to her college classes and suggested, “if people took a cultural diversity class, they would start to learn” and then pointed out that additional changes in her thinking came after working at Lowe for two months. She observed, “after working in a primarily Black community, I noticed that diversity isn’t just race and ethnicity.” Her experiences at Lowe seemed to catalyze a shift in her perception. Brittany emphasized that the interpersonal relationships and backgrounds which shaped her students’ schooling were valuable. She did not frame these differences negatively.

During Brittany’s second placement, her definition of diversity seemed to settle, but she talked about it much less with Ms. Duncan than she did with Ms. Austin at Lowe Primary. In a predominantly White low-income school, she talked less about not only race and ethnicity, but also diversity in general. During this time, she explained that age mattered more to her and teachers in general. When discussing her students’ disinterest in schoolwork, for example, or their lack of energy or inconsistent attention in school, she said, “I think that a very uneducated person from my community would be like, ‘that’s because the kids are Black.’” She added, however, “I don’t think it has a lot to do with that actually. I think it really has to do with age and who’s giving them attention.” Age was the final and most important factor in determining how
students behaved or developed. I asked Brittany to think about how she may have conflated changes in student age with changes in school or community culture. She acknowledged, “I’d like to see the Lowe kids grown up…or have done my student teaching at Lowe Junior High.”

Broadly, Brittany showed malleability in her thinking about diversity. She and her cooperating teacher, Ms. Austin, talked about being White women working with Black children. In her second placement, Brittany retained her openness to learning, but only in our interviews. During observations and her edTPA write-up, her definitions of diversity were either missing or focused predominantly on how groups of students such as “visual, auditory, or tactile” learners explored music in school.

**Individualistic Orientations.** During her time at Lowe, Brittany did not discuss her students individualistically. She referred to her students as a whole—predominantly as “low-income.” Meanwhile, when asked specifically to define “diversity,” Brittany focused on the individual qualities of each person. She said that difference was “how [students] are different from everybody else.” Somewhat ironically, Brittany became focused on individual students at her second placement, just as her definition of “diversity” became more firmly grounded in relationships.

At Graye, she focused her attention on students who “pushed her buttons” as Ms. Duncan described it. I asked Brittany to describe a class that I observed and she answered,

I think of the boys, Chris and William. The second one has an attitude problem…because I have an attitude problem [too], it’s a constant attitude battle with this kid. It’s weird because we’re on each other’s side; we like each other, but every once in a while, we kind of bicker. And then, another one is William. I had ADHD as a kid…so I know how William feels when he’s just restless—I’m not saying that I know exactly how he feels,
everybody is different with their ADHD—every child’s different—but I know what he means when he says he feels restless and for some weird reason, I still don’t have a lot of patience for him.

This quote encapsulates three aspects of Brittany’s individualistic work at Graye. First, she was seemingly hyper-focused on her relationships with each student. She would often tell me when she felt a connection with a student, and these connections often sprang from the student’s interest in Brittany’s music-making. Second, Brittany drew on her personal experiences when trying to understand students. With William, Brittany’s ADHD was a potential bridge to her student, just like her identity as a singer-songwriter was a bridge to so many others. However, despite her attempts to connect her experiences with those of her students, she saw each student as unique and she could not see how she could deeply understand all of her different students. She moved from color-blind and individualist definitions to categorical definitions during her transition between placements while simultaneously addressing categories of student difference less and responding to individual students more during the same transition.

Brittany’s work on her edTPA project provides insights into her individualistic thinking. She completed the portfolio while working at Graye, but her lessons had been taught and recorded at Lowe. Given the contrast between her categorical thinking at Lowe and her individualistic teaching at Graye, writing about her first placement while teaching at her second created a mash-up of her multiple conceptions of diversity. Brittany’s edTPA commentaries described her lesson planning and instruction as highly individualized. For example, in her commentary on instruction, she wrote: “during Lesson One, I ask certain students to perform the rhythmic dictation they see on the board. This gives me an understanding of where certain students stand on sight-reading and performing rhythmic dictations.” The edTPA requires
student teachers to address the needs of three focus students and her discussions of those students was individualistic. In her assessment commentary, Brittany said, “The feedback I provided to Student One addresses their individual strengths pertaining to their creation and performance.” She made similar statements for the other two focus students throughout her edTPA commentaries. Notably, Brittany referred to individual students when prompted by the edTPA to “consider the variety of learners in your class who may require different strategies/support.” She wrote: “there are two students in the class who obtain [sic] 504 plans. One student has a special education disability while the other has a speech and language disability and is limited-English proficient.” Brittany described making individual accommodations for these students despite wrestling with addressing the types or categories of students (low-income, non-White) who lived in Lowe during her actual teaching experiences.

**Categorical Orientations.** Brittany began her student teaching experience by requesting to work in a low-income area. She never explained her motivations for working in a low-income area or school, despite my direct questions about the subject. However, Ms. Austin suggested that because “she worked at a summer camp in California—she worked with privileged kids—she knows the challenges that come with that.” She entered her first placement hoping to work with students who “needed her,” said Brittany, and who would benefit from her presence. Ms. Austin encouraged this thinking, telling Brittany, “kids in a district like ours, they need you more than in an affluent district.” Brittany worked to develop relationships with her students and valued the complexity of their experiences. Ms. Austin, who seemed to know Brittany well, guessed that Brittany felt tired of working with upper-middle class over-bearing parents and kids who “don’t want to ever work for anything.” Regardless, Brittany started the semester with the preconception that working with students from low-income schools would help her meet her
goals—she hoped to move to California after student teaching and “work with kids in Compton” while trying to make it as a singer-songwriter in Los Angeles.

Brittany talked about working with “these kids” in Lowe and referred generally to schools in low-income neighborhoods. She spoke positively about her intentions and her experiences. Her categorical conceptions of students arose from ongoing comparisons between her own schooling, her students at Lowe, and her students at Graye. As noted in the previous section, Brittany defined “diversity” individualistically, but thought about her students at Lowe as a group (categorically). She was focused on addressing the needs of “low-income” students and understanding how students of color would respond to music teaching. In discussions about classroom management, she said, “that’s not how they’re raised at home. You’ve got to treat ‘em how they’re raised at home,” while having only vague ideas about how her students were raised. She knew that they listened to different music at home and might be raised by parents or siblings or grandparents, but spoke in overwhelmingly general terms.

Brittany seemed to focus on working with individual students even as her definitions of diversity became more categorical. She described Graye students as “bratty” and suggested that because of either “hormones” or their maturational age, her students in Graye were less enjoyable to teach. “For [middle school] kids, everything is a huge deal and everything they say has to have a lot of expression…but everything is just a bigger deal than it needs to be.” She found middle school students to be less mature than she expected. To her, they seemed focused on silly things like spilled coffee and would panic if they lost a binder. Brittany was surprised by these instances; they framed her view of the middle school students somewhat negatively. There was only one case in which Brittany was surprised to find that her students at Graye Middle School were more mature than she expected. One morning, Brittany told her students that she
thought her house had been burgled. She found the door open on her way to school and only remembered later in the morning that she had left it open when she came home late. She said, “they were like, oh my god, that’s scary!” which surprised her. Brittany forged connections with her students in this interaction in the same way she did when students expressed curiosity about her music. Yet, these instances were exceptions to what Brittany perceived as students’ general disinterest in her or music or school. “They have more of an attitude of ‘I just want to leave now’ or ‘I want to go to my boyfriend’s house.’” She felt that at Lowe, students “didn’t think that far ahead” and she “liked their energy a little bit better.”

In her edTPA project, Brittany described students categorically twice. First, she referenced learning styles and students who learn best aurally, visually, or kinesthetically. She describes the accommodations that she made for students including the inclusion of “hands-on activities, body movement, examples and visuals, and performance.” The final accommodation of “performance” is intriguing as it points to a possible fourth style of learning in Brittany’s conception of learning styles. However, Brittany only described learning styles as a salient characteristic of student diversity in her edTPA commentary. Her use of this language regarding accommodation may have been developed to meet the criteria of the edTPA or it may have been suggested to her by a colleague as Cara and Flora also described making similar accommodations for learning style diversity in their edTPA commentary.

