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INTERTWINED CULTURAL JOURNEYS:
AN AUTOETHNOGRAPHY OF LEARNING, TEACHING, AND AFFIRMING
DIVERSITY THROUGH MULTICULTURAL MUSIC

by

KATHRYN BLACKMON

(Under the Direction of Sabrina N. Ross)

ABSTRACT

As our schools gain more and more children from different cultures and ethnicities, there is an increasing need to diversify curriculum to assist in cultivating tolerance and understanding. Drawing upon an eclectic group of theorists who highlight the importance of meaningful curricula and education, and using autoethnography as method, I explore aspects of reflective teaching and student empowerment through the medium of multicultural music education.

Connections between my own cultural heritage and the cultures of my students were made through a critical evaluation of my current approach to multicultural music education. Using multiple information sources including student observations, lesson plans, and journals, four key events holding significance for my practice of multicultural music education were identified and discussed in order to illuminate teaching methods that have empowered and enriched the lives of my students.

In this study, Banks' (2007) theory of multicultural education provides the framework for my current practice of multicultural education while Schwab's (1978) four commonplaces (i.e., subject matter, teacher, learner, and milieu) are used to organize the key events discussed in this work. Freire's concept of conscientization (1987) is used to chronicle key cultural events in my life that demonstrate the continued process of my critical consciousness and Greene's (2001) concept of intense noticing is used to illustrate multicultural music education that encourages students to engage in imagination and empathy. Finally, Eisner's (1985, 1988) concepts of educational connoisseurship and meaningful education are used to highlight ways in which aspects of my musical curricular practices speak to larger issues of educational purpose and meaning.

By relaying my own personal stories and the stories of the immigrant students I teach, my hope is to convey the positive aspects of multiculturalism and multicultural music study. This study validates the need in public schools for the kind of meaningful education that brings students feelings of joy, empathy, and purpose. This study connects curriculum studies and music education with issues of social justice by highlighting the role music study can play in affirming diversity and educating for equity.

INDEX WORDS: Autoethnography, Self-study, Curriculum studies, Critical consciousness, English language learner (ELL), Immigrant students, Multiculturalism, Multicultural education, Music, Student empowerment

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B.M.Ed., Berry College, 1983

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A Dissertation Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of Georgia Southern University in

Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

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KATHRYN BLACKMON

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DEDICATION

It's funny: the people most deserving of accolades are the ones least desirous of them. This is the case with my husband, Jim. There would not be a doctorate without him; as a matter of fact, there would not be a *'me'* without him. During this course of education, he has carried me through the pain and suffering of hospitalizations and surgeries, stress and late nights, computer issues, and microwave meals: all with smiles, intelligent suggestions, and words of encouragement. Sweetie, I love you more than I can ever say. This work is dedicated to you with my whole heart because you are and always will be the best man I know.

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I would first of all like to thank all my students: those in my past for helping me see the need for studies such as this, those in my present for bringing me cultural joy, and those in my future because I know you will enter my room with open hearts and searching minds. I also want to thank staff members in my schools, past and present; your help and encouragement meant so much at the hardest of times. And to Dr. Walts- you have been my angel of mercy. I will always remember coming to you with so many questions! You would reply that you hoped you had an answer; and you *always* did. I love and appreciate you for that, and so many other ways you have tried to make my educational and teaching lives easier.

Finally, I wish to thank my committee members; Dr. He, Dr. Schubert, and Dr. Weaver so much for their time and assistance during this endeavor. This has been the fulfillment of a lifelong dream for me that without all of you could not have been accomplished. And especially to Dr. Ross; thank you for your patience, wonderful ideas and suggestions, and all the time you gave to me to make this a reality. You never gave up on me; therefore I could not give up on myself.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Music Brings Us Together—Or Does It?

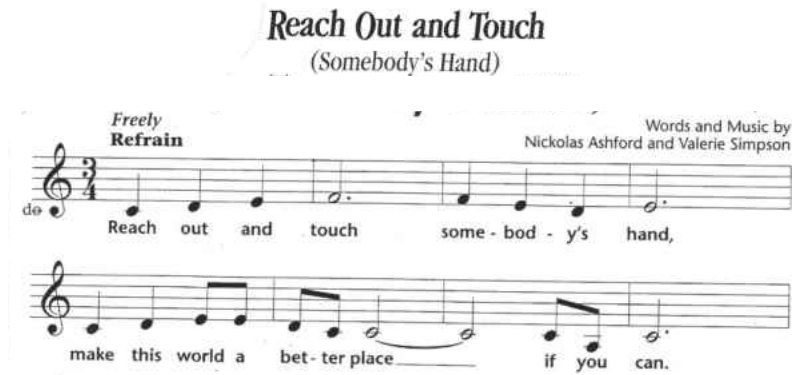


Figure 1. "Reach Out and Touch" (Ashford, N. & Simpson, V., 1970)

I am a teacher, and I am a melody. My thoughts might be beautiful or insightful, honest or intriguing. But still I am only a melody- alone. As a melody alone, I realize too that I am operating from an aesthetic epistemology that challenges traditional ways of knowing. Upon entering my classroom each child is also a melody searching for the right flow of notes to belong, becoming part of our symphony. As a teacher I need the textures my students bring in to my classroom. Through the overcoming of conflicts and dissonance our harmonies are formed. In creating our particular song, we reciprocate and I rely on them as much as they do me. With the addition of the many cultures represented both in our school and within the lessons I teach, the harmonies are enriched, accented, and strengthened. Together we combine to craft the blend that makes our music both united and unique. A melody can come from anywhere around the world. In my opinion the more diverse the collection of tunes, the more beautiful and enduring the final work becomes.

In my life, music has always been used as a descriptive tool. Almost every memory I have centers in some way around music and song, and I know my life has been richer for it. At the age of three, a trip to the *Nutcracker Ballet* stirred something in my soul, and my enthusiasm for Russian music has never waned. From dad's recordings of Prokofiev's *Peter and the Wolf* and Rimsky-Korsakov's *Scheherazade* (listened to while sitting on his lap tapping out the beat at the age of about six), to my high school all state band's performances of Shostakovich's Symphony # 5 and Tchaikovsky's Symphony #4 (based on the Russian folk melody *The Birch Tree*), to my teaching of Khachaturian's *Sabre Dance* in my classroom and more, I love them all. Looking back I now think that listening to and performing the music of other places (beginning as a child) made me more interested in and open to learning about them; this in turn helped pave the way for teaching in a multicultural way.

When I was five years old, I saw "Lady Liberty" face to face. It was the summer of 1965 and my family and I were traveling to Canada to see our beloved relatives. Due to an airline error in timing, we missed our connecting flight from New York to Montreal, so the airline did a very surprising thing: they flew us there by helicopter (they had to use two- we were a family of seven). Our pilot must have done stunt training, because before I knew it I was up close and personal with the largest visage I had ever seen. Even at five, it took my breath away (my mothers' too- she was scared of heights and almost passed out). When I was older, we drove to Montreal by way of Washington, D.C. and New York. My father the historian toured us all over these towns, including a trip to the pedestal. I remember my father reading and explaining these words from the poem "The New Colossus" (Powell, 2001) written by Emma Lazarus, a young Jewish girl from New York, to me when I was but a young child. It was important to him for me to understand what this new land meant to people like me; immigrants.

As an adult, I twice had the opportunity to sing these lines which were transcribed into a moving song by composer Irving Berlin for his musical *Miss Liberty*: “Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to be free. The wretched refuse of your teeming shore, send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me. I lift my lamp beside the golden door!” (Berlin, 1949). I believe not much in life is coincidence- there was a reason I was continuously coming into contact with the idea of peoples from other lands. I now know it was to teach and learn in a multicultural way.

Being a child of immigrants I always had a different take on what education should encompass; I have often felt like an outsider both in educational and musical communities; discordant in my teaching philosophies. When I began my career in 1983, Georgia public schools had little cultural diversity. I was very much a rudimentary teacher- reading music, musical elements, instrument study, and singing. The more than twenty odd years that have flown by have brought a cultural unfolding in the way I work with children. As our schools gained more and more children from different lands, I brought cultural study into my self-written curriculum. We now dance, and sing, and create, and talk about the lives of the children in my classroom. We display tolerance and understanding in a safe and secure environment. When I meet a new child who is scared and unsure, I think back to Momma and Nana’s stories, and I try my best to nurture, protect, and value each child’s multicultural background. Because of my life’s opus and teaching experiences, my educational praxis seeks to bring together the individual melodies of my students to create a classroom symphony of cultural appreciation, acceptance, esteem, and respect. I create in my classroom a place of investigation and learning which can be explored through a framework of critical reflection and multicultural music education.

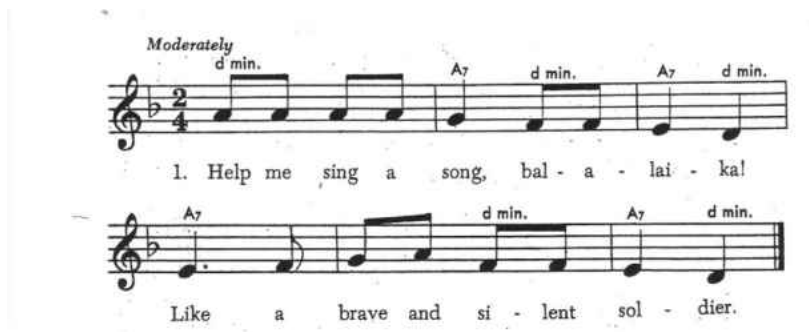


Figure 2. “The Birch Tree” (Russian folk song)

My passion for this inquiry can be traced from my search for my own cultural roots as a child to the same yearning I see in my students as I teach them. To begin, I never knew my Nana, but I am her namesake. When I listen to the song *The Birch Tree* (referenced at the introduction to this section), I am reminded of all I missed, and the parallels in our lives. Nana spoke only Russian in an (at that time) English speaking country (Canada), but like the brave birch tree she learned to bend but not break. Like her I learned to be a ‘silent soldier’, keeping my beliefs inside to take out and reflect upon alone while wanting so badly to share myself with others. Now as an adult and an educator, I see my students desperately desiring to be understood. In this instance it seems culture is an indelible link from the past to the future.

Even as a very young child, I was intelligent and was aware that my family was different from other families in the community. This difference became even more apparent with the onset of public school attendance. I longed to find out about myself, so I of course questioned my parents. My father has a favored saying, ‘what is, is’. I knew his family was from England (by way of Ireland), and he and my mother met and married in Canada. He went on to explain that everyone follows the customs and traditions of family, from the foods they eat to the way they speak. This satisfied me until one Christmas when I received a precious gift from my maternal aunt- a matryoshka doll. The doll was actually a beautifully painted set of nesting dolls, along

with a story relating the need for families to stay together for strength. Knowing about her Russian heritage, my Aunt corresponded to the one relative she knew about in St. Petersburg. As a result, the doll was sent to her. A fascinating story then unraveled about my grandparents escaping from Russia because of the Bolshevik Revolution. My aunt's father died in Canada as a result of wounds obtained during the trip, but his wife stayed in Montreal to scrub floors, take in washing, and raise four children. Because she spoke very limited English or French, life continued to be difficult for her until her death; nine months after I (her namesake) was born.

Though I was justifiably proud of this artifact I was not allowed to bring the doll to school to show for many years. During my youth, a Cold War raged between the Soviet Union and the United States, and my parents spent many years trying to protect our family from harm. The lack of understanding in this country was such that it did not matter that my relatives were not Soviet, and it did not matter that I was just a child; this was very hurtful. Feelings of judgment and prejudice were strong in this country back then and, as unfair as it is, not much has changed today.

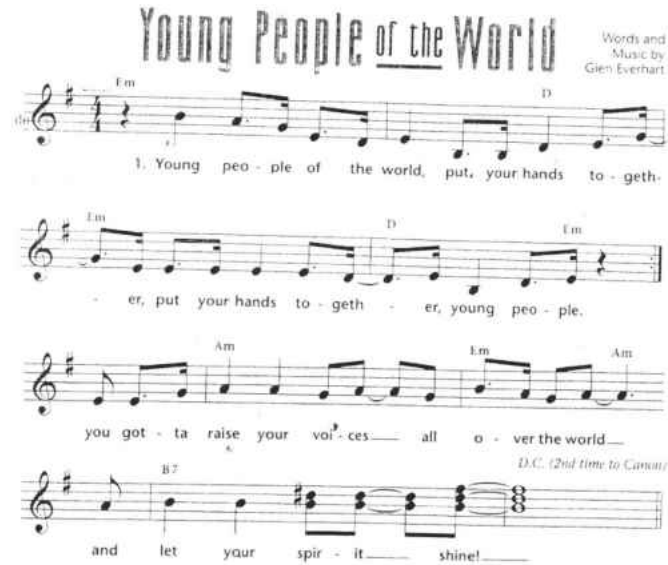


Figure 3. “Young People of the World” (Everhart, G., 1998)

With apologies to music theorists the world over, is there really a point in later life where a non-performer should know the form of a classical piece or that a quarter note receives one beat? But instead what about the joy a child feels when listening to a piece of music or performing a dance from his or her own tradition, and then seeing the empathy and appreciation peers feel, as well? This is teaching that makes an impact, both today and in the future. In my opinion there is a necessity for students to receive a meaningful education that creates and develops within them feelings of appreciation and purpose, and I believe music can and should be used in this regard.

I believe the purpose of education should be enriching students by letting them ‘shine’ and assisting their ability to question. I began placing my students in my sphere of reference, telling my stories and relating them to those of other peoples. My students begin sharing their thoughts and ideas. In doing this, my students and I engage in meaningful education and, in doing so, are continuously creating a haven of community for all who enter.

My students and I have had many discussions on the topic of multicultural education, and have decided on a working definition: multiculturalism and especially multiculturalism in music is a chance to learn about and experience cultures and ethnicities around the world and in the past with the purposes of understanding, appreciating, valuing, and empathizing with others as the desired outcome. I was amazed and proud upon the discovery that my students' and my ideas reflect those of He (2003) that this knowledge will "provide implications for enhancing mutual respect and understanding, developing compassion, empathy and acceptance, and creating possibilities for cultivating a world community" (p. 149). My research in multiculturalism and the multicultural learner (which in my opinion encompasses my entire student body) both validated my motives and teaching style and indicated what could be improved upon to further benefit my students- in my view a task not being undertaken by many fellow educators.

Armed with this definition of multiculturalism, I began teaching with even more vigor and creativity. I am in agreement with Spring (2001) that "simple integration of cultural studies into textbooks and the curriculum was not enough...all teachers and subjects should reflect a multicultural perspective" (p. 409). Of course I still have days of self-doubt, but as I reflect on shared lessons and student interaction I can say I am proud of what my students and I have accomplished together. I am also hopeful some of what we have done will stay with them and help them in the future (and isn't that a teachers' fondest dream?). The multicultural perspective I embrace requires me to avoid 'colorblindness'; to really see a child, you must first understand, accept, and above all respect every aspect of their identity. I have therefore vowed to "not ever be colorblind...to celebrate our differences in the classroom" (Hughes, 2008, p. 139). While the multiculturalism that I embrace facilitates meaningful education for my students, there is a need

for multiculturalism to be infused into the educational curriculum of all teachers so that the benefits received by my students can be extended to all students.

The Need for Multiculturalism in Music:

“The times, they are a’ changing” (Dylan, 1964)

The influx of immigrants to the United States in search of what they perceive as a better life has continued: According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2000), almost 31% of the population of the United States is non-white, and this is projected to rise to 50% by the year 2020. Despite this fact that our country is becoming more ethnically diverse almost by the day, there seems to be no national program used in schools (especially at the elementary level) to help immigrant children feel more comfortable in their new surroundings. A simple and effective move toward (and beyond) tolerance in schools is the incorporation of multicultural education through the use of ethnic music. “Music has many different functions in human life, nearly all of which are essentially social... Music can arouse deep and profound emotions within us, and these can be shared experiences between people from quite different backgrounds” (Hargreaves & North, 1997, p. 1).

Due to the continuously changing face of Georgia, the ideas of multiculturalism and teaching for diversity should be a forefront issue to educators. Multiculturalism and ethnic music are needed in all schools, especially at the elementary level where children are being introduced to so many new ideas, and where so many life-long opinions are formed. To go beyond a mere tolerance to an understanding and respect for the cultures and traditions of one another will help bring about social unity in our students and our communities. It is the opinion of renowned musicologist Shehan-Campbell (2004) that “because of the cultural diversity of populations

across the globe and within our very own local communities, there is musical diversity. Further...curricular subjects for study, including music, are intended to be taught and learned from the perspective of more than a single ‘dominant culture’” (p. 13). In studying the music and cultures of our country and our world, children can be shown that we are all equal in that there is cultural diversity in everyone.

As in the past, with the focus in education continuing to be passing the basics (reading and math) to the detriment of the arts (Eisner, 1978c) it is unlikely that a multicultural music curriculum will ever be mandated through any national or state government. Research also shows that of the national standards used to teach music, those relating to culture have been and are being neglected (Kruse, Oare, & Norman, 2008). However, this does not change the inherent cultural desires of teachers or children. Music educators wishing to respond to the needs of their students are given the task of creating their own multicultural music curricula. In writing this dissertation it is my intention to give educators struggling with this issue a resource. In sharing my stories and struggles in the refinement of my craft I hope to help validate opinions of other teachers dedicated to helping *all* of their students.

The general purposes of this research work are both exploratory and emancipatory. Like all of us, my life experiences combine to influence the way I think and shape the way I am. The research is exploratory in that I will critically assess key events in my life in order to explore the significance of those events in shaping my understanding and practice of multicultural music education.

This research is also emancipatory; by gaining deeper insight into my life and teaching, I hope to continue the process of becoming a better and more critically aware teacher who will, in

turn, provide my students with greater opportunities for their own growth and empowerment. This research is also emancipatory in another aspect; my hope is that, through reading this dissertation, other teachers who find themselves in search of ways to educate their students for empowerment will find this work helpful.

By exploring stories of my life and ways in which my life's cultural journey helps me to better understand my students' cultural journeys I hope to reveal the importance of multicultural education for both teachers and learners. My ultimate goal is to show that for minority children to feel belonging and success in school, their culture must first be explored, accepted and appreciated.

The need for and understanding of culture should be questioned; to question is to learn. There is a freedom that comes from empowerment. In this work I intend to demonstrate that cultural equity can be begun at the elementary level through musical experience. Any kind of educational reform can only come through open dialogue, and the opinion of students should be considered (Woodford, 2005). I will use autoethnography to show that teaching about my personal heritage and using multicultural methods in my classroom in combination has the power to facilitate positive change and to "promote emancipation by generating new and deeper thinking about the effects of current practices" (MacNaughton & Hughes, 2009, p. 43).

Researcher’s Perspective: “The light of you is all I see” (Wonder, 1976a)



Figure 4. “America’s Leading Import” (Ravosa, C., 2000)

The choice of dissertation topic and related resources stems from my belief that music, especially ethnic music, should be considered an integral part of the education of elementary level children. Regardless of social level or area, the United States is a country of blended cultures. Because of the way school populations mirror our societies, “music education needs to reflect the multicultural, multimusical scope of America” (Kelly & VanWeelden, 2004, p. 1). However, this is not the way music (or any subject, for that matter) is presented to our youth.

Although this is a personal study it reflects the current and ongoing national issues of integrating culture in our schools and society with equity. This kind of life-based inquiry can have impact and lead to change within a community: I see this happening with my students and their families. I have used cultural music as a euphonious (agreeable) method of calming racial conflict in my classroom with very positive results for quite some time. It is my hope these ideas will be adapted elsewhere to “foster family, school, and community relations to maintain quality

multicultural education [and] make significant contributions towards understanding identity development and cultural transformation” (He, 2003, p. 149).

Sharing my life with my students makes me proud of whom I am, and I hope as they share with me they feel that same harmony. Of the twenty-eight years of music teaching experience belonging to me, at least ten of these years have been devoted to the exploration and study of multicultural education. I believe this, coupled with my diverse cultural heritage qualify me to instruct my students in a multicultural way. I intend to continue my background research and refine my teaching methods to make sure *all* my students have a chance of belonging and acceptance, as well as the personal joy of creating meaning in music.

Research Questions: “We all want to change the world” (Lennon & McCartney, 1968)

The research questions that guided and provided the focus of this study are:

1. Can critical reflection on significant cultural events in my life shed light on my practice of multicultural music education specifically and the need for implementing multicultural education in general?
2. Is my personal experienced-based method of teaching empowering my students into being more aesthetically aware of culture in my classroom and their world?
3. Does my method of teaching empower the students in my classroom?

Organization of the Study

In chapter one, the introduction, context, and rationale for this study was provided. Chapter two includes a review of literature and discussion of the theoretical framework for this study. The methodology for this study is presented in chapter three while chapter four includes an

account of significant events in my life that relate to my multicultural teaching and learning. In chapter five, I address the research questions guiding this study and explore research challenges and findings associated with this study.

Delimitations

I see my past struggles and thoughts mirrored in the eyes and on the faces of my students; being in a place but not necessarily of it. I am cognizant of this fact every day in my teaching and as I notate and journal the cultural experiences, feelings, and impressions my students and I share with each other. As I work with them I feel our camaraderie; they perceive me as an ally fighting a foe they cannot at times see or understand. As I become more and more involved and share stories and pieces of myself I realize it is sometimes hard to separate their present fight from my past experience. However, because my goal has always been to support them in any way I can, I consider the interconnections between my students' experiences and mine to be a strength and not a weakness.

