

**Intersecting Social Justice and the Secondary Choral Classroom:
A Phenomenological Study of Social Justice Teacher Perspectives**

by

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Abstract

The American public-school student population has changed, yet school music remains much as it was at the turn of the twentieth century. The reality of today's profound absence of students of color, equity gaps, and lack of opportunity for low SES students persists in school choirs, bands, and orchestras. Music ensemble enrollments continue to decline. Social issues continue to expand and effect students in profound ways. Today, many scholars and practitioners call for radical social transformation from within music education. They urge music educators to turn from Eurocentric exclusivity to a model which better reflects the current student demographic in public schools and is relevant in contemporary society.

Using four key elements from Hess' (2018a, 2019a) activist music education, I developed this phenomenological study to understand the varying beliefs, attitudes, and practices of sixteen secondary choral music teachers who self-identified as social justice educators. I investigated how they define teaching for social justice, why they teach for social justice, how they describe social justice in action within their classrooms, and how they think teaching for social justice affects their students, their school cultures, and the communities in which their schools are situated.

Findings revealed participants' definitions reflect student-centered pedagogy motivated from deep care for students. Life experiences, outside influences, and seeing students struggle with inequities and injustices caused them to adopt a social justice pedagogy. Participants reported teaching for social justice requires internal work and is a continual process which is fraught with challenges related to varying rates of students' psychological development, societal issues, and their own human fallibility. Findings showed benefits of teaching for social justice

were positive teacher and student social/emotional growth, developing and utilizing skills helpful in real life, and creating positive social change through music making.

Implications from findings suggest music education is changing systemically and pedagogically to better reflect social justice issues and meet the needs of increasingly diverse students; however, a faster rate of development is needed. Systemic changes could begin with pre-service training. More programs need to offer classes to help pre-service teachers not only explore social justice issues but teach them how to incorporate social justice education. School administrators need to offer training (professional development) focused on helping in-service teachers gain confidence and skills with social justice pedagogy. Composers and arrangers could supply additional appropriate and accessible repertoire for middle and high school students devoted to social justice issues. More social justice choral music practitioners at all levels could publish literature describing their methods and curriculum helping bring awareness and practical support to the field.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

And so, in these days of difficulty, we Americans everywhere must and shall choose the path of social justice—the only path that will lead us to a permanent better of our civilization, the path that our children must tread and their children must tread, the path of faith, the path of hope and the path of love towards our fellow man. (Roosevelt, 1932, p.17)

The American public-school student population has changed, yet school music remains much as it was at the turn of the twentieth century (Kelly, 2019). The National Center for Education Statistics (2014), the primary federal entity for collecting and analyzing data related to education, accurately predicted by 2014 that students of color and of mixed race enrolled in public schools would exceed the number of White students (p. 3). According to the latest statistics gathered in 2018, there are 50.7 million public school PK-12 students enrolled in public schools. People of color and of mixed race comprise 27.4 million students while there are 23.4 million White students (National Center for Education Statistics, 2020). Students of color and of mixed race in public schools outnumber White students by four million. Population demographics specialists predict the gap will widen through 2029 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2020). Diversification of the public-school student population continues, yet music education stays the same.

“Music for every child; every child FOR music” (Gehrkins, 1933, p. 31) has been a guiding principle for music teachers during the last century, expressing the desire for a more diverse and socially just music education. However, school music education privileged the large performing ensemble which gained attention in American society, in part, two decades earlier as World War I service band members returned from the war and formed school bands. The large performing ensemble was designed “for reasons that include quality of music making, sense of community, and individual and collective pride for many of the students involved” (Bledsoe,

2015, p. 18). Although these reasons are commendable, music education must further expand to meet the needs of today's students (Hess, 2014; Kelly, 2019; Kratus, 2007; Salvador, 2019; Williams, 2011).

A profound absence of students of color, equity gaps, and lack of opportunity for low SES programs persists in school choirs, bands, and orchestras. Studies showed that most members of school music ensembles are White, suburban, middle to upper socio-economic level with college-educated parents (Elpus & Abril, 2011; Elpus & Abril, 2019). The absence of people of color and their cultural representations in curriculum, the “disenfranchised from music education” (Dammers & Williams, 2017, para. 3), was called the “elephant in the room” by Williams (2011, p. 51) in his practitioner article. Elpus and Abril's (2011, 2019) findings showed public school secondary ensemble enrollment in the United States is not reaching all children. In addition, ensemble enrollment is on the decline (Kratus, 2007). Therefore, music education as envisioned by Gehrkins (1933) is failing U.S. school children, especially at the secondary level (Elpus & Abril, 2011; Elpus & Abril, 2019).

My research addressed problems associated with inequity and social injustice occurring in the secondary choral music classroom. Though there is a growing amount of literature about social justice issues, my research was limited to the following areas of social justice in music education:

- diversity (Cain, Lindblom & Walden, 2013; Hoffman, 2012)
- culturally focused pedagogy (Abril & Robinson, 2019; Hoffman; 2012; Shaw, 2016)
- critical pedagogy (Cooke, 2015; Hess, 2017a; Salvador et al., 2020)

- race (Whiteness) and racism (Bradley, 2015; DeLorenzo, 2016; Hess, 2018b; Kruse, 2020)
- activism (Elliot, 2016; Hess, 2019a; Hess, 2019b)

Need for the Study

This study was needed because although research exists concerning equity and social justice in music education, I found limited research related to teaching for social justice in secondary choral classrooms. Additional research in this area could increase awareness about issues of social justice in the secondary choral classroom and empower more secondary choral educators to teach for social justice. It could produce solidarity for those teachers who already define their praxis through a lens of social justice and encourage them to further commit themselves to the work of equity and social justice in their classrooms. Practitioners who struggle to connect their desire to teach for social justice with their teaching practice could discover new ways of connecting the two.

Choral music teacher educators can benefit from this research as well as choral conductors outside the PK-12 and higher education fields such as community choir directors. This study could also help church choral directors whose traditions are historically and theologically grounded in “doing justice” (*Holy Bible, English Standard Version*, 2001, Micah 6:8).

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to understand the varying beliefs, attitudes, and practices of secondary choral music teachers who self-identify as social justice educators. I wanted to find out how and why they teach for social justice, their social justice teaching practices, and how the teachers perceived their students, school culture, and

communities were affected by a pedagogy rooted in social justice practice. Social justice educators are defined as educators who, as evidenced in their teaching philosophy and according to their own opinion, include in their curricula and place emphasis on, teaching about social justice issues in their classroom. I defined social justice music education using Hess' (2019a) description of pedagogy for social change, "music education...must honor the humanity in all and resist injustice loudly and musically" and follow a "model that celebrates community, honors lived experiences, provides musical means to share them, and encourages a praxis of noticing and resisting injustices" (p. 161).

Research Questions

My research goals were to investigate the varying beliefs, attitudes, and practices of secondary choral music teachers who self-identify as social justice educators. I examined the participant teachers' positionality and background which caused them to teach through a social justice lens. I also studied the pedagogical practices which they identify as social justice education, and I learned what effect teaching for social justice had on their students, school culture, and community. The following research questions guided my study:

- RQ1: How do secondary choral music teachers define teaching for social justice?
- RQ2: Why do secondary choral music educators teach for social justice?
- RQ3: How do secondary choral music teachers describe social justice in action within their classrooms?
- RQ4: How do social justice secondary choral teachers think teaching for social justice affects their students, their school cultures, and the communities in which their schools are situated?

Positionality

I was born a White cisgender female during the Civil Rights Movement in the deep South, right after JFK and right before Martin Luther King, Jr. were assassinated, during the race to the moon and school desegregation, women's rights, Watergate, and the Vietnam War. The way I view the world is deeply rooted in that beginning. As a person of deep faith, "...to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly..." (*Holy Bible, English Standard Version*, 2001, Micah 6:8) is a mandated response to my world.

The day I reported to first grade was the first day Black students traveled several miles by bus from the neighboring city to my little school in the country. De-segregation had begun in my neighborhood. On that first day of school, I was accompanied by both of my parents. We were met by police and German Shepherd dogs in the school parking lot. It was frightening for me as a six-year-old, but I cannot imagine the fear those students who were bused into our community must have felt for many more reasons than police and dogs. It is only now, as I have devoted the last four years of coursework to the study of social justice in the choral classroom, that what they must have felt has become more real to me than ever. I loved sports and played everything they would let a girl play while growing up. In junior high my nickname was "Oreo" because I was the only White girl on the basketball team and was "in the middle," my teammates liked to say. My aunt, who was only four years older than me, attended junior high where racial tensions complete with knives and other weapons kept her home from school many days of her seventh-grade year.

While in college, I helped establish a church in Zimbabwe, Africa, leading worship services, and teaching old hymns of my childhood to the Zimbabweans. Some years later while in seminary, my husband and I were invited by an African American seminary friend and his

wife to attend a Louis Farrakhan rally in Louisville, KY, where I was first exposed to his views of the continued oppression of his people. It was shocking to me, but I wanted to know more. Improving race relations became a theme in my ministry. My husband and I, eager seminary students on staff at a local Baptist church, began planning “mission trips” to urban centers like Chicago, Houston, and New Orleans. We wanted to transform our all-White church members’ attitudes towards people of color and bring about unity between the races, at least in our little corner of the world. I was surprised to learn that our church, located in the Midwest, was in a hotseat of KKK activity, still active even in the 1980’s and 90’s. Through our work, we did see many of our church members’ attitudes change as well as those of the people in the cities where we worked.

Following graduation from seminary, I became acutely aware of being a woman in a field mostly dominated by men. Doors open to my male counterparts were firmly shut to me when churches made it clear that they would not consider hiring a woman minister of music. I felt the sting of rejection. Eventually, a wonderful congregation hired me, and I became the first female full-time minister of music of my religious denomination in my state.