In the second instance of Brittany’s categorical thinking, she chose three students from among her classes to represent three types of learners in the second-grade classroom. edTPA does require that teacher candidates discuss “target students” and that they describe how they will work to meet those students’ needs. Brittany chose a student who presumably represented low-achieving students, one who represented the average second-grader, and one who exceeded
her expectations. “I will support Student One [low-achieving student] by explaining to them that throwing such items (paper plates) is not appropriate during activities.” She added, “I will continue to practice discipline with this student in order to teach them that certain behaviors in the classroom are unacceptable.” Student Two “exhibited full understanding of what was needed and expected of their behavior” and Brittany found that this student met her expectations for average behavior and learning outcomes. Last, “Student Three exhibited full understanding” and “participated in each lesson thoroughly with enthusiasm.” Brittany explained that she would “continue working on pushing Student Three to succeed in and outside of the classroom” and “would use their [final project] as an example for later activities or other classes.” This trio of students and the types of learners that they represented demonstrate Brittany’s hybrid individualistic-categorical conception of diversity. While each student was accommodated in her plan individually and then discussed again in her assessment commentary, they represented three general categories of students—low, average, and high-achieving. Discussing individual students and how Brittany would meet their needs or augment their strengths thinly masked her normative typology of student learners. Furthermore, the ways in which Brittany differentiated her students did not account for their sociocultural identities. Student One, Brittany said, had an “IOP plan [sic] for Special Education.” Brittany did not account for or otherwise explain how placing Student One in her low-achieving category might reproduce deficit narratives about her neurodiverse students.

**Contextual Orientations.** Brittany exhibited few signs of a contextual orientation to diversity. Brittany felt aware that some categories of “diversity” were socially produced. “In my cultural diversity class, they also said that race was brought up by humans. It’s not really a thing, it’s kind of a social term.” In our conversations, Brittany was trying to figure out why her Black
students would point out that a musician was Black, for example, when she played music in class. She was surprised that students would notice or announce race in class. She went on to say that several other types of diversity were social. “I wish I had my notes. Gender, ethnicity, and something else are not socially brought-up, but sex and race, those are socially brought-up terms.” Brittany was aware of the socially constructed nature of race, although she was not sure about ethnicity and gender. Still, despite an emerging awareness, Brittany wrestled with distinctions between what she perceived as real and socially constructed diversity. She wondered what either or both might mean for teachers.

Aside from the mostly academic distinction above, Brittany noted contextual factors surrounding race in particular after deep discussions with Ms. Austin. At Lowe, she noted that teachers worked to help students understand the “real-life” situations they would enter after school. She said, “we’re trying to teach them that this isn’t going to happen in real life—you’re not just going to get a card clipped [a behavior modification strategy]. You’re going to get arrested or you’re not going to go to high school.” Teachers, she said, were “aware of the area” and “more concerned about the kids’ safety than they are about being nice to kids.” Ultimately, the teachers at Lowe “want [students] to grow up being like, ‘how can I be safe with the world that I’m living in right now?’” It was true that Lowe had experienced trauma and violence and even Ms. Austin noted that Lowe was known for gang activity around the school. Brittany, with the help of Ms. Austin, thought deeply about how her students would interact with a world outside of their schools. Still, despite this contextual understanding, Brittany did seem to develop expectations that living in Lowe would come with trauma and violence, perpetuating a community-deficit mindset.
**Pedagogical Orientation.** In Brittany’s first placement, she began the semester by reacting to trauma in her school community. Following the death of a student and two family members of other students, Brittany and Ms. Austin had to reestablish a sense of normalcy in their classroom. They were not teaching differently than they would at the beginning of the year and their teaching-as-usual was a response to trauma more than it was a response to student diversity. While work at her first placement, Brittany hesitated when talking about race and ethnicity. In her teaching, this limited her ability to respond to her students. Toward the end of her time at Lowe, Brittany became more open to discussing her racial identity and that of her students and was able to have complex conversations with her cooperating teacher. At the beginning of her second placement, she reflected, “[Ms. Austin and I] talked a lot about how to gain trust as being a, being primarily the dominant race in the country right now. And how to gain respect and trust from others.” In a conversation about working with young Black students, Brittany was told by Ms. Austin that in her predominantly Black classes, the students might talk more. Ms. Austin ascribed this difference between White and Black elementary students at Lowe to their culture and what their experiences in church were like. Brittany said:

B: She told me that I needed to have more patience with kids’ talking because she said that they’re not doing anything bad, they’re just trying to talk. They’re not talking to disrespect me, that’s just kind of how they were raised.

…

B: Every time I’d get annoyed with them talking—not annoyed, but I’d just be like, “why are they talking?” She'd be like, “listen, they’re talking about the lesson, they’re just vocalizing it, you know?” So, she just kept telling me they’re listening and they’re paying attention but they need to talk about it. And I was like, “that’s fine.”
MF: And so, in that context, for you two, was that related to race and conversations about race?

B: Yeah, I think that was from—she’d talk about the churches and stuff.

When Brittany was able to discuss race explicitly with Ms. Austin, she was able to think through issues related to student behavior and her responses.

In her second placement, Brittany had far fewer students of color in her classes, her cooperating teacher did not talk about race, and Brittany was busier than ever with her travel to Chicago and her edTPA project. In the second half of her placement, Brittany did not talk or think about diversity in terms of race specifically or difference broadly. When asked to reflect on an instance in which diversity came up in the classroom, she looked back at an experience she had early at Lowe Primary. She said:

There’s one incident—I don’t even know if it's an incident—it’s just something that happened that I didn’t know how to respond to, based on [or because of] being White. What happened at Lowe is that I was showing a bunch of pictures of my rapper friends, because I knew that the kids liked rappers. I showed both White and Black people, but I showed them rappers trying to get them kind of excited to be a rapper or a songwriter. One of the kids responded and said, “he’s Black!” I didn’t know what to say because to me, I was kind of like, “yeah he is, does that matter to you?” The kid was Black who said it, so I was really confused because I didn’t bring it up. I just said, “yeah,” but I was just really confused that he even mentioned that, you know?…I was really confused when he said that. I thought at that age…I knew that I didn’t think they were color-blind or anything, you know what I mean? I knew that they knew who was White or Black, but I
thought at that age that it didn’t matter. So, I never really—I’d never heard any of those kids bring it up before.

This incident from the middle of Brittany’s first placement and her reflection highlight two features of Brittany’s developing pedagogical orientation toward diversity. First, even when she was able to notice race or discuss it with me, she was surprised that students in elementary school would. Additionally, she was unable to speak critically or even helpfully about how the representation of Black musicians in a predominantly Black class might affect students. Her pedagogical orientation was limited.

**Summary**

Brittany exhibited some traits associated with an individualistic orientation in her relationships with students at Lowe Primary. However, because she also considered her privilege as a White teacher and how that affected her relationships with her non-White students, I suggest that she developed an interpersonal orientation toward diversity during at least her first placement. An interpersonal orientation, extending Paine’s four orientation framework, encompasses beliefs that diversity is developed through social interactions, but located at the level of the individual, and that diversity is recognized interpersonally with varying responses from teachers, community members, and other educational stakeholders. Brittany believed that diversity was more than race, despite knowing that race was socially constructed, and that every student was still different while also linked to categories of diversity through their family and cultural backgrounds.

Brittany worked in her first placement with a student population that was two-thirds Black and in her second, the student population was two-thirds White. She also went from teaching in Lowe, where her grandmother lived but she did not go as a child because her family
feared that the area was dangerous, to teaching in downtown Graye with demographics closer to those of her own schools, but still quite different in terms of socioeconomic diversity. Brittany had the hardest time discussing race and culture at the beginning of her placement, but gradually developed a critical perspective on the relative roles that race itself and the circumstances in which students are raised affect their education. This was less attributable to working in Lowe, however, because Brittany specifically noted that it was Ms. Austin who helped her talk about being a White teacher in a mostly Black classroom.

During her first month at Lowe, Brittany worked through community pain and trauma with her students and with Ms. Austin. Seemingly through this experience and with Ms. Austin’s reminders that “you have to be firm, but loving which is a really hard balance especially when you’re 22,” Brittany deepened her understanding of the role that diversity or difference played in students’ lives. She said, during our second interview, “the child [that] lives in this area, this child grew up listening to this music, and this child lives with their grandparents. That is diversity, you know?” Brittany was sure after speaking with Ms. Austin that the relationships between a child and their community formed the foundations of their identity. Furthermore, Brittany found information on those relationships useful as a teacher. “I like to learn about the backgrounds about kids…if you know the background in certain situations, you’ll understand certain things better.” Brittany repeatedly discussed the role that family relationships played in shaping the diverse identities of students. “I think a lot of [student diversity] is seeing how certain kids are raised.” She noted that at the start of her first placement, she felt that diversity was “more of a race and sex thing,” but her views shifted and after two months at Lowe, “it’s more of a gender, ethnicity, how-you-were-brought-up thing.”
Brittany’s thinking regarding diversity shifted dramatically during her first placement. This shift was influenced by her experiences at Midwestern University and by living and teaching in an economically and racially stratified area. Brittany seemed to adopt a social orientation to diversity. She stopped short of addressing problematic contextual issues surrounding race or class, but believed that diversity was forged out of the interpersonal relationships between students and their community.
CHAPTER 5: CROSS CASE ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Cross Case Analysis

In this study, I repeatedly asked the student teacher participants to define diversity, to name instances in which they noticed diversity, and to look for occasions in which I might witness them addressing or responding to the diversity among their students. I endeavored to inhabit Grant and Gibson’s (2013) third orientation to research on diversity in teacher education in which the pervasive and insistent issues of racism, sexism, and other forms of privilege and oppression are placed under scrutiny. I sought to answer the following research questions.