Additionally, the hierarchy of classroom power is always a potential issue in conducting and interpreting educational research. In my teaching practices, I attempt to show the students that because I am in constant search for my cultural identity, we can share the discovery of culture in my classroom as we teach each other.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Perspective: “I won’t stay in a world without love”

(Lennon & McCartney, 1964)

This work is informed by the theoretical perspective of multicultural education, especially as it relates to the study of music. There are several reasons why I chose this theoretical perspective. Due to the circumstances surrounding my birth, I have a fascination with cultural study. I believe that our cultural and ethnic experiences can be blended into the school setting in many varied and wonderful ways, to the benefit of all students and staff. Our country is (and always has been) a cultural mix; the students arriving on our shores and in our schools need to be proud of who they are as well as what they are becoming. Lastly, music study and culture make a wonderful duet- many songs sung to and by children at the elementary level are from other lands.

Multicultural education displays for us a way to teach all students with fairness and equity. Students must feel accepted and valued in order to learn. This theoretical perspective and literature review shows us that our country has much to celebrate *because* of our cultural and ethnic combinations. People must be made to realize that multiculturalism in our communities and schools is very much an issue of power. All students need a voice, and solutions must be formulated to promote equity.

Defining Multicultural Education

Multicultural education is a reform movement and a continuing process with democratic ideals created for all students (Banks, 1997). The idea of multicultural education was devised to answer the need for achieving unity among diverse populations in schools. The definitions of multicultural education as well as its place in curriculum and curriculum theory continue to be debated. Because of this, there is a need to review existing literature on multicultural education approaches and ideologies and to present critiques that have been initiated against multicultural education before proceeding to a discussion of the approach to multicultural education used to frame this study.

Pratte (1979) named five alternate ideologies of cultural diversity in curriculum and school: assimilation, amalgamation, insular cultural pluralism, modified cultural pluralism, and the open society. Assimilation requires students adopt the values of the dominant culture to the detriment of their own. In amalgamation, students blend together to become homogenized. Cultural pluralism is a divided concept. In insular cultural pluralism students study and celebrate the history of ethnic groups from the perspective of the dominant group: modified cultural pluralism bases its program on immigrants and the American experience while grouping apparently similar cultures. While the open society is Pratte's ideal- justice through humanity freed from the prejudices of history, it is his belief that this is almost impossible to accomplish. In his opinion most Americans perceive the need for more individuality and equity in schools and society, but concerns about conflicting goals, community division, and economics continue to make this difficult. Because of this it is his opinion that cultural pluralism may be the best we can achieve.

Steinberg and Kincheloe (2001) state there are five common ideologies discussed in the teaching of multiculturalism. Monoculturalists believe in Western superiority and promote assimilation. Liberal multiculturalists search for sameness in peoples, believe that inequality stems from lack of opportunity, believe education is not political, and acknowledge assimilation. Pluralist multiculturalist philosophy has become the norm in education, focuses on difference (but as the 'other'), and promotes cultural study and pride while circumventing the topic of oppression. Left-essentialist multiculturalists view the 'other' in unchanging groups that should remain authentic; blended cultures are not seen as important or in need of a voice. Left-essentialists idealize to the extent of expunging historical struggle. Critical multiculturalists derive their thoughts from critical theory and focus on issues of power, privilege, and social order in order to promote equity in schools.

Shields (2009) believes there is no one opinion as to what constitutes multiculturalism in education, citing the five positions posed by Steinberg and Kincheloe (2001). This author takes a critical viewpoint believing that change can only occur when the 'other' is given equitability. In her opinion additive multicultural education is the kind practiced in most schools, and is not the answer. To Shields, a solution could be transformative leadership. Multiculturalism without the study of power imbalance or oppression can perpetuate the status quo. Teachers and administrators who do not treat each child on an individual basis are reproducing the failures of the past. Schools are not places of neutrality, and racism on all levels needs to be addressed.

Spring (2002) defines multicultural education as assimilation of immigrant groups for the benefit of social harmony. When referring to cultural study in schools, he uses the term bicultural education; pluralism, or learning the mainstream while keeping and being educated in

the native or family culture. He concedes that these programs have two benefits: to build up and support self-esteem in children and to help them progress in society.

Disillusionment and Confusion

Spring (2002) sees the politics of the higher-level educational structure as to blame for the situation multicultural educators find themselves in today. He believes government officials and boards of education elected by the majority could not possibly have the best interests of minority children at heart, and therefore do not represent all children in their decision making processes. To Spring, the purpose of multicultural education must not be to merely perpetuate the status quo by placing a band aid over the mouths of the protesting ‘other’ with placating words or assuaging the consciences of upper-class groups by educating skilled laborers.

Some realize the necessity for multicultural education in schools, but are concerned with its conceptualization and presentation. The reasons for the reform of multicultural education are many, and include changing demographics, a rise in youth hate crimes, textbook bias, teacher bias/cultural ignorance, educational underachievement, and a monocultural program of study. Because school is a socially powerful element in a child’s experience, the promotion of pluralism in school should be a focus (Webster, 1997). However, in many instances culture is not taught deeply enough to give students the tools to better understand their world (Santomé, 2008). At times, meager usage of multiculturalism in schools has even discontinued what could have been in-depth learning and discussion (McCarthy, 2008).

Many educators are discordant about the effectiveness of multicultural study. McCarthy (1990) laments that the educationally diverse teachings of the 1970’s and 80’s have given way to the growing popularity of the neo-conservative platform. In his belief that no one is ‘getting it

right' he offers the concept of "nonsynchrony" (p. 99); that the unifying aspects of multiculturalism are thwarted by the diverse needs and desires of ethnicities and cultures. Also underlying this is his neo-Marxist idea because school is just a microcosm of the larger society in order for the menial workforce of the United States to continue, capitalism dictates that the status quo in education must be maintained.

Dual concerns of McCarthy and Logue (2007) are that in many instances multiculturalism is filtered through the manifest of nationalistic British-whiteness, rendering it untrue; also that the tendency to universalize in cultural study muddles the truth. In a later, somewhat auto-biographical chapter, McCarthy (2007) reveals that his cultural study has been motivated by his uncomfortable straddling of the line between the voice of the 'other' (he was born in Barbados) and that of the practicing United States academic and intellectual. He describes this complex situation he finds himself in as the postcolonial predicament; he does not wish to lose his racial self. He sees labeling as a confinement, and to him there should be no racial lines drawn when studying cultures, arguing for curriculum as a search for commonalities.

In the opinion of McCarthy (2008) the boundaries created when traditionalists try to introduce the study of cultural material in school combined with the backing away from the elements of the critical and popular culture and the hatred and fear that continue to be a part of this country as a result of the September 11th tragedy have all converged to make cultural study almost impossible. McCarthy (1990) believes that because the wounds regarding the teaching of multiculturalism are so systemic and deeply felt, the educational world will continue to be at an impasse.

Negativity toward Multiculturalism

Some educators contend that multicultural study is unnecessary and will lead to the destruction of America's national identity, thus continuing the discordant debate. Schlesinger's (1998) concern is that when educators add multicultural study to an already overloaded curriculum, they are denying all children the basic elements of education needed to be successful. He does not believe that teaching children about their own cultural heritage will instill in them pride and a desire to achieve, instead suggesting that because each child's native country is still in existence their traditions will remain. He maintains that it would be better for children to learn about what he calls the American culture; the place in which they call home. The one exception to his self-made rule is when he speaks of the Native American Indian; Schlesinger states that because this people originated on American soil to remove them from the school curriculum would lose that connection and diminish mankind. He goes on to note that cultural study is to take place in the home, the church, and the community.

Ravitch (2010) advances the idea that reforms incorporating racial equity and representational diversity in the 1960's and 70's, though well intentioned, contributed to the lowering of educational achievement in this country. In her opinion in order for the great American school system to rise to its rightful place, schools must become more rigorous in the teaching of basic skills. Though no longer a strong proponent of testing, Ravitch has unshakable faith in standards (which by definition are not individualized) and the 1983 educational document *A Nation at Risk*. She seems to support the creation of a national curriculum and the accompanying mainstream rules and regulations, and diversity to her appears to be students who attend private and religious schools.

Neo-conservatives are more concerned with what they deem as the damaging effects of the inclusion of diversity in classroom study. Bloom (1987) argued that moving away from the ideas of the traditional canon and universal truth in education has negated important thought and discussion, thus failing students. He considered himself a philosopher and decided that the main reason for discord in education today was the presence of relativism; that freedom of thought, pop culture study, and the search for self had subverted the Socratic ideal. Bloom deems that a color blind society where everyone follows the same rules and morals and strives for efficiency will create an educational system of which everyone can be proud.

The Need for Multicultural Education in Schools:

“You may say I’m a dreamer, but I’m not the only one” (Lennon, 1971)

The multiculturalism referenced in American education that began in the 1970’s and was implemented in the 1980’s and 1990’s is still being revised today (Sleeter & Grant, 2009). Like democracy, multicultural education can be understood as an ongoing process. My own perception and implementation of multicultural education encompasses this idea of process as I work with students to identify and express the realities of their lives and honor their own and other students’ cultures. Thus, regardless of the diverse definitions, debates, impediments, and arguments listed above, it is the conviction of this author that multicultural education, when caringly and attentively applied to curriculum, is a valuable tool in educating and empowering culturally diverse students for meaningful and joyous lives.

This study utilizes Banks’ (2007) tenets of multicultural theory in combination with work of select curriculum theorists (i.e., Schwab, Freire, Eisner, and Greene) to conceptualize multicultural music education as a practice of respect, inquiry, and student empowerment. A

discussion of Banks (2007) is presented, followed by discussions of Schwab's (1978) commonplaces, or bodies of experience needed to create curriculum, Freire's (2007) conscientização (conscientization) concepts of the necessity of a personal cultural journey, Eisner's (2002) educational connoisseurship of creative teaching and learning, and Greene's (2001) ideas of intense noticing, "phases of imaginative awareness" (p. 31), and "the wide-awakeness brought about by aesthetic education" (p. 11).

Bank's Tenets of Multicultural Theory

In *Multicultural Education: Characteristics and Goals*, Banks' (2007) discusses the need for *all* students to experience multicultural education. He stresses that instead of polarization, the goal should be to create structural equity and educate students "to become effective citizens in a pluralistic, democratic society" (p. 67). Banks is also adamant in his belief that instead of being a deterrent to democracy, this kind of teaching embraces its true definition. His five dimensions of multicultural Education are 1) integration of content, 2) process of knowledge construction, 3) reduction of prejudice, 4) pedagogy equity, and 5) the empowering of school culture and social structure. These tenets or dimensions regarding the teaching of multiculturalism are very prevalent in related literature.

Integration of content indicates whether or not teachers use cultural and ethnic examples when discussing content and theory (Banks, 1996). Teaching transformatively from this diverse perspective throughout the school curriculum is empowering to ethnically victimized children (Appelbaum, 2002). The critiquing of the canon of traditional knowledge can also lead to transformation and social action among students (Banks, 1997, Banks, 2004; Delpit, 1995; Mahalingham & McCarthy, 2000; Nieto, 2006).

The knowledge construction process refers to the ways teachers lead students in the understanding of cultural bias, perspectives, and assumptions intrinsic to the subjects they are taught (Banks, 1996). In the uncovering of bias, students and teachers work together in a discovery of truth leading to ownership of knowledge instead of 'surface' multiculturalism (Banks, 1997; Cochran-Smith, 1999; Sleeter, 1996).

Prejudice reduction will transpire when teachers lead students to change their attitudes about race by the use of critically selected resources and teaching techniques (Banks, 1996). The building of bridges between cultures enables both pride and respect to occur (Gay, 2000; Hurtado & Silva, 2008; Irvine, 2003) and can assist in cultural conflict resolution (Grant & Sleeter, 2007; Valenzuela, 1995).

A pedagogy of equity is created when teaching is adapted to bring about the achievement of students from diverse backgrounds. Multiple teaching methods should be employed to reach all students (Banks, 1996). When teaching, the presenting of as many points of view as possible while still making the dominant perspective apparent can lead students to understand the hegemony that exists in education and better balance its power structure (Grant & Sleeter, 2007; Sleeter & Grant, 2009; Shields, 2009; Valenzuela, 1995). This in turn can prepare students to act on the issues of oppression they are made aware of and create an atmosphere of social change within the community (Appelbaum, 2002).

Examining and taking steps to improve climate in the areas of student-staff interaction, academics, extra- curricular activities, and the application of grouping and labeling students can empower the culture and social structure of a school positively (Banks, 1996). Leaders who empower and willing teachers and staff who are able to treat each child and situation on an

individual basis, question dominant traditions in education, and acknowledge the power struggle in schools will find success (Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Mahalingham & McCarthy 2000; Miller, 1990; Nieto, 1999; Shields, 2009; Steinberg & Kincheloe, 2001). An aura of unity is then created to give every child the tools to perform in the more and more pluralistic society they can now see themselves as an integral part of (Banks, 1996; Banks, 2002; Gay, 1994; Howard, 1996; Nieto, 1999; Pratte, 1979; Sleeter & Grant, 2009).

Banks' tenets of multicultural education provide the theoretical foundation for my practice of multicultural education and will be used in this study to support the educational practices that I engage in with my students.

Schwab's Building a Better Curriculum

In *Science, Curriculum, and Liberal Education*, Schwab (1978) indicates that for curriculum building to be a positive undertaking, four dimensions, or 'commonplaces' must work in tandem with the purpose of creating a balanced and equitable curriculum for students. When the dimensions of subject matter, learner, milieu, and teacher are accounted for, a strong and meaningful curriculum is the result. When working with minority students developing these dimensions becomes even more important. Schwab believes that the values expressed when creating curriculum to be studied by children are fluid and should be monitored constantly for modification. It should then follow that as our populations change, so should what is being taught.

Schwab (1978) states that each discipline taught must be treated by the educator with care. The teacher must research and study in order to become a historical expert in what is taught, and must also integrate material with empathy and representation. Teachers must be

flexible regarding new material and be willing to learn new methods for educating children. They should possess the ability to relate to all students. Educators must also be aware of any biases they bring into their classrooms in order to deal with them in an honest manner. The purpose of multicultural education should be to empower and build the self-esteem of minority students while creating understanding in all students.

According to Schwab (1980), “what men prize... is determined in good part by the society and subculture which nurtured them. Culture and society are, then, in this light, expressions of the character of humankind” (p. 367). The classroom is but one of a myriad of milieus a child encounters in daily life. The teacher must be able to gift students with the ability to improve or change (as opposed to conforming to) the environments they inhabit. In the building of curriculum important factors should be knowledge and sympathy regarding the children to be taught. What is learned must be relatable, pertinent and have meaning.

Above all, curriculum should be created to instill in students feelings of achievement and satisfaction through discussion and participation. Schwab (1978) calls this search for meaning in curriculum the art of the practical. In *College Curriculum and Student Protest* (1969) Schwab proves himself to be a proponent for building a curriculum around the liberal arts. By doing this he believed it would give students a chance to question and create their own meanings to prevent school from becoming stale. Because in his opinion students were one of the key components of teaching and learning, he felt they should have a voice in curriculum creation. Schwab’s (1978) ideas regarding curriculum and cultural milieu were progressive. To follow his design plan is to give all students a more equitable chance at education.

Schwab's Commonplaces

Schwab's (1978) concepts of curriculum building are based on his disciplines, or commonplaces. He strongly believes in the "coordination of the four commonplaces" (p. 372) and states that curriculum cannot be built without reference to subject matter, learner, milieu, and teacher. To create his fifth discipline of the complete and appropriate curriculum, the four others must be in equal balance. To maintain this balance, Schwab suggests it is necessary for the people doing the planning to also know the other four factors in order to coordinate the optimum learning climate for all children. I want to show that the teacher who is culturally sensitive to the needs and interests of all students is best suited for this job. It is clear that in order to teach all students fairly we must "step away from the scripted stories of school in order to negotiate a curriculum of diversity, a curriculum that fit the moment and the lives being lived there" (Huber, Murphy & Clandinin, 2005, p. 287).

In this study, Schwab's four commonplaces are used to organize my recounting of significant events in my life. These commonplaces, subject matter, teacher, learner, and milieu, combine to form the curriculum of my life; their use in organizing my autoethnographic reflections demonstrates interconnections between curricular occurrences within and beyond the school environment.

Freire's Empowering the Multicultural Learner

There is a point of awakening Freire (1973) calls "conscientização (critical consciousness)" (p. 15) when people see their circumstances as unfair and want to take steps to correct them. In order for change to be lasting, it must come from within: a purpose of education is to create this self-awareness. This is a political statement, but then school is a political place; especially when you are the 'other' (Freire, 1973). A curriculum removed from their reality is

not able to develop this critical consciousness in children. To facilitate the awakening, a contribution of the educator must by necessity be a critical one. These children need to be made savvy to their situation, and those who are privileged to work with them should teach in an atmosphere of wonder and with the idea of problem solving as an intimate activity (Freire, 1973).

To encourage the process of *conscientização*, Freire (2007) begins to question, developing a pedagogy with the idea of “overcoming a fatalistic understanding of history” (p. 6). In education students can be shown they are present products of their cultures but also always striving for more. If students are not allowed questioning and creativity but are just exposed to the traditional methods of ‘teacher as authority’, no transformation can take place; only the perpetuation of domination will occur. To Freire (1987) this *conscientização* is juxtaposition between the individual and the group; the collective consciousness brought on when the self recognizes the oppressive circumstance and then the society comes together to facilitate a change.

The standard that Freire (2004) lives by seems to be that while change may be difficult, it is always possible, and that history is a possibility and not a determination (2007). He insists that having the vision and acting on it can overcome the status quo. The obstacles of freedom are not hereditary, but socially and politically created (Freire, 1998). What is most important is the progressive drive to uphold and respect another’s right to exist. Freire proclaims that it does not matter how long this striving for reform takes, it is owed to the people of each cultural past who made our present endurable. As for what is to come, Freire (2004) believes we must not condition ourselves into acceptance: “The future does not make us. We make ourselves in the struggle to make it” (p. 34).

Freire (1998) reveals if “educators choose to be democratic...they live the difficult but possible and pleasurable experience of speaking to and with learners. [This] is a positive way for democratic teachers to contribute...to the training of responsible and critical citizens” (p. 114). Part of multicultural teaching is hearing the learner and removing ourselves from the lack of faith that seems to surround these students. We must give them the power to discuss and create and become; the desire to see their situation in a different way (Freire, 2007). Traditional education does not enable this listening, does not prepare for independent thinking, and consequently cannot transform someone’s reality (Freire, 1973).

History gives us the perspective from which to begin. As educators, we must search for the reasons children are oppressed, and then help them create and implement the steps to overcome this oppression (Freire, 2007). Freire (2004) speaks of conservative educators as having the “mind-narrowing objective of immobilizing history” (p. 101), and instead urges us to realize our students are equally unfinished human beings full of hope and waiting to learn. What and how we teach them is their hope for the future. Freire (1998) fervently believes that progressive teaching takes bravery, but that the rewards are worth it. Instead of serving students an education, he imagines the better path as creating a reciprocated learning dialogue (using the art of language in the creation of meaning) that encourages independent thought.

Freire and Conscientization

According to Freire, conscientization is the critical point when a child (or person) begins to place themselves in the moment of political circumstance and see they can become empowered *through* and not *in spite of* their identity. It is also the time when the teacher should willingly become the facilitator, and not necessarily the leader, in class discussion (Freire, 2004). The job of the educator, therefore, is to really hear the learner, accept their circumstance, and work with

them to achieve success together. To Freire (2007) an educator's goal should be to use wonderment and questioning of the situation (p. 32) to transform a child's reality (p. 35).

I use Freire's concept of conscientization to chronicle key cultural events in my life that demonstrate the continued process of my critical consciousness. This critical consciousness refers to greater understandings about my life, my teaching, and ways in which the provision of multicultural education empowers the students that I teach.

Eisner's Connoisseurship and Criticism

As part of the 33rd annual *Distinguished Lecture Series* for the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Eisner (1978a) discussed the position of the arts in schools. It was his opinion that the continued focus on basic skills to the detriment of other subjects was creating an unbalanced and unworthy curriculum, and that this lack of meaning and artistry would lead to competition and loneliness in students. Instead, a connoisseurship; a private appreciation for teaching and learning could be created in our students. The public expression of this connoisseurship- educational criticism- would then be used to assist students and teachers in helping each other to describe, interpret, and evaluate. (In a later work Eisner (1996) states that criticism should be used to improve the quality of the field of education.) To Eisner, ideas of educational significance should have emotion, meaning, and worldly artistic form. All humans have the need to create meaning in all that they encounter in their lives. This creating takes both elasticity and intelligence. (Eisner, 1978b).

Eisner (1996) makes a plea for a validity and richness within the teaching and learning experience. He believes this will result in satisfaction for all children. Creating in students this connoisseurship and the ability to positively critique themselves and each other would be a better design to reveal distinctive talents and abilities (Eisner, 1999). Artistic participation should

refine our senses, engage our imagination, make tangible our experiences, and give new avenues for addressing creative thinking and ways to express meaning. To Eisner (2002b) this creation of meaning and preparation for life is the true purpose of education.

To Eisner (2002a), the designation of meaning encompasses feeling and emotion as well as thought. He gives aesthetic meaning the term “forms of representation” (p. 8). This is the expression of feeling into creation and then cultural communication. He goes on to say that our senses create these forms of representation, and that what we choose to symbolize comes from the experiences we receive. Humans are meaning-making beings, and education should foster the ability to construct and intensify meaning. When curriculum restricts this flow, aptitudes for all students to develop and achieve meaning are severely limited (Eisner, 1994).