Several years ago, I met an African American high school choir director at a professional development conference for choral music teachers. She and I started a friendship over coffee and pancakes which turned into an ongoing collaborative Unity Concert event. Together, we had the joy of seeing her urban African American and my racially diverse, suburban choir students build friendships and relationships over four years which they would never have had the opportunity to form without our collaboration. We watched them become educated about and develop empathy for people different from themselves. Our communities looked forward to the concerts with great anticipation. Not only were we able to implement collaborative events designed to prove the

power of music in working for social justice, but she and I have been able to and continue to have difficult conversations about race, stereotypes, and other society issues. For both of us, using music to work for social justice continues to be a driving force in our teaching practices.

These and other life experiences make this study personal for me. My research has brought to light how much more I want to do to bring “liberty and justice for all,” so dutifully recited by my students and me each day in our classroom. My research has shown gaps in my own thinking and actions. I realize in being White, there are some things about social justice that I can never know, however I continue my “messy” (Hess, 2018b, p. 128) journey toward a brighter and more just future.

Rather than negate the legitimacy of my research, I believe my life experiences of being the only one in a group of “others,” and considerable efforts to create equity and justice as my life’s work cause a subjectivity which strengthened my data collection and analysis. I used my subjectivity to “create rich, thick descriptions” (Creswell, 2014, p. 202) in my research findings and reporting. The result is satisfaction that one part of my journey has concluded. However, this research process also brought awareness of the need to continue the journey both for my personal growth, and hopefully for that of my students and colleagues. Music is a powerful tool to wield in the journey toward a more just society. I am more convinced of that than ever before.

Theoretical Framework

My theoretical framework for this study was based on Hess’ (2018a; 2019a) ideas for an activist music education. Music education must “honor the humanity in all and resist injustice loudly and musically” (Hess, 2019a, p. 161). Drawing from her study with activist musicians, “individuals who do both activist and music work, often simultaneously” (2018a, p. 37), she called for music educators to become activists. Four key elements form Hess’ (2018a, 2019a)

framework for teaching music for social justice. First, activist music education must center and honor student culture and life experiences in ways that celebrate and affirm. One way this happens is by including student voices in all or most curricular choices (Hess, 2018a). This provides a means for students to see themselves in and connect with the curriculum (Hess, 2018a). Second, activist music teachers must “actively address oppression in the classroom both through music and through issues and conditions that affect youth” (Hess, 2018a, p. 38). This not only requires fostering student critical thinking about music and the world at large (Hess, 2018a), but provides a safe place where student voices are heard and valued as part of a teacher-student constructionist learning model (Casey, 2016; Freire, 1970/2005). Third, Hess (2018a) stated that activist music teachers expand across content areas which “locates youth at their own cultural centers” (p. 38). This interdisciplinary approach allows a widening of student perspectives (Hess, 2018a). Teaching for emotional and musical connectedness within the ensemble, Hess’ (2018a) fourth key element of activist music education, “fosters positive and mutually supportive learning environments” (p. 38) across the ensemble and beyond to the students’ larger community.

This dissertation used Hess’ (2018a, 2019a) four key elements of teaching for social justice in the music classroom as a broad metric to analyze and interpret research data. Employing Hess’ (2018a, 2019a) music for social change model, I designed interview protocol questions to explore how the participants define the following: teaching for social justice, motivation of their interest and commitment in teaching for social justice, varying practices of teaching for social justice among the participants, and the perceived effect of teaching for social justice on their students and stakeholders.

Definition of Terms

- Anti-oppressive Education – Forms of education that explicitly work against multiple oppressions focusing on the following:
 - improving the experiences of students who have traditionally been treated in harmful ways
 - changing the knowledge that all students have about people who have been labeled “different”
 - challenging...privilege
 - reasons...anti-oppressive education is often difficult to practice (Kumashiro, 2004, p. XXV-XXVI)
- Critical Pedagogy – a method of teaching where students are taught to find the problem, find out why the problem exists, consider workable solutions to the problem, implement the solutions, and assess the outcomes (Freire, 1970/2005; Shelby-Caffey et al., 2018)
- Culturally Responsive Education (CRE) – “...a pedagogy used to validate students’ varied experiences, and to teach to and through their strengths. CRE emphasizes high expectations, the formation of cultural competence, and development of a critical consciousness” (Bond, 2019, p. 153)
- Secondary Education – grades 6-12
- Social Justice Educators -- teachers “who maintain moral, ethical, and political commitments toward equity in their teaching practice” (LaGarry, 2016, p. iii) and who, as evidenced in their teaching philosophy and practice and according to their own opinion, include in their curricula and place emphasis on, teaching about social justice issues in their classroom
- Teaching *for* Social Justice – teaching practice which actively, with purpose, engages in the work of equity and social justice (Delorenzo, 2016; Elliot, 2016; Picower, 2012)
- Social Justice Music Education -- a pedagogy for social change where “music education...must honor the humanity in all and resist injustice loudly and musically” and follow a “model that celebrates community, honors lived experiences, provides musical means to share them, and encourages a praxis of noticing and resisting injustices...” (Hess, 2019a, p. 161)

Assumptions

I assumed that participants were self-identified social justice teachers who honestly engaged in self-study as they authentically reflected on their praxis. All participants welcomed

answering the interview protocol questions as an opportunity to reflect upon what they do in their classrooms. I also assumed that there are multiple interpretations and perspectives of social justice in teaching practice prompting clarification and diligence on my part in quantifying and striating the abundance of data which I collected.

Delimitations

I delimited sampling for this study to secondary choral music teachers in the United States who self-identify as teaching for social justice. Employing non-probability sampling allows the researcher to not only study a phenomenon but to discover the relationships between differing occurrences (Merriam, 2009). I used “community nomination” (Fosters, 1994, p. 132; Ladson-Billings, 2009, p. 181), “purposeful” (i.e., “snowball”, “network”) and “convenience” (Merriam, 2009, p. 79) sampling methods. Community nomination sampling “means that researchers rely upon community members” (Ladson-Billings, 2009, p. 181) to judge if people fit the phenomenon of teaching secondary choir for social justice. According to Merriam (2009), “purposeful sampling is based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned” (p. 95). Snowball and network, examples of purposeful sampling, utilize people who know others who might be a good fit for the study and existing networks of people (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam, 2009). These types of sampling depend upon finding people who fit sampling criteria and asking them to refer others to the study (Merriam, 2009).

Limitations

While employing nomination and purposeful sampling to recruit participants, I am sure that I overlooked participants because it is impossible to know all social justice secondary choir teachers personally. There are teachers doing important social justice work within their choirs

and communities, but because I did not know them, or I did not speak to someone who does, they did not take part in my study. Precluding worthy participants is a limitation when using these kinds of sampling methods. After my data collection process concluded, I continued to receive recommendations from colleagues proving that I was not able to include all teachers who could have added rich data to my study.

Small sample size is also a limitation in qualitative research. While I hope my research will help music educators, the findings may not generalize to the greater population of choral music educators in the United States. Although for a qualitative study 16 participants produce substantial data from which to study the phenomenon, applying it to larger people groups remains a challenge. This does not occur with random sampling methods found in quantitative research. I tried to overcome this by supplying thick, rich descriptions of teaching for social justice in the secondary choral classroom, the goal of qualitative research methods (Merriam, 2009; Randolph, 2009).

Overview of Chapters

This qualitative study explored the varying beliefs, attitudes, and practices of secondary choral teachers who self-identify as social justice educators. Practitioners recognized that creating a socially just music classroom can be a daunting, but worthy, process for teachers (Salvador, 2019; Soto, 2018). I studied choral music educators who knowingly and purposefully work toward social justice in their classrooms.

In Chapter Two, I discuss literature associated with teaching for social justice. I began with the origins of the term *social justice* and its history in education. My review included related terms and theories associated with social justice and teaching for social justice in

secondary education. Finally, the literature review narrowed to literature about teaching *for* social justice in the secondary choral music classroom.

I explain my rationale for using phenomenological methodology in Chapter Three. My interview research design, including methods and procedures for sampling, data collection, data administration, coding, trustworthiness, reliability, and limitations were described in detail.

In Chapter Four, I describe findings associated with each research question. I organized the chapter into three main themes derived from In-Vivo coding: (a) “Because I Love My Students,” (b) “Instruments for Change,” and (c) “When You Sing Together... You Can’t Help but Love Each Other.” Theme Two includes a sub-theme “It’s Messy! Bumbling Through.”

Chapter Five closes this dissertation with a discussion of implications my research uncovered for the music education field. I shared ideas and questions for further research in teaching for social justice in the choral music classroom. In conclusion, I revisited my positionality and reported how my life and teaching experiences affected my research and how the research changed me.

CHAPTER 2

Review of Literature

Education for social justice is not a new idea, nor is it just another reform proposal, an add-on to what already is. Rather, education for social justice is the root of teaching and schooling in a democratic society, the rock upon which we build democracy.

(Ayers et al., 2009, p. xiv)

Social justice education is difficult to define because of ambiguous and sweeping use of the term *social justice* (Benedict et al., 2015; Boyles et al., 2015; Burke & Collier, 2017; Noltemeyer & Grapin, 2020). According to the literature, a lack of continuity in pre-service teacher education (Cochran-Smith, 2010), passive attention to in-service professional development, the pull toward status quo (Dover, 2009), and lack of consistency in pedagogical methods (Burke & Collier, 2017) contribute to difficulty of the definition. The result is sporadic implementation and diminished efficacy in schools at primary, secondary, and tertiary levels; however, the call for social justice education is more acute than ever (Bohonos et al., 2019; Robertson & Guerra, 2016; Salvador et al., 2020; Shallish et al., 2020; Shelby-Caffey, et al., 2018). These issues, as well as others, contribute to the challenge of defining social justice in education.