1. How do the student teachers in this study define diversity?
   a. How do these definitions change over time?
   b. Under what influences did the student teachers’ definitions change?

2. What orientations (Paine, 1990) to diversity do student teachers discuss in interviews and demonstrate in observations of practice?

3. In what ways does student teaching prepare these preservice music educators to notice, name, and address their own conceptions of diversity as well as identity, privilege, and oppression in music education?

In this project, I answered my questions through observation, interviews, analysis, reflection, and the compilation of these data. The answers that I can provide are always already filtered through my theory-laden perspective—a theory-laden perspective of the theory-laden conceptions of the student teacher participants at that. In the critical realist paradigm, I strove to understand and uncover the mechanisms that structure the changes in the perceptions and responses of the student teachers to what they conceive of as diversity.
1. How Do the Student Teachers in This Study Define Diversity?

Throughout the study, the participants described two types of diversity. The two types of diversity are what Squire (2015) described as discursive patterns of diversity. The two discourses—diversity as ubiquitous difference and diversity as categorized identity—sometimes worked against each other with ubiquitous difference downplaying the importance of racial identity in a racist society and categorized identity making it easy to essentialize students by their identities. These discourses were born of and lived in separate ontological understandings of how students were different and what those differences meant to music educators. This double-barreled definition made it difficult to discuss diversity because the two definitions were sometimes opposing. If diversity was found among all students who were different in unlimited ways, then diversity was a concept so amorphous as to lose its relevance in education. However, when diversity was discussed as a system of categories of identity that defined the qualities or characteristics of learners, then the student teachers came to the precipice of predefining their students and their learning. Brittany, in particular, resisted talking about students in terms of their racial identities and Cara was influenced by her cooperating teacher who played down the role that race played in the lives of her mostly White students while emphasizing that class was an “elephant” that was underdiscussed.

Cara noted that diversity was usually associated with “kinds of diversity” like race, sexual orientation, or “types of learning” (i.e., visual, auditory). June talked about “the boy/girl ratio” and age. Flora talked about race and culture. While her peers discussed these types of diversity first, Brittany discussed types of diversity after referencing difference more broadly. At the beginning of the study, Brittany was hesitant to talk about race or gender explicitly and spoke about diversity broadly. Brittany said, “it’s finding out about somebody in every aspect.”
However, Brittany did reference types of difference in her initial definition saying, “you can’t just look at a certain race and be like, they’re all like that, they’re all diverse in different ways too.” Brittany was the first to place difference as a concept at the center of her response, but her peers also discussed difference. Flora said, “I think that diversity is just boiled down to, everybody’s different despite skin color or culture.” Cara talked about how different every student was from another, and June noted that diversity was “uniqueness, but not entirely.”

1a. How do these Definitions Change over Time?

While there was some uniformity in the ways that the participants defined diversity at the outset of the study, the four student teachers each redefined their thinking in different ways.

Table 5.1

Changes in Thinking about Diversity over One Semester

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Initial definitions</th>
<th>Definitions at the end of the Semester</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cara</td>
<td>Many types of diversity such as race and ethnicity are important for teachers to respond to.</td>
<td>Students are different in infinite and expanding ways. A highly individualistic view. Almost no mention of race and ethnicity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>There are obvious forms of diversity such as gender, ethnicity, and age. Everyone is unique, but not entirely.</td>
<td>Students are different because of the environments that they are raised in. Socioeconomic diversity is important and age is, too.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flora</td>
<td>Race and culture come to mind first, but everyone is different despite physical or identity characteristics.</td>
<td>Race and culture still come to mind first, but neurocognitive diversity is more important than I first thought in education.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5.1 Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brittany</th>
<th>Everybody is different despite preconceptions about individuals based on identity markers, which are overrated.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Diversity is the ways in which everyone is different, but race is also part of that. Even students are aware of race. It affects education.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The phrases in table 5.1 are representative of the participants’ thinking about diversity at the beginning and end of their semester of student teaching—they are summations and not direct quotations. There were types of diversity that became more important to each of the participants over time and types that became less important. Brittany was more comfortable talking about race and her students’ experiences in a segregated city after working with Ms. Austin and her students at Lowe. Cara was most focused on getting to know each student’s interests, families, and hobbies after working with Ms. Penn. Flora was able to talk about race throughout her experience and the prevalence of racial issues in her time at Plains among students and faculty influenced her thinking, but at Lake and River, she concentrated on completing the edTPA project and thought more carefully about how IEPs and 504s along with students’ educational needs might matter for teachers. June’s thinking was the least affected throughout her student teaching experience. She was made aware of student differences according to racial or cultural identity types by her cooperating teachers, but overall, her attention was focused on how to teach high school students after working at the middle school and then on teaching each level of orchestra while working at Scott. In general, the changes in the student teachers’ thinking led the participants to describe conceptions more similar to those of their cooperating teachers.
1b. Under what Influences did the Student Teachers’ Definitions Change?

Two major factors influenced the student teachers’ changing definitions of diversity: the edTPA project and the cooperating teachers with whom they worked as well as the schools in which the student teachers worked. While both major influences were intertwined, they each had some specific effects on the student teachers.

The edTPA. Through completing the edTPA, the student teachers were required to reflect on their experiences. The edTPA was a tool which asked the student teachers to apply educational theories to their instruction and planning and to think about their students as learners who needed differentiation in assessment and instruction. The edTPA privileged the discussion of certain types of student difference when asking the student teachers to reflect on how they could meet the needs of their students. The edTPA offered the following prompts related to students’ identity, diversity, and culture. While other prompts could certainly be directed toward issues related to diversity, these were the most explicit in the assessment’s expectation for student teachers to address those topics.

Table 5.2

Sample edTPA Project Prompts that Center Diversity among Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>edTPA Task</th>
<th>Prompt</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planning 2: For each of the prompts below, describe what you know about your students with respect to the central focus of the learning segment. Consider the variety of learners in your class who may require different strategies/support (e.g., students with IEPs or 504 plans, English language learners, struggling readers, underperforming students or those with gaps in academic knowledge, and/or gifted students).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning 2a:</td>
<td>Personal, cultural, and community assets related to the central focus—what do you know about your students’ everyday experiences, cultural and language backgrounds and practices, and interests?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning 3a:</td>
<td>Justify how your understanding of your students’ prior academic learning and personal, cultural, and community assets (from prompts 2a-b above) guided your choice or adaptation of learning tasks and materials. Be explicit about the connections between the learning tasks and students’ prior academic learning, their assets, and research/theory.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning 3b:</td>
<td>Describe and justify why your instructional strategies and planned supports are appropriate for the whole class, individuals, and/or groups of students with specific learning needs. Consider the variety of learners in your class who may require different strategies/support (e.g., students with IEPs or 504 plans, English language learners, struggling readers, underperforming students or those with gaps in academic knowledge, and/or gifted students).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instruction 2a:</td>
<td>How did you demonstrate mutual respect for, rapport with, and responsiveness to student with varied needs and backgrounds and challenge students to engage in learning?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5.2 Continued

| Assessment 1c: | Use evidence found in the 3 student work samples and the whole class summary to analyze the patterns of learning for the whole class and differences for groups or individual learners relative to applying the following within music/dance/theater. Consider what students understand and do well, and where they continue to struggle (e.g., common errors, weaknesses, confusions, need for greater challenge). |
| Assessment 2b: | Explain how feedback provided to the 3 focus students addresses their individual strengths and needs relative to the learning objectives measured. |

Based on these prompts and the repeated reminders to think about students with IEPs or 504 plans, and the other needs detailed in the prompt, it is unsurprising that the student teachers focused on addressing neurocognitive diversity in their answers. Additionally, one requirement for identifying focus students was that one had to be a student with an IEP or 504 plan. June, Flora, Cara, and Brittany all discussed how they worked to accommodate that student using either differentiated instruction or the principles of Universal Design for Learning, a topic covered in their undergraduate course on differentiating music instruction in school settings. It is noteworthy, though, that this category of student difference was dissociated from other categories of identity in all four student teachers’ responses. When naming their first focus student, the student teachers’ responses read as if the IEP or 504 plan was the only relevant way in which their focus student was different or had special needs. Previous research has indicated that students of color and male students (and male students of color in particular) have been identified as having special needs or assigned IEPs and 504 plans at disproportionately high rates.
(Artiles et al., 2002; Blanchett, 2006). The edTPA makes no mention in its prompts of this or how culture, marginalization, and this overrepresentation must be mediated by thoughtful educators. The student teachers did not discuss culture or race or power and privilege in their answers. However, the edTPA prompts themselves left open the possibility that student teachers would continue to reiterate the problematics of overrepresentation.