Relevant to cultural study in school, Eisner (1998) states “the taken for granted is seldom seen” (p. 3). To him, adaptation is not the answer; he sees the arts as opening our eyes to fresh ideas and new possibilities. Eisner believes that to continue the democracy that should be America, multiple forms of representation should be used in schools to enable all students to develop their gifts in an equitable environment. Participation in the arts is more equal to what a student will experience in life. Learning in the arts also gives students permission to explore possibilities and understand their own emotions, as well as the emotions of their community of artists (Eisner, 2002a). For it to have a profound and lasting effect on children, education should be treated aesthetically. Students who see their own worth are more likely to see the worth in others and feel they belong (Eisner & Ecker, 1966). This aesthetic satisfaction goes beyond the arts to all worthwhile human activity (Eisner, 1985b).

Eisner (2005) affirms that a gift of artistic study in school is "...to enter into a culture and to grasp it in terms that are as close as possible to those who live it. Art is one of the vehicles humans have created that makes such participation possible" (p. 126). In Eisner's (2002a) vision of the artistic classroom, the teacher becomes the facilitator, with the ability to assist students- and to change and tailor lessons to represent all and give a richness and depth to the curriculum. Eisner (1985a) is also a firm believer that what people experience, they become. Education influences the way children view the world, so in a democratic society equal representation is imperative. In the mind of Eisner (1985b) imbuing students with the ability to critique what is studied with an eye toward culture and aesthetics in order to facilitate change would be an empowering experience.

Eisner's Educational Connoisseurship

Eisner (1988) combines inquiry, curriculum design, and evaluation aesthetically with one goal in mind- to educate the whole child. According to Eisner, inquiry should be based on making schools a better place for children. Curriculum should be designed for the many interests, levels, and abilities of all the students involved; a reciprocal approach and hands-on approach to learning. Evaluations should be constantly updated in order for teachers and schools to assess the quality of their teaching. What Eisner (1985, *The Art of Educational Evaluation*) is calling for here is an entire system of educational criticism; a field of study dedicated to the connoisseurship and aesthetic beauty of creatively educating children. For teachers craving autonomy and respect, for students yearning for interest, input, and meaning, and for schools seeking vision this is a strong and inspired plan for the future.

Eisner's concepts of educational connoisseurship and meaningful education will be used to highlight ways in which aspects of the musical curricular practices I engage my students in speak to larger issues of educational purpose and meaning.

Greene's Aesthetic of Imagination, Metaphor, and Empathy

Greene's (2000) view of education (and life) is about the freedom of perspective, whatever that perspective may be. "If it is indeed the case that the arts occupy the margin in relation to the conformist, the respectable, the moralistic, and the constrained, and if that marginality can be affirmed, the problems raised by multiculturalism may take on a different form" (p. 28). To her, honored places belong to those with the courage to create, not necessarily those in power. To be given the gifts of freedom and imagination enabling us to create is what matters. This cultural creativity is what creates a connection of empowerment and meaning.

In combining multiculturalism and imagination, Greene (2000) sees the open possibility of coming together and interpreting our circumstances through the arts; "becoming a friend of someone else's mind" (p. 38) and then empowering them to feel pride in being who they are. The arts give students a chance to state an opinion- creating a connection while still being free to choose their identity (Greene, 2007). When these true connections are made we become a community of thinkers that appreciate commonalities and respect differences (Greene, 2000).

When Greene (1988) speaks of cultural remembrances as "voices aching to be heard" (p. 87) I think about my students and their desire to be listened to and understood. In studying the music of these children we are opening our circle to let them in while in turn accepting and appreciating them as well. Greene laments that the wedge of support for pluralism that had opened in public school now seems to be closing again due to the educational constraints of

tracking and testing. To her induction and assimilation are not equal to freedom in any way, and as educators we must resist the pressures of essentialism. We must instead create classrooms of light in dark times and dark places. Freedom is power: freedom is also the right to be different.

Aesthetic education is not superfluous, but central to a child's education, and is the main part of their imaginative development (Greene, 2001). Within the aesthetic, Greene (2007) sees metaphor as an instrument for the social imagination. Human nature is fluid- not static, and changes with each interaction. Greene (2000) believes that children in the minority seem to have a lack of agency, and that arts classrooms should be the places to go beyond any preconceived notions school has for them. The use of metaphor in learning can awaken students to possibility and give them the courage to delve into the unknown. In Greene's (2001) opinion, the link between metaphor and empathy is crucial. Especially in today's times, we must have "the capacity to see through another's eyes, to grasp the world as it looks and sounds and feels from the vantage point of another" (p. 102).

Aesthetic education goes far beyond the appreciation of and for the arts. It involves the teaching of all students to intensely notice both artistic performance and their surroundings, providing them opportunities to believe in themselves and their opinions (Greene, 2001). The arts give us leave to notice, to notice is to question, and to question is to grow to completeness (Greene, 1988). Children of all lands want to know that their opinions and experiences count; they want to become an aesthetic part of the world they share with others (Greene, 2001). Creating this empathy is at once an empowering, feeling, and responsibility-making experience. This sensitivity and emotion toward others is what Greene (1994) suggests schools help develop. "We know enough about the racism and classism that impose invisibility on so many and make the weaving of community so difficult. We know, too, that an absence of imagination is

involved when that happens” (p. 18). Participatory aesthetic experiences will enable children to create personal, cultural meaning, from Greene’s (2001) perspective a main goal for education- and give them the imagination to understand.

Greene's intense Noticing

In aesthetic education, multiculturalism, instead of being a barrier, opens up new avenues of expression and discussion among peoples. It enables us to reach beyond to see what all cultures have to say. Greene (2000) asserts that in education permission should be granted for all to hear and view the expressions of other lands and peoples- this is a privilege. She sees metaphor as the vehicle for the empathetic expression of feeling and understanding toward others unlike ourselves. Greene (2001) states “Is not that what many of us hope to bring about in classrooms, as our worlds expand?” (p. 102). Aesthetic education is open ended and questioning, can lend itself to any educational endeavor, and transcends the concepts of traditional education (Greene, 2001).

In this study, Greene’s (2001) concept of intense noticing (she also refers to this as enhanced awareness or enlightenment) will be used to describe multicultural music education that encourages students to engage in imagination and empathy. Multicultural music study can be used to create feelings of unity and understanding in students while also assisting them in their search for personal meaning and identity. Greene (2001) shows us that music is like life in that its discovery is a process never finished. I see the study of aesthetic education as Greene does, a creating of the openness and possibility in which children “suddenly understand their own lives in relation to all that surrounds” (p. 7).

Summary of Theorists: “If it is magic, then why can’t it be everlasting?”

(Wonder, 1976b)

In the quartet of educators and theorists used to guide this study, there are commonalities and contradictions. Although an artist, Eisner studied with Schwab who was a man of science. In Schwab’s (1978) opinion teaching was a universal project in that because of the organic connections between all subjects, all subjects (as well as the entire school milieu) impacted all students equally. Where they converged in education was in the building of curriculum for the betterment of educating children. Whereas Eisner (2002) focused on working with children through the promotion of the arts as subject matter, both Freire (1983) and Greene (2001) chose to go beyond the subject into the political causes of the oppression of the people they represented. Eisner (1978b) seemed also to be about the creation of personal, sensory meaning; Greene (1994) and Freire (2007) wanted people to realize their connection with and responsibility to the world.

However, these theorists are all in unison that the search for personal and cultural meaning must be inherent in each lesson when teaching children. Using the imagination to affect change is also a concept they share. They stress that teaching is best done from a personal perspective and that leading students to see they have a stake in what is accomplished will build a brighter future. What these educators seem to suggest is that teaching aesthetically and with meaning towards equity can bring about a difference in the attitudes of children and within the community. The themes presented by these theorists continue to assist me in my ongoing multicultural instruction.

Exemplary Studies in the Use of Music for the Cultural Growth of Students

A collaborative study was done by the Society for Ethnomusicology and the Music Educators National Conference (MENC). Experts on the music and cultures of Southeast Asia, China, West Africa, the Latino culture, the Amazon, the Middle East, African Americans, and Native Americans were asked to collaborate on a series of lesson plans to be published. Included were suggestions about cultural respect in teaching and performance, as well as the notion that teaching fewer cultures in more depth was more impactful and preferable to a broad survey format. Also of note was the suggestion that students learn about the culture and mores of each group in addition to simply the study of music to achieve better intercultural understanding (Shehan-Campbell, 1996).

A result of this study was the decision that the values and attitudes wrapped in world music enable its integration into other subjects in the school curriculum. Searching for commonalities in the unfamiliar can lead to personal enjoyment as well as understanding of and respect for others. The common college canon of Western music only must be re-thought in order for music educators to experience (and then teach) the musics of all our students in order to facilitate cultural growth (Shehan-Campbell, 1996).

In her efforts to promote the idea of a decolonizing discourse among musicians, Bradley (2006) performed a study to assess opinion on racial opinions and practices among students. She notes that music study is sometimes thought about as isolationist and cloistered, and sees this as untrue: that the incorporation of multicultural music can in fact encourage racial communication and promote the concept of social justice by exposing students to material they might otherwise not experience. Using a sample of students pulled from a teen-aged vocal chorus embarking on a

cultural music tour, Bradley did a year-long series of pre and post performance interviews regarding opinion on the relation of music to language and race.

In her work, Bradley (2006) shows that debunking popular myths and stereotypes in cultural study advance tolerance and understanding from all sides. As students see the need for honesty from others in exploring their cultural experience, they can see (perhaps for the first time) that the reverse is also true. In her interviews with Canadian high-school age choir members during a one-year performance venue of African music, she constructs a discourse where boundaries are both evident and problematic; but also in reflections during exit interviews with these same students they share moments of oneness and meaning in cultural musical performances and musical experiences dealing with current world issues (i.e., apartheid, racism). Denying race in music education reproduces the status quo in that traditional (Western) music is valued and all other music is not. Multiculturalism works with the humanness that shared musical experiences can evoke.

Bradley (2006) states that as these adolescents learned and performed this African freedom music they began to understand and accept their part in this multicultural world. When learning of the history and meaning behind this music, commonalities are discovered between races and peoples. The result can be an intensely personal and lasting experience for every child. Bradley encapsulates this self-understanding through cultural study with the term “multicultural human subjectivity” (p. 17), suggesting it will bring about openness toward the unfamiliar as well as expressions of social justice in everyday life.

Case study methodologies were employed by Blair and Kondo (2008) using the music of Japan, Chen-Haftek (2007) using Chinese music, and Nam (2007) employing the music of

Vietnam and Africa. Respect, appreciation, and valuing difference seemed to be the focus of these lessons.

In a case study involving two classes of intermediate elementary level students (the exact number of students was not provided), Blair and Kondo (2008) entered these classrooms, taught a series of multicultural lessons on listening and instrument performance, and then interviewed selected students regarding the outcome. The rationale of this study was two-fold: to see if students would be open to the multicultural experience, and to see how they would connect these new understandings to pre-existing knowledge. Blair and Kondo also conducted the study with the purpose of students' approaching the cultural music of Japan with respect. The researchers wanted the students to connect to any previous knowledge and learn to honor the new music and each other. The article seemed to also address bilingualism, and discussed a dual metaphor called the iceberg- a comparison of the bulk of the iceberg (below the surface) being the concepts students already know relating to music and language, and the tip the newer material studied. Students need not relearn everything; just build a bridge from the new material to what is already known.

A valid point was made by Blair and Kondo (2008) in that in our quest to study the music of many cultures, we sometimes neglect the music of the students already in our classes. Another interesting thought was that the conceptualizing of new music must be accomplished through the musical knowledge already possessed. It was indicated by the researchers that students made the connection between the musical sounds they were hearing and playing and the Japanese culture. Blair and Kondo (2008) stated that they believed experiencing Japanese music created meaning and acceptance in their students. However, although these positive outcomes

were stressed, no student opinion was given in the research. There was also no mention of any ethnic students within the study.

In her case study *Contextual Analyses of Children's Responses to an Integrated Chinese Music and Culture Experience*, Chen-Hafteck (2007) involved six classes of fifth and sixth grade students and had teachers employ two methods of music study; the socio-cultural application and the musical concept-based approach. The socio-cultural method (also known as multiethnic music education) involved studying music and culture in its authentic context (as much as was possible), using instruments, song, and discussion of life style and struggle inherent to each specific ethnicity. The musical concept-based method (or world music education) used cultural music to emphasize the study of musical concepts only.

In the music and cultural study by Chen-Hafteck (2007), several positive outcomes were related: a heightened awareness of cultures outside the norm in school, and cultural pride among minority students. As a result of this study, Asian students told their teachers they felt happier about being in school, and that the other students better appreciated and understood them. Two Chinese students in particular gained positive outcomes from this study. One student could not contain her excitement upon hearing a native song sung in China, and began talking to others in both Chinese and English (overcoming her previous shyness). Another child stated (after writing her name in Chinese characters) that she felt interest in her culture by others for the very first time since arriving in America.

Using world music to learn and review musical elements created stronger feelings in those students already showing cultural awareness; however, negative attitudes did not change. Only when employing a socio-cultural approach with much student interaction did all student

attitude change for the positive. Teachers working in this study voiced that students were more open to new music, and that all races of children in their classrooms showed increased understanding and respect for one another as a result of these lessons. Chen-Hafteck (2007) also states the need for more qualitative research and adequate support in this field.

Nam (2007) also used a case study methodology while working with children on her research. Nam worked with sixty students in the fourth grade in two elementary schools in the Southwestern United States, her purpose being a need to see if exposure to multicultural music (singing and activities) would lead to children's value and appreciation of others, culturally. Students attending one school received lessons on African drumming; the other students experienced a variety of cultures in music. Open-ended questionnaires and interviews were collected. Results stated that while most students enjoyed the music, responses showed no increase in the valuing of the related cultures. The researcher suggested that a more in-depth and guided study might lead to more positive results. Even though Vietnam was one of the countries whose music was studied and the researcher was Vietnamese, she chose to have no interaction with the students during the course of the study only to observe (videotaping) and complete the final interview segments.

Although in the previous studies it was made clear these researchers had a personal cultural stake in the outcomes, for whatever reason most decided to stay apart from the students involved. Although in these studies positive outcomes were stressed, there seemed to be a lack of student opinion or perspective given in the research. Also of note was that the reasons the researchers chose to do a cultural study were not explained, and the ethnicity of the students was not mentioned.

Epstein (2010) employs a more interactive and student-centered approach to her work. She relates being introduced to *Beyond Today* as a model for the purpose of working with the concerns of teaching in the urban school, and was asked to study this program and the opinions of the fourth and fifth grade students involved over the course of one year. Three representational schools in New York City were chosen; one mainly white, high socioeconomic, one black and Latino with a low socioeconomic standing, and the last being ethnically diverse.

The goals of this program were created to specifically address overcoming the mindset of segregation using a social Reconstructionist curriculum; focusing on the areas of community, crossing borders, leadership of students, and student-created social action plans. Lessons were created using materials and books about prejudice and resistance, and students were asked to share their thoughts both verbally and in a journal. Creative teaching approaches such as role play, graffiti boards, modern and ethnic dance and music were used, and students were also given social time in order to build friendships. Within the context of these activities students were asked to reflect on how their treatment of and respect or disrespect for each other mirrors their school communities, and what steps they could take to alter each situation.

Epstein (2010) states that because students saw their experiences as central to the study they became empowered to see the need and to make authentic change within their peer groups. Observation by the supervisors of the program noted that although hesitant at first, most students became adept at working out racial conflicts, building inter-racial connections, and creating ways of understanding each other while still respecting each other's differences. In teacher discussion of the project it was decided that students had an interest in others and a desire to learn about diversity, and that they would be open to anti-racist ideas. Epstein (2010) goes on to share that it

takes bravery for students to go against the accepted norm of segregationist behavior, and teachers should take responsibility in supporting anti-racist ideals.

Summary of Literature Review:

“All we are saying is give peace a chance” (Lennon & McCartney, 1969)

Multicultural education continues to be a reform movement created to speak to educational inequalities both within the school and between the school and home environments. Though the vocal cacophony of opinions seem to be in accord when speaking of the need for multicultural education, supporters of this reform insist that the needs of the ‘other’ are not being met in the mainstream instruction that most students receive (Barone, 2002). Diversity and learning are compatible in that they are both personal and communal; educators who learn about the families and communities in which they teach have a positive impact on their students (Schwab, 1978). Schools that care enough to teach multiculturally will reap the rewards of a population that can reside in an atmosphere of respect and peace (Quintero, 2006).

In sum, there is much literature to support the need for multicultural education in schools. Of concern to this researcher is the apparent lack of personal and hands-on teacher experience or student opinion cited within the bulk of literature studied. Apple (2001) is attuned to this idea stating that while the meta-theoretical work of multiculturalism in schools has a crucial purpose, the lived realities of the actual student must be understood. Also, while several government agencies and many music educators, theorists, and researchers (as previously noted) remark on the need for multicultural study in music, there seems to be a scarcity of literature (especially current) in which to study and report.

Traditional one-size-fits-all teaching methods (Eisner (2002) refers to this as ‘non-teaching’) are not particularly effective with the children of today. In order for children to want to learn they must sense your investment in them. Making yourself vulnerable to them in your teaching by sharing personal and cultural stories is one way to accomplish this.

Being in an environment of reciprocal trust is much different than one in which you have been subjected (Freire, 1983). In sharing cultural narratives, this trust has already been built. Obviously the outcome of this study is going to be a different one. It is my hope that my paper will fill the need of educators like myself who have searched for their own cultural identity and feel empathy toward others who do the same.

In the research reviewed involving multicultural teaching the impression was given that these educators were employing materials and methods that were impressed upon them. The negative impact on children when they are led to think (by the attitude of the teacher) that what they are is not important enough to merit study is unconscionable. However, when students view their instructors and mentors teaching from a place of personal meaning and keen interest they are more apt to see the necessity of learning and then sharing their own opinions regarding their impressions of what they learned.

In the few studies with children I was to uncover, there seemed to be a decided lack of interaction between the researcher and the student. When students were questioned it seemed to regard interest only; their opinions considering the creation of empathy or critical consciousness were not discussed or noted. Of interest regarding the focus of the subject matter was a lack of minority student opinion throughout the research. There also seemed to be no evidence of teachers getting involved and actually sharing and discussing cultural experiences together.

The musicians whose work was reviewed tended to treat multicultural music as an exhibition of sorts (Hanley, 2010) but there seemed to be no ongoing cultural study accompanying the isolated lessons. Though multicultural theory was cited and related to the teaching of music, there seemed to be very little evidence of praxis. Also, the personal experiences and stories of students within the classroom were not mentioned. And although there was mention of the importance of music in the multicultural curriculum, there seemed to be no mention of using aesthetic means (Eisner, 2005) as a way to learn in other areas to make connections for student retention and feelings of pride within the school and community.

My study is unique in that although I have cited case studies and action research projects, none have the enduring quality of autoethnography (Ellis & Bochner, 2000). I put the pieces of my life I have discovered into the curriculum I have designed; I cannot teach any other way. Through the course of writing this paper, I realize how my methods of cultural and ethnic teaching and sharing my own experiences have brought about lasting change in my students. In my classroom cultural music and study is also used as an instigator in the discussion of issues of oppression; this was not seen to be the case in the literature I reviewed. My students look forward to and respond to my lessons as they share questions and cultural insights with each other, building trust. This mutual trust will enable my students to follow me into more and more cultural endeavors as we progress in unison.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

“All my heart can hear is your melody” (Wonder, 1976a)

There's Just Something About a Song
Words and Music by Janet and Ted Wilson

There's just some-thing a - bout a song that
seems to make ev - 'ry-thing bet-ter, There's just some-thing a - bout a song -
that's es - pe-cial-ly spe - cial when we sing to-geth-er. Ev-'ry-bod-y's got a
song to sing. So come on, let the raft-ers ring - with a song.

Figure 5. “There’s Just Something About a Song” (Wilson, J. & Wilson, T., 2000)

I am a musician, an educator, and a storyteller, and it is surprising how often these three crafts seem to intertwine. I always wanted to be a teacher. When I was a little girl (in about the third grade) the thought of sharing ideas with others and the thought of impacting and being a part of so many lives literally gave me chills. Even through all the legislation and budget cuts, twenty-eight years later I still feel the same way. It is a miracle to me to watch a child discover something they did not know before, and to own the idea from thereafter.

I have always had a special love for music. I experience everything through song; emotions, memories, love. To many people (especially those in power) music is not important. But it is to me, and to my students. I find the more cultural study we do, the more meaning we

create together; we are cantabile- we flow together in the same key. In my classroom we close the doors and breathe a sigh of relief. I firmly believe every child has a gift, and it is the purpose of the educator to uncover and help develop that gift. My students are given every musical and artistic opportunity I can provide for them.

In this chapter, I relate the groundwork for the implementation of my research. This is a qualitative autoethnographic study of how my continuing cultural search impacts my teaching and the lives of my students. I realize that even though there will probably never be a national or state level curriculum for the teaching of multicultural education or multicultural music education, I believe teaching from my personal perspective will empower and enrich the lives of all my students. Using autoethnography for the choice of method is a strong one:

“Autoethnographies place personal experience within social and cultural contexts and raise provocative questions about social agency and socio-cultural constraints” (Reed-Danahay, 2009, p. 28).