Social justice is not a new concept (Bradley, 2007). The term has been in existence almost 200 years. Through many iterations it has come to include an extensive range of social issues (Noltemeyer & Grapin, 2020). The words *social* and *justice* each have meaning alone, but when combined connote varying ideas among scholars and practitioners (Bradley, 2007). Social justice is an umbrella term which includes the following issues:

poverty, structural violence, disparities in access to education and healthcare, religious marginalization, and other forms of identity-based discrimination (e.g., discrimination based on gender, age, national origin, culture, and ability/disability). Social justice also encapsulates notions of intersectionality, which highlights the ways in which multiple

marginalized identities (e.g., race and gender) interact to yield interlocking systems of inequity and oppression. (Noltmeyer & Grapin, 2020, p. 1)

Solving social problems through education was reflected in the writings of many educators of the past. John Dewey and Paulo Freire wrote extensively about the power of schools in transforming society (Dewey & Tufts, 1909; Freire, 1970/2005). Dewey, Freire, Booker T. Washington, Horace Mann, W.E.B. Du Bois, and others like them assumed that schools and the students they produced were the answer to the social problems their generations faced as well as those to come (Dewey & Tufts, 1909; Du Bois, 1903/2006; Freire, 1970/2005; General, 2000; Mann, 1868).

The Rise of Social Justice in Education from a Selected Historical Perspective

Social justice is not a new concept (Bradley, 2007). The earliest combined use of the terms *social* and *justice* was traced to a little-known Jesuit priest, Luigi Taparelli, in 1840. Taparelli was concerned with how smaller groupings in society such as government and citizen groups contributed to larger society. He “composed a theory of society that focused on the relationship between authorities and subjects” (Boyles, et al., 2009, p. 32) which valued larger societal groups over the contribution of individuals. Taparelli’s belief in the importance of the individuals’ contribution to the larger society was quite different from the earlier “top down” (Boyles et al., 2009, p. 32) views of Plato and Aristotle (Boyles et al., 2009).

Taparelli’s views radically countered the more revered classical thought dominating the intellectual landscape of his day. Although he was the first to use the term *social justice*, his writings were in Latin and Italian, as were the commentaries written about his work. The language barrier is one reason his ideas failed to gain popularity in education. Also, during Taparelli’s lifetime the Catholic Church began its struggle to address widespread problems which plagued 19th century Europe. Taparelli’s ideas were espoused by Pope Leo XIII in his

attempt to address rampant economic devastation of the poor (Behr, 2003). These overwhelming economic issues eclipsed any attention social justice might have acquired in education.

Consequently, Taparelli's work had little, if any, bearing upon educational thought in Europe.

Protestants who settled America from Europe supplied the predominant thought formation of social justice education in the United States. "The Old Deluder Satan Law, passed in Massachusetts in 1647...mandated that all towns with more than 100 families establish a grammar school to teach young people to read and write while also instilling Christian values" (Boyles et al., 2009, p. 33). Schools in the United States continued to formalize throughout the following two centuries catering to the upper middle class White families who could afford to send their sons to exclusive private academies (Boyles et al., 2009; McCarthy, 2015).

Taparelli's idea of smaller societies contributing to the common good of the larger one echoes in the work of Horace Mann in his establishment of common schools. "Mann envisioned a system of state-administered public schools that would offer *all* American youth an equitable education rooted in the common experiences and values of 19th century life" (Boyles et al., 2009, p. 33). Mann believed that a common shared education would unite all students, therefore ending inequities among them (Boyles et al., 2009; Mann, 1868). Although a respectable notion, there is no enduring evidence that Mann, the first U.S. Education Secretary in Massachusetts, achieved the utopian educational system he envisioned. Quite the opposite is true as common schools solidified educational praxis of standardization and tracking based in exclusion, not inclusion (Boyles et al., 2009).

More recent scholars like John Dewey expressed opposition to Mann's ideas. Dewey believed that schools were morally responsible to produce a more democratic society which would right societal injustices. Whereas Mann believed that a common education or curriculum

could bring about social justice, Dewey emphasized the ability of the schools to develop “young people into active social beings who would work to ameliorate social injustices” (Boyles et al., 2009, p. 35). “Dewey held that schools should be living, active communities where the deliberation over issues relating to social equality would replace the learning of isolated curricular information” (Boyles et al., 2009, p. 34). Dewey thought social justice would be achieved when citizens were free to engage in a chosen career. He argued for a system where victims of injustice actively participated in society to bring about social change for themselves (Boyles et al., 2009).

“Intellectual reconstructionists” (Stern & Riley, 2003, p. 28) Harold Rugg and George Counts argued for a distributive curricular approach to address social justice in public schools. Rugg held that teachers should be facilitators in a democratic classroom as students grapple with a curriculum fundamentally rooted in contemporary social problems. Like Dewey and Mann, Rugg believed schools were the answer to creating a more just society. Through incorporation of social issues into all content areas, students, using democratic and critical methods, would be able to resolve them. He wrote textbooks espousing his beliefs which were widely well-received and implemented into social studies curricula on a national level until groups like the American Legion and other conservative parent and citizen groups began accusing his curricula of promoting and indoctrinating socialism and communism. This occurred during the rise of patriotism preceding, during, and directly following World War II during the time of McCarthyism when the collective identity of America was in transition and a more conservative national mindset countered the progressive notions of Rugg and his contemporaries.

Rugg’s fellow Reconstructionist George Counts criticized “the American education system’s passivity regarding social injustice” (Boyles et al., 2009, p. 35). He wanted to “replace

the individualism embedded in America's schools with a new focus on issues of social justice" (Boyles et al., 2009, p. 35). Like some current education theorists, he believed that students should be taught to disrupt and "counter the conservative school order with a more radical education that promoted social change" (Boyles et al., 2009, p. 35).

Another branch of the struggle for social justice began as "African-American scholars, teachers, and students...[were] fighting to gain access to education" (Boyles et al., 2009, p. 36). With the emancipation of former enslaved people in 1863 and the end of the Civil War came the immense challenge to educate them. "In many ways, African Americans viewed education as the ultimate emancipator, enabling them to distance themselves from slavery, move past their subordinate status in society, and achieve social mobility" (Allen et al., 2007, p. 267).

Booker T. Washington, a former enslaved person, recognized first-hand the problems of educating the newly freed people coming off the plantations. Until emancipation, it was against the law to educate enslaved persons, and any found doing so faced severe punishment. While some in the Black community like W.E.B. Du Bois criticized his methods, Washington believed the answers to these social challenges were found in an integrated curriculum. Using his plan, education centered around solving problems of everyday life, where "students were learning the academic subjects of math, geometry, science, English and the specific trade skills of carpentry, welding, masonry, electricity, and other salable skills of the building and trades" (Generals, 2000, p. 217). Pupils worked on projects in teams led by older, more experienced students. This hierarchical teaching system taught leadership, accountability, and other valuable skills and was advantageous for all (Generals, 2000). Washington's hands-on learning approach served not only to reinforce and enhance intellectual learning but taught important principles Washington held dear. These ideas began to formulate while he was under the tutelage of his mentor General

Samuel Champman Armstrong at the Hampton Institute (Young, 1976). The idea of labor for labor's sake and that hard work teaches not only a skill but is moral, good, and contributes to a better society were ideas he heard from Armstrong. These beliefs harken back to earlier teachings of Frederick Douglass (Young, 1976) and further back to Puritan ideals. Coupling the rise of the industrial revolution and agrarian backgrounds of the formerly enslaved Africans, Washington saw industrial education as the opportunity for his people to gain "economic self-sufficiency" (Young, 1976, p. 229). In 1881, he was appointed the first principal of the Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute in Tuskegee, Alabama, where he implemented his beliefs. Washington remained at Tuskegee until his death in 1915 at age 59.

Although Washington's early death cut his career short, his educational philosophy was much the same as his contemporary John Dewey and the other Progressives. There is no mention of the words "social justice" in Washington's writings or recorded in his many speeches; however, his lived experiences as a former slave turned educator and leader helped to shape his beliefs and added to his credibility as an important inside contributor toward social justice.

While Booker T. Washington worked inside his political structure, purporting a style of education for African Americans which was more palatable for White Southerners of his time (Young, 1976), he faced strong opposition from African American leaders like W.E.B. Du Bois who stood in stark contrast calling him "the most distinguished Southerner since Jefferson Davis" (Du Bois, 1903/2006, p. 36). Du Bois and other Black leaders of the day, while respecting Washington for his work toward the cause of uplifting Black people in America, considered him old-fashioned, and pandering to pre-Civil War and slavery times.

Du Bois strongly disagreed with Washington's educational philosophy and practice (Du Bois, 1903/2006). His contribution to the cause of raising the social status of Black people in

America differed from Washington's. Having received degrees from Fisk University and Harvard College, Du Bois traveled Europe and attended university in Berlin, Germany. In 1896, he received a Ph.D. from Harvard University becoming the first African American with that distinction. He taught at Wilberforce University, the University of Pennsylvania, and Atlanta University, now Clark Atlanta University. Du Bois was a prolific writer espousing a more radical path to civil rights for African Americans. In his plan, he called for the "Talented Tenth" (Du Bois, 1903/2006, p. 78) to have equal access to higher education. Du Bois believed Black colleges should "seek the social regeneration of the Negro, and it must help in the solution of problems of race contact and cooperation. And finally, beyond all this, it must develop men" (Du Bois, 1903/2006, p. 80). Du Bois' own extensive formal education shaped his ideals that higher education played a strong role in the overall plans toward achieving a just society for African Americans.

Like other scholars and theorists of his day, Du Bois believed in the power of the schools to change society. He believed schools should teach "African-American children skills needed to acquire social and political power while deepening their understanding of the struggle for equality" (Boyles et al., 2009, p. 36). He "shunned a distributive notion of justice in arguing that a just and democratic society required the recognition of each persons' abilities and experiences to contribute and should have equal opportunity to use their strengths for the betterment of society" (Boyles et al., 2009, p. 36). Unlike earlier educational philosophers, Du Bois advocated that women, Black people, and the poor take part in conversations about social justice (Du Bois, 1903/2006).