Finally, the edTPA prompts regarding the needs and strengths of school-age students and Assessment Prompt 1c seem to have led the student teachers to identify three focus students as representative of three levels of learners. This stratification unnecessarily marked delineations between high- and low-achieving students. It was the case that none of the student teachers identified focus students who embodied both needs and strengths. Focus student one was below average, student two was average, and student three was above average in every student teacher’s edTPA commentaries (though Flora had student one as above average and student three as below average, flipping the order). These delineations may have reinforced unhelpful and problematic divides between students and certainly may have led to the stigmatization of students with IEPs or 504s as below average students.

Interestingly, the edTPA elicited one additional problematic in the student teachers’ thinking regarding diversity. All four student teachers described differentiating their instruction for edTPA in terms of a curious type of student difference: learning style. While the edTPA handbook and prompts do not specifically reference learning style, Cara, Brittany, June, and Flora all spent time describing how they would alter their instruction for visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learners. Although the myth of learning styles is pervasive in the discourse surrounding education and it is true that learners may prefer one style or mode of learning, “virtually no evidence” (Pashler et al., 2008) supports essentialist schema of learning style
diversity. It was unclear whether the student teachers were prompted to discuss learning styles in a student teaching seminar or their preservice coursework, but remarkable that they all did so with greater emphasis than any other discussion of types of diversity.

**The Contexts.** The student teachers in this study worked in schools with varying degrees of racial and socioeconomic diversity and with cooperating teachers who helped address the kinds of diversity they found relevant in practice. Of course, there were other types of student identity that Cara, Brittany, Flora, and June noticed while teaching and discussed with their mentors; however, as class and race were the most discussed categories of student identity, the following demographics were of high importance.
Table 5.3

*Approximated Select Demographics of the Student Teachers’ Placements* (Illinois State Board of Education, 2019)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>American Indian</th>
<th>Pacific Islander</th>
<th>Two or More Races</th>
<th>Low Income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prairie School District (Cara)</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bernard Middle School (June)</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scott High School (June)</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plains High School (Flora)</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lake Junior High (Flora)</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>River Middle School (Flora)</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lowe Primary School (Brittany)</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graye Middle School (Brittany)</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

3 These demographic data are approximated to help conceal the identity of the participants and the location of their schools.
The influence of the school contexts on the four student teachers varied greatly. While the cooperating teachers held important and traceable sway over the preservice teachers, the school demographics and location seemed less directly related to the student teachers’ definitions of diversity. It is difficult and even perhaps unhelpful to dissociate schools and students from the cooperating teachers who work with/in them. The question of the influence of student demographics before mediation by family, friends, mentors, and supervisors is a topic of great importance and a potent subject of future research.

2. What Orientations to Diversity do Student Teachers Discuss in Interviews and Demonstrate in Observations of Practice?

The student teachers demonstrated pluralistic and shifting orientations to diversity. Paine (1990) described the individualistic, categorical, contextual, and pedagogical orientations to diversity as “clusters” (p. 3) of ideas and “layers of meaning” (p. 2) among responses to survey questions asked of preservice educators by the National Center for Research on Teacher Education. These categories were described as distinct but not discrete and in this study, they overlapped within and among the cases. Generally, the student teachers discussed individualistic orientations to diversity—in the cases of Cara and Brittany, and categorical orientations—in the cases of June and Flora. Cara was the most consistently individualistic in her discussions about diversity. She began the semester with an acknowledgement that diversity was most often discussed in types of difference or identity. Cara became gradually more individualistic and her views were fueled by Ms. Penn’s relationships with students which developed over 1-8 years in choir and her efforts to see students as unique persons within a homogenous White population. Brittany was most individualistic at the start of the semester and spoke more openly about categorical difference as the semester progressed. Toward the end of her first placement, Brittany
talked about how the families and areas which students came from affected their identity and school experiences. Her discussions about diversity remained coded with “family” and “area” substituting for more explicit discussions of race and socioeconomic status; however, over the course of her second placement, Brittany became disinterested in talking about diversity in general and seemed to revert to individualistic views. June held predominantly categorical views throughout the semester. She shifted her attention from categories of social identity as key markers of difference among students toward the age and skill divisions among students as she changed placements and began to work with the 6 levels of orchestra at Scott High School. Finally, Flora held but resisted categorical views of diversity in the beginning of the semester. She worked to eschew her preconceived notions of why students succeeded in choir at school or what motivated and inhibited them from participating in school music. Ms. Lee was a major force in shifting Flora’s conceptions over time. She demonstrated a responsive view of student difference that was sometimes individualistic, and sometimes contextual, helping Flora work through difficult situations at school such as racial profiling among student staff, racial tensions within the surrounding community and the school, and the racialized nature of school discipline and the communication between students and school administration. In her second placement, Flora maintained her individualistic views, but because her definitions of diversity were largely rooted in social categories of difference among students, she did not consider her students at Lake or River to be diverse in significant ways and her cooperating teacher discussed explicit warnings about discussing diversity in classes in their meetings. In general, the student teachers held different orientations toward diversity. They mostly progressed from individual to categorical and then to contextual orientations, but their movement between these categories was neither linear nor clear, as noted by Paine (1990) in the original framework.
The pedagogical orientation was an omnipresent stance among the student teachers’ discussions and actions. In her first interview, Cara said, “I think it’s important to get to know your students outside of the classroom…I think that’s something that I’ve noticed that Ms. Penn does.” Flora said, “diversity is everybody’s different and we need to, there’s no possible way to accommodate every single human being on this planet…but, doing the best we can to make everyone feel welcome and included and encouraged.” These responses among others demonstrated an embedded connection between difference and music teaching. The student teachers all felt that diversity and difference among students warranted and often required a teacher to intervene in instruction, to make accommodations, or to facilitate inclusion. These responses to diversity were present among Cara and Flora’s discussions of an individualistic orientation to diversity as well as instances when they and the other student teachers expressed categorical or contextual orientations. Since Paine’s (1990) report on research, notable pedagogues have advocated for culturally responsive pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995), culturally relevant teaching (Gay, 2013), and culturally sustaining pedagogies (Paris & Alim, 2017). These approaches to responding to diversity have been embedded into mainstream educational discourses in such a way that it may no longer be possible to discuss diversity in education without connecting diversity to pedagogy. The connections between pedagogy and equity or justice may be less obvious and explored. Still, diversity does seem to beg a response in 21st century education.
3. In what Ways does Student Teaching Prepare these Preservice Music Educators to Notice, Name, and Address Their Own Conceptions of Diversity as Well as Identity, Privilege, and Oppression in Music Education?

Student teaching had very little to do with the development of these preservice teachers’ abilities to notice, name, and address diversity and other related concepts. The experience of student teaching was not responsible for Flora’s development as a relationship-oriented teacher; it was not the cause of Brittany’s increased comfort with discussions about race in music education. Student teaching did not inhibit June’s growth regarding diversity or shift her focus from personal identity to skill or age level. Cara did not develop individualistic orientations toward diversity because of student teaching. In each of these instances, it was the work and guidance of cooperating teachers, the influence of students and school contexts, and edTPA preparation and execution with all its related reflection and planning that contributed to the development of these student teachers as equity-oriented music educators. This may be self-evident, but the discourses surrounding field experiences, cultural immersions, and exposure to issues of diversity or diverse students might lead teacher educators to locate the influence on student teachers in the experiences themselves rather than their component designs, actors, objectives, and experiences.

In this study, the four participants took four different approaches to addressing diversity in their classrooms. For Cara, whose Catholic identity was important to her personally and tied to her professional persona, addressing her mostly White and what she presumed was a mostly Christian school population led to an insistence that music with Catholic or Christian associations was a good cultural fit with her school’s demographics. Yet, despite her addressing the majority religious identity, there appeared to be several missed opportunities for deeper
pedagogical responses to her students’ identities. I wonder to what extent could explicit
discussion of a dominant world religion such as Christianity contribute to a curriculum focused
on diversity and equity? When considering parallels to other types of diversity, would a social
studies teacher at an all-male school focus predominantly on male historical narratives or would
an English teacher at predominantly White school predominantly teach literature written by
White authors and poets?

For Brittany and Flora, their first placement was focused on addressing the needs and
seeing the strengths of students of color and from families with limited financial resources. Both
student teachers were able to explore their role as a teacher of students of color in racially
segregated communities. Their students experienced different circumstances in home and in
school depending on whether they were White or not and their cooperating teachers discussed
these issues explicitly. And still, explicit references to issues related to race and racism were
couched in terms of music instruction and learning. Flora was challenged to encourage all her
students to participate fully in the musical opportunities that Ms. Lee offered to her students. In
class, she observed Ms. Lee take students into the hallways to discuss their behavior and explore
the circumstances that may be leading them to act inappropriately in the music classroom. For
Brittany, Ms. Austin was focused on providing enjoyable and educative musical experiences
despite the trauma that her students experienced after the death of one student and the family
members of two others. Ms. Austin and Brittany made a point of speaking to these traumatic
events and their relationship to the neighborhood and safety around Lowe Primary as well as to
the perceptions of these issues from the Graye and Shale communities.