Being a first generation American has emboldened the continued search for my cultural roots, especially as regards to music and culture. I know the negative feelings associated with being noticed as ‘different’. Interestingly, the more study I do into my own life, the more I find I can empathize with the stresses some of my students feel every day by not being a part of the traditional norm in education. Therefore, one significant aspect of this study is that in teaching from a personal and relatable perspective in a small way I can share the struggles of my students with the purpose of overcoming this hegemony. In expressing my cultural sensitivity to all my classes, I am adding validity and worthiness to the concept. It is also my hope that even though there is no official mandate, a [music] teacher reading this study will perceive the necessity of multicultural study and be inspired to teach with the goal of cultural equity.

Autoethnography is a method of research that allows me to share and compare my cultural narratives with those of my students for the critical purpose of informing the reader of the need for multicultural study in the music classroom and the school curriculum. Research indicates the method works well in an educational setting (Ellis, 2004; Reed-Danahay, 2009; Wall, 2006). Through personal stories and experiences this methodology will capture my perceptions of my students' desires to belong and to be understood. He (2003) imparts that when using types of inquiry such as this "researchers bring personal experience to bear on research, embed research in communities, respect participants' voices, validate the knowledge of communities, and advocate on behalf of these communities" (p. 148).

Steinberg and Kincheloe (2009) state that because there are so many facets to multiculturalism in education, it is important to discover the purpose of the study as well as if there are any hidden agendas to uncover. My purpose is to see if my self-designed music curriculum and cultural study along with the personal stories I tell help build acceptance, appreciation, and empowerment in my students. If there is an agenda to this study, it is to blatantly promote the marginalized students I am privileged to work with through the study of their own music, as well as to create feelings of acceptance and appreciation in all my students regarding the music of other cultures.

Autoethnography as Research Design: "The long and winding road"

(Lennon & McCartney, 1970)

Wall (2008) states the purpose of autoethnography is to expand social understanding by giving personal experience a voice. My hope is to use autoethnography for the purpose of making connections between my life narratives and the stories my students share. If I, like

Afonso and Taylor (2009), believe that my purpose as a teacher is to lead students into becoming critically aware of their circumstances, I must use autoethnography as the methodology for my work. This method enables the unveiling of cultural myths educators might still be clinging to that perpetuate the reproduction of marginalization. Another benefit of autoethnographic research is that the researcher and participants are understood to be jointly constructing the research experience. Although I use the term autoethnography, it falls under the umbrella of personal narrative, autobiography, and insider ethnography (Ellis, 2009). By critically examining my stories as they relate to the education of my students, I will also be exploring the extent to which my teaching is enabling my students to feel empowerment and pride in their cultural heritage despite the lack of genuine affirmation of cultural diversity within Georgia public schools.

Autoethnography as Reflective Practice

To the qualitative researcher one of the ways meaning is revealed is through metaphor. Metaphor not only allows us to experience (as best we can) the situations of others, it also allows us the ability to begin to understand the unfamiliar and give it significance (Shank, 2002). He (2003) insists that metaphors form the thoughts of teachers and help them place personal knowledge into an educational context. This use of personal experience in research will help create consideration and acceptance between cultures and make contributions of existing theory; the connection between personal experience and theory supports my use of autoethnographic research for this project.

Ellis (2004) states that empathy is created through the sharing of stories and a shortening of the distance between the researcher and the participant; the process of performing

autoethnography puts the researcher in the place of the ‘other’, creating compassion and deep understanding. Doing an autoethnography “require[s] courage, self-insight, and an ability to articulate feelings. An ‘ah-ha’ moment must be reached where people understand themselves better or gain new insight...” (p. 296). In placing myself among my students as a fellow participant in our search for cultural identity, I am opening myself up to them and in turn am encouraging their trust in a very personal way. Reading narrative creates an author to reader connection; it is my hope that readers of this study will feel this connection and take a step toward the cultural understanding of their students, as well.

Autoethnography is overlaying the experiences of personal life on a culture or group (Wall, 2008). It demands self-questioning and introspection and can leave the researcher vulnerable. However, the passion and honesty put forth within this kind of qualitative work creates a deep understanding of both the self and the others involved. Autoethnography as method is appropriate for use in my research because I want to understand the thoughts and actions associated with my teaching at a deeper, more meaningful level.

The use of autoethnography in this study is important because it is a format capable of conveying the complexity of the interaction between me and my students for the purpose of exploring a subject needing more attention. The intensity of this method urges readers to empathize because autoethnography is not just about collecting information; it concerns participation and intense interest. When Ellis (2004) says, “I learned as much from what I felt as from what I observed” (p. 10), I believe she is referring to the deep feelings that occur when comparisons are made between researcher and student experiences. I trust the narrative component of autoethnography will also create these deep feelings and connections in the reader.

It is the opinion of Reed-Danahay (1997) that there is “an increasing trend toward self-reflectivity in all realms of writing” (p. 1). She considers that autoethnography is actually a combination of three types of writing that are becoming more prominent: native anthropology (the study of one’s own group), ethnic autobiography (stories written by those in a minority group), and autobiographical ethnography (placing personal narrative in ethnographic writing). Reed-Danahay believes this combining occurred because of an awareness of power issues and the need for representation in literature.

Autoethnography as Method

Reed-Danahay (2009) defines autoethnography as a process with the goal of uniting the self (autobiography) with ethno (culture). She acknowledges that there are many terms synonymous with autoethnography including self-ethnography, critical ethnography, and self-narrative, and that the method is useful to educators, giving them an insider’s perspective for the improvement of praxis. While there is a focus on the written culture that dominates, in her opinion a strength of autoethnography is that it centers on observation, reflection, and personal experience to culturally critique social and classroom situations for the improvement of practice in fields such as education.

Chang (2008) states that because there is always a connection between the self and others and a narrative of the self provides a porthole into comprehension, autoethnography is an excellent tool for teachers to “gain profound understanding” (p. 13) of both themselves and others. She decides that in questioning the very meaning of culture a place is opened up for autoethnographic inquiry to fill. Even though culture is intrinsically communal, the fact that we

are all socially and personally created removes the distance between observer and observed, giving us leave to study and learn.

To Chang (2008) the interconnected ideas of self, other, and culture are the building blocks of autoethnography. The use of this literature in education has the purposes of learning about the culture of others while reflecting on suppositions and biases. Thematic focuses of educational autoethnography include self-reflective narration and research on practice, philosophy, and student relations. “As teachers face increasing cultural diversity in the classroom, their interest in using self-narratives as cultural texts to analyze themselves and others will only grow” (p. 38). Because of the evocative nature of the material, a benefit of this methodology can also be the transformation of both the researcher and the reader. The potential for healing and changes in educational praxis make autoethnography a valuable form of research.

Ellis (2004) discloses that when doing autoethnographic research one must be cognizant when dealing with the lives of others because writing narrative in a persuasive way links their stories to the personal ones of the researcher. Autoethnography requires thinking of sensory images about the researcher’s experience with real people in real occasions. This then necessitates thinking and trying to capture feelings and ideas about the research experience and changing those feeling and ideas into written words.

There are several different methods within the performance of autoethnography. These include personal narrative analysis combined with reflection, autoethnography combined with grounded theory and narrative, interview study (weaving a personal story through the stories of others), performance, and social action (Ellis, 2004). For this study, I will combine personal analysis and reflection with social action. By sharing stories and cultural experiences with my

students, I encourage them to share with me as well. I teach in this way for the purpose of empowering my students and enabling them to see the need for change in our school and community.

Benefits of Critical Ethnography

Schools are sites for both the creation of knowledge and the production of power. Critical autoethnography in education puts the writer in the position of combining personal experience with anthropology in order to contribute to scholarly information regarding hegemonic practices (Reed-Danahay, 2009). Vavrus (2010) discloses that while autobiography in education is not a new practice, autoethnography is a more focused choice. Autoethnography employed in educational research uses the personal as an impetus to critically transform what is taught. This in turn creates a deep and supportive multicultural pedagogy that is accessible to other educators, offering ways to intensify individual understandings while at the same time focusing on social phenomena.

Marshall and Rossman (1999) describe critical ethnography as a method of research into policies that oppress by means including race and ethnicity. Critical ethnography also questions procedures in schools that create and perpetuate the supremacy of dominant groups. Lichtenstein (2005) decides that a search for the self within the context of education provides a connectedness to students and a resistance against the oppression of the structure of school as a tool of objectification. The reflexive progression of autoethnography provides an in-depth probing of both the self and the methods of instruction used that becomes cyclical. Introspection leads to discovery, confession, and in some cases guilt based on 'virtuous' errors when working with

children in the past. Redemption occurs when the critical elements of resistance and informed hope become realized (Quicke, 2010).

According to Wall (2006); “The postmodern era has made it possible for critical theories to emerge and take hold in academic inquiry and to open up the possible range of research strategies” (p. 2). These theories recognize the tie between the cultural and the individual while making room for alternate methods of the construction of information. In the realm of research, autoethnography creates areas of empowerment for the unique through stories and reflection. In discovering personal experience a relationship is formed between the observer and the participant that gives immediacy and voice to both contributors.

Autoethnography has been criticized for using personal rather than expert knowledge; however this truth of relating the cultural to the personal through lived experience challenges the paradigms of traditional research. “Methodology arises out of philosophy” (Wall, 2006, p. 10), and in qualitative research neutrality does not speak to and for everyone. Through reflection, autoethnography draws on personal experience to identify with and comprehend social and cultural events. Because the purpose of this work is to understand the concerns of my students through my own personal experience, the use of autoethnography as my method of research is the most appropriate choice.

Concerns with the Use of Autoethnography

Chang (2008) does highlight some of the pitfalls of autoethnography. The first is not to overindulge in personal stories: autoethnography should emphasize the interconnectedness of the researcher to the participants. The focus should be cultural analysis in a non-traditional form of investigation, not just the telling of stories. In addition to personal memory, additional sources

should be used for the validity of the work. Finally, the researcher must always be aware of confidentiality, and must make sure personal stories have a cultural basis. Chang believes if these elements are taken seriously, autoethnography has much to offer in the field of education in regards to raising cultural and social consciousness.

Sparkes (2002) is adamant in refuting the charges some have labeled against autoethnography; that this type of inquiry is narcissistic and self-indulgent, believing this is just a resistance to change. He prefers the terms heart-full, self-knowing and self-sacrificing. He argues that because we are parts of the societies we inhabit, writing about self and others are inter-related. Narratives imply relationships; therefore an autoethnography can become a testimonial for those who cannot witness for themselves.

In crafting my own autoethnography, I have been inspired by the autobiographical work of curriculum theorists, the autoethnographic work of musicians, and the life stories of artists whose music has impacted my life. The following sections of this chapter highlight the works that have contributed to my practice of autoethnography.

Autobiographical Writing in Curriculum Studies

Everyone writes from their own perspective. Freire composes from the political, Greene from the aesthetic. Schwab comes from a background of science, and Eisner is steeped in the arts; however all would come together in unison in the idea that curriculum designed for the creation of personal meaning is far from apparent in education today (Aoki, 2005a). Aoki (2005b) understands narrative as the inner voice making us human and better able to teach our students, and to bring them into spaces of relation with other subjects, other cultures, and other people. He speaks movingly of children entrusting us with their care, and the need for a style of

learning that provides this watchful care, enabling students to simply 'be'. Aoki (2005c) is very fond of using words such as 'and' and 'bridges' that signify the creation of connections. It is evident that in his teaching he views using personal narrative as a way to make these connections of the utmost importance.

Pinar (2006) calls curriculum the center of learning and despairs of the corporate shine placed on schools when teachers are forced to merely manage student learning using pre-packaged, one-size-fits-all curriculum and making education a service instead of an opportunity. He states that curriculum is a politically motivated communicative device, and because of its mis-education of students needs to be reconceptualized. Pinar goes on to say that with the use of the 'objective', educators have depersonalized the learning process to the extent that building relationships with our students is almost impossible.

Pinar (2004) shares his ideas of *currere*- "the running of the course" (p. 35), an autobiographical form of curriculum construction relying on subtlety, imagination, reflection, and patience; in order to understand the effects of what is learned on what is lived. This method requires teachers to look deep for self-understanding, and be always "living simultaneously in the past, present, and future" (p. 4). The four moments comprising *currere* consist of the regressive, the progressive, the analytical, and the synthetical; all autobiographical, experiential, and relative to both the teacher and learner. In the regressive moment the student enters into memory- leading to the progressive moment where imagination of the future takes place. In the analytical moment the two are combined and examined to create a space of being in the present. The synthetical moment is reached when one sees one's purpose, and it is all made whole. As an educator it is our responsibility to move away from the scripted objective into personal

engagement and reflection with our students in the creation of meaning and each student's particular place in what is learned.

Currere also means to see clearly. Grumet (1976a) contends that the common definition of education is "man's experience in the world" (p. 33). However she suggests a broader view, one with more introspective and transcendent connotations. The theory behind currere requires a definition of knowledge through humanism, and the phenomenological and existential push-pull of the person and their circumstances. She asserts that however objective the material is in its presentation, it becomes subjective in the way each student absorbs and uses it to inform their lives. Grumet (1976b) continues that currere in praxis uses the art forms of autobiography and theatre because they are most symbolic of specific feelings and experiences. It is not a change in materials but in presentation, a way to lead every child into the reflection that leads to revelation.

Autobiographical writing in this sense is used as a reflective and narrative tool for the purpose of gaining insights and confronting thoughts. Interestingly, Grumet (1976b) speaks of the subjectivity of autobiography as placing the individual as much in the present as in the past. "Autobiography is a story that I tell about my experience. It records the present perspective of the story teller and presents the past within that structure" (p. 73). She goes on to reveal that through this method the storyteller reveals both assumptions and intentions providing personal truths in the telling. The teacher becomes the facilitator; the student becomes the one in control of their own destiny. As she believes strongly that the purpose of education lies in self-discovery, she proposes that "the autobiographical process be moved to the very center of humanities education because it is within that relationship of the knower to the known that education is humanizing" (p. 74).

Casemore (2008) speaks of place within autobiographical inquiry and narrative as the intersection between living, meaning, and the construction of self. He also remarks that place-as in birthplace- is also very important in the south where he is from; it has a “heightened significance” (p. 2) that can confuse and disconcert an individual’s world view (I see this differently, perhaps because though born in the south, I was not raised to be southern). Because he strives to create a southern curriculum that uses autobiography to build in his students both social and personal identity, his work is informed by the concept of *currere* (Pinar & Grumet, 1976). The theory of *currere* states that language has conscious and unconscious influence, and political implications that can obscure meaning. Because place is in the mind as well as the physical and is filtered through values, it can be explored and discussed.

Ayers (2004) does not use the term *currere* in his discussion of curriculum creation, but his hoped-for outcome is the same. He maintains that the biggest challenge for a teacher is to view each student as an individual with experiences of the past, things to deal with in the present, and dreams for the future. He too speaks for moments of change, and that teaching and curriculum are more than just subject and script; they are large and alive and ambiguous and *important*. Real teaching occurs not in a framework, but situation by situation. Ayers makes a plea for teachers not to turn away from students, but to think, remember, and experience with and through them. “Reflection is a process that can allow teachers to integrate personal, implicit knowledge with more objective knowledge and along the way to render choices more controllable” (p. 109).

Autoethnography in Music

“One of the most challenging tasks facing the world today is building mutual understanding and respect among ethnic enclaves. Music can show how people have dealt with their human existence on this planet from an emotional perspective” (Jacobo, 1997, p. 3). Music and storytelling have been part of the cultural experience throughout history. There is a reflection that weaves itself through musical happenings; a breaking down of barriers where many ‘I’s’ become ‘we’ (Greene, 2001).

Bartleet (2009) believes music and autoethnography can reciprocally increase the creativity in each other. Experiences in music create a special bond few other things can because these events always contain elements of both the personal and the ensemble, combining them to create a memory that can be reviewed and remembered. Music in school is years and years of creativity and hard work accomplished together. Music, like autoethnography, places personal stories within view of the bigger picture. Where there is music, there is emotion, and always “chemistry in the air” (p. 726); a chemistry that will be discussed excitedly after every experience from dinner table to restaurant for miles around.

Autoethnography in Popular Music

Music pervades the spaces in which we live, making constant connections between all of us and our world. It has the power to transport us to a place, to relive a memory, or even to consolidate random thought into action. Teaching music gives me the daily opportunity to explore my evolution as a multicultural educator. Every time my students and I investigate a certain culture or style of music I remember the insights I gained from comments made in the past, the incorporation of which continue to enrich my lessons. It is cyclical and exciting; the

demographic makeup of my classes differs yearly, so the way students react to my lessons and stories is never the same.

In this introduction I proclaimed that I am a musician, an educator, and a storyteller. In reading about her life, I believe Morris (1999) feels exactly the same. She speaks of remembrances, both positive and negative, but both contributing to make up what she is living- a life as duet of musician and teacher. In a very real sense, I am like her: "Writing curriculum as musical text is what I do" (p. 13). In her story she tells us memories are inescapable. I think Morris is correct in stating that memory is painful; but I also think that uncovering painful experiences can be used to help others. The musicians I write about composed their memories and thoughts into songs they hoped would help the world understand. I use my memories to compose stories that will hopefully show my students they are not alone in their feelings of displacement and solitude.

I plan to use autoethnography, the writing of my cultural self, to tell my musical teaching story. The soundtrack of my life included artists like John Lennon, Stevie Wonder, and Bob Dylan. Listening to the musical poetry of these three writers and performers has always shaped my thoughts and helped me along my multicultural journey. Now as I teach their music and message I share stories of my past. I admire these artists because they saw the racial problems in our world and were moved to make as many people as possible aware of the situation and possibly begin the process of change; something I have devoted my life in teaching to continue, on a smaller but more personal level.

Stevie Wonder: “Love’s in need of love today” (Wonder, 1976c)

Unlike the other artists mentioned, Stevie Wonder experienced racism first-hand. Many black people in Detroit had their roots in the south, and most Motown reviews played in the region because of its high record sales. After a performance in Birmingham, Alabama Wonder and a group of Motown performers scrambled onto their tour bus amid screams and gun fire: it seemed the ‘Motortown Revue’ banners were mistaken for Freedom Riders (blacks who challenged the bus laws of the times) (Ribowsky, 2010).

Although quick to state that he is neither preacher nor politician, the music and messages of Stevie Wonder touch many people. He continues that the doors that would shut for Stevland Morris remain open for Stevie Wonder—something he never takes for granted. It is his anticipation that within his musical ideas “the sought for impossible, when believed strongly enough, can become a reality...I am joining the fight, and I hope many will join us in the fight to help” (Wonder, 1976d). In teaching about discrimination, I tell my students about negativity I encountered in school because of being thought of as being ‘different’, and that any feelings of this kind are unacceptable.

Bob Dylan: “May you always know the truth” (Dylan, 1973)

About his beginning, Dylan states “I hadn’t done anything yet, wasn’t any kind of songwriter but... I could see that the type of songs I was leaning towards singing didn’t exist and I began playing with the form, trying to grasp it—trying to make a song that transcended the information in it, the character and plot” (Dylan, 2004, p. 276). A revelation for Dylan was that the [hate] language of America was responsible for the conflicts that kept arising. His ability to phrase made him into a consummate musical storyteller and led him to study at the feet of the

literary and music subculture artists of the times- Leadbelly and his blues, Dave Whitaker, and especially the protest ideas of Woody Guthrie (Epstein, 2011).

Dylan (2004) remembers “In a few years’ time a shit storm would be unleashed. The national psyche would change and in a lot of ways it would resemble the Night of the Living Dead. The road out would be treacherous, and I didn’t know where it would lead but I followed it anyway. It was a strange world ahead that would unfold, a thunderhead of a world with jagged lightning edges. Many got it wrong and never did get it right” (p. 292). Many of the people who ‘did not get it right’ are still around today. My story involves sharing these ideas with my students to provide them with the tools and confidence to work for change themselves.

John Lennon: “War is over—if you want it” (Lennon & Ono, 1971)

John Lennon was an artist who painted suggestions with words and as a result became the voice of a movement. By 1969 he was appalled at the violence and misunderstanding he saw all around him and decided to make use of his celebrity (Norman, 2008). With both his actions and his song “Give Peace a Chance” his goal was to target the youth, whom he believed could change the ideologies of the world. He had hoped that the song would be an anthem in the present day; a modern version of “We Shall Overcome” and time has shown his wish was granted (Partridge, 2005). He thought as I do, that children are more open to and understanding of new and different ideas.

In a series of interviews with David Sheff (1981) John and Yoko discussed that the first step toward changing consciousness is awareness. They truly believed in the beauty and equality of everyone, and that true development will come with dialogue that results in each individual being able to develop to their true potential (regardless of race, gender, or ethnicity) to help

society grow. They also believed that enduring and coming through the other side of a negative situation leads to peace, love, and acceptance instead of fear. John pronounced that “We’re one world, one people whether we like it or not. Aren’t we? I mean, we can *pretend* we’re divided into races and countries and we can carry on pretending that until we stop doin’ it. But the reality is that it is one world and it is one people” (p. 18). This is something I believe myself and share with my students; we are one people and we will all have things to overcome.

Coda: “Imagine all the people, living for the world” (Lennon, 1971)

The assassinations of John and Robert Kennedy and Dr. King, along with the killings due to the continued race riots of the three ‘long, hot summers’ from 1965 – 1968 took a personal toll on these musicians (Hull, 2002; Norman, 2008; Rogovoy, 2009). Wonder, Dylan, and Lennon knew each other, sung each others’ songs, and were in unison in their belief that the music industry was not doing enough to further the causes they believed in (Dylan, 2004; Hull, 2002; Ribowsky, 2010; Sheff, 1981; Wilentz, 2010). The stories these musicians tell in song are firsthand accounts of meeting Civil Rights activists and experiencing violent situations. I can only research and retell the messages they shared; but in my passion for the retelling I hope to lead *all* my students to see their importance.