The genesis of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU's) in the late 19th century through the 20th century helped realize Du Bois' dreams for African American higher

educational opportunities. The American Missionary Association, Disciples of Christ, African Methodist Episcopal Church, and White philanthropists funded and helped found the institutions (Allen et al., 2007). Passed by Congress in 1890, the 2nd Morrill Act, which forbade discrimination based on race, supplied the land for the schools. “In the 25 years after the Civil War, approximately 100 institutions of higher learning were created to educate freed African Americans, primarily in the southern United States” (Allen et al., 2007, p. 267). Steady growth continued into the twentieth century.

Despite the gains made by African Americans in their struggle for quality education, schools remained “separate but equal,” a concept substantiated by *Plessy v. Ferguson* in 1896. This court case legalized “racial segregation which excluded Blacks from the public spaces generally and public higher education specifically” (Allen et al., 2007, p. 269). Therefore, HBCU’s remained the only alternative for Black students desiring a college education. “Prior to 1954, over 90% of Black students were educated at HBCUs” (Allen et al., 2007, p. 269). However, change was on the horizon.

Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka Kansas, the seminal case brought before the Supreme Court in 1954, reversed the earlier *Plessy vs. Ferguson* case which established segregation and “separate but equal” conditions. In the class action suit against the Board of Education of Topeka Kansas, several Black families represented by the National Association of Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) filed a lawsuit because their children were not allowed to enroll in the nearest schools to their homes. In a unanimous vote, the highest court in the land found that segregation because of race was unconstitutional. Though the court’s ruling called for de-segregation of all schools in the United States, it did not supply specific instructions

for how this was to happen. States slowly began de-segregation, heavily prompted by the Civil Rights movement of the 1960's.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 further strengthened de-segregation in public education. Begun by President John F. Kennedy and signed into law by his successor Lyndon B. Johnson after Kennedy's assassination, the legislation was the crowning achievement of the American Civil Rights Movement. Title VI of the law states:

No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.

(<https://www2.ed.gov>)

Title VI clearly prohibits discrimination in all institutions receiving federal financial aid. *Brown v. Board of Education* showed the unconstitutionality of "separate but equal" established by *Plessy v. Ferguson*. Although both *Brown v. Board of Education* and *The Civil Rights Act* were monumental legal victories, American public education remained far from providing an equitable school experience for all students (Boyles et al., 2009).

Following the Civil Rights Movement and passing important legislation of the 1960s, scholars and practitioners continued to address issues of social justice in education. The *Civil Rights Act of 1964* lost potency through continuous decisions made by the Supreme Court and lower courts which "chipped away at the progress that had been previously won" (Demoiny, 2017, p. 15). New epistemologies like Critical Race Theory (CRT) appeared in response.

Critical Race Theory centered race with the goal of exposing systemic racism to better understand social inequities and work toward greater justice (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Beginning in the late 1990s, CRT found its way into education. Ladson-Billings (1995) urged continued

scrutiny and critique cautioning that CRT “is likely to become the ‘darling’ of the radical left, continue to generate scholarly papers and debate, and never penetrate the classrooms and daily experiences of students of color” (p. 22). In the twenty-four years since Ladson-Billings wrote those words, CRT has become “a recognized theory in education” (Demoigny, 2017, p. 18) contributing to theory and practice in all content areas.

Current social movements such as Black Lives Matter (Castillo-Montoya et al., 2019) and concerns such as “new racism” (Bonilla-Silva, 2015, p. 1358; Vaugeois, 2007, p. 171) are beginning to influence the field of education. The civil unrest reflected in recent protests and wide-spread demonstrations following incidents involving police, bring rise to new epistemologies and will eventually find residence in our educational system. Effects of inequities in technology access and other deficiencies in education exposed during the Covid 19 pandemic are also on the horizon. The impact of these social factors upon education is still in development.

Evolution of Selected Social Justice Terms Associated with Education

Persistent evolution of terms associated with social justice contributes to the difficulties of defining *social justice*. The same phenomenon exists for social justice in the field of education. Paulo Freire (1970/2005) first spoke of his democratic ideas of education in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, his seminal book on oppressive education. His critique of what he called the “banking system” (p. 71) and call to “liberating education” (p. 77) began the dialogue around critical pedagogy.

Freire (1970/2005) emphasized the cultural positioning of students and teachers and the importance of learning from experiences of everyday life. He espoused teachers and students working together to co-construct meaning. These ideas became tenets of his work to bring literacy to uneducated poor people. He noticed that even the most illiterate person, as they began

naming and contextualizing practical objects and concepts in their everyday life, not only did words begin to take on meaning, but the person began using words to construct new meaning for themselves and those around them. “In this educational experience, he or she comes to a new awareness of self, has a new sense of dignity, and is stirred by a new hope” (p. 33). Freire’s (1970/2005) “liberating education” concept (p. 77) started the critical theory discourse which continues today (Hess, 2017a; Hess, 2019a).

Freire worked to free the poor from injustice in South America and other parts of the world as the fight for racial justice raged in the United States. Racial integration of schools, though it fell short, began the process of providing equal educational opportunity for all. Multicultural education came in response to the Civil Rights Act and emphasized equity (Kahn, 2008; Nieto, 1992). Education which celebrated cultural diversity within student groups (culturally aware pedagogy) includes “culturally appropriate” (Au & Jordan, 1981, p. 139) and “culturally compatible” (Jordan, 1985, p. 111). “Culturally relevant pedagogy” (Abril, 2013, p. 6; Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 465), “culturally responsive teaching” (Gay, 2000, p. 48; Shaw, 2012, p. 75; Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995, p. 1) and other similar terms were introduced by scholars and practitioners during the 1990’s and early 2000’s. “Culturally responsive education,” or CRE is yet another derivative term used by scholars who promote using a cultural lens to ensure successful teaching practice (Bond, 2017, p. 153; Kindall-Smith et al., 2011, p. 374; Kindall-Smith, 2013, p. 34). “Anti-oppressive pedagogy” (Kumashiro, 2000, p. 25) emerged in the early 2000’s. “Critical pedagogy” (Hess, 2014, p. 229; Parkhouse, 2018, p. 277; Shelby-Caffey et al., 2018, p. 69) and all associated terms such as “critical theory” (Picower, 2009, p. 211; Turner et al., 2013, p. 342), “critical race theory (CRT)” (Picower, 2009, p. 197), “Black Critical Theory (BlackCrit)” (Coles, 2019, p. 1), and any number of additional derivatives of the

“critical” terms are currently found in research literature associated with social justice. These theories harken back to Freire’s earlier ideas of examining and using students’ culture to connect their school learning to their everyday lives. Unseating and “decentering Whiteness” (Kruse, 2020, p. 143), “troubling Whiteness” (Hess, 2018b, p. 128), and “countering” (Coles, 2019, p. 12) to disrupt the long-held systemic racist underpinnings in society are among the most recent terms used in the body of work connected with social justice.

The terms listed above are but a small representation from the literature. Each author/researcher/teacher claims valid reason for their chosen term/s. However, the slightly varying terms and uses create a moving target in the quest for a succinct definition of social justice education.

Teaching for Social Justice

Teaching *for* social justice, as opposed to *teaching social justice* or *social justice education* highlights the importance of the teacher’s role. Teaching *for* implies action, an activist mindset requiring teacher modeling and activism (Delorenzo, 2016; Elliot, 2016; Picower, 2012). Some scholars have described this as an anarchist sentiment (Gabbard, 2009). Critics stated that the teaching profession has failed in their endeavors to teach social justice (Grant & Gibson, 2009; Picower, 2009).

Teaching for social justice looks different for each teacher and may evolve during their career (Picower, 2012; Salvador, et al., 2020; Samuels et al., 2019). A teacher’s personal belief system, biases, positionality, and level of courage to step out of their comfort zone each contribute to their own views and execution of teaching for social justice (LaGarry, 2016).

Teaching for Social Justice in Music Education

“Music for every child; every child FOR music” (Gehrkins, 1933, p. 31), proclaimed by Karl W. Gehrkins’ in his 1923 presidential address before the Music Supervisors National Conference, now known as the National Association for Music Education (NAfME), captured the sentiment of music teachers to equalize music education for every student (McCarthy, 2015). However, almost one hundred years later music education enrollment statistics show that many students continue to be left out of music education. This is evidenced by practitioner articles (Bledsoe, 2015; Heidingsfelder, 2014; Salvador, 2019; Soto, 2018) and empirical literature (DeLorenzo, 2016; Elpus & Abril, 2011; Elpus & Abril, 2019; Palmer, 2018). Gehrkins stated,

The idea behind this slogan was that we must set ourselves the twin tasks of (1) providing some sort of music instruction for every child, and (b) providing every child with teachers and music of such high quality that he would be fascinated by his delightful experience during the music hour. The slogan has served the Conference well through the years since 1923. (Heidingsfelder, 2014, p. 48)

Achieving Gehrkins’ goal of equal access for all students requires music teachers to go beyond rhetoric, making a choice between “music programs that are only for certain kinds of students” (Bledsoe, 2015, p. 21) and those which are designed to serve the diverse student population of non-traditional band, choir, and orchestra students (Bledsoe, 2015; Hess, 2017c; Kratus, 2007; Williams, 2011). Connecting rhetoric and action in achieving equity in the music classroom can sometimes remain elusive even for teachers who want to teach for social justice. Teaching for social justice in the music classroom is a “messy” journey” (Hess, 2018b, p. 128) requiring courage and persistency to work for change if music education is to reach every child (Bledsoe, 2015; Heidingsfelder, 2014; Salvador, 2019; Soto, 2018).