Cara received the message that while race exists, it does not matter in educating students
in the Prairie Schools or districts like it where class is more important, though less explicitly
discussed. June, too, was told by Ms. Brady that despite her students’ South and East Asian cultural identities, they were typically just 21st century preteens. Mr. Chen, June thought, even exhibited racist tendencies and despite his explicit efforts to support Black and African American students in Coloratura, his Black students were mostly in the come-all orchestras and Coloratura had no Black or African American students when she was a student teacher at Scott High School.

**Discussion**

In their seminal paper on the qualities of cooperating teachers, Abramo and Campbell (2016) address the roles that mentor teachers play for student teachers. Little research or theoretical literature focuses on the purposes of the student teaching experience itself, however. In their article, Abramo and Campbell argue that effective cooperating teachers support “educative growth” (p. 118) and help student teachers “engage in critical thinking” (p. 120). The development of criteria for the selection of cooperating teachers is useful for clarifying which teachers might make effective mentors and best promote student teacher development toward their intended professional and personal objective. However, what are the professional, let alone personal, objectives of the student teaching experience? Among these unconfigured objectives, where does the work of learning to notice, address, and respond to diversity fall? How is this work then translated into action toward equity and justice in music education? Ayers (1993) suggested that learning to develop a sustained interest in and a love for students is a worthy objective of teacher education.

Lately, the purpose of the student teaching experience seems to be to pass the edTPA or other certification exam requirements. When students are required to pass the exam developed by Pearson, can they pass their student teaching semester without passing edTPA? In the case of Adam Kuranishi (Kuranishi & Oyler, 2017), a student teacher working toward certification in
New York City, faculty and supervisors were supportive of Adam’s teaching but he failed edTPA. He passed every one of his 12 in-school observations and student teaching overall, but was unable to be certified to teach. In states without the edTPA, there are other professionalization standards required for certification and student teaching may be a place where these standards are met (May et al., 2017). If these standards are not met, do student teachers pass their programs? If you can pass your program without being certified to teach, what is the purpose of student teaching?

It seems obvious that student teaching serves to improve the pedagogical and instructional practices of preservice teachers, the purpose of student teaching being: to make preservice teachers into better educators. But, if this is the purpose of student teaching, does it accomplish its goals? Are there other more valuable objectives for teacher education that student teaching is not best-equipped to address? One purpose of teacher education, broadly, must be to prepare a teaching force to meet the needs and strengths of school-age learners. In the late 20th and early 21st centuries, the needs of students in America are related in large part to diversity. Racism, classism, discrimination, and privilege are all as prevalent as they are in society, except that students are less empowered and have fewer resources for responding to marginalization—no jobs, no income, and often no choice of with whom, what, or where they will study. So, if these are major challenges of education in the current era, then what does student teaching do about it? What can student teaching do about it?

Throughout the edTPA project, teacher candidates are required to identify three focus students for whom specific modifications will be designed. In the case of the student teachers in this study, the three focus students represented three levels of learners. Brittany, Cara, Flora, and June chose to highlight focus students with special needs or disabilities, focus students who
represented the average student in their class, and focus students who the student teacher identified as gifted or of high ability. The choice of the four student teacher participants to identify three students representative of different levels of learners was unprompted by the edTPA handbook, but perhaps spun out of some shared dialogue about successful strategies for passing the edTPA.

In Assessment Task 3 in particular, the student teachers were responsible for describing their approaches to differentiating instruction for the three focus students and three levels of learners by proxy. This leveled thinking was least problematic when it encouraged the student teachers to develop appropriate accommodations for students who were not challenged by the content of their lessons. But I was alarmed to see that in the case of each student teacher, the lowest learner was the focus student with an IEP or 504 plan for behavior management or other learning needs. June wrote, “focus student 3 has an IEP for speech stuttering…Although he represents students with learning disabilities, he demonstrates clear, basic knowledge of the musical elements on his worksheet.” In this case, the individualized nature of focus student 3’s IEP is forgone and his needs are deemed representative of low-level learners and other students with disabilities by June. Cara chose a student “with dyslexia and trouble focusing” as focus student one and labeled focus student two as an “average student” while focus student three was “gifted student” in her commentary on assessment. While Brittany focused on the strengths of her first focus student rather than their needs, despite having an “IOP [sic] for Special Education,” she also assigned the focus students by level. In her case, the focus students were cases of differentiated behavior. Student one typically exhibited poor behavior, leading Brittany to write, “student one displayed full comprehension of the vocabulary/symbols” but added, “I had many problems with discourse throughout the lesson regarding their behavior…I gave them
a [low score] on their participation, communicating that their behavior was unacceptable.” She went on to say that student two exhibited good behavior while “student three exhibited excellent participation.” These levels of representative behavior are nearly as problematic as the levels of musical understanding or skill described by Cara and June, with the added complication that Brittany was focused nearly solely on behavior as a sign of the students’ learning or content knowledge. Flora, too, chose three students at three levels of musical skill. It was disturbing to me that when leveling their students by skill or behavior, it was the default position of all four participants to choose a student with special needs as the lowest achieving student in their group. In the case of Brittany, who saw her students’ special needs through a more positive lens than her peers, she still noted that student one succeeded “despite” her special needs. The conflation of the needs of students and their low achievement on musical assessments was an unexplored problem in the participants’ edTPA projects.

Student teaching could be a place where preservice educators are shown how the realities that school-age students face are incredibly diverse. With some students living in America experiencing the great benefits of living in the most productive and prosperous time in human history while others live on as little as $2.00 a day (Edin & Kissane, 2010; Edin & Shaefer, 2015), student teachers could be shown how their in-service counterparts are actively responding to these inequalities. Student teachers would be well-served by learning to teach content, by building pedagogical content knowledge, and developing culturally responsive habits and dispositions over the course of a semester or two. However, these are not the only pedagogical designs that could achieve these ends, to be sure. With enough pedagogical imagination, teacher educators could create or facilitate experiences in which preservice teachers learn to study sociology, psychology, pedagogy, methodology, and innovative or creative thinking in balance.
both in and outside of schools. However, powerful traditions and immutable discourses of “capstone” (Draves, 2013) and “most valuable” (Conway, 2002, 2012) experiences keep music teacher education firmly in place, repeating our practices until we get it right.

Implications

In this study, the student teachers who found that they thought about diversity the most were placed in schools where diversity and the issues related to privilege and marginalization were discussed explicitly by cooperating teachers and even students. Based on the data, my experiences with the participants and as a stakeholder in music student teaching from multiple perspectives, and the extant research, I note below implications for university supervisors, music teacher educators, and music education researchers.

Implications for University Supervisors

The role of the university supervisor as part of the student teaching triad is described as key in research on student teaching (Draves, 2013; Liebhaber, 2003; Silveira & Diaz, 2014). The university supervisor provides repeated and critical feedback to both the student teacher and cooperating teacher while also generating useful knowledge about the teacher candidate’s development. However, the role of the university supervisor is one of the most flexible in student teaching. Juchniewicz (2018) found that approximately half of NASM-accredited music teacher preparation programs use full-time faculty as university supervisors, while part-time or adjunct faculty were supervisors at 24.6% and 20.3% of universities respectively. Finally, approximately 8% of universities employed graduate students as university supervisors. These supervisors were responsible for between one and fourteen observations per student teacher with four being the most frequent number of observations.
Throughout this project, I asked the participants to define diversity in their own words and followed that key question with more detailed explorations of what the participants meant by “different,” “unique,” and other descriptive terms. This was designed to help elucidate whether and how the participants’ conceptions of diversity changed over time. However, an unintended consequence of this questioning was student teacher growth. While I meant to elicit thinking, the question and its repetition fostered new ideas about diversity. The question is simple, yet profound when followed by investigative questioning and might be used by university supervisors or cooperating teachers as a way to prompt thinking. The university supervisor can instigate these conversations during three-way meetings with the student teacher and their mentor(s) and facilitate in-depth reflection using reflective writing or shared journaling. In this study, I utilized the Critical Incident Questionnaire developed by Goodwin (1997), and that led to good conversation, too, but the simplicity of “what does diversity mean to you, in your own words?” might make this question a powerful tool for initiating dialogue about how diversity shows up in a student teacher’s classes, planning, and interactions with students and the community. Bradley, Golner, and Hanson (2007) described their use of reflective journaling in a graduate music education course and how their practices developed awareness and responses to cultural Whiteness in the United States and music education. Their model might provide a place to begin or a strategy for augmenting existing student teaching seminars which privilege conversations about professionalism, student teachers’ responsibilities and classroom management and do not typically address topics related to culture, diversity, or equity (Baumgartner & Councill, 2017).
Implications for Music Teacher Educators

Every student teacher should be challenged to address musical learning and to foster educative experiences for their students with the guidance of caring and culturally responsive mentors. I hope that every student teacher works in schools where issues of race and racism, indelible features of American education and society (Bell, 1993), are discussed explicitly. Teachers need to be aware of these issues and prepared to address privilege and oppression in music and the arts as well as history or social studies. And while these experiences and conversations can happen in all or predominantly White schools; in this study, they did not. It is the responsibility of the placement coordinators or student teaching program administrators to ensure that student teachers will be part of these crucial conversations.