With songs such as “Chimes of Freedom”, “Blowin’ in the Wind”, and “The Times They are A’Changin’” Bob Dylan became and continues to be the voice of generations of reform. My experience with Stevie Wonder’s “Higher Ground” led me into seeing the need for social change. Of all John Lennon’s songs, my personal favorite is “Imagine”. I play it for my students and then we discuss its meaning. I am amazed at how appropriate the song still is. I realize my story will be very different: I do not have the power to gain the attention of millions

of people with every song I sing, every word I write, or every story told about me. My work is on a more intimate scale. More important to me is I can see me sharing myself in my teaching year after year make a difference in the way my students view music and each other. These musicians used their love of music to point out social injustices; I am using my love of music to assist in repairing them.

CHAPTER 4

ETUDE: AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC REFLECTIONS

Autoethnography as the Researcher's Perspective

I am (and have always been) so involved with my students and their lives both in music and in the community that my chosen topic of multicultural education in music was inevitable. However, a more difficult decision was what method to use for the research. In finding autoethnography I have found a way to incorporate what I do when I teach: use my personal and cultural insights to allow students the means to share their own and become more powerful in doing so. In my work I will be beginning with some anecdotes and insights of my own, and then expanding to incorporate the stories and observations of my students. It always amazes me how much the input of my students enriches my teaching. Fulfilling their wants and desires in music education has altered my curriculum for the better. I realized that through our “polyphony of voices” (Johnston & Strong, 2008, p. 48) we could become one in our journey to make our music classroom a place of learning and equity.

My entrance into multicultural teaching happened quite accidentally. It was known around our building that I was a storyteller. At that point in my life I was doing all I could to discover and research my own matriarchal heritage, which is Russian. When my principal asked me to take part in a cultural storytelling event for the spring PTA (Parent-Teachers Association) meeting, I said I would be happy to participate as long as I could do a Russian story (I always felt I had to ask). So that evening found me in costume with artifacts at the ready. When the storytelling portion was over, we all met in the cafeteria with the students and parents for refreshments. My principal then wished everyone a happy Cinco de Mayo. The next day I asked

several of my Hispanic students I saw there if they enjoyed the program. They replied that the storytelling was nice, but being from Puerto Rico they were tired of people referring to them as Mexican. I realized then that researching my own heritage was not enough; as a teacher I owed it to my students to know about their cultures as well.

Years later I got the chance to participate in a multicultural book club for our students. We read books chosen because of the author's birthplace and culturally correct content, and did related activities. Two pieces of art we made I am particularly proud of: we wrote a book and made a family quilt. The book I entitled "My Skin is Beautiful because..." where each child took a blank face stencil and makeup to complete the design. Accompanying each page was a verse about the color and why it was special. For the quilt each family that wished to contribute created a fabric square depicting their cultural roots. I then sewed the pieces together and completed the project by adding binding and trim.

Both of these projects were lovely, but were special to me more because I felt I finally understood what it meant to be a multicultural teacher- to see and appreciate my students from where they were and what they could contribute. Ladson-Billings (2002) believes culturally relevant/responsive pedagogy and multicultural education should be more than an individual accomplishment and should maintain the cultural integrity of each child. School is also about a student's preparation for citizenship: "students must develop broader sociopolitical consciousness that allows them to critique the cultural norms, values, mores, and institutions that produce and maintain social inequities" (p. 19).

Now I fast forward to this past fall when I had to attend our yearly meeting of the music teachers in my district. The discussion of teaching students from differing ethnicities came up,

as it inevitably does. The comments ranged from “Why do we have to teach these kids?” to “What can we teach these kids? They don’t really understand.” I, like Pennington (2007) had come to realize that in using our own blind “racial positioning” (p. 94) to assimilate these students we were not saving them; what was needed was instruction on cultural empathy and appreciation. I really believe that in finding out and sharing the culture of my whiteness I have opened up pathways for my students to come through.

When I recall these meetings (and meetings just like them in the past), I sometimes have doubts. I know I am looked at by other music specialists as a bit of an eccentric. However, in building a cultural music curriculum for my students that leaves room for insight and opinion, some things have had to be left out. Do I choose between teaching a lesson on the difference between half and whole notes or quickly thinking of activities to help a new student just arrived in my classroom from Mexico feel more at home? In my heart (where it counts) there is no doubt. In experiencing the highs and lows that come with my way of teaching; the sorrow that comes from listening to special music chosen for a funeral that came too soon, or the joy that watching a non-English speaker performing in her first chorus concert (confident because you gave her just a little assistance) can bring, I am repeatedly made aware the choices I have made with my teaching have been the right ones.

Origins of my Current Approach to Multicultural Education

Music is its own world, but in education we are far removed from that ideal. Almost twenty five years of my experience as an educator has been spent in a system with upper level music administration continuously striving for legitimacy in the age of evaluation and accountability. It is the opinion of Greene (1994) that the stress Public schools face regarding

accountability is what is contributing to the depersonalization of a distance growing between students and teachers, and must be bridged for real teaching to occur. In my system music teachers were required to employ the use of a staunch, lengthy, and generic music curriculum coupled with rigorous pre and post testing of all students (including kindergarten). The scores of each school were then posted and compared. To quote Eisner (1994), “Whether the public display of student report cards will make it possible for schools to become better places for students or teachers is not entirely clear” (p. 2).

The constant threat of the low-score stigma left little room in the day for flexibility, creativity, or the teachable moment. Teachers and students felt the stress, and leading students in experiencing the personal joy and fulfillment music can create inside the self became almost non-existent. Greene (2001) is emphatic about the ability of music and the arts to empower the individual aesthetically. She affirms “we have to break, as much as we can, with the technical, the measurable, with the fearful ideas of effectiveness and efficiency. We have to make discovery possible again...the arts nurture that capacity” (p. 62).

Because I believe the most important part of the music learning experience for a child lies in the creation of an individual relationship and search for continuing musical meaning, I was the lone conscientious objector in this viscous testing cycle. I began to create new ways for my students to learn musically enabling them to think creatively, critically, and culturally while still educating them on the basic elements that comprised our standardized test. As a result, my scores dropped a bit- but I was not concerned. In my opinion it was more important to teach my students to think, become smarter music consumers, and become more aware of the world around them. These are the red threads, the “apt metaphor[s] for describing the beliefs, passions,

values, and goals that tie together and unite a teacher's practice over time and contexts" (Ritchhart, 2002, p. 182) I deem of the utmost importance to my students in my classroom.

Then about five years ago, my husband and I found ourselves in the position of having to relocate and I began teaching in a smaller (and less musically formal) system. There was no set curriculum and no testing in the music program. After all this time, I was finally free! However, after all the pressure I previously experienced I was now floundering. Music is such a huge and encompassing subject and could be approached from so many different angles, I found it difficult to decide what to include and what to omit. I wanted to explore those red threads in the lives of my students and I wanted to lead them into enriching experiences. I was in an enviable position, but felt stymied.

As I discussed my dilemma with my husband, he gave some insightful suggestions. I could teach the basic elements of music in ways that would enable my students to function musically in life (discussion of artists, singing in choirs, purchasing music). I would then have time in the schedule to use music as a vehicle for creative and critical thinking, using the intelligence concepts of Gardner (2006) as a beginning point. Finally (and most significantly) I could focus on the rich abundance of world music I had been researching and studying as a result of my extensive personal cultural discoveries. Because of the military community in which I am employed I found myself teaching students from all over the world, making cultural music study even more meaningful to both my students and myself.

One purpose of this study is to explore the key events in my life that influenced my current multicultural music education philosophy. Toward that aim, I provide autoethnographic reflections on four key events that, in one way or another, have influenced my multicultural

teaching and my views about the importance of multicultural education for all students. I will be using Schwab's (1978) commonplaces of subject matter, learner, milieu, and teacher as an organizational tool to harmonize these key remembrances and place them in a useful context. According to Schwab (1978) a complete curriculum must include culturally familiar material, all the milieu and unique individuality that comprise each potential learner, and a flexible and seeking teacher. Just as it is necessary for these "agents of translation" (p. 365) to all be present in order for an equitable curriculum to occur, I believe it is also necessary for these commonplaces to be highlighted for my stories to warrant application for others.

Research Setting

Although this autoethnography provides information on key events in my life that occurred outside of 'Cultural Georgia Elementary School' the purpose of retelling these events is to gain greater insight on my current multicultural teaching and practices. This school, then, is the ultimate research setting of my study. The setting and demographics of students in Cultural Georgia Elementary School are described below to contextualize the key events I will discuss in this chapter. Cultural Georgia Elementary School is located in a relatively small southern town. It is 18 years old, but is very well kept and looks almost new in condition. It houses children of kindergarten age through fifth grade, all on separate halls with the office, media center, and cafeteria at a central point. In addition to the administration and office staff, teachers and paraprofessionals, custodial and cafeteria staff, there is also a specialist team including a physical education instructor and paraprofessional, computer teacher, art specialist, and me- the music specialist. It is a warm and friendly place to experience the many facets of education.

Of special interest and very relevant to my study is that because there is a military base (army) within the district, over half of my students' parents are in enlistment, and many other students are part of military families. This coupled with the fact of our increasing immigrant population means my students have much cultural and ethnic knowledge and experience to share with others, which is a critical component within my work.

There are currently 700 students in attendance at 'Cultural Georgia Elementary'. We are a very diverse population, and as of March 2011 our demographic breakdown is as follows: American Indian, .30%; Asian, 3.20%; Black/African-American, 41.40%; Hispanic, 15.60%; multiple ethnicity, 6.10%; and white, 33.40%. In this school the ratio of boys to girls is almost equal, males making up 52.70% of the population and females 47.30% (doe.k12.ga.us).

Our English Language Learner (ELL) population consists of three Chinese students (two boys, one first grade and one second grade; one fourth grade girl); one German student (a third grade boy); one Filipino student (a Tagalog fifth grade girl); eleven Hispanic students- five Mexican (one kindergarten girl, two first grade boys, one second grade girl, and one third grade girl) and six Puerto Rican (one kindergarten boy, one third grade girl, two fourth grade boys, and two fifth grade girls); one Indian student (a fifth grade girl; and two Vietnamese students (one kindergarten boy and one first grade boy). I have been teaching with cultural and ethnic music as the heart of my program for five years.

Collection of Experiences and Stories

A number of sources were used to identify the key events in this study including journal entries, lesson plans, personal memories, and significant cultural materials. For years, I have kept a daily journal documenting my school activities. The few minutes I have between classes

are typically used for jotting ideas; lunchtime and the end of the day are used for refining material. I write open-ended, multicultural lesson plans that allow me to gain student opinions and observations about curricular activities. The insights of students are crucial to the outcome of this study. In most educational studies I have read, “all too often those most affected by educational policy and programmatic decisions—the students—are absent from inquiry” (Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p. 115). In this autoethnography such will not be the case. Like my journals, these lesson plans and the student comments and observations associated with them were used in this study to generate the subject content for my autoethnographic remembrances.

The multiple sources of information described above were reviewed and analyzed using the constant comparison method of analysis (Shank, 2002) to reveal emergent themes. Materials collected from student observation, student comments, class and club participation, and personal journals were analyzed to reveal connections between the lesson plans and my students interactions and behaviors.

To ensure validity I engaged in a process of interpretive analysis, moving from my personal interpretation (journals) to past thoughts of my students (in informal thoughts and comments) to classroom opinion they expressed regarding various cultural experiences. This method is referred to as triangulation. Jenks (2002) states that in searching for autoethnographic credibility, testimony of this personal nature must continuously be examined. In doing this kind of research, there is a reciprocal relationship that occurs between parties affecting observations and reactions.

Remembrances: Tunes, Tales, and Time

As links in an unbreakable chain or the movements of a unified symphony, the life experiences of my students and me seem to constantly mirror one another. I consider music the tie that binds us together; to me, music is just another way to communicate. The experience of any music is multi-faceted, but the disparate elements composing multicultural music make it even more so. When we study cultural music my students can see and verbalize the beauty they hear; they find the special (as well as being comforted by the commonalities) in all the music I present, which can then translate to finding and appreciating the unique in those around them.

Based on the methods of analysis described above, what follows is a description of my current approach to multicultural music education and a discussion of four key remembrances that provide insight into the multicultural music curriculum that I practice. The stories that will be shared span time from some of my earliest remembrances to my recent teaching experiences. In these stories, the threads of my cultural journey and my students are connected through the multicultural curriculum that frames teaching and learning in my classroom.

Remembrance 1: A Story about Myself and my Students

Bless the Beasts and the Children

The image shows a musical score for the hymn "Bless the Beasts and the Children". It consists of six staves of music in a single system. The lyrics are written below the notes. Dynamic markings include *p* (piano), *cresc.* (crescendo), *mf* (mezzo-forte), and *f* (forte). The lyrics are: "Bless the beasts and the chil - dren, for in this world they have no voice, they have no choice. Bless the beasts and the chil - dren, for the world can nev-er be, the world they see. Light their way when the dark - ness sur-rounds them; Give them love, let it shine all a - round them." The music is in a simple, hymn-like style with a key signature of one flat and a 4/4 time signature.

Figure 6. "Bless the Beasts and the Children" (DeVorzon, B. & Botkin, Jr., P., 1971)

Of the many after school projects I have done, I very much enjoyed working with the aforementioned multicultural book club (which took place many years and several schools ago). We spent time with students; reading stories from other lands, and making cultural projects designed to promote self-esteem. Two of my favorite creations were a book about our many and varied colors of skin (and what made each extraordinary), and a family lineage multicultural quilt which we all sewed together. But one of the reasons I helped start this student organization was because of the negative outcome of a parent-teacher meeting.

In a country built from immigration it is ridiculous to say I remember when the latest wave of multiculturalism 'hit' the modern public school, so I will instead speak of when I was

introduced to it in my suburban community- about fifteen years ago. Although I was continuing to research my cultural heritage, my curriculum was so necessarily (because of the higher level administration) rigid I had not made the connection between myself and my seeking students. Here we were, a group of young(ish) and energetic teachers well-meaningly serving what we considered to be multicultural snacks after the program: we were wrong, and hurt the feelings of several parents and children in attendance. Spring (2001) and others discuss this shallow stab at multiculturalism (often called the ‘tacos on Tuesday’ approach) as obliterating and detrimental to both the students and community. Looking back I cringe as I realize our part in the misleading of a large group of impressionable children (and their parents), all with the best of intentions.

Milieu: Cacophony

I remember as a child being misunderstood and looked down upon because some of the things my family and I ate and the things we did were different. I remember mealtimes for me as being unlike those described by my friends. Instead of pizza, hot dogs, and fried chicken with grits (its ok, Martha Stewart didn’t understand grits for a while, either), we had cabbage rolls, borsht, and rolladen. These were the foods my nana taught my mother how to cook; this was family knowledge handed down through the generations for many years. To honor daddy every once in a while we would have English foods; Stilton cheese with onions and Brussels sprouts with bacon and cow tongue (he was the only one that ate the tongue). My dad said Nana (my mothers’ mother) had been a wonderful cook, and that Russian food was fine with him. I don’t remember inviting my friends over for dinner as a child- maybe as a defense mechanism? I inherently knew the children I went to school with would not enjoy the things my family loved to eat, and I did not want to change myself for them.

I remember begin a child of the 1970's, and being afraid when I saw Nixon and mention of the Cold War on television. Mention of Khrushchev and Brezhnev frightened my mother; she never spoke to us about it but looking back I think she was remembering her own stories of the terrors of the Bolshevik revolution, and hoping and praying her children did not have to go through anything like that. I of course did not really understand the complexities and reasons behind the conflict (honestly I am still not perfectly clear of the necessity for this political agenda). The politics of our world continued to make it uncomfortable for me to speak of my background at school. This was very difficult for me; I wanted to be proud of my mixed culture, and was resentful I could not share it with anyone. Home has always been my refuge, and I had to accept that home was the only place I could truly be myself. And home is where my stories stayed until I could pull them out at a (much) later date.

It's funny how something so small as what you eat has such a big impact on how others see you. Of course as I grew up, we felt it necessary to 'Americanize' ourselves by eating things like hot dogs, meat loaf, and pizza. I know we did this in order to fit in with our peers. As a teenager, I even learned how to bake 'southern' delicacies such as cornbread (but I always put brown sugar in it to kill the soapy taste) and fried chicken- my mom never 'got the knack of it', as she used to say. But I recall on our birthdays, we always selected the things we ate at the beginning as a family for our special birthday meals. I guess this was the way we chose to subconsciously honor our family lineage, and satisfy that 'pull' immigrant families always feel toward somewhere else.

Subject Matter: Discord

My first year of public school rocked along pretty well, at least until the vegetable incident (so what if it was only day 10- who's counting?!). Walking into the cafeteria I smelled an odd and unfamiliar smell, like an acrid burning assaulting my nostrils. I remember it very clearly- there was something on my plate I did not recognize as we picked up our trays and sat down at our assigned tables. When my teacher walked by I asked her what the pile of green and wet stuff was (the source of the smell), and she told me it was something called 'collard greens'. When I asked what *that* was, she patiently explained it was a vegetable, and that I should eat it because we were supposed to at least try everything on our plates. I looked at it askance- at my house, vegetables consisted of green beans, peas, and pretty heads of broccoli and cauliflower topped with cheese sauce, if we were lucky. The teacher walked away, vowing to check back in a few minutes.

I felt so trapped. I honestly did not know what would happen if I ate the greens, never having eaten them before. I put my trust in my teacher, and at home my mother told me I should always do what I was told. What was I supposed to do? I was stymied, until the kid beside me told me to do what he always did at home- close your eyes, hold your nose, and swallow. I did just that, I swallowed those stringy, slimy greens and poof; they came right back up, along with most of what I had eaten that day.

My father was furious: he could not believe a teacher would force a child to eat food they were not familiar with! He considered this a callous and insensitive concept, and looking back I can see his point of view. I think now that I am an adult and a teacher, situations like this make me more aware of the things I ask of children. In an instance such as this I guess I am glad I

have my experiences growing up as a cultural child to draw from in order to help my students. But back then we were the unfortunate generations to follow the Sputnik concern, and those in power believed patriotism and assimilation were the keys to continuing America's political domination. During my school years I remember feeling like a small cog in a giant wheel; in preparation for what, I am still not sure. The greens incident made it clear to me that being different was not a positive thing. However at that time the revolution was only in my soul; I made myself in tune with the other students by way of vocal acquiescence or silent debate (saved for later).

Teacher: Conductor Only

I think the way I structure my classroom is in inverse reaction to my first grade year. I did not feel nurtured or loved; it was simply not a required part of the curriculum at that time. Teachers concerned themselves with discipline and the traditional platform of reading, writing, and arithmetic; the only injections of the personal coming in the short term when asking students if summer and winter holidays were enjoyed. Teaching then was not the all-encompassing career I consider my job today. Forcing students to eat foods and participate in activities unfamiliar to them was callous, but it was what teachers were told to do. Cultural diversity was not an issue back then, and children of immigrants had no advocacy.

I do not wish to be unduly unfair to the teachers I had growing up. Families were more nuclear then, and any cultural study was expected to take place at home. I know my father wanted to 'bring his children up without outside interference' as much as possible. He enjoyed the southern lifestyle, but he did not necessarily want us to be mainstreamed into society. Looking back I think my mother was sorry we moved to Georgia; the differences were just too

great for her to comprehend and accept. Placing this in context and going with the ‘all things work together for good’ mentality, my experiences as a child in school have made me understand the need to go beyond and empathize with each of my students, making them feel comfortable in my classroom and with the material I teach.

Learner: Furioso

For a long time after the greens incident I actually dreaded going into the school cafeteria; lurking inside were always foreign smells and sights with which the other students seemed so familiar. My mother did pack my lunch the rest of that school year. I am sure this did not make me fit in any better, but I was grateful I was not made to eat anything else beyond my recognition. I do not recollect if this changed my teachers’ feelings toward me, but it changed mine toward her. In that moment I saw the power she held over me, and I of course was afraid of whether or when it would be used again. When you are a child small things like this can make the biggest impact, and any bond we would have shared was severed before it was formed. It is amazing to me that I still remember the incident so vividly; for better or worse, this is the power a teacher holds over those she teaches.

I find myself continually going back and forth between my childhood and the lives of my students. Over the years I remember students encountering difficulties eating our cafeteria food because it was different (watching them during my breakfast duty, I could almost see myself trying to swallow those camouflage-colored collard greens). Their teachers were always frustrated with them, which I found odd: if it were an academic problem it would have at least been addressed, but the teachers did not see the fundamental nature of this cultural issue toward their feelings of belonging at our school. I pleaded with them to understand; they were not the

one catching glimpses of these children trying so hard to choke down what was clearly unpalatable to them.

One particular instance was the proverbial straw that broke the camel's back. I remember a little Mexican girl in the second grade sitting at breakfast staring at her tray and crying. When I sat down and talked to her she said "it's just I'm so tired of being different. We [she, her family, and her friends] are different about everything [food, language, customs]. People laugh at us sometimes". When I told her it was because others did not understand, she asked me why adults were not trying to help people understand: I thought of that oft used expression- 'out of the mouths of babes', and set about in earnest trying to make her wishes come true.