Research shows that teaching for social justice remains an important topic in music education 159 years after emancipation. Most music teachers want to use music to create a better society (McCarthy, 2015). Teaching for social justice “emphasizes the worth, dignity, and preciousness of individual human beings and reinforces a sense of self-respect and self-worth in those who pursue and receive it” (Jorgensen, 2015, p. 10). But music teachers encounter challenges in teaching for social justice. Shifting demographics, a culturally mismatched teaching force, curricular disconnection, and clinging to outdated ideals present continuing challenges to the field of music education envisioned in President Gehrken’s motto (Elpus & Abril, 2011; Elpus & Abril, 2019; Hess, 2014; Salvador & Kelly-McHale, 2017). Statistics show that over the last 17 years the racial student enrollment in American public-schools has shifted from majority White to majority persons of color. In 2017, the number of students of color including Black, Hispanic, Pacific Islander, Asian, Native American, and students of mixed race made up at least 57% of students in public education where the number of White students in 2017 was 48%, down from 61% in 2000. White student population numbers will continue to decline and the number of students of color will continue to increase (National Center for Education Statistics, 2020).

Stark contrast exists between the public-school student population and both the pre-service and in-service teaching force. Music education licensure candidates traditionally overrepresent White teachers at 86% (Elpus, 2015, p. 314). In-service music teachers revealed a similar finding at 89.6% White (Gardner, 2010). “The majority of music teachers...are White, middle class, monolingual English speaking, female, and from small towns or suburban areas” (Bond, 2017, p. 153). This gap between teachers and students will continue to widen in coming years.

According to other statistics, student participation in music education classes at the secondary level, where music classes are mostly electives, is decreasing (Elpus & Abril, 2011). Additionally, student enrollment does not represent demographics of the overall diverse student population (Elpis & Abril, 2019). Although some teachers include non-traditional music curricula such as music technology and ethnic and popular music ensembles, music instruction has, in large part, stayed the same as it was at the turn of the 20th century, focused mostly on large performing ensembles whose repertoire is Euro-centric (Heuser, 2011; Shaw, 2016).

Addressing Diversity with Culturally Focused Pedagogy in Music Education

Creating socially just music classrooms is not a new challenge to music teachers. German music educator Egon Kraus spoke to the assembly at the International Society for Music Education (ISME) conference in the Summer of 1966 and “argued that a one-sided view of music from either East or West was no longer appropriate, and that an open mind leads to better understanding and knowledge” (Volk, 1993, p. 138). This opened the door in music education for what became a concerted effort to include multi- or poly-cultural musics in the curriculum. The Tanglewood Symposium in 1967 furthered the efforts to include world musics recommending “music of all periods, styles, forms, and cultures...including avant-garde music, American folk music, and the other cultures” should be in the curricula (Choate, 1968, p. 139). The participants of Tanglewood took a major step toward addressing diversity and providing a more socially just music curriculum.

Despite Tanglewood’s goal of creating multicultural music classrooms, studies of current secondary music ensemble demographics continue to show a lack of diversity within band, choir, and orchestral groups. Williams (2011) called the large performing ensembles (band, choir, and orchestra) “an outdated model” (p. 52) and offered alternative methods of music education to

reach a more diverse student group. Some scholars propose the answer to the lack of diversity problem in music education is a pedagogy which considers and makes a high priority of students' cultures.

Student-centered, culturally responsive music education highlights music of students' own home culture, "honor[ing] their world" (Abrahams et al., 2012, p. 71). It shows a strong connection between home and learning at school (Bond, 2017; Doyle, 2014a; Gay, 2013; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Shaw, 2012; Shaw, 2016). This adds value and produces deeper and more meaningful learning for students (Gay, 2013; Ladson-Billings, 1995). When teachers were a cultural match with their students, teacher attitudes and expectations of their students rose (Doyle, 2014a). Shaw's (2016) findings from a study done with an urban nonprofit community children's choir organization accentuate the teacher-student relationship aspects of culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP). Student participants interpreted their teacher's use of CRP as "honoring their own cultural backgrounds while also expanding their cultural and intellectual horizons" (Shaw, 2016, p.45).

Caring teacher-student relationships are an outcome of culturally responsive pedagogy (Abril, 2013; Bond, 2017; Shaw, 2016). These develop because of a deep sense of mutual respect between student and teacher and the shared "teachable moments" (Fitzpatrick, 2012, p. 57). When students trust their teachers, they become free to "make connections between music experiences in the classroom and those in their respective homes and communities" (Abril, 2013, p. 10). When student-teacher relationships based in mutual respect and trust are solid, a safe space for new conversations about social justice issues develops (Shaw, 2012).

Related Theories in Music Education: Critical, Race, and Activism

Three closely related social justice theories which have surfaced in music education literature during the last eight years are critical pedagogy, issues related to race/racism/anti-racism, and activism. Although peripheral in music education, these theories have been prevalent in literature of other content areas (e.g., social studies, literature, and English language studies) for years. They continue to receive increased attention in music education.

Critical pedagogy in music education, which includes previously discussed Critical Race Theory (CRT), is a burgeoning topic. The goal of teaching using a critical lens focuses on creating social change (Hess, 2014; Hoffman & Carter; 2013; Westheimer, 2016). Social change begins as music educators “move out of terminal naivety toward a heightened consciousness of political issues and racial oppressions” (Hess, 2017b, p. 15). This requires a paradigmatic shift from the “liberal framework” (Hess, 2014, p. 230) found historically in music education, to a “critical framework” (Hess, 2014, p. 230). Outdated liberalism in music education “fosters competition and notions of meritocracy without recognition that students are situated differentially in relation to power based on factors including gender, race, class, disability, immigrant and refugee status, age, language and sexual orientation” (Hess, 2014, p. 231). Critical theory calls for a centering of these things to expose racism and privileging certain bodies over others. It demands disruption of the hegemonic status quo (Bradley, 2007; Hess, 2014; Hoffman & Carter, 2013).

Moving toward more socially just practice, music educators must dialogue about issues of race ignored in the past (Bradley, 2007; Hess, 2014; Hess, 2017b; Hoffman & Carter, 2013). Bradley (2007) discussed the “the difficulty many white people experience talking about race” (p. 135) and the importance of disrupting the silence to address issues of social justice.

Discussions of race, racism, anti-racism, color-blind racism, and “troubling Whiteness” (Hess, 2018b, p. 128) in music education are integral in critical theory praxis (Bradley, 2007; DeLorenzo, 2016; Hess, 2018b). The predominantly White teaching force must be willing to confront their privileged culturally dominant position with openness and humility (Bradley, 2007; Salvador et al., 2020). This requires going beyond their uncomfortable feelings and the acceptable language of academia to root out “music education’s complicity in perpetuating racism by leaving whiteness undisturbed and undisputed” (DeLorenzo, 2016, p. 185). This is part of the process described by Hess (2018b) as the “messiness of equity work” (p. 128). Conversations about race are integral in the movement toward more socially just music education.

Freire’s important work concerning equitable and just education of oppressed people serves as the foundation for critical pedagogy. In his “problem-posing education” model (Freire, 1970/2005, p. 79), he posits that students have equal voice in mutual learning which occurs horizontally *between* teacher and students, not vertically from teacher *to* student. Other scholars call this democratic practice (Elliot, 2016; Michelli & Jacobowitz, 2016). A key element of this praxis is teaching students to think critically about their world, recognizing wrong thinking, policies, and practices (Woodford, 2016). But thinking critically does not go far enough. Teachers must help students find voice to challenge the status quo to affect positive social change (Cooke, 2015; Hess, 2017a; Turner et al., 2013; Wright, 2015).

Critical pedagogy is a useful framework when examining activities of well-meaning music educators which contribute to the problem of unjust praxis (Bradley, 2007; Hoffman & Carter, 2013; Vaugeois, 2007). Bradley (2007) cautioned against salvationist “acts of charity posing as social justice” (p. 133) where activities such as benefit concerts create feelings of

“moral superiority” (p. 133) and “leave students, teachers, and audiences feeling good by affirming individual and collective capacities for compassion” (p. 133). These kinds of actions by music educators reinforce colonialism (Bradley, 2007; McCarthy, 2015). However, adopting a critical pedagogy can lead toward a more socially just music education (Bradley, 2007; Hess, 2014; Hess, 2017a; Hess, 2017b).

Although dialogues about the difficult issues of social justice are essential, music education must go further in the journey towards equity and justice by employing activism (Allsup & Shieh, 2012; Elliot, 2012; Hess, 2018a; Hess, 2019a; Hess, 2019b). Elliot’s (2012) practitioner article-issued a call to “unleash [music’s] full potential” (p. 27) to enact social change for a better society. Hess (2018a) defined the pedagogy of “activist music educators” (p. 37) to include a curriculum which centers student cultures and viewpoints, engages students in critical thinking about issues of oppression, links other school content areas, and focuses upon student emotional connectedness promoting cohesiveness and a supportive environment (Hess, 2018a). Appeals for teacher action, posited by Dungee (2020) in his practitioner article, encouraged music teachers to become active students of developing “restorative anti-racist pedagogy” (p. 13). He suggested a two-fold pedagogy. First, requiring teachers to take a deep and thoughtful look at how they may contribute to “upholding White supremacy and internalizations that come from being socialized in a racist society” (Dungee, 2020, p. 14). Second, he stated that anti-racist pedagogy “is grounded in action taken toward challenging the racist ideas that lead to racist polity, and the racist policy that leads to racist ideas” (Dungee, 2020, p. 14). These are steps teachers can take in the journey toward a more just music classroom.