Throughout the planning and review of literature for this study, I was reminded that placing student teachers is a complex process. Music teacher educators may begin their placement process with intentions of identifying and selecting highly skilled teachers capable of leading their mentees through often difficult conversations about race in American music education, but these ideals only go so far. As noted by Zemek (2008), student teachers are placed in schools by music and general teacher education faculty, in conjunction with university placement services and offices, other music faculty and in concert with building or district administrators dependent on willing and available music teachers. There are issues of locale and student teacher and university supervisor travel to consider, too, as Juchniewicz (2018) found that student teachers are typically placed within 100 miles of their university. Because there might be multiple universities working to secure student teaching placements for their music education majors in a single metropolitan area, the pool of possible cooperating teachers is sometimes quite limited. These limitations and restrictions make it imperative for music teacher
preparation programs to develop strong relationships with qualified and willing teachers and to revisit those teachers. Careful preparation by music teacher educators, the university supervisor, cooperating teachers, or those responsible for mentoring the student teachers could have intervened to discuss these tangled issues of identity and representation in the cases of Flora, June, Brittany, and Cara. Gay (2002) and others (Ferri & Connor, 2005) have addressed this issue in empirical research and pedagogical studies. In practice, there may be few schools in which preservice music teachers can be placed and met with fertile conditions for considering inequalities in education. These conditions make it imperative that teacher educators be prepared to help preservice teachers think through race, racism, power, privilege, and other issues related to diversity (a) in multiple teaching settings including those with predominantly White and predominantly non-White student populations, (b) with cooperating teachers who actively discuss in developmentally useful ways how the issues at hand affect music teaching and learning, and (c) with student teachers who have many competing demands for their time and attention.

During my own undergraduate degree, half of my peers were assigned to student teach in the fall of their senior year and half were placed in schools during the spring semester. For those who came back from student teaching for a final semester of coursework, faculty constantly commented on how mature their concepts of teaching were during discussions in advanced methods courses. These fall student teachers were able to reflect on their experiences and also served as mentors to their undergraduate peers. They drew on incredibly vivid accounts of teaching to enrich their conceptions and discussion of teaching. Is student teaching as the final teaching experience a useful model of instruction? What other methods might be equally or more productive or conducive for learning? I wonder whether student teaching as a powerful
apprenticeship experience might be better utilized by second- or third-year music education majors. I imagine that student teaching would be a more open-ended experience when teacher candidates are fresh in their programs but have time to reflect on their experiences. The effect on cooperating teachers, too, might include an increased emphasis on mentoring and guided experience. Perhaps two student teaching experiences at the mid and final points in music teacher preparation might serve as a chance for adequate reflection and repetition of key moments in the apprenticeship model. Teacher educators should think creatively about how student teaching is imbued with meaning during teacher preparation and whether alternative designs and models for guided experience are possible, practical, and meaningful.

**Implications for Music Researchers**

One of the challenges I anticipated in this study was that the participants would refer to race or racial first when discussing diversity, but that the difficulties surrounding discussions of race—especially for White and preservice teachers—might preclude deep conversation (Bradley, 2006). There are multiple discourses surrounding diversity (Squire, 2015) and among these, racial difference is made important through histories of discrimination in schools based on race, through legislation aimed at segregating and then desegregating schools by race, through policies which target students of color for behavior management and discipline at inordinate rates, and more. These histories and the current discourses surrounding diversity in education make race a prominent characteristic of discussions about equity in schools. There are, of course, many more ways in which students and teachers are different and similar from one another. Gender, sexual identity, religion, socioeconomic status, size, ethnicity, culture, language, citizenship status, ability, cognitive differences, and other categories of identity all shape social and educational interactions in schools in overlapping ways. More research is needed to understand the
experiences of teachers preparing to teach in schools where overlapping oppressions and multiplying privileges affect learning and teaching. For example, even in the case of student cultural diversity where a first-order responsibility of teacher candidates might be to learn about their classes’ cultural identities, the cultural identities associated with intersecting student identities and social forces complicate even that task. For example, to work through addressing students’ already pluralistic Latinx identities and then think about how gay, lesbian, or queer culture adds complexity to the teaching situation is an incredibly complicated experience for teacher candidates.

One powerful source of evidence of how student teachers make sense of diversity might include the submitted edTPA portfolios and other certification requirements collected by state agencies and private and public organizations regulating teacher licensure. First, analyzing the data collected by Pearson in the edTPA project would provide insights into if and how large groups of preservice teachers make meaning of their experiences related to diversity in schools. It would provide teacher educators with information regarding holes and gaps in teacher candidate knowledge as well as areas of success in which methods for providing teacher candidates with useful information about diversity in schools is well-founded. Additionally, analysis of these extant data sets would provide teacher educators, policy makers, and other educational stakeholders with critical information about how the edTPA prompts equity—or justice-oriented thinking and action among preservice teachers. As discussed in the cross-case analysis, the requirement that student teachers identify three focus students with one having an IEP or 504 plan and the implication that these students should represent groups of learners leads to critical questions about which students preservice teachers are focused on. Researchers should carefully examine whether these circumstances lead to preservice teachers overidentifying
students of color as focus students, particularly as students of color are already overrepresented in special education programs and classrooms (Artiles et al., 2002). Researchers should ascertain and respond to whether teacher education candidates perpetuate this pattern of increased scrutiny as well as the longitudinal effects of that possibility.

This study focused on the teaching practices and investigations into diversity of four successful student teachers. However, like Kuranishi and Oyler (2017), there is important research to be done with student teachers who fail their certification or college programs. The student teachers who are pushed or drop out of preservice teacher preparation represent short circuits or failures of a traditional system. Their stories and experiences may reveal gaps that teacher education programs or policy makers could bridge.

The expectations for supervision or the preparation that supervisors receive should be examined more closely. Teacher education researchers might investigate whether graduate students, full- or part-time faculty, or local or retired music teachers are best suited for student teacher supervision and under what circumstances. Under what conditions are the power relationships between student teachers, cooperating teachers, and university supervisors best balanced or negotiated when addressing race or issues related to diversity? Under what circumstances are graduate students able to address difficult issues with the other members of the triad without fear of retribution? Who is best prepared to discuss concepts and action related to anti-oppression in music teaching and learning? With what training or education? In this study, the role of the university supervisor was left unexplored because neither the cooperating or student teachers brought up their supervisor in discussion. However, in future studies, the role of the supervisor as a provocateur or discussant of issues related to diversity might be worth
exploring. Similarly, the role of parents, significant others in the lives of the student teachers, and school-age students could all be investigated in more detail than this study.

Additionally, this study was focused on the experiences of preservice teachers in their final semester of university coursework and fieldwork. The benefits of addressing diversity, privilege, and marginalization in college of education and music education courses with student teaching then reinforcing the connections between coursework and teaching practice is invaluable. Yet, can addressing diversity, privilege, and marginalization wait until student teaching? Research should ask whether, how, and to what ends fieldwork might be made to reflect theoretical concepts surrounding race and social inequality in educational contexts. To what extent should every experience in fieldwork be focused on addressing equity? When are preservice teachers ready to discuss these topics? When will preservice teachers move from discussing social justice to enacting it in their teaching practice? How can the developmental models of Ballantyne and Mills (2008) be realized in coursework alongside foundations and methods courses? I personally recommend that conversations and projects that center race and inequality in education should be woven throughout the preservice teacher curriculum to best prepare music educators, but more research is needed on the consequences of these curricular changes.

Music teacher education researchers might consider studying the demographics of the cooperating teacher population as well as their comfort or sophistication when discussing issues related to diversity. These key players in the education of student teachers hold incredible sway over the development of their mentees. As such, understanding the current cooperating teacher population might be useful. Who are the persons trusted with this capstone experience? This research might then lead to studies which build on Abramo and Campbell’s (2015) notions of
qualities of cooperating teachers. Identifying strong cooperating teachers like Ms. Lee and Ms. Austin in this study and understanding the pedagogical strategies that they employ when talking about race or diversity with preservice teachers might provide frameworks for future cooperating teachers. Negative examples, too, would be useful for identifying the qualities of a cooperating teacher that inhibit educative dialogue or action surrounding inequality in music education. Who are the teachers working in diversity-rich environments who miss opportunities or create negative educational experiences that send negative messages about the role of diversity in music education? Finally, what skills or dispositions or patterns of dialogue might facilitate more educative experiences and how can cooperating teachers be shown ways forward toward equity? The field of music teacher education might develop professional development modules or programs for preparing cooperating teachers to have difficult and/or generative discussions about diversity in student teaching. Robinson (2017) provides such a model for preservice teachers and might be a place to start.