Because I believe as Greene (2000) does, that democracy is fluid and is shaped by reaction to both injustice and the vision of potential; I spoke with our principal about the situation, and she called the parents and corrected the situation as best she could. We also began instituting food choices for our school meals, which helped. I knew the students were not being belligerent, and that they would eat the food if they were able. I believe this is just another way we show these children (by neglect) that their culture is not important; just as I felt 'less than' my peers so long ago. I look around and I see that we are still not making the big and small changes that need to be made to meet the needs of these children; the symphony that should be a child's education is still incomplete. We must not forget that this nation was purposefully built by immigration and that "education is cultural action for freedom" (Freire, 1971, p. 1). Because our children have no voice or choice except the ones we allow them to share, we must, as the song states "light their way when the darkness surrounds them; give them love, let it shine all around them" (DeVorzon & Botkin, Jr., 1971).

Gaining critical consciousness is a never-ending process. At times, I feel confident as an enlightened multicultural music education teacher; at other times, I realize that I still have much to learn. Although, through my own childhood experiences, I clearly understood the difficulties students had with unfamiliar food options in school, there were other cultural issues for these students and their parents that I needed to be educated about.

Remembrance 2: Nana’s Story, Language Loss and Assimilation



Figure 7. “Kalinka” (Russian folk song, English translation by M.M.H.)

A professor I had at Georgia Southern University once told me that I was lucky to have at least a small piece of my family tree to ‘grow’ from- most people do not have even that. I understand that now, but in my younger days I just felt the alienation caused by my discovery. Having to conceal my cultural background as a child put an idea foremost in my mind that as an adult I cannot dispel: to be an American, should one have to deny their cultural roots? Our genealogy is a part of who we are, and denying a part of our being is impossible. Freire (1970) declares that “sectarianism is always castrating” (p. 21), and reminds us that humanism should be man’s vocation; I believe as teachers we should be especially cognizant of this.

I know little about my father's family, and even less about my mother's. But I did know from a young age (without really understanding) that assimilation is a hurtful thing. Looking back I realize that broken cultural ties also broke my mothers' heart. My dad used to call my mom Babushka (I think he was referring to the beautifully painted and embroidered head wraps I've seen my Nana wear in pictures). She took it as an insult, even though it was not intended that way. Thinking back on my childhood I realize that in the generations that have come before me to settle in Canada and America, the point was to assimilate- to fit in.

I am a first generation American- fiercely loyal to my country but always feeling the tug toward somewhere else. Technically I am English-Irish-Russian-Canadian-American, and I strongly believe as Dewey (1998) did- that the hyphen should unify and not divide us, and should mine all the insight and experience each culture has to offer to make our country strong. "All these surrenders and contributions taken together create the national spirit of America" (p. 267).

Years into my adulthood I decided I had to come to terms with the fact that my mother would never appreciate my genealogically seeking heart. I have tried to understand what her life was like coming to America in the late 1950's. She did not embrace the culture in southern America (as my father did), believing it to be just another region of conflict like the one in which she grew up. I guess she always felt as if she was floating with no real place to be. Perhaps, as Ming Fang He did in "A River Forever Flowing", my mother felt a "flowing back to the bamboo light? Sustaining in the maple leaf light?" (p. 156) crisis of identity. I only knew that unlike He, my mother did not seem to be striving to keep her cultural background intact, which a generation later I did not accept.

I think stripping my mother of her culture was dehumanizing to her, and she chose to opt out of life as a result. I believe as Freire (1970) did, that stolen humanity leads to struggle or

oblivion. I observe that same struggle in my students, and I hope I show them that the search for the freedom of their identity is a risk that is worthwhile. In striving to be this kind of educator I hope to help with “the creation of a world in which it will be easier to love” (p. 24).

Milieu: Lacrimoso

I will never forget the stories my Auntie Olga told me which she began the Christmas I was eleven years old. As we examined each ornament on the tree, some so old and delicate, her words began to weave a very sad and almost unbelievable tale. It seemed that when newly married my grandparents lived near St. Petersburg in Russia, where my grandfather was an artist (of woodwork and bead making; my mother kept the last necklace my grandfather made in her bureau even after the beads began to crumble) as well as a minor part of the Tsarist government there. When the revolution began, my family’s lives were threatened, my grandfather was shot, and they fled to Canada. They had four children and tried to start a new life there, but my grandfather suffered badly from his wounds, and later died from them.

As a child I visited my mother’s family home. It was located on Beattie Avenue; my mother and my aunts and uncles spoke of it so much; I will never forget this fact. It was a very tiny house but my relatives were very proud of it because they pooled their money to purchase it for my Nana. Long ago in the basement of this first and only Canadian house my mothers’ family ever owned was an old, hand carved wooden cradle that had been handed down from my mothers’ family for generations. Auntie Olga went on to share that Nana told her (in her broken English) it was the only thing saved on that horrible trip, and it held nothing but bad memories. Although I have seen photographs, I will never see the real thing- it was stored in the attic and used to hold potatoes and beets, and has since rotted and been thrown away.

My mother was very young then, and I'm sure seeing the struggle and strife her mother went through is the reason she decided forgetting the past was the least painful thing to do. I guess I understood, but I decided mine would be a different story. I suppose it is because of the generation that separated us: I saw the beauty in my family's artifacts whereas my mother's emotions were near enough to only remember the struggle and pain. Regardless, the tug I feel in my heart whenever I think of my Nana's panicked ride through the winter snow makes me wish the experience had been less romantic and exciting, and more pedantic. If this were the case I might have had more tactile remembrances of my maternal family.

Like my Nana and Granddad, as more and more people sailed over to these shores, less and less of their true culture remained; language often being the first thing jettisoned. When I think of my Russian ancestors I feel alienated and possessed of an almost physical pain that I will never know them, visit their kin, or go to their homes. To me this alienation is symbolic of the negativity of assimilation, creating oppression and a "culture of silence" (Freire, 1971, p. 32). If the words at the base of the statue of liberty and on our most important documents have any meaning at all, it is that we should bring our differences together to celebrate and create a new and special place where we are all welcome: transformation will have occurred, the old order will be seen as wrong, and a new pedagogy will belong to us all (Freire, 1971).

Subject Matter: Vivacé

In my spare time, I am trying to teach myself at least a little of the Russian language: to me it is very difficult but beautiful. When singing favorite multicultural songs with my classes I am always struck by how much easier it is to learn new words within the context of music, for both me and my students. Banks (1997) calls this content integration, and my immigrant

students love to sing the words they comprehend as well as link them to their new language. Music class has always been so special to me, both as a child and now as a teacher; holding the lyrics and notes on the printed pages, ready to be sung and discovered and used as a tool to link us together in a search for understanding. I remember the music books we used in elementary school, and I remember singing only patriotic and American folk music from them. I use those same books today, and they are one of my constant sources of multicultural music from places like Africa, Latin America, Asia, and Russia: they are full of music that as a child I never heard or sang. I cannot help but take this so personally and I continually ask myself- why was this not taught to me, when seeing the music from other lands on the printed page would have afforded me the validity I craved?

Eisner (2002) believes that placing the arts in a cultural context is both necessary and impactful. I can see myself as a child through the eyes of my students and thinking the same questions they ask in the present time about words and places that are unfamiliar to them. Banks (1997) states that an equity pedagogy can only occur when students are actively involved in dynamic knowledge construction, employed by teachers who “have a keen understanding of their own cultural experiences, values, and attitudes toward people who are culturally, racially, and ethnically different from themselves” (p. 99). Listening and moving to cultural music never fails to stir and excite my children, especially when the music choices pertain to them! They then become open to sharing their impressions with one another. It is necessary for the subject of music to lead all my students into an understanding of the specialness of tune and timbre, certainly; but also to show the beauty and endurance of language and tradition.

I do not know my mother’s entire family name; it was not deemed necessary in the grand scheme, I guess. This had a profound effect on me. When I introduce myself to my new

students and ask their names and how to pronounce them, most times my ELL students will shrug and tell me it does not matter. I cannot help but wonder what has happened in their short lives to make them believe this is the correct thing to say. I cringe- it *does* matter how we spell and speak their names! It cannot be like it was in my Nana's (and so many others) past. According to Banks (1996) in order for prejudice to be reduced, the reproductive educational systems must be transformed; this is a major goal of multicultural education. Without meaning to, my parents and so many others finding themselves in this same situation raised a generation of children who will never understand where they came from and will never really belong; always feeling there is something missing in their lives.

I have many family stories about my Nana- how she and her husband fled to Canada and she was scared to death: new in an unfamiliar place and not understanding the language spoken there. My two older aunts learned to speak both English and Russian, probably because my grandfather was still alive at the time. My mother and her younger brother did not really know their father (he died when my mother was two and my uncle was just a baby of wounds inflicted while fleeing Saint Petersburg). By then my Nana was heartbroken, and my mother and Uncle Johnny learned only English: their communication with their own mother was through broken dialogue or the translation of older siblings.

I see this phenomenon today with the students I teach. The older students try to keep up both the native and new languages, but the young ones do not see the need. It is as if the further they are removed from their homeland the more their language (and culture) fades away. Like my nana and the cradle, in their eagerness to become Americanized my students seem to be letting go of their past, not realizing they are distancing themselves from the people who could care about them the most.

Schwab (1978) states that curriculum can only be relevant when all students are represented. Several years ago as one of my first grade classes entered my room for instruction I was introduced to a new little girl from Puerto Rico. I could tell by the expression on her face her name was being mispronounced, so as I was writing her information in my grade book I asked her how to say her name the correct way. After a few tries (with her smiling and laughing) I got it right, and then I told her she might have to help me and her classmates remember the pronunciation during class. We then played a Puerto Rican singing game all the students enjoyed. The next day as I was doing breakfast duty she and her brother (a third grader) brought me a beautifully illustrated book containing Puerto Rican stories and told me I could show it to the other students during the day. I thanked her, and they went back to their classes. Several days later I had her brother, and I asked him about the book. He told me it was a special book given to them when they were very little, but his sister had not looked at it in a very long time. It seems after my class that day she came home and told her parents about her experiences in music, and since I was interested in her culture she wanted to bring the book to me to help me teach!

This was such a simple thing to do within the context of a class period, but it made a difference to a child. To alter this situation of neglect we must all be willing, as Freire (1970) suggests, to have the courage to create a dialogue where people come together to name their worlds. In naming our worlds together we will be showing our students that we have more in common than not; we are all 'bits and pieces' and because of this have so much cultural wealth in which to draw and share. When this happens the past will come forward, our students can learn what is expected of them (and probably much more), and we will all be at peace with one another.

Teacher: Agitato

I often ask myself: must we suffer the monotony of a culture of sameness in school? In Schwab's (1978) opinion a teacher's flexibility and knowledge of her students are key components in the success of a curriculum. All children enter our classrooms trusting us to be honest and nurturing; they expect us to lead them in an ongoing search for truth. But so many times we fail in this simple quest. I cannot speak of how many times I have had a teacher bring ELL students (within their regular classes) to my classroom with the admonition to 'make sure they do not speak [Spanish, Chinese, etc.]'. I know they all meant well; to be a classroom teacher is to feel the stress of testing every day, and desire *all* students to make at least a year's growth under their guidance. But in my experience, these students are able to learn English very quickly without having to sacrifice their native tongue. I believe the pressure we place on them is needless: why not instead celebrate the uniqueness of each language while relating one to the other so everyone is enriched?

In these instances I weigh the odds of doing the expected thing while at the same time trying to put myself into the mindsets of these children. How would I feel if I were placed in an unfamiliar building filled with people whom I did not understand? Wouldn't I be overjoyed when I heard my native tongue? I will always remember one of my Puerto Rican students (a fifth grade boy) whispering to me that "me try so hard speak English, but I cannot [until] I hear Spanish". What is missing here is that we fail to notice how hard these students are trying every single day: we should be continuously praising them as they overcome all the obstacles placed in their way. As Greene (2000) suggests, literacy is a social undertaking where students join in concert searching for commonalities. We must "discover together against the diversity of our backgrounds" (p. 119); participating in a language power struggle will not accomplish learning.

Learner: Dissonance

As I think back to the past I remember two instances in my classroom. Because all of our ELL students are placed in the same classroom (it makes scheduling easier for the office staff), I had five Hispanic 5th graders (two from Puerto Rico, one from Mexico, one from El Salvador, and one from the Dominican Republic) all together. We were working on writing rhythm/melodies using templates I had created that we would later play on melody instruments and record to produce our own class ‘symphony’. I could tell one boy who was new to our school was having particular problems with English translation and was becoming frustrated. So I went to his table and began getting them to do some English-Spanish word volleying. He and the other boys began enjoying themselves, talking and teaching the others as they worked on their projects. Then the funniest thing happened; I asked them to tell me how to say “I am cutting my paper with scissors”, they taught me, and I repeated it back a few times. About five minutes passed, and just like he had heard his teachers say (and in the same tone of voice) he came to me and said “now, Mrs. Blackmon; tell me what I just taught you”. Well, I was not expecting this; I repeated to him what I thought were the correct words. They all burst out laughing. Apparently I told them something to the effect that I was “cutting my stomach” instead! I could tell they enjoyed themselves for the rest of our time together, and as they all filed out of my room all those boys hugged me- something they had never done before.

I also had a special little kindergarten girl from Puerto Rico. She came into my room crying on that first day. My heart ached for her; I thought of my nana not being able to speak a word of English and being frightened of everything and everyone. So, we sang. I made her laugh with puppets. Then the *pièce de résistance*: we sang a song with Spanish words, and her eyes glowed. We were integrating a curriculum “infused with diverse voices” (Banks, 1996, p.

288). I will never forget the joy on her tiny face as she sang each phrase she recognized! She bounced up and down, exclaiming the words and pointing toward the sky. From that moment on she entered my room in a state of enthusiastic wonder, ready to try her best to learn the new because the familiar was represented to her. Freire (1970) asserts that authentic education places students in the world by relating material directly to them, and that the humanist educator must be willing to be transformed along with her students.

My immigrant students often have tales to tell of unnecessarily lost and broken cultural ties. When my students discuss each others' heritage the abruptness of the things they say to each other are often construed as off-putting, but like my father's babushka comments to my mother I do not think this is their intention. I think they are merely curious, questioning, and needing to familiarize- states of mind that should be encouraged. "Children come to school with many negative attitudes toward and misconceptions about different racial and ethnic groups" (Banks, 1996, p. 338); when teachers include cultural content in their teaching these attitudes are changed (Banks, 1996). Music should be the tie that binds us to our pasts and to each other, making us all equals in our search for ourselves. It is simple and necessary to integrate cultural content into the study of music (Banks, 1996).

When we study about the music and culture of different places my students (and their parents) often bring in artifacts and tell stories they hope to represent themselves to others. Hearing stories and touching a Russian Easter egg or a Native American Indian kachina doll helps my students understand that our differences are what make us unique and special and should never be forgotten. When my students spun the chocolate stirrer while chanting the accompanying Mexican song rhyme, their eyes lit up with enjoyment! My 'white' students have now begun to question and explore their heritages as well (I consider this very positive because

whiteness is never elaborated on; not even on census forms or birth certificates). My father taught me to be proud of *everything* I was, what I had to share, and that there was no one else like me in the world. In my teaching of culture I hope I also teach this to my students; that knowing and being comfortable with your own identity is the most important lesson of all.

Remembrance 3: Vietnamese and Chinese Stories

Harmony



Figure 8. “Harmony” (Simon, A. & Simon, N., 1973)

Banks (1996) informs us that “reducing prejudice and discrimination is one of the major goals of multicultural education” (p. 288). The more culture and ethnicity is highlighted in school, the more positive reaction students being exposed to it will have. About ten years ago I was at a wonderfully ethnically mixed school, and because I had many Vietnamese students I decided to sing part of a familiar song to them in their language. When I was finished, a precious little first grade girl asked me in all sincerity; “Do you like Vietnamese people? Because many people do not”. I was stunned: who could not love this child- this ‘lantern angel’? Thinking back, I am sure that she felt my alienation one-hundred fold, and I hope in my heart

through my teaching I was able to help all these children be both comfortable and proud of their heritage within the American context and ‘take their lanterns to the sky’. But taking the opposite view, how much more excitement and rich cultural experience could these children (and their parents) bring to a classroom if allowed?

The precious Vietnamese child that I described above wanted to believe I cared about her and her people; she desired harmony, even at the tender age of six. It is so sad that after so many years of immigration, many of these children believe they do not belong just because they are different. When I was asked to create the music and dance club for our student council I was excited to notice several Asian students in my group. I seized the opportunity to learn and perform some traditional Asian music for the New Year in which I knew these students would be familiar. I wanted to right the wrongs’ these students had experienced by showing students, parents, and teachers a culture often overlooked in school had a special place; and I also believed these students could be resources for unification.

Milieu: In Key

The milieu must be made to be relevant to the learning (Schwab, 1978). This is not so easy in the school cafeteria; definitely a multi-purpose place. Students eat breakfast and lunch, teachers meet with each other and parents during conferences, children line up for dismissal. But one day in the not too distant past we made musical magic happen. Music is only an art when there are those around to experience and interpret it as such. Greene (2001) affirms that aesthetic education is created when students own the experience and infer meaning on it for themselves. As the music and dance club filed in and saw the musical instruments I had set up, I could see

their excitement. I heard things like “how can I choose?” and “can we play more than one?” When I assured them they would get a chance to try them all they were so happy!

At first some of my students were afraid to touch the instruments, so I urged them to try. As they reverently inched closer to examine, a few of the students picked up the mallets and began to experiment with the sounds they could produce. One first grade boy from China moved to the bells and began playing first the major eight-note scale recognizable to the other students. The cafeteria became very quiet, and I heard whispers of “how can he do that?” and “how does he know that?” When he realized he had everyone’s attention, he then began to play the five-note pentatonic scale Asian music is based on. This scale has a magical and exotic quality, and the children were entranced. This student finished by playing a lovely melody (he later told me it was a song his mother sings to he and his brother sometimes). All the students clapped for him: his cheeks turned pink, but I could tell by his smile he was pleased at the outcome of the day.

Subject Matter: Enharmonic

A pedagogy of equity is “instruction that adapts to the unique talents and needs of a diverse student population” (Banks, 1996, p. 288). After this mini-performance I removed some of the bars from the bells and xylophones so we could all play the pentatonic scale together. We improvised to beautiful traditional songs and I heard the children commenting to each other the music sounded “different but fun”, “Godly, like in church”, and “peaceful”. As I continued observing the children playing and talking, I noticed they began comparing this music to songs they sing at home and in my class. As I went around listening, I think they were discovering similarities that pleased them as well as interesting differences. As Greene (2001) so aptly

expresses about the teaching of music; “Not only did our musical experience expand and deepen the sounding world around mysteriously changed” (p. 192).

Then it was time for the Asian New Year to begin! Round and round the children went, their ribbons silken flashes of pink and blue, red and green. The daikos, gongs, and cymbals crashed in cacophonous and triumphant climax as the children’s faces glowed in accompaniment. As we finished our marching, the discussion began. My marginalized students became the experts and told stories of red envelopes with gold lettering, lions and dragons, and wishes for good fortune. These students also shared the important fact that each Asian culture celebrated a bit differently, which we did not know before. As Freire (1970) states; “The students-no longer docile listeners-are now critical co-investigators in dialogue with the teacher [and one another]” (p. 68). We said goodbye amidst promises of more activities for the coming meetings, children walking side by side happily sharing pieces of themselves in what I hope to be the beginnings of equality.

Learner: Cantabile

No matter our age, we all desire connections; the continued connection of dialogue makes change lasting (Freire, 1970). Time and again I have witnessed music with this integration of diverse content (Banks, 1996) bringing together the most disparate of situations and peoples. Whether it is a Filipino boy leading a group of children and adults in tininkling (what he was to discover his father already knew of as the national dance of that nation), Chinese ribbons floating majestically through the air, or a joyous Mexican folk dance; children participate with abandon and delight. No other subject is capable of garnering this reaction in the midst of learning.

As I listened and watched my students improvising and performing, the situation reminded me of sharing my Matryoshka doll so many years ago. I had the desire to fit in and to become special, all at the same time. I remember opening up the doll and showing the painting on each one. I remember telling the story about families staying together to gain strength in the harshest of conditions, both mental and physical. When the last piece of the doll was put into place, I realized for the first time how much the doll resembled my mother; a link in the genealogical chain I had never noticed before.

Teacher: Dolce

I am tearing up as I write this, and mentally thanking the teacher who enabled me to share this small part of my life and my history with others. It was seventh grade, and my history teacher was the coolest person I had ever met. Going beyond any standardized curriculum, we studied giant maps, created costumes, and wrote and directed plays. She instituted show-and-tell, and I held my breath as I ran home from the bus stop. I knew just what I wanted to tell about, and begged my parents to allow me to bring my doll to school. I wrapped the precious doll up carefully in a favorite piece of fabric and put it in my bag, ready for its unveiling the next day.

My heart warmed as I told *my* story. It was such a little thing for a teacher to suggest, but it meant so much to me. Maybe as Freire (1970) suggested, in showing my doll I was taking ownership and taking my first steps toward my personal transformation; a transformation that is still unfolding. I believe my culture continues to be overlooked, as are many in this country. Remember my story of the little boy from China with the bells? Two days later I had him in my music class with an entirely different group of students. Upon entering my room, he went

straight to the xylophones and began playing the pentatonic scale and his melody. The students in his class were stunned; in academic subjects he was usually (honestly) a bit of a disorganized troublemaker. I think he felt the freedom to be able to contribute for the first time, certainly; but I also believe he wanted to again experience that feeling of importance, specialness, and pride at being ‘good’ different instead of bad. Greene (2000) states that community is not conformity, and that stories told through many differing perspectives can build bridges that unify. I concur, and think it falls to the hands of educators to facilitate change for the betterment of our schools, our society, and most of all our future.