Teaching for social justice in music education means that teachers engage in using critical pedagogy to reflect upon and inform pedagogical and curricular choices (Salvador, et al., 2020). This creates an atmosphere where cultural change can occur by creating new and different ways of thinking about content and practice (Hess, 2014, Hess, 2017a; Wall & Wall, 2016). Teaching using a critical lens provides opportunities to have difficult conversations about racism and anti-racism (Salvador & Kelly-McHale, 2017; Salvador et al., 2020). Critical pedagogy and conversations should lead to activism or “putting our music making to work” (Elliott, 2016, p. 32). In teaching for social justice, music educators and their students, by logical extension, become powerful agents for positive, transformative social change (Elliott, 2016) which yields greater “hope, freedom, and equity for students, the school and ideally the community” (Silverman, 2016, p. 162).

Teaching for Social Justice in the Secondary Choral Classroom

My literature review did not reveal any scholarly work specifically about “social justice” in secondary choral classrooms. However, there are several studies in other ensemble settings which employ social justice pedagogy (e.g., Abrahams et al., 2012; Fisher & Fisher, 2020; Heuser, 2011; Perkins, 2019; Weber, 2021).

Abrahams’ et al. (2012) and Weber’s (2021) studies of social justice choirs located within the carceral system found goals to provide choristers with rehabilitative experiences resulted in positive emotional support, feelings of greater connectedness between participants and the human race, and a sense of pride in being part of something larger than themselves. Being part of the choir supplied an outlet to express emotions which they felt they had lost through their incarceration experience and caused them to have hope about their future (Abrahams et al., 2012; Weber, 2021). The pre-service teachers responsible for leading the choir in Abraham’s study also

gained valuable insight about “the importance of honoring each person’s individuality” (Abrahams et al., 2012, p. 70). Increased confidence in their teaching dispositions resulted from their facilitation of the choir which they carried to future in-service opportunities (Abrahams et al., 2012). These studies showed the positive impact of teaching choral music for social justice which school music teachers can apply in their own settings (Abrahams et al., 2012; Elliot, 2016; Hess, 2018a).

Some pre-service music education programs have implemented teaching for social justice within their curriculums. This is an on-going process as a growing body of literature proves (Abrahams et al., 2012; Fisher & Fisher, 2020; Perkins, 2019). Studies show that though student push-back does happen (Salvador & Kelly-McHale, 2017), many pre-service teachers want to learn more about social justice issues (Fisher & Fisher, 2020; Perkins, 2019). Perkins’ (2019) study enacted “choral-dialoging” (p. 72) in a choir class. Choral dialoging is a combination of choral singing and intentional group conversations “for critical and empathetic social justice education” (p. 74). The study revealed that students were “disturbed” (p. 82) at the lack of cultural diversity and consequent perspectives in their pre-service curricula. Course content caused them to re-evaluate the role of music teachers in teaching for social justice and the dominance of performance-focused practices. Fisher and Fisher’s (2020) study also showed that students want more instruction about social justice issues. The study was set within two university women’s choirs. Content centered on human-trafficking education, awareness, and activism. The participants collaborated with a local law enforcement task force and non-profits focused on awareness and providing services to victims (Fisher & Fisher, 2020). A culminating event included speakers, media, and musical performances to help educate the public and raise awareness of local human trafficking activity. Like Perkins’ (2019) study, pre-service teachers in

Fisher and Fisher's (2020) study showed marked progress in awareness of social justice issues and a hunger to know more. Both studies show how choir can affect positive social change.

Pedagogical impetus in teaching for social justice in instrumental music, a related field, can apply to the choral classroom. Heuser (2011) concluded through studying bands that "music instruction might play a role in fulfilling the greater mission of education, which is to create a just and equitable society" (p. 294). However, many large performing ensemble directors are time-poor and may lack the capability or the desire to teach beyond the music. Some of them share a belief that teaching for social justice is not part of their job description (Salvador & Kelly-McHale, 2017).

Music teacher educators' opinions and attitudes of teaching for social justice are also valuable in the study of secondary choral classrooms. Salvador and Kelly-McHale (2017) found that out of 285 respondents in their study of college music education teachers, 40% said they were satisfied in their coverage of social justice issues. When asked about the obstacles they faced in teaching social justice, "65% of respondents indicated lack of time, 29% lack of knowledge, 29% [said] nothing, and 5% were concerned about tenure" (p. 14). "Ten percent cited lack of interest or felt it was not their job" (p. 14). Respondents who answered a more in-depth question said they made "a conscious choice not to cover social justice topics at all" saying it would detract from time needed to spend on other content. They preferred to "leave [social justice teaching] to the Political Science courses or History, etc." (p. 15). One respondent said,

Teaching social justice is as easy as saying "We are all equal and should be treated as such. We should celebrate our differences as much as we celebrate our similarities. In the end, we are all human beings." End of story. I just saved myself a week of time to talk

about more important topics such as music selection, instructional behaviors, and curricular issues. (Salvador & Kelly-McHale, 2017, p. 15)

This cavalier attitude toward teaching for social justice showed a difference-blindness or “privilege-blindness” (Ryan, 2020, p. 6), a viewpoint upheld by the dominant culture group. This view maintains the status-quo further disadvantaging marginalized groups (Salvador et al., 2020).

Difference-blindness “is rooted in the concept that good teaching is effective for all students and that content and pedagogy determine success” (Salvador & Kelly-McHale, 2017, p. 19). Williams and Land (2006) referred to the phenomena as “colorblindness” (p. 579) and define it “as practices in the classroom that seek to continue to perpetuate the dominant group’s primacy and efforts to bring all students to ‘the normalized White standard’” (p. 580). Treating all students equally seems on the surface to be a desirable classroom policy and many well-meaning teachers espouse a similar educational philosophy. However, these well-meaning educator attitudes may serve to further alienate those most vulnerable students not part of the dominant cultural group.

“Colorblindness” (Williams & Land, 2006, p. 579) and other problems educators meet in teaching for social justice in the choral classroom need further study. It would not be surprising if the attitudes of the pre-service music educators in Salvador and Kelly-McHale’s (2017) study existed in secondary choir teachers. I hope my qualitative study will help expose those long-held beliefs, even biases, which enable status quo and act as roadblocks to equitable and just music education.

This gap in the literature reveals a need for more research within this area of music education. The purpose of this phenomenological study is to understand the varying beliefs,

attitudes, and practices of secondary choral music teachers who self-identify as social justice educators to find out how and why they came to teach for social justice, their social justice teaching practices, and their perceptions about how their students, school culture, and communities are affected by a pedagogy rooted in social justice practice.

CHAPTER 3

Methods and Procedures

*I believe that we can transform dark yesterdays of injustice
into bright tomorrows of justice and humanity.*

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand the varying beliefs, attitudes, and practices of secondary choral music teachers who self-identify as social justice educators. I wanted to find out how and why they came to teach for social justice, their social justice teaching practices, and their beliefs of how their students, school culture, and communities were affected by a pedagogy rooted in social justice practice. I used “emergent design” (Creswell, p. 186) which centered participant perspectives. Throughout my iterative qualitative research process, I kept “a focus on learning the meaning that the participants hold about the problem or issue” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 44). The blending of each participant’s story into a cohesive study required arduous and trustworthy synthezation. This was of paramount importance in conducting an integrous study which successfully contributes to the existing literature. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), a qualitative researcher must implement the following procedures:

- engage in the complex, time-consuming process of data analysis
- write lengthy and descriptive passages
- embrace dynamic and emergent procedures
- attend to anticipated and developing ethical issues (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 47)

I approached my research with the goal of “methodological congruence” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 50) where “the purposes, questions, and methods of research are all interconnected and

interrelated so that the study appears as a cohesive whole rather than as fragmented, isolated parts” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 50).

I based my qualitative research methods on Creswell and Poth’s (2018) definition which posits that a phenomenology is a study describing “the common meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or a phenomenon” (p. 75). My primary research goal was to uncover and describe what all the participants have in common in teaching for social justice, the “common essence” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 75) of teaching for social justice in the secondary choral classroom. Finding out *what* the participants have experienced and *how* they have experienced it were central purposes of the research, moving from narrow, individual statements to broader concepts of teaching for social justice (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Research Design and Contextualizing Positionality in Qualitative Research

I designed this study using the idea that “there is no single, observable reality. Rather there are multiple realities, or interpretations” (Merriam, 2009, p. 8). Positionality of participants and the researcher were reported so that a proper context for meaning was employed. Creswell and Poth (2018) referred to this as being “context-dependent” (p. 44). How researchers position themselves or “reflexivity” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 44) lends to the readers’ wish to know why the researcher desires to study a certain topic and what they stand to gain from it (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Contextualizing positionalities of the researcher and participants brings deeper, more meaningful understandings to all involved, including the reader.

I sought to understand, interpret, and describe the varying beliefs, attitudes, and practices of secondary choral music educators teaching through a social justice lens. Using a qualitative method to gather in-depth, semi-structured interviews ensured that the emphasis remained on participants’ expressions of their lived experiences, the focus of qualitative research.

Disadvantages come with the subjective nature of the interpretation of data in qualitative research. I endeavored to overcome this challenge with meticulous and repeated coding procedures and strong data management systems.

Interview Protocol

I developed my Interview Protocol based upon a thorough review of the related literature striving to design items to serve as prompts for rich, detailed participant responses (Castillo-Montoya, 2016; Jacob & Furgerson, 2012). I designed open-ended questions to build trust between researcher and participant and spark creative responses (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012). In planning semi-structured interviews, the Protocol questions functioned as a beginning point to more in-depth conversations (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Silverman, 2013). I relied on Castillo-Montoya's (2016) Interview Protocol Refinement (IPR) process to build reliability and trustworthiness in the Protocol. Castillo-Montoya's four phases are:

- Phase 1: Ensuring interview questions align with research questions
- Phase 2: Constructing an inquiry-based conversation
- Phase 3: Receiving feedback on interview protocols
- Phase 4: Piloting the interview protocol (Castillo-Montoya, 2016, p. 812)

Phase One included a chart aligning all interview questions with each of the four research questions (see Table 2). Connecting the interview questions directly to the research questions is important to show the scholarship and integrity of the Protocol (Castillo-Montoya, 2016). However, the Protocol should not merely directly restate the research questions (Castillo-Montoya, 2016; Silverman, 2013). I constructed the Protocol items to put the participant at ease and encourage natural conversation patterns (Castillo-Montoya, 2016; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Jacob & Furgerson, 2012) which occurred during the interview process. At times, the participants anticipated and answered the next question before I asked it. This natural lead-in let me know the conversational value of the question sequence.