Implications for the edTPA Project

In this study, the participants told me that the edTPA was a surprisingly good tool for fostering some critical thinking about teaching and learning in music. The participants were prompted to connect their teaching to educational theory and did so to varying degrees and in varying depth. Similarly, the space to explain, justify, and then critique their planning, instruction, and assessment were useful tools. While the prompts were hardly memorable to the participants, the act of writing and reflecting on practice was enough to foster educative growth in the student teachers. However, the edTPA was a disappointing tool for prompting equity or justice-oriented thinking in the student teacher participants. The edTPA should be augmented, critiqued, and/or supplemented with discussions about diversity, race, class, difference, identity,
representation, equity, equality, and schooling. The developers of the edTPA should specifically change three questions: first, when asking the participants to count the students in their class, preservice teachers are asked to list the number of boys and girls with no place to count the number of nonbinary or gender-nonconforming students. Second, a question on the edTPA asks the student teacher to describe the context in which their school is embedded as either “city,” “suburb,” “town,” or “rural.” These descriptions are vague and belie the potential usefulness of a question about the contexts or communities surrounding the school. An open-ended question such as “in what context is your school located?” might provide student teachers with a chance to reflect on the characteristics of the location of their schools. To distinguish between city, suburb, and town while separating those answers from rural contexts is not helpful to preservice teachers who are wrestling with the implications or meaning of the contexts of education. Similarly, I imagine that these indicators are only marginally useful for adjudicators responsible for scoring edTPA projects. Finally, student teachers are asked to “summarize required or needed supports, accommodations, or modifications” that the students in their class might need. The edTPA guides responses with a text box reminding student teachers to:

"Consider the variety of learners in your classes who may require different strategies/supports or accommodations/modifications to instruction or assessment (e.g., students with Individualized Education Programs [IEPs] or 504 plans, students with specific language needs, students needing greater challenge or support, students who struggle with reading, students who are underperforming or those with gaps in their academic knowledge."

While there is one reference to students who need additional challenges and the prompt distinguishes between academic and other forms of knowledge, there is much to be improved
upon in this prompt. First, the focus of the student teacher is overwhelmingly directed toward students’ needs rather than their strengths. The work of teachers is framed as responding to deficiencies or deficits in student knowledge and behavior, while transformative teaching includes augmenting students’ strengths to help them meet their goals as individuals and communities of learners. Additionally, the prompt emphasizes the established and official responses to neurodiversity that are required by law in schools. IEPs and 504 plans are useful and important for creating systems of support that foster student learning with collaboration between schools, parents, and students. However, this focus on school-mandated responses to diversity may not be unilaterally useful for preservice teachers who are wrestling with the role that student diversity plays in instruction. I worry that excessive emphasis on mandated responses to diversity may preclude a flexible and adaptive approach to teaching to a pluralistic classroom. When a teacher stands in front of their class and thinks about the required modifications, how is their creativity or professional judgment short-circuited? Preservice music educators ought to practice responding in real time to the stated and observed needs and strengths of their students. They can practice this with the help of cooperating teachers and university supervisors, but to place unilateral importance on prescriptive responses to student difference may limit responsive teaching. I recommend that the prompt be broadened by those designing the edTPA or augmented by university staff or supervisors to include prompted discussion of how the teacher candidate responds in planning and in real-time to their students as individuals and groups of learners.

Conclusion

Student teaching is a complex and potent experience that fosters preservice teachers’ reflection on their interactions with students, music teaching, and schools. In this study, the
student teacher participants were often overwhelmed by the difficulty of their work. They had to get to know their students as learners and people and reconcile their views of teaching, learning, and music with those of their cooperating teachers. Two of the participants travelled significant distances each day to their placement sites and one made a move from their college town to their parents’ home at mid-semester. The demands on student teachers are complicated. Flora, Cara, June, and Brittany finished their semester nearly totally exhausted by the demands of the school day and certification applications, and they went immediately from student teaching into full- or part-time positions in education. Schmidt (2010) reminds us of Dewey’s notion that we do not learn from experiences, rather, we learn from reflecting on experience. In her study of four student teachers, it was the guidance of knowledgeable others that helped preservice teachers make meaning of their complex experiences. With only four observations and incredibly varied depth of guided reflection with cooperating teachers, do student teachers receive adequate time and space to incorporate generative learning into their teaching practices when they are flung from student teaching into the profession?

The student teachers in this study were given time and space to think about their experiences during their visits with the university supervisor. In parallel to their reflections on teaching and learning, the student teachers discussed the complex and complicated topic of diversity in music education with me. They spent time defining and redefining what difference meant to them as individuals and what student difference did mean or should mean to their profession. My role in this study was to observe teaching, prompt thinking regarding diversity, and notice when the student teachers made explicit connections between their work and the children in their classrooms as well as their varied and inequitable circumstances. There was much to reflect on during just one semester and five interviews with each participant. The
student teachers focused closely on a few topics related to diversity in music education when prompted to by either the circumstances in their schools, their cooperating teachers’ work, or their own personal growth and experience. But, amongst these noticing, there were several times and ways in which difference did not come up and equity was left undiscussed.

Grant and Gibson (2011) noted that there were three approaches that researchers in the field of teacher education had historically taken toward diversity. The first was a consideration of how diversity among PreK-12 students might matter to teachers, the second was a focus on how teachers could meet the needs and strengths of specific cultural groups among those students, and the third was an emphasis on the problematics of inequity, inequality, and injustice as the problem that teacher education was meant to take on. Schools are sites in which the greatest inequities in the United States often play out in stark juxtaposition. Schools with large fully funded music programs perform in recital halls down the street from buildings closed due to disrepair and neglect. In one classroom, music teachers must work to reconcile the privilege of their White, able-bodied, and well-off students of multiple normative or dominant identities with the marginalization of their peers. Privilege and marginalization are broad topics that are sometimes difficult to discuss. Without prior experience discussing and acting on inequity in music education, student teachers need cooperating teachers or university supervisors to guide them through complex situations. Even with experience addressing inequity in non-school settings, the public and pluralistic nature of schools as well as the demands of teaching or student teaching can make it impossible for preservice teachers to work toward justice in their teaching. They need time, guidance, and reflection to make sense of their experiences. Music teacher educators and the field as a whole then need to cultivate the circumstances which engender
“sustained interest in and deep knowledge of another person [which] is in itself an act of love, and a good preparation for teaching” (Ayers, 1993, p. 18).
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ILLINOIS

OFFICE OF THE VICE CHANCELLOR FOR RESEARCH
Office for the Protection of Research Subjects
805 W. Pennsylvania Ave., MC-095
Urbana, IL 61801-4822

Notice of Approval: New Submission

July 3, 2018

Principal Investigator: Janet Barrett
CC: Matthew Fiorentino
Protocol Title: What preservice music teachers learn about diversity during student teaching
Protocol Number: 18894
Funding Source: Unfunded
Review Type: Exempt 1, 2
Status: Active
Risk Determination: No more than minimal risk
Approval Date: 07/03/2018

This letter authorizes the use of human subjects in the above protocol. The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed and approved the research study as described.

Exempt protocols are approved for a five year period from their original approval date, after which they will be closed and archived. Researchers may contact our office if the study will continue past five years.

The Principal Investigator of this study is responsible for:

- Conducting research in a manner consistent with the requirements of the University and federal regulations found at 45 CFR 46.
- Requesting approval from the IRB prior to implementing modifications.
- Notifying OPRS of any problems involving human subjects, including unanticipated events, participant complaints, or protocol deviations.
- Notifying OPRS of the completion of the study.
APPENDIX B: RECRUITMENT SCRIPTS

**Student Teaching Coordinator Initial Contact Email**

Dear [STUDENT TEACHING COORDINATOR NAME],

My name is Matthew Fiorentino and I am PhD candidate in music education at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. I am conducting a research study investigating what preservice educators learn about diversity during student teaching. For this research, I will be interviewing and observing four student teachers and their cooperating teachers to investigate the ways in which student diversity affects preservice teachers’ teaching and learning. This research will take place across the fall semester. This research will provide a more nuanced understanding of the role that student teaching, a vital experience in preservice education, plays in preparing preservice teachers to work with diverse students.

I am contacting you to ask whether you would allow student teachers in your program to participate in this study. If you would, I ask that you forward this student teacher recruitment letter to preservice teachers who will student teach in the fall of 2018. Please feel free to review the recruitment letter and send me your questions, concerns, and/or comments.