Remembrance 4: My Ongoing Educational Struggle



Figure 9. “Candle on the Water” (Hirschhorn, J. & Kasha, A., 1976)

I think I teach with the attitude of ‘there is nothing you cannot do’ because that is what my father proclaimed my entire childhood. But I relate to my ELL and immigrant students because even though my ethnicity did not show I experienced marginalization in many ways. In

my home I was special; when I walked out the door I was just oddly different. I ate differently, I dressed differently, I spoke differently (it seemed all the languages and dialects from both my families when combined produced a sort of ‘non-accent’ my peers found hard to understand). I now wonder if this shaped my choices all along: I was academically gifted (strike one), then joined the band (strike two) and became a girl trumpet player and soloist (strike three- I guess I’m out). However, I see myself as proof that with perseverance (after a few years of ridicule and pain) you can begin to revel in your individuality. What probably helped the most was that I found my niche; I loved all aspects of music so much I lost myself in it and no longer cared what others thought.

As I alluded to earlier, I have spent much time in discordant thought about the importance of teaching music in public school. I believe (as in my case) music could be a child’s “candle on the water to light their way” (Kasha & Hirschhorn, 1976), and be a bridge to their learning and acceptance. I knew music should be an important element in every child’s life; the subject being so broad and encompassing, from integrating with math, science, and language, to the aesthetic joy of simply listening and experiencing its many and varied styles. Current research (Blair & Kondo, 2008; Bradley, 2006; Jorgensen, 2007; Kelly & Van Weelden, 2004) continues to validate my opinion, but those in power in educational circles do not seem to share this outlook. I was so disheartened, when it came time for me to assess where I was going with my education (I had planned on trying for a doctorate from the time I was told I could receive one in education), instead of enrolling in a doctoral program I was going to ‘throw in the towel’ and simply re-certify into regular elementary education and be ‘one of the normal masses’.

Subject Matter: Allegro con Molto

Then for some inexplicable reason, I found myself driving an hour to an advertized meeting in an adjoining county. What I heard excited me, so the very next semester I was once again following my dream of being ‘doctor’ and enrolled at Georgia Southern University. To say this changed my life would be an understatement. This was the beginning of my conscientization (Freire, 1970); the crucial turning point of my teaching, and the self-affirmation of my teaching methods. This conscientization was a throwing off of the blinders keeping me from seeing the state of education as it really was and aiding me in the beginnings of the removal of obstacles in my way toward my teaching methods and process (Freire, 1971). All my research and study there enabled me to create and follow through with an even clearer vision of what my lessons could mean to an ensemble of seeking students. Being able to use music to comfort and stimulate has given me a purpose in my teaching I have never had before. Being exposed to concepts such as marginalization and equity let me really see and appreciate my students and build a bridge from the struggles of my past to the conflicts they face in the present.

The first time I picked up a book by Joel Spring (in my second semester), I was hooked. His timelines helped me see the struggles of my immigrant students in a way I had never thought of before. His works led me to the theories of Paolo Freire, James Banks, Geneva Gay, and Gloria Ladson-Billings (and so many others) causing me to take a serious look at my teaching methods. I realized as Freire (1970) stated that committing myself to my students to this degree would call for a profound and constantly re-examined change-state. From this moment on everything I taught (and thought about regarding teaching) would require action for change, then reflection (leading to further action) in order to be authentic. I found myself searching through my music for cultural examples both representing my students and new music I hoped we could

all discover together. For the first time I thought I could really make a difference in the lives of all my students by sharing my history, and in turn allowing them to share theirs; making our relationships a narrative and active quest for meaning.

Milieu: Ala Brevé

I share Eisner's (2002) opinion that what education and the arts have in common is the ability to expand consciousness; and that these experiences are "central to growth" (p. 3), and "the medium of education" (p. 3). I truly believe and share with my students the importance of being a life-long learner. In my classes my students enjoy hearing (just as I enjoy telling) about my childhood in school, from elementary through my college years. I love the smell of a college campus; my husband jests it's because I have been a student my entire life! Sharpened pencils and ink combine with anticipation and a slight tinge of apprehension. The first semester at Georgia Southern my husband came to Statesboro with me a day early so we could explore. We loved walking the brick pathways and viewing the fascinating mix of old and new architecture common on most university grounds. I was proud to be taking the next logical step, but did not know what was ahead for me. But as with the schools I have been a part of in my teaching, I knew it was not the buildings as much as the people who made things happen.

I have never read so much! When our classes would meet or have online discussions so many perspectives would be presented by both my teachers and my peers, and I was grateful for the new knowledge. I remember my first curriculum class, being bombarded with so many theorists and educational concepts. I also remember seeing the aesthetic and the cultural validated on the printed page; renowned people giving credence to ideas I had always thought were important gave me the impetus to continue and refresh my teaching methods. For the first

time it did not matter so much about our funding issues, class sizes, and over-crowded scheduling; I regained my focus on what was truly central to the purpose of education, all my students and their educational and emotional needs.

So many little arias of memory come back to me from that first weekend: the heaviest textbooks I have ever carried, developing a philosophical stance, what multiculturalism really is (and is not), and a chance to have a validated opinion (and be able to defend it). In so many ways my doctoral career continues to mirror the lives of my students. I was waiting for a point in time for my subject to matter just like they are waiting to matter *as* themselves. My vow after my first semester: I will not allow music, culture, or the lives of my students to be marginalized from this day forward. The culmination of this program for me is the beginning of a mindset of mattering; the life-affirming authenticity that comes from being a subject, and not an object (Freire, 1970).

Teacher and Learner: Harmony

My experiences of learning in the doctoral program at Georgia Southern have been transformational. While some of the concepts I received with trepidation (then acceptance)- I remember a particularly heated debate about the idea of ‘colorblindness’ in the classroom- for the most part I could feel myself growing and changing. Being a child of immigrants I always had a different take on what education should encompass, but felt like an outsider. Like Greene (2000) I saw the need to teach my students the importance of dialogue and communication in search of truth instead of silence; a song for all the children I would teach. What I studied about multiculturalism and the learner both validated my motives and teaching style and indicated what could be improved to further benefit my students.

In this doctoral program the research I have done, the professors I have worked with, and the things I have had to experience have helped to make me a culturally independent thinker and teacher. I now look back sheepishly at the ‘cultural’ things I have done with my classes in the past: a very weak attempt at cultural exchange, an oppression “sweetened by false generosity” (Freire, 1970, p. 40). I now realize that to really know a person, you must hear them and understand their situation. The children of Georgia are the future of this state. I let them lead me, and because of them, I teach so much more than just music; and I am very proud of that. My study has given me focus and heart when teaching for tolerance and building a community in my classroom, and I will always be grateful for the chance this degree has given me to become a better educator.

In my life, the teacher is also a learner; it is a constant and reciprocal relationship between self and soul. In being open to the learning my doctoral program has provided me, I have become a more understanding and knowledgeable teacher for my students. It has given me the pivotal moment of conscientization (Freire, 1970) I would not otherwise have had, and it brought home to me how vital higher education is as well as how important teachers are in the lives of students. To Freire (1970) praxis is reflection leading to action. In committing myself to my students in this manner, I have become different. Constantly learning about my students has become a critical part of my teaching because in doing this I realize their problems and needs; the reciprocity exists when assisting my students in their search for identity and freedom strengthens me culturally, as well.

The closer to your heart the learning is the more painful but worthwhile it is to accept. This impactful learning is necessary in that it can lead to positive emotional and critical consciousness instead of the silence of educational contradictions (Freire, 1971). I believe in

many cases our students are looking to us for guidance when we are ignorant of a workable and equitable solution. How devastating to consider in classrooms all over our nation students are being led to think they do not matter simply because their identities are not being noticed and explored in the (mistaken) hopes that cultural unity requires overlooking difference.

I think the greatest thing this program of doctoral study has done for me was to make a difference in the way I see my students. Instead of looking at them as something in dire need of assistance, instead I view our relationships as reciprocal ones. I recognize the gifts of culture and language they have to share with me and the other students in their classes. I believe identifying the things they know and are good at empowers them to try and succeed at the unfamiliar. Eisner (1994) says that “Humans both understand and reason about the world in a variety of ways” (p. 87), and that the more forms of representation (vantage points for creating comprehension) we can give them the more knowledge they can achieve.

The hardest thing about this doctoral program is that it highlights the flaws in the educational system, many of which are out of a mere teacher’s control. Sometimes to empower your students is to put yourself on the line, such as the language example that was mentioned above. Sometimes the way ELL students are grouped into classes for ease of scheduling makes it difficult for them to learn; the authors I have read the past few years have enabled me to see and identify the inequities of practices such as this. In the politically charged climate teachers exist in today most of these students are seen as an educational testing detriment, the only positive aspect of them being that they enable the prospect of the receiving of funding. How demeaning and untrue: I agree with Greene (2001) that if they are not learning it is that “I do not think we offer the young enough...options, options they feel good enough to seize” (p. 206).

This program of study has validated and strengthened my thoughts: that every child has something to share, and allowing them to share is not only equitable, it is their right as members of our schools. Many of my peers in this program have removed themselves from public schools because of these flaws, and are going at the problem from other angles; several of them are working with pre-service teachers to expand their cultural opinions before they enter their classrooms. For now, I remain in the trenches, where I believe I can do the most good.

A pedagogy for the liberation of the oppressed is created as the painful path toward freedom unfolds; the freedom for our students to learn, think, and exist as who they really are. These ideals of Freire (1970) are echoed in the thoughts of Eisner, Schwab, and Greene: the bureaucracy education finds itself in today is negative to humanism and a threat to what should be the beautiful process of every child learning what they need to know to be a happily functioning member of the human race, experienced at their own pace. Greene (2000) believes that allowing diverse students to share their lives not only creates meaning for them, but also “to reach out for the proficiencies and capacities, the craft required to be fully participant in this society, and to do so without losing the consciousness of who they are” (p. 165).

In remembrances and occurrences I speak of wondering what to teach these students to fill their days with meaningful learning. Eisner (1994) stresses that a word such as metamorphosis without a form or frame of reference is “nothing more than a noise” (p. 62), and that meaning is only created when students undergo the processes of experience and context applicable to them. Removing the self-deprecating ideas of inferiority, along with the blanket of negative protection ambiguity affords in the way we teach our students is the first step toward real and lasting learning. Teaching multiculturally has shown me that there can never be enough days to learn what is important.

To me music brings children together to create an atmosphere of joy, peace, love, and freedom of expression. These remembrances (and many more) will stay with me forever; because in them I was able to help my students attain these feelings (even if only for a short while) and possibly make a difference in their lives and in their futures. My students tell me “I can be open in your class”, “I can be myself”, “I love how the music you play makes me free”, and my favorite, “your music makes me so happy”: as long as music can do all this for children, I will keep teaching.

CHAPTER 5

FINÉ: CHALLENGES, INSIGHTS, AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The image shows a musical score for the song "Music Brings Us Together" by Garry Smith. The score is written in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a 4/4 time signature. It includes a main melody line and a refrain line. The main melody starts with a dynamic marking of *mf* and features chords F, C, Bb, and F. The lyrics are: "1. Chil-dren, sing all o-ver the place. Sing a song loud and clear, for ev-ry-one to hear: Let a joy-ful noise make its home in your heart." The refrain is marked "Refrain" and "Group 1" with a dynamic marking of *f*. It features chords F and Am. The lyrics for the refrain are: "Sing a song loud and clear, for ev-ry-one to hear: Let a joy-ful noise make its home in your heart." The score also includes a second line of music with chords Bb, F, and Eb.

Figure 10. "Music Brings Us Together" (Smith, G., 1998)

Every day I begin my teaching wondering if I've been handed and accepted a blessing or a curse. My immigrant students and I share a kind of marginalized kinship of both music and culture not being considered a priority in today's educational composition. I often relate to my husband that a difficult day dealing with children is better than a good day dealing with adults; so in planning what I believe to be best for my students, I try to keep the negative viewpoints toward the back of my mind. My students are so much more accepting of new ideas and concepts; I know that in the times I am able to close my door and just teach, discuss, and explore, music does bring us together.

The purpose of this study was to investigate my approach to multicultural music education and to explore how my cultural heritage and experiences have enabled me to teach my students multiculturally and musically. Three research questions guided this autoethnographic study:

1. Can critical reflection on significant cultural events in my life shed light on my practice of multicultural music education specifically and the need for implementing multicultural education in general?
2. Does my personal experienced-based method of teaching empowering my students into to being more aesthetically aware of culture in my classroom and their world?
3. Does my method of teaching empower the students in my classroom?

I believe that the remembrances shared in this dissertation have helped to illuminate both the need for multicultural education in general and the reasons for my own practices of multicultural music education. The remembrances have also demonstrated ways in which my teaching methods empower and enrich the lives of my students to give them all pride of place in society. I know that my students receive much from the experiences we share in my classes. I also know that my teaching is cyclical; the more I reflect on and share my cultural experiences, the more my students do the same. The joy and strength my students get from our musical time together shows the need for my curriculum of multicultural music education.

It has always been my hope that sharing my background, and in turn being open to accepting their cultural knowledge will help overcome feelings of racism; and creating cultural curiosity and empathy that will last and strengthen *all* my students as global human beings. I believe my love for my students as well as my ongoing search for cultural knowledge have made me uniquely suited to continue the creation of a multicultural music curriculum and to complete this work.

Many people still uphold the value of the “melting pot” theory in the U.S. The glaring flaw in the melting pot theory in this country is that for decades people have paid the price in lost

languages, histories, and traditions. This practice needs to cease, and instead we need to embrace the dignity and relevance of diversity. Instead of expecting schools to fall in with the melting pot practice, we need to make students (and teachers and administrators) aware of the discriminative implications in our current procedures. To me, this should be an all-encompassing endeavor, but the multicultural classroom is a good place to begin. “Advocates of multicultural education strive for the curriculum to be totally transformed so that it truly represents the cultural diversity of all knowledge” (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2004, p. 382).

Schubert, Schubert, Thomas, & Carroll (2002) concur:

A postmodern reading of curriculum also recognizes there are significant differences that establish the identity of the learner—the narratives of cultural, race, gender, and sexual expression being among those most often considered in inquiry and in consideration of meaningful practice. The importance of each of these differences in the life of the learner has encouraged scholarship on how curriculum must attend to the diverse narratives that constitute the self (p. 377)

Reflections: Til I Reach the Higher Ground (Wonder, 1973)



Figure 11. "It's A Small World" (Sherman, R. M. & Sherman, R. B., 1966)

As a music educator I continue to experience the cacophonous conflict between the rigidity of teaching to traditional standards-based education and the individualized and fluid curriculum I continue to create for my students and myself. In my opinion, in order for equitability in teaching to occur every educator must first take a focused look at their demographic and then at the curriculum they are currently teaching. As trite as it sounds, our world is getting smaller every day, and if the past few years are any indication, this will continue. As I have stated before, our country was (and is still being) created by immigration; what we teach our children must be a reflection of our population and I am committed to taking what I consider to be this higher ground.

In music 'opening up' refers to an instrument becoming accustomed to personal touch. The more it opens up, the more flexible and beautiful the sound becomes. With my students the more they trust me (and what happens because of the curriculum I have created within my classroom), the more they open up to give me and others insights we would not otherwise have. All my students must be given the chance to feel nurtured and comfortable with themselves.

Stripping children of their ethnicity in order to teach rudimentary skills is not equality. On the contrary, our identity is bound within our ethnicity: taking this away can create learning blocks and lead students into isolation (Nieto, 2004). Teaching a child without acknowledging their culture is counter intuitive.

Creating a meaning-filled curriculum is difficult, but necessary. In the area of curriculum design, Schwab (1978) was definitely progressive, suggesting an intersectionality allowing for problem solving and opportunities for the benefit of all students. A music class example: once several years ago we had a new student enroll before our school received any of his records. We knew he had a Hispanic background, but were not apprised of his first language. The first week he did not speak or sing in my classroom; the next week I pulled out a few Spanish folk songs and movement activities. Suddenly, he perked up and began singing and moving in his chair! When I moved closer to him, he began speaking to me in Spanish very excitedly. I told his teacher, as well as providing her with several songs and activities in Spanish. Our understanding of each other began to develop mutual trust, and he began participating in all areas in school. This music curriculum allowed this kindergartener to use problem solving to help his teachers decipher his best learning style.

Greene (1988) believes a balanced curriculum should include the ideals of freedom as well as (and synonymous with) accepting the responsibility of one's place in the world. In my classroom when we study the musical element of rhythm, for example, we learn and perform the universal rudiments (note and rest values, meter, and beat) first. Then because both African and Caribbean music have a strong rhythmic foundation, we delve into this music, as well as any traditional rhythmic movements and percussive rhythms from these regions. Pulling cultural music and relating it to traditional rudimentary music learning does two things: it accomplishes

my goal of rhythm instruction in an enjoyable way, and it shows my students that cultural music is just as valid as our traditional canon of musical examples.

To Eisner (1998) the most important aspect of using the imagination lies in cultural development. He is adamant in his conviction that we owe to future generations the use of our imaginations in this present: in curriculum this requires teaching to the aesthetic and the construction of diversified meanings and situations. In my music classroom we do a lot of dancing. I firmly believe that movement is a great way to lose inhibitions and get creative juices flowing; when we dance and move my students love to pretend to 'be' things like animals and items in nature. I also love to help children engage in storytelling! There are certain Asian and Hispanic chants and stories that beg to be made into sequels. So, we discuss different places, I show pictures and examples, and they ask questions. Before long they are listening to the music and creating their own movements, then extending lessons to create class stories with illustrations.

Freire (2007) would continue that because it is the teacher's duty to expose oppression, curriculum must be created that will awaken the political consciousness of the student and the teacher. He believes when the reasons for oppression are uncovered we can take steps to overcome this oppression together, and both be stronger for the effort. When students experience something unfamiliar (like cultural music or movement) they tend to giggle or laugh. This sometimes hurts the feelings of the immigrant and ELL students in their classes. Instead of overlooking this I stop the lesson and we discuss our feelings about the situation: the outcome of this discussion is a better understanding of each other as people.

However, I have a particular example of awakening consciousness in my classroom. I had a third grade boy who came to me mid way through the year. We were discussing spooky music and the meaning behind Dia de la Muerte. I then let the class choose to dance or draw their impressions of the music they were hearing. He began to draw the most amazingly accurate flags from so many Hispanic countries, all from memory! I was so impressed, and then I noticed: the Mexican flag was missing. When I asked him about his reasoning he told me he was Puerto Rican, and Puerto Ricans were better than Mexicans. I did some research with his teachers and found out he was aggressive and confrontational with the other ELL students. When I saw him at bus duty that afternoon, I asked him to come visit me after breakfast the next morning. Because I knew of his love of art, I went to the art teacher and asked her if I could borrow some posters by Diego Rivera and Frieda Kahlo. The next day he entered my room sheepishly, thinking he was 'in trouble. I showed him the artwork, and as I predicted, he loved the use of color and shape in the works. It was then I told him they were done by famous artists from Mexico. As he left my room I could tell he was thinking. Later on he brought what he told me was his completed picture; it included the Mexican flag. As we have gotten closer and continue to talk, he shared with me his feelings of inferiority upon arrival in this country and at our school. I think he was criticizing others to try to build his own self esteem. This is a common practice that teaching multiculturally can help alleviate.

I entered teaching with the pledge to create a kind of sacred trust: my students trust me as their empathetic and listening ear and know I would help them in any way possible. For all my students but especially for my immigrant and ELL children I am much more than just their music teacher. I am their mentor and cultural liaison, confidante and comrade, and in class we learn about more than just music. The idea of the globalism should be a fascinating one opening

children to so many possibilities. I believe it is my job to put forth this vision; to continue to take this ‘higher ground’ and I accept the responsibility gladly. However, beginning with music in class does lead to some interesting study and experience. I find in sharing with my students initially that we will be learning about the music and customs of many different cultures overcomes what I term the objectification of the exotic as the year unfolds. When cultures and ethnicities are put on display (through things like one day a month activities and bulletin boards) students tend to view these cultures as odd and untouchable. By participating in our ‘world discussions’ (this is what my children sometimes call our talks) and experiences, students see that we are all cultural beings on an equal level and we can all share with each other.

I began my teaching career idealistically, with stars in my eyes (as most young teachers do). Moving toward the end I look back more realistically; knowing I have done quite well, regardless of obstacles that have blocked my way. Working with children is so different than a ‘regular’ job, and things happen to alter your perspective almost on a daily basis.

Reflections on Remembrances

In this section, I revisit key events discussed in chapter four in order to highlight benefits and challenges of integrating multicultural music education in the public school system.

Visiting Remembrance 1: Myself and my Students

The words of the carol spoken of in the first remembrance poignantly speak of joy coming at the end of a toilsome journey; one in which I am sure many of my students are familiar. It has become my goal to make sure I help as many students as I can feel this joy and completion. According to Banks (2007) “A systemic view of educational reform is especially important when reform is related to issues as complex and emotionally laden as race, class, and

gender” (p. 85). To me, the collard green/Mexican food incident in my first remembrance is a ‘tip of the iceberg’ situation. When these students enter our schools they are stripped of everything that makes them unique, all for the goal of conformity. Because of our uniforms they cannot wear the clothes they want to wear, eat the foods they are familiar with, read books in their languages, listen (except in my classroom) to the music they enjoy, or talk to anyone in which they can actually converse. There are no reminders of ‘home’ for them. This leaves these immigrant students confused at best and disenfranchised at worst.