Phase Two included developing protocol questions which foster conversation focused on telling the “life experiences” of the participants (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012, p. 9). I also built time for listening, a key part of gathering rich data, into the sequencing of protocol items (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012).

I conducted Phase Three (feedback on the interview) using Castillo-Montoya’s (2016) “close reading” method (pp. 825-826). In this method, the reader “examines the protocol for structure, length, writing style, and comprehension” (p. 826). A colleague in psychology supplied feedback and edited wording and question flow so that my research questions and theoretical framework were well-integrated into the Protocol.

A colleague who did not take part in my study assisted me with Phase Four (piloting the protocol). She is an elementary music teacher with past secondary experience. Her suggestions helped to eliminate redundance and clarify desired results in questions. She also suggested I tell participants that the interview could take longer than the stated 45 minutes. Also, as part of the emergent design process during interviews, I suggested that participants view the protocol themselves to follow along with me as I asked the questions. This seemed helpful to several participants eliminating distractions that can be inherent in on-line interviews.

Participants

I gave careful attention to finding candidates who self-identified as teaching secondary choir using a lens of social justice. I did not use a best practice rubric to qualify candidates because part of what I wanted to study is why teachers think they teach for social justice. Their belief that they taught for social justice was the only qualifier I needed for participation.

I used multiple sampling methods to find participants who met the criteria of self-identifying teachers for social justice. I wanted to find choral practitioners who would help me

“gain insight...from which the most could be learned” (Merriam, 2009, p. 77). Initially, I employed “network sampling” (Merriam, 2009, p. 79), appealing to members of the professional choral music teacher community of which I was a member for 15 years while I taught secondary choral music. I first contacted those members with whom I have personally worked, having easy access to their contact information. Merriam (2009) calls this “convenience sampling” (p. 79). A study based only in convenience sampling tends to produce research which lacks rich data; therefore, it is important to use other sampling methods along with it (Merriam, 2009).

Gathering recommendations from colleagues, I employed a sampling method called “community nomination” (Fosters, 1994, p. 132). This is a term and method borrowed from anthropology which allows researchers to gain an “emic” or insider view of the phenomenon (Fosters, 1994, p. 132). In this method, researchers rely upon knowledge and expertise of community members to recommend people who they think exemplify the phenomenon being studied.

I considered teachers whose work I respected and who had the widest knowledge of choral music teachers and their praxis. In the beginning of the recruitment process, potential participants came from three specific colleagues. One of the first people I spoke with had recently retired from high school teaching over 30 years and was teaching music education courses adjunctly at a local university. She gave me seven names of teachers she thought would be a good fit and would have interest in taking part in my study. I contacted all of them and six of her suggested teachers chose to participate in my study. Another person with whom I spoke taught higher education. She gave me three names of former students whom she felt would be a good fit. One person from her list agreed to take part. A choreographer with whom I worked for

years also gave me two names. One joined my study. Those three colleagues helped me find eight participants.

Other names came from various associations with schools and churches through a network of choral musicians in my area of which I have 29 years of membership. I continued to rely on them to judge whether teachers were a good fit for my study (Ladson-Billings, 2009). A former classmate recommended one participant, and one was a colleague with whom I had worked closely in social justice teaching. Multiple mutual colleagues recommended her. Other community members contributed names of people they knew who emphasized social justice in secondary choir.

I continued to add names throughout the interview process. All but two participants contributed at least one name. One teacher recently finished a master's degree and recommended two classmates for the study. Each of those recommended someone and a "chain" (Merriam, 2009, p. 79) of potential candidates formed. The master's students had recently engaged in classes which explored social justice issues in the music classroom causing them to identify as teaching for social justice. I added 15 potential participants during the interview process. Seven participated in the study.

Momentum built in my participant recruiting process in the second week of interviews causing a "snowball" effect (Merriam, 2009, p. 79). Colleagues and participants recommended twelve people at the end of my interviewing process whom I did not have time to contact. However, I now have a rich reserve for potential future research.

As teacher recommendations were received, I made initial contact with them by sending an email (See Appendix A) or by texting and then calling the potential candidate to ask them to take part (See Appendix B). I obtained all email addresses and phone numbers either from my

phone contact list, from the person who recommended them, or from their school website. If potential candidates did not respond to the email or text/phone within one week, I did not pursue them further.

I emailed my Information Letter and Interview Protocol to each potential participant after a positive response during the first conversation. In the email, I gave them a choice of 2-3 interview dates and times and asked them to respond with their preference. Twenty-two people responded positively to my email or phone call saying they wanted to take part. However, six did not follow through by choosing a time for the interview. I contacted them one or two times after and they either stopped responding to communication or told me they needed to withdraw from the process because they did not have time to take part. For the first interview, I scheduled and conducted 16 Zoom interviews from the total 37 teachers who were recommended by the choral community members.

I conducted two interviews with each participant. Each first-round interview lasted between 45 minutes and two hours. I used a semi-structured interview protocol (See Appendix D) as a guideline, but I encouraged the teachers to expand their responses by asking follow-up questions when appropriate. As a result, only one interview remained within the 45-minute time which I stated in the first invitation email or phone call. As interviews were completed, I produced transcripts of the conversations.

The second interview (See Appendix E) lasted approximately 15-30 minutes and was conducted via Zoom or telephone call. We discussed transcript accuracy and preliminary findings. All participants completed second interviews conducted over a four-week time period.

The Corona virus outbreak and increased common use of Zoom video conferencing allowed my study to expand beyond geographical borders imposed when physical travel is

necessary. Twelve participants were from eight counties and school systems in one state in the South. This was the result of the specific sampling methods initially employed, especially network and community referral methods, and produced the largest cluster of participants. Three participants came from a different state located on the U.S. border, and one participant was from the Midwest.

Other participant demographic data are teacher ages, gender, cultural identification, and number of years teaching (see chart below). Teacher ages ranged from middle 20s to late 50s. Eight teachers were 21-30, two teachers were 31-40, five teachers were 41-50, and one teacher was 51-60. There were four males and twelve females. Three people identified as African American and 13 as White. Four teachers taught for five years or less. Four teachers taught between six and 10 years. One teacher taught for 17 years, and six teachers taught between 20 and 29 years. Time spent in their current position ranged between one and 15 years. Twelve people taught at their current school for six years or less and four were moving schools beginning the coming school year.

School settings represented by teacher participants varied within the study. The teachers identified their schools as urban, city, suburban, small town, and rural schools. There were two urban, four city, eight suburban, one small town, and one rural. The cultural make-up of the schools varied from mostly people of color (e.g., African American, 95-96%; Hispanic and Black, not African descent, 97%) to mostly White in some suburban schools (from 48-80%). There were schools which represented almost equal numbers of people groups. One school was almost equal African American, Hispanic, and White students with no Asian and mixed race. Other schools in the study had equal amounts of African American and White but very few Asian, Hispanic, and mixed-race students. There was no representation of Pacific Islander in any

of the schools in this study. The study participants’ schools represented a wide variety of cultural make-ups within their student populations. I gathered socio-economic status of school populations from internet sources. Schools ranged from 6% to 91% economically disadvantaged (see chart below).

Participant Demographic Information

Pseudonym Name	Pseudonym School Name	Setting (large suburb, mid-sized city, mid-sized suburban, small city, fringe rural, distant rural)	SES % Economically disadvantaged	School Cultural Make-up % (Black, White, Hispanic, mixed, other, Asian) *	Teacher Age	Years Taught	Years at School	Teacher Race (Black, White)/ Gender (Male, Female)
Zeke	Randolph High School	mid-sized city	61	95.8, .6, 1.7, 1.2, .5, .1	31-40	9	2	B/M
Elizabeth	Abingdon Junior High School	small city	64	35.9, 31.4, 27.9, 3.1, .9, .8	21-30	3	1	W/F
Brooke	Weldon Middle School	small city	42	14.3, 54.7, 21.2, 3.3, .5, 6	31-40	17	15	W/F
Hannah	Lancaster Middle School	large suburb	5	4.5, 79.9, 4.3, 3.4, .4, 7.5	41-50	26	13	W/F
Sam	Baldwin High School	fringe rural	29	20.1, 63.6, 3.7, 1.6, 9.2, 1.8	21-30	5	3	B/M
Jordan	Chatom High School	small city	33	2.6, 70.2, 17.1, 3.4, .2, 6.4	21-30	5	2	W/F
Juliana	Vernon Middle High School	distant rural	63	21.8, 68.6, 5.4, 3.9, .2, 0	21-30	7	3	W/F
Tiffany	Palmer High School	mid-sized city	91	95.1, .4, 2.3, .8, 1.3, .3	41-50	29	12	B/F
Christina	Macon Middle & High School	large suburb	73 67	21.8, 43.3, 30.3, 3.3, .5, .8 28, 48.4, 20.7, 2.2, 0, .7	21-30	6	3	W/F
Jason	Hardin High School	small city	23	27.8, 53.7, 6.9, 4.7, .1, 6.7	41-50	25	6	W/M
Aaron	Lee Middle School & Shipman High School	large suburb small city	87 26	20.9, 6.4, 65.9, 1.1, 5.1, .7 7.2, 57.5, 28.5, 2.6, .4, 3.7	21-30	8	5	W/M
Kali	Jewett Middle School & Poplar Grove High School	mid-sized city large suburb	85 66	50.2, 3.6, 43.3, 1.6, .5, .8 50.6, 21.6, 20.2, 3, .8, 3.9	21-30	5	5	W/F
Kelly	Hudson High School	mid-sized suburban	41	46.4, 48.5, 3.2, .6, 0, 1.3	51-60	20	6	W/F
Courtney	Golden High School	large suburb	30	29.8, 66.2, 2.9, .1, .3, .7	41-50	24	3	W/F
Stephanie	Rockford Middle School & Pearl High School	large suburb large suburb	78 60	50.1, 20.9, 28.1, .7, .2, 0 49.1, 31.5, 18.7, .2, 0, .5	41-50	27	8	W/F
Sadie	Hamilton High School	mid-sized city	20	22.2, 63.6, 5.8, 5.3, 1.1, 2	21-30	7	6	W/F