I know that your student teachers’ time is valuable and how important your relationships with your cooperating teachers are. In this study, I will ask to observe student teachers for two-three hours six times over the course of the semester. After my observations, I will ask the student teachers to meet me after school for an hour-long interview. I will not ask the student teachers to provide me with materials that would not otherwise prepare for their cooperating teachers and will not evaluate or provide feedback about the quality of their teaching in any way. I will also ask to conduct one hour-long interview with each cooperating teacher. These interviews will pertain to their program’s history, their views of diversity, and their student teacher’s work. You will not be asked to participate in interviews.

If you would allow your student teachers to participate in this study, please forward the attached letter to your student teachers by [DATE ONE WEEK AFTER SENDING EMAIL].

Thank you for your consideration,

Matthew C. Fiorentino  
Ph.D. Candidate  
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign  
School of Music  
1114 West Nevada Street  
Urbana, IL 61801  
(631) 921-7383  
mcf@illinois.edu
Student Teacher Recruitment Letter

Good afternoon,

My name is Matthew Fiorentino and I am PhD candidate in music education at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. I am conducting a research study investigating what preservice educators learn about diversity during student teaching.

I am writing you today to ask whether you will volunteer to participate in this study. Your role in this study would involve a series of six observations and interviews over the course of the fall semester. I would come to watch you approximately once every two weeks and then interview you after school to learn about how you think about your students and the differences between them. These observations and interviews would not be evaluative in any way.

If you are interested, please visit the link below. There, you will find a digital form to fill out. Should you choose to volunteer to participate in this study and fill out the digital form, I will contact your cooperating teachers to let them know that you are interested in participating in this study. I will ask them if they would allow you to participate as well as whether the administrators in your school placements would allow me to conduct this study in their classes. If your cooperating teachers agree to participate in this study, I will contact you with paperwork confirming your participation in this study and schedule our first meeting.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study, please feel free to contact me at either mcf2@illinois.edu or 631.921.7383. Again, if you volunteer to participate in this study, please fill out the digital form at [RECRUITMENT FORM WEBPAGE] by [DATE TWO WEEKS AFTER COORDINATOR CONTACT EMAIL].

Thank you for your consideration,

Matthew C. Fiorentino
Ph.D. Candidate
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
School of Music
1114 West Nevada Street
Urbana, IL 61801
(631) 921-7383
mcf@illinois.edu
Digital Student Teacher Recruitment Form

Thank you for your interest in participating in this study. By filling out this form, you are agreeing to volunteer in this study. But, you may change your mind, ask questions, express concerns, or withdraw from this study at any time. After receiving your completed form, I will contact your cooperating teachers. If you do not have any questions or concerns, you will hear from me in approximately two weeks, after I have contacted your cooperating teachers. Thank you again for volunteering for this study.

Matthew C. Fiorentino

Your Contact Information

Name:
Email Address:
Phone Number:

Your Demographic Information

What is your concentration (Band, Choir, Orchestra, General Music, etc.)?
What is your gender?
What is your race/ethnicity?
How would describe yourself, in general?

Your Placement Information

School Name 1:
Cooperating Teacher 1:
School Name 2 (if applicable):
Cooperating Teacher 2 (if applicable):
School Name 3 (if applicable):
Cooperating Teacher 3 (if applicable):
APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS

Date of interview:
Time of interview:
Location of interview:

Student teacher name:
Current teaching placement:
Current cooperating teacher’s name:
Classes observed today:

[Begin recording]

Thank you again for agreeing to participate in this interview. I am looking forward to talking about the lessons that I watched you teach earlier, your current goals for your teaching, and about the students in your classes. Please keep in mind that you can stop this interview at any time and can skip any questions that you cannot or do not want to answer. Is it okay with you if I continue to record this interview? Do you need anything? Do you have any concerns or questions?

[The section above was repeated at each interview and followed by the questions below].

Student Teacher Interview 1

1. Please describe yourself the way you might to your cooperating teacher, say, the first time you met them.
2. Is there anything else that you would add to describe yourself in general?
3. Please tell me a little bit about your music education history. How did you get to be here today?
4. What is your reason for working towards the degree?
5. What is your schedule like in your current placement?
6. What classes are you teaching?
7. What does your work with those classes look like?
8. What are your early impressions of your cooperating teaching?
9. Do you have any concerns or questions about student teaching so far?
10. What other feelings are you experiencing related to student teaching so far?
11. You’re living [at home or still near school], is that right? What is that like for you so far?
12. Please tell me, in your own words, what diversity means to you.
13. How do teachers learn about their students?
14. How would you describe what you learned about diversity during your college courses and field experiences at your university?
15. In your current placement, how would you describe the students?
16. In terms of their cultural identity, how would you describe the students?
17. How do you feel when talking about diversity?
18. Is there anything that you want to tell me or talk about that we haven’t already discussed?
Student Teacher Interview 2
1. What’s new?
2. Is there anything else that you’ve been thinking about a lot lately?
3. How are you, in general?
4. How is your cooperating teacher and your work together so far?
5. On what topics or issues have you and your cooperating teacher been working together?
6. Please tell me, in your own words, what diversity means to you.
7. In what ways, if any, have your definition(s) of diversity or thinking changed since we last spoke?
8. Why do you think you’ve begun to think differently?
9. How do you feel when talking about diversity, culture, and/or identity?
10. Is there anything else that you want to tell me or talk about that we haven’t already discussed?

Student Teacher Interview 3
1. How are you, in general? What’s new?
2. How is your current placement (or transition between placements) going?
3. What are you now responsible for teaching?
4. What does that look like?
5. In your own words, what is your timeline or plan for completing the edTPA?
6. Please describe your edTPA project.
7. How is your (new) cooperating teacher?
8. How is your work together going so far?
9. Please describe your students.
10. In terms of cultural identity, how would you describe your students?
11. In your own words, how would you define diversity?
12. Is there anything that you want to talk about that we haven’t already discussed?
13. Do you have any questions about this project so far?

Student Teacher Interview 4
1. How are you, in general?
2. As you start to move toward the end of student teaching, what is coming up next for you?
3. How do you feel about that?
4. What questions do you have about your next move?
5. What do you have left to do as part of your edTPA project?
6. How is teaching going for you (at the new placement so far)?
7. Please describe your current teaching or teaching responsibilities.
8. What have you learned about students?
9. What have you learned about your placement(s)?
10. What do you feel you’ve learned about teaching?
11. In your own words, can you tell me how you define diversity?
12. Can you describe an occasion in which diversity appeared to play a role in an interaction or incident during student teaching? If so, please describe that occasion.
13. What do you feel you’ve learned about diversity so far?
14. Is there anything else that you want to talk about that we haven’t already discussed?
Student Teacher Interview 5

1. How are you, in general?
2. As the semester wraps up, what do your teaching responsibilities look like?
3. If you are still working on your edTPA project, what do you still have to do to finish?
4. What do you feel you have learned from completing the edTPA project, if anything?
5. How are things going with your cooperating teacher?
6. If you could have any big question or a few questions answered about teaching or students or planning, what kind of questions do you have at this point?
7. Can you describe an occasion in which diversity appeared to play a role in an interaction or incident during student teaching? If so, please describe that occasion.
8. If you could speak to preservice teachers about to start student teaching, what would you tell them about diversity? What is important these future teachers to know about diversity in music teaching?
9. Do you have any questions or concerns about this project at this time?
10. Anything else?

Thank you and please reach out if you have any questions or concerns. You can also reach out to my advisor, Dr. Janet Barrett at the phone number that I have emailed to you. Thank you again, congratulations, enjoy your break!

SAMPLE SEMI-STRUCTURED COOPERATING TEACHER INTERVIEW

Date of interview:  
Time of interview:  
Cooperating teacher name:  

School name:  
Student teachers’ name:  

[Begin recording]

Thank you again for agreeing to participate in this interview. I am looking forward to talking with you today about your school, your teaching, and your student teacher. Please keep in mind that you can stop this interview at any time and can skip any questions that you cannot or do not want to answer. Is it okay with you if I continue to record this interview? Do you need anything? Do you have any concerns or questions?

Program History

1. How long have you been teaching here?  
2. Please describe your program.  
3. What classes and ensembles do you teach?  
4. What are your goals for your program?  
5. How have these goals changed over your time teaching here?

Conceptions of Diversity

1. How would you describe the students in your classes and ensembles at this school?
2. When student teachers work with your classes and ensembles, what do they need to know about your students?
3. Are you the students in your classes and ensembles different or the same from one another? In what ways?
4. Are the students in your classes and ensembles different or the same as the students in the school, in general? In what ways?
5. In what ways does or should student difference matter to teachers?
6. In what ways does or should student difference matter to student teachers?

Student Teacher
   1. How are things going with your student teacher?
   2. What are your goals for your student teacher during their time at your school?
   3. How does student difference affect your student teacher’s planning?
   4. How does student difference affect your student teacher’s teaching?
   5. How does student difference affect your student teacher’s assessment of their students?

Thank you so much for your time and your thoughtful answers.