Of course the little ones cry; of course the older students become angry. If we placed ourselves with them (as we should), we would cry and be angry, too; receiving daily servings of a dominant culture we do not understand. If our goal as educators is to instill a love of learning in all our students, it is time to reassess our methods. The best chance we have of altering the ‘white bias’ (which can begin as young as the age of five) is to use prejudice reduction throughout the school and system: techniques that transform each students’ attitudes and points of view regarding race and ethnicity (Banks, 1997).

We continue to be in the disturbing age of accountability. I have taught in schools in the recent past where the descriptor of ‘good’ is defined by the highest test scores and silent and stern discipline in the halls and classrooms. To me, this is an archaic notion based on educational methods of decades ago. Administrators’ and teachers’ hands are tied by these procedures, when they could instead be searching out and finding the specialness inherent in every child. When this is accomplished, a successful school is being established.

Even though our students of color continue to fail using the prescribed methods of instruction, we go on doing the same thing year after year (Ladson-Billings, 2002). Change is

frightening, especially if you are the only one doing the changing. The consequences for the educator choosing to follow this path are varied: peer misunderstanding, certainly, but also the stress of being different as well as finding time in the harried schedule to perform basic instruction and cultural lessons (however, with research both could be integrated). The pressure to follow the prescribed curriculum falls to us all; failing at this could lead to reprimands or teacher remediation. What people seem to be unwilling to understand is that teaching marginalized students in the way they learn best assists *all* students in learning and retaining material (Gay, 2000).

Visiting Remembrance 2: Nana's Story

In my second remembrance I wrote about the negative impact of assimilation. Because of my family experiences I am not, nor have I ever been, an assimilationist. While I understand the need for ELL students to learn to express themselves in English, I see no reason for them to abandon their own language and culture; language is an integral part of identity, and your name is part of your language. Banks (2007) states that a pedagogy of equity occurs “when teachers modify their teaching in ways that will facilitate the academic achievement of students from diverse racial, cultural, and social class groups” (p. 337). When my ELL students share with others that the pronunciation of their names are unimportant, they are accepting their cultural defeat due to years of mistreatment.

In my experience immigrant children tend to lack self-confidence, and these ‘name incidents’ are just a symptom of deeper feelings of unworthiness. This is indicative of feelings of a lack of belonging and struggle with their new identity and placement in their new country. They sense (without being able to name) this oppression, and this equates to powerlessness

(Freire, 1970). A prejudice is reproduced every time a child's name is not spoken correctly: this is where the teacher should step in to help 'right the wrong', showing students this is a form of discrimination and is inappropriate. Greene (2000) states: "There is no question but that some students face fearful obstacles due to inequities in this country" (p. 18), but goes on to suggest that involved teachers can facilitate change. Prejudice reduction happens when students' attitudes about race are changed as a result of the way a teacher teaches and the materials he or she chooses to use (Banks, 2007).

When most teachers work with ELL students it is always "English, English, English"! As I have mentioned in this work, I do not teach a tested subject. I realize this is because music is thought of as unimportant in the grand scheme of education and what people in authority think children should know. However, if this 'non-focus' gives me a chance to work with all my students in ways I think would benefit them best, I consider myself fortunate. Up until now although I have heard grumblings passed on from my ELL students' classroom teachers to me, no one has spoken to me as of yet. If things were to change, I would not change my stance or my teaching methods, because I believe being a safe haven of learning for all my students is what education should be about.

Visiting Remembrance 3: Vietnam and China

Just as music has been (and continues to be) a source of comfort, stability, and delight throughout my life, the power of music continues to assist my students in their search for identity and belonging. When I think of content integration- the use of culturally representative materials when teaching for the purpose of building classroom equity and resonance (Banks, 2007), I am reminded of the music club in my third remembrance and my precious little Chinese boy. In his

bell performance he revealed talents and strengths the other students were not aware he possessed. This serendipitous moment achieved two things: it affirmed his culture, and it revealed to my students that he could succeed.

In my class the following week this same child went straight to the bells I had set up in my room and played his music for this new group of students; he then sang some of his native songs for the class. He later drew a picture of himself beside his house in China and gave it to me, and began sharing small pieces of himself with me I do not think he would have had music not forged a bond between us. That spring he was a speaker for his class program, and watching the joy on his face as he sang was such a reward for me. From that time on he was very engaged in my class, looking forward to the new discoveries cultural study would bring him.

One of the most wonderful things about folk and traditional music is that in a world of ephemera, music endures. When I teach a song, sharing that it is over one hundred years old and that children in the distant past sang the same song, my students can hardly believe it. I enjoy ‘placing’ cultural music historically for them. It helps my students see the bigger picture; that we are all from other places and are equal in that we share in the continuous creation of our country.

I believe children are more likely to learn and understand if information is conveyed to them within their own frame of cultural reference. I have seen my informal multicultural curriculum make a difference in the lives of my students, both academically and in building their self esteem. As Gay (2000) emphatically states, “*All* [italics mine] our children deserved to be empowered on multiple levels. Empowerment embraces competence, accomplishment, confidence, and efficacy.” (p. 215). As for me, I am thrilled that so many cultures are

represented in our state school system. In searching for my cultural heritage, I discovered that each of my students had one, as well. I sense that we are all equal in our quest and discovery of this knowledge. Teaching with all of these diverse children is a rewarding challenge, and now more than ever, I feel like I belong.

Visiting Remembrance 4: My Education

In my fourth remembrance I made mention of the happiness my students derive from my teaching methods. I would like to share several more examples of the intensely positive things that can happen when students are given a reprieve from cultural assimilation in school. Several years ago, I had a kindergarten student that had just relocated from Puerto Rico. I remember well the first day he came into my music room- it was about half way through the opening week of school, and by the defiant look on his face, I could tell he was a ‘weary traveler’ and had experienced more than his little brain and soul could stand. As I began class, I let him quietly wander the room for a few minutes (my room is very cultural, colorful, and engaging for this purpose). After we had finished a few warm up songs, I led the group in a chant and a game song in Spanish. He turned, looked at me, and came running to sit on the carpet with the rest of the students: *this* was something he could both understand and participate in! The smile on his face was as if the sun had risen, and later his teacher let me know he had his best day yet. By mid-year he had learned most of the songs we sing- and listened intently to pick up the words to any new songs I selected for my classes.

It is clear to me that both young and old benefit from cultural music study. An instance I recall regarded an intermediate level student from Haiti who upon arrival in my room spoke only French. I remember feeling for her as I was introduced to her; she was terrified. At the time I

was working with her grade level on their program and we were listening to and singing the chosen music. The rhythm and flow of one song reminded her of music she sang in her school in Haiti (she expressed this to me- I can understand and speak limited French); she was so excited! Later that month after learning the words at lightning speed, she was front and center on our stage singing and letting her spirit shine.

Another instance I remember involved a fifth grade student whose parents are Jamaican; he seemed to come alive during our study of the Caribbean Islands. After class he excitedly told me he had been listening to this style of music his whole life! His mother taught him a dance that went with one of the lively Island songs I had chosen to perform with traditional instruments. He taught the dance and we later used it (with him as leader) in a program we performed for the school. My students continue to benefit from my teaching methods: making CD's and music copies and spending extra time working with these students have helped give them the confidence to achieve. When they come back to visit me and tell me about their experiences in chorus, band, and drama club, I am so proud of them; and they are so appreciative of me. For some of my students, I am hopeful that their joy was more than fleeting, and I believe we came together for the purpose of making cultural identity a priority. What began for me as a way to reach all my students has become far-reaching into my community.

The Politics of Fairness

Schools, in my opinion, have become agents of assimilation. Culture, especially when it happens to involve language, is viewed negatively. In my remembrances of chapter four I critique several commonly accepted teaching practices such as; the lack of cultural self-esteem building, culture as part of the null curriculum, cultural negativity regarding testing, ELL

grouping, and educational reproduction. This is unacceptable; students must be shown they have validity and a right to exist. It is almost like a purposeful removal of culture is taking place under the umbrella-like fallacy of equitability; that all students can then begin with a blank learning slate. In most of today's schools there seems to be no attempt made at building self-esteem through cultural identity. There are shallow attempts at multiculturalism (lunchroom food, bulletin board decorations, and theme days) sure, but in my opinion culture and ethnicity are seen as detriments and students continue to be looked down upon because of difference.

There has always been an 'either-or' mentality concerning education that seems to place groups of students at a constant disadvantage. Ornstein and Hunkins (2004) speak of this dichotomy: "This [multicultural] attempt to add 'everyone' and 'all things' in our political and social conversations and actions is a 'rub' against our dual way of thinking of power. If something or someone has power, some other thing or person does not" (p. 378). The pendulum regarding culture in education has to do with language and assessment (of course). In education's hurry to put everything on paper, ELL students are grouped into classes (making learning difficult because there are usually no higher language-functioning students to group them with) and considered a testing detriment anxiously awaiting coding (so their scores will not be counted against the schools they attend); paperwork is then filled out quickly in the hopes of receiving government minority funding.

I also find it odd that in a time when educational administrators stress the concept of differentiated instruction (finding methods to teach every student in the way they learn best), the culture of the student is not taken into account. Schwab (1978) states that when building a curriculum, the different milieu and learning style of each child must be represented; this is not happening, so our instruction is not differentiated or complete. The curriculum needs equal

representation; education could be used as a unifying tool giving all students chances to be experts and develop positive momentum. Instead language and culture are not discussed, creating class distinctions and racial conflicts and attitudes that are not reasoned out, just punished. According to Banks (1996) our reproductive educational systems need to be changed so as a society we can go beyond our public schools' only creating a menial labor force.

While many flaws in our present educational system are out of the teacher's control, much can be done to improve the situation. Teachers need to take control of their classrooms and content by constantly researching materials using a critical eye, as well as continuous interaction with all their students and parents. Teachers must realize that the power they have over their students is an awesome responsibility. We are a huge part of the lives of our students and they look to us to speak the truth and offer guidance. It is Freire's (1970) belief that the act of freedom must be a search with the oppressed, not for the oppressed, and in liberating our students we in turn unfetter ourselves.

The validation of music in the school curriculum has been against the political agenda for many years (Woodford, 2005), and I do not see this changing in the near future. However, I have personally witnessed multicultural music unlock a child's language and initiate their potential for learning. I have seen experiences with multicultural music build my students' self-esteem and empower them as well as help them forge their new identities in our global society. I can attest that teaching against common practices is difficult, and teachers brave enough to take this path must understand they will be alone and often times misunderstood. However, the rewards received in the lives of our children (and in the self) are most definitely worth it. It is time we rediscovered what truly matters; not budget cuts, not crowded conditions, but taking the time to design curriculum to enrich and meet the needs of *all* our students.

Theoretical Framework as Musical Metaphor



Figure 12. "Peace Round" (Old English carol, revised words by Ritchie, J.)

Stories: everyone has a story, and everyone loves to hear stories. Stories of culture combine us into duets, trios, ensembles; where once only solos began. They bring us together into unison, create harmonies, and make us appreciative of the spice involved in the foundation of positive dissonance. In this section, I use the metaphor of music to revisit the contributions of Schwab, Eisner, Greene, and Freire and Banks to this study. What follows is a theoretical melody that bridges this eclectic group of theorists in my multicultural music education. Freire (1971) tells us that the intensity of personal narration is a first step toward feelings of freedom; Greene (2000) is emboldened to say that sharing stories aesthetically builds empathy in us all. I think my students being able to tell others about themselves through the context of my lessons encourage freedom, and these celebrations of freedom encourage equality. When the lessons we all participate in show the commonalities we share (in stories, dances, and songs) we are building lasting feelings of empathy toward one another.

Greene (2001), Eisner (2002a) and others speak of joy, peace, love, and freedom being created through self-expression and sharing. Freire (1970) would agree that the unfolding of freedom, like education, is a process; education, therefore is the dynamic practice of freedom (based on reality), and should be both personal and reflexive (Freire, 1973). But for my cultural students I believe freedom is most important; it is the ability to be uniquely from another place but still have the right to exist in America. To me, music has always brought about feelings of love, joy, and peace. I experience this daily and do my best to share this with all my students every way I can. I believe strongly that music can be a window to the world. My immigrant children and children whose families are from other lands tell me they feel “free like a bird” when they are able to lead a class in discovery and share themselves without fear of ridicule.

Morris (2007) believes that within the act of attempting to understand and create individual meaning from music we free ourselves. This attentiveness and focus- what Greene (2001) calls intense noticing- brings us out of our self-consciousness and into confident expression and freedom. This freedom of expression in turn creates feelings of positive identity and belonging in our students. Greene (2000) also believes when independent thinking occurs, students are more capable of using their imaginations and can therefore cross over into empathy for those who are different. Through my lessons I have witnessed children become so lost in a folk song or piece of cultural music that they began moving, creating dances that flow with the music. This happened during a listening example of a raucous and vibrant Chinese New Year parade march. A student from China exclaimed that in his old country they did ribbon dances using movements similar to those the students were displaying. I got out my ribbons, and we combined his dance moves with those the students were already doing to create something special; something my students asked to do again and again.

A new broader paradigm of what music education means must be created to ensure feelings of acceptance and student success in schools. Standard practices must be changed and doors must be opened to allow music to pervade the school and community. Greene (2001) defines this as “aesthetic literacy” (p. 50); its objective being “opening new perspectives on a world increasingly shared” (p. 189). It is much more important to place the focus on the student and what they can give to the subject than conducting music in the traditional method. Grant and Gomez (2001) call this a “softening of the boundaries between teacher and student, suggesting that we can learn from each other and can teach each other” (p. 251). The experience should be about nurturing the individual on their personal musical journey.

Because I have always been comforted by music, I use music to comfort my students. In my classroom my students know they have the freedom to discuss anything, and they get to ‘be themselves’. Sometimes I can see the calmness or excitement in their faces as they enter my room! I plan my lessons with the exploratory purpose of showing all my students the joy of learning all there is to offer in music. I also plan my lessons knowing that they have much to discover about themselves and each other as they travel the road to being citizens in a global society. I believe music can be an integral part of assisting children on their journey toward understanding.

Schwab and Eisner both see the need for educators to become experts in their respective fields. In creating a multicultural music classroom, adherence to Schwab’s (1978) notion of commonplaces is so important. To him the continuous crisis in curriculum education is a result of the omission of educators in its process. His commonplaces represent the pieces of a successful educational puzzle that should be under constant scrutiny and comparison. It is the opinion of Eisner (2002a) that being a teacher in the arts means effectively reaching students aesthetically in

“an endless venture” (p. 56) that “never ends until we do” (p. 56). Both theorists agree that an optimum learning environment for thinking and growth should be provided: both see the classroom and curriculum as places of growth where values and practices contribute to the identity of each child.

In my classroom we always begin cultural study with respect; students are allowed to question but not to criticize. We spend much time in discussion of how ‘unfamiliar’ is not synonymous with ‘inferior’. What we teach students is important; what we show them with our attitudes and speech is even more so. As teachers and leaders, if we take the time to value each student for what they can bring to our classrooms and schools, each child will be more able to find their place of success.

Challenges

There were times in the writing of this work when my personal feelings became so intense I felt I could not continue. Oddly, often times it was my students coming back to visit me that urged me to continue writing this project. In telling them of my work, they were excited; they wanted their stories shared! Looking back I wish I had approached this differently. I think the research could have been strengthened by interviewing individual students and compiling this information. In performing the research the way it was done, I was showing concern for my students and keeping them (and their culture) anonymous. I sincerely hope I was not feeding into the duality of the culture of power (of marginalizing my students by naming their culture) by doing this; it was not my intention. In my suggestions for future research I would include completing individual student, teacher, and administrator interviews. I also want to make it known that teachers motivated to attempt this kind of multicultural curriculum should begin with

the cultures and ethnicities of the students they teach, so everyone's work will of necessity be different.

It was difficult but cathartic to keep digging through memories and diaries to uncover more of my cultural background, but in the end I enjoyed bringing it to light. That was my initial purpose for this work: to show the lantern vision (Shank, 2002). I wanted to shine light into the dark places "where no light had been shed before" (Shank, 2002, p. 11). But in my earnest search for meaning and acceptance for my children, I also found it for myself and my teaching.

When speaking of my students and our multicultural studies, I find it very hard to be objective. Finding multicultural music has saved my teaching and possibly my sanity. Where some might see the subject of music as unimportant, I believe within its study lies a connection into the souls and identities of all my students, and should be referred to and treated reverently. Freire (1971) refers to education for freedom and identity as moving from ambiguity to the creation of transformative knowledge and requires a "relationship of authentic dialogue" (p. 12). I think this is what music does for my students: some do not know who they are, until they hear a song.

For my theoretical framework, Greene and Eisner were chosen because of their attachments to the aesthetic and the arts. In Greene's work on multiculturalism it is so easy to get lost in her words, making it difficult to cull. With Eisner it was surprisingly hard to find multicultural information; it was clear his main objective was to show the importance of the arts in schools and the artistry of teaching. As with Greene, Freire's writings on critical consciousness and awareness left me inspired; his level of honesty and commitment in his situation was astounding. It is my earnest wish that I can attempt to do with music what Freire did with language. And Schwab was a delightful discovery for me. I thought his declaring the

curriculum field as moribund (1978) was gutsy and intriguing. As I read more of his (limited) work I realized his vision of the creation of curriculum was a common thread all my theorists shared. I see them as visionary in that they are champions of the oppressed (in many different ways), wanted a child-focused curriculum to be used as an educative tool, and not just for show. They all also recognized that for learning to be lasting it must encompass personal meaning, and that equity in education is achieved through creating empathetic feelings toward others.

Conclusions

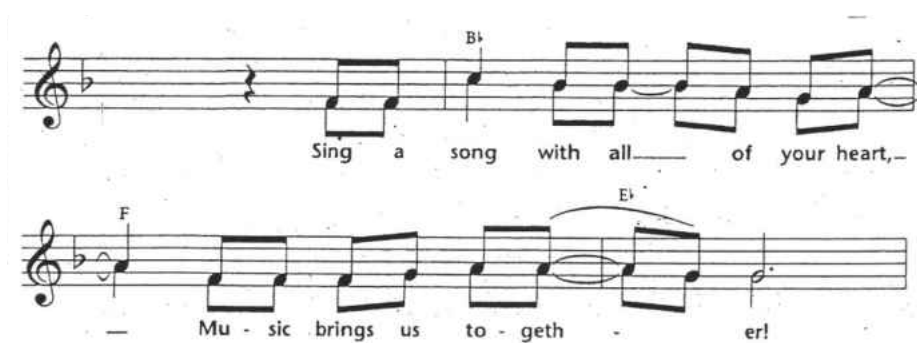


Figure 13. "Music Brings Us Together" (Smith, G., 1998)

In reviewing my findings I cannot help but note that from my childhood to today not many improvements have been attempted multiculturally. I suppose it is because our educational administrators will always be in assimilation mode; it is easier to herd large multitudes of students toward graduation (or not) that way. But how much we miss when we do not see our students as individuals! Reading all these theorists and writing of the exploits of my students has gone a long way toward validating my teaching methods. In my remembrances I appreciate the teachers that accepted my quest for identity, and I am humbled by the students who entrusted their lives and stories to me. I have always said the best stories are true, and in this work I think this theory of

mine has been proven. It is my hope that anyone reading this paper will understand my point; that culture is something to be proud of, and to be shared.

As my years of teaching pass I realize that music is a key to cultural awareness and acceptance in all my students. It creates an opening into their minds, souls, and opinions. I have entered and remain in this fissure for the purpose of being present with my children and to find ways to make their existence more positive and serene. Because of my teaching methods (both inside and outside the classroom) and my students being open to and accepting the way I am, over time we have forged a bond not easily broken. I believe with all my heart (and I think my students would corroborate this) music brought us together; to stay.

To people entering the teaching field, I would like to share that in my experience the most important thing is to try your best to appreciate each child. Backgrounds should be understood but not judged; and it should be accepted that each child has insights and ideas that when allowed expression can add much insight and depth to the classroom. I think the significance of my work lies in its showing how one's own life experiences can be compared, integrated, and shared with students. When you share with your students, they see themselves as important, and they see you as a trusted confidant; which is an awesome but wonderful responsibility. It is important for teachers to engage in multicultural educational practices because these are the faces of our precious students, and they count on us to be fair and equitable to them in all ways. I leave this work with mixed feelings; I have hope that in reading earnest works such as this more teachers will begin the journey of teaching multiculturally, to the benefit of all their students. But I fear that so many of our students are being lost in the denial of our educational system to see the enrollment truths surrounding them. The choice is ours: striving for equity in our classrooms, or continuing down a failing path.

In reviewing the questions that guided my study, I am struck by how much my students have come to rely on me in their cultural seeking. When I began my own search for identity so long ago, I did not realize how my knowledge would come to fruition in the eyes and hearts of the children I see every day. I believe I have empowered myself to help empower them, and we have all gained in the learning and experiencing. As my students and I work together, we have come to take pride in whom and what we are; and in the knowledge that 'different' is a positive thing. I think in choosing to 'walk-the-walk' instead of just 'talk-the-talk', I have proven to my students that speaking out and sharing take courage, but it is always worth the struggle.

I began this study of remembrances about music, but as I continued to research it became more political: there is a tragic sense of the contradictions regarding multicultural music and the politics of resistance. Like the notes of a symphony or the tunes instruments play, my students open up to me and to each other to create beautiful and multicultural music. However, this is often done to the soundtrack of resistance from adults who sometimes find it difficult to let go of the past and embrace our potential together. Looking toward the future, I do not know if we will be able to compose this into harmony; but I do know this is the melody I have chosen, and I will continue to sing.

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