*Setting, SES, and School Cultural Make-up statistics taken from usnews.com/education

Data Collection Instrument

I collected data using semi-structured interviews to allow for an “inquiry-based conversation” (Castillo-Montoya, 2015, p. 813). The researcher’s goal in this type of interview process is to obtain quality answers to research questions in a conversational manner (Castillo-Montoya, 2015). I asked open-ended questions to capture participants’ experiences, how they describe those experiences, and the meaning they make of those experiences (Castillo-Montoya, 2015). I conducted interviews using Zoom, a cloud-based video conferencing platform, of which 15 were recorded successfully. Because of a technical difficulty, one interview did not record. I attempted to reschedule a make-up interview, but the participant did not respond. Initial

transcripts were produced using the “record” function in Zoom. Further manual editing produced accurate transcripts for 10 of 15 interviews, but this was a lengthy process. Four weeks into the transcription process, I discovered REV.com, an online professional transcription service upon recommendation from a colleague. I used it for the last five transcriptions. REV.com offers a “rough draft” function which uses Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology to produce a much more accurate transcript than the record function in Zoom. Using REV.com cut transcription time in half or down to one-third the time of the ones completed using Zoom transcripts. Rev.com also offers traditional human transcription services which are much more expensive and produce a more professional looking manuscript. Because of budget constrictions, I used the “rough draft” function which costs approximately one-fifth of the full transcription price. Using Zoom and Rev.com, I produced transcripts for 15 first round interviews.

I emailed preliminary findings and transcripts to each participant for “member checking” purposes (Creswell, 2014, p. 201). Member checking is more than making sure the transcripts are accurate (Creswell, 2014). It allows the participants to comment on the findings and engage in the formation of meaning more fully (Creswell, 2014). I asked each participant to read both documents and supply times when they were available for a follow-up interview. I conducted second meetings using Zoom or telephone. Most participants chose to let the transcripts stand as transcribed. One interviewee supplied the spelling of a Spanish word spoken in his interview which sounded garbled on the recording. The second round of interviews concluded the data gathering stage of the research.

I learned that there are advantages and disadvantages of conducting qualitative interview-based dissertation research using virtual meetings. The advantages of online or video-platform interviews are cost and time effectiveness and minimal scheduling needs. Because I was teaching

classes at Auburn University as a Graduate Teaching Assistant while conducting the interviews, I had access to the professional level of the Zoom platform. This meant that interviews did not have the time limit imposed when using the free version of Zoom. Another positive attribute of the virtual interviews is that no travel was needed, making it cost effective. The virtual method also saves time. Because I was in one place, I was able to schedule interviews on a tighter time schedule. Participants also did not have to spend time traveling to a site. The minimal scheduling needs of virtual interviews also makes this method attractive. One email containing the date, time, and link was all I needed to confirm each meeting. Because of the convenience, I was able to conduct multiple interviews per day.

There are also challenges to conducting virtual interviews. Four participants were in different time zones than me; therefore, there was some confusion when scheduling meeting times. When creating a meeting link, Zoom automatically schedules according to the researcher's profile and translates time zones for participants to match their zone. But it can still be confusing. I sent reminder phone text messages to help with this problem and sometimes participants initiated communication with me via text. These methods worked well to ensure accuracy of meeting times.

Another problem with virtual interviews is unstable internet connections for both the interviewer and interviewee. Rural settings can have weaker signals which was an issue for some participants. One participant lost internet and had to reschedule their interview. Once, because of a storm and losing power for multiple days, I had to reschedule and go to a location with power. Another participant's unstable signal caused her to leave and come back to the meeting room multiple times throughout the meeting. Fluctuations in the internet signal sometimes caused a loss of words or phrases on the recordings. I overcame this challenge through careful "member

checking” (Creswell, 2014, p. 201) with each participant. I shared completed transcripts via email and discussed corrections during the second interview.

Data Collection Administration

I collected data through semi-structured interviews conducted and recorded using synchronous Zoom video conferencing software. Transcripts were produced using the “record” function of Zoom and REV.com, an online transcription service. During the transcription process I created a pseudonym for each participant’s name, the name of their school and/or community, and names of any other persons mentioned during interviews such as students, parents, and colleagues to ensure confidentiality.

When choosing pseudonyms for participant names and school names, I used the internet. For each teacher participant name, I chose a popular name from the decade they were born that began with the same letter as their name begins. For example, if their name was Jared and they were born in the 1980s, I Google-searched “Popular names starting with a J in the 80s.” I chose a name similar to theirs in length and number of syllables. When choosing a school name pseudonym, I used a similar system to find names which also began with the same letter as their school on a list of closed schools.

I deleted the interview recordings from Zoom and stored them on my personal computer. As a backup, I also copied them to Box, a secure Auburn-supported cloud storage system where they were kept until they were longer needed, at which time I removed them. No one other than my dissertation chair and I had access to the raw data.

Data Analysis

In qualitative research, data analysis begins during the collection process and continues throughout the writing process (Creswell, 2014; Saldana, 2021). I began analyzing early in the

interview process. Conversations with my sixteen participants provided numerous perspectives of the phenomenon, and protocol questions asking the same thing in different ways provided multi-faceted views from each participant. Memoing or “preliminary jotting” (Saldana, 2021, p. 31) allowed me to uncover patterns and similarities which I used as talking points in successive interviews. This created ever-deepening conversations with participants. Through the progressively in-depth conversations I achieved my primary research goal of capturing the “common essence” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 75) of each participants’ perspective in teaching for social justice in the secondary choral classroom.

A challenge in qualitative data analysis is precisely representing the data. A common critique of qualitative designs is that they rely on the researcher’s intuition and feelings which produces an empirically weak study. I sought to combat this weakness of qualitative design by using the following “data analysis spiral” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 185) to build explication into my research:

- managing and organizing the data
- reading and memoing emergent ideas
- describing and classifying codes into themes
- developing and assessing interpretations
- representing and visualizing the data (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 186)

Creswell and Poth (2018) described the data analysis process as a spiral image stating that it is the best representation of how the researcher moves round and round through and between the “facets of analysis” (p. 185). This circular movement allows a creative flow for the researcher to discover and report deeper meaning than other types of research. “Spiraling” through the data allowed me to uncover complex and rich significance which is the valuable goal of qualitative methodology.

Another challenge when coding qualitative data is accounting for unexpected and unusual developments (Creswell & Poth, 2018) although these add to the rich content of qualitative research. I was not prepared for the massive amount of dense, rich data I gathered from thirty-two interviews. At times I felt overwhelmed, however, I “exercised perseverance” (Saldana, 2021, p. 20) continuing the analysis and interpretation process. First, I printed hard copies of all interviews and read them. During the first reading, I highlighted words, phrases, and passages of transcripts that “struck” me as answering my research questions or quotes which I thought were profound. I read them again, this time with a taxonomic and domain mindset, memoing relationships I discovered between codes and main ideas which stood out to me. Saldana (2021) called this process “pre-coding” (p. 30) In these readings, I took a macro or overall view of the body of data.

First Cycle Coding

First cycle coding began with my use of MAXQDA software. I began coding using the few a priori codes I found earlier in the memoing process with the hard copies of the interview transcripts. I employed inductive coding as I kept as open a mind as possible letting the data lead my analysis. In doing so, I coded using a mix of In-Vivo and descriptive codes. In-Vivo coding utilizes the actual language of participants as the code, and descriptive coding represents ideas presented within the data.

I reviewed the data several times organizing and cataloging the codes into logical groupings. I coded myself, which Saldana (2021) said was appropriate in some instances, when “interactions [with participants] are more than just information gathering” (p. 27). I included my comments if they were “significant, bidirectional, dialogic exchanges of issues and jointly constructed meanings” (Saldana, 2021, p. 27). I met several times with a university colleague

who served as my coding auditor. She provided insight into the process which I used to further organize and prioritize codes.

Second Cycle Coding

During second cycle coding I continued categorizing and re-organizing data. I recoded portions by “splitting” and “lumping” (Saldana, 2021, p. 280) data. Splitting data entails taking larger portions and “splitting” them into smaller sections. “Lumping” groups similar codes together. I used the Codebook function in MAXQDA which allowed me to see relationships more clearly between codes. I continued re-coding and rearranging data, “winnowing” (Creswell, 2014, p. 195) the data until I felt comfortable enough with the structure to begin the writing process.

Writing Process/Third Cycle

While writing, I continued finding patterns, re-organizing, re-coding, and analyzing to find the most logical and processual methods of presenting the data. I interacted with participants, clarifying and further exploring ideas. I memoed throughout the process allowing me to grapple with dilemmas which arose. Throughout coding, I determined to remain true to not only the words of my participants but to the spirit in which they offered them. Letting the data speak was important in conveying participant stories as well as describing the teaching for social justice phenomenon. I also kept in mind the influence that my life experiences, especially as a classroom teacher, had on analysis process. This allowed me to take a metacognitive approach to data analysis being “humbly and keenly aware not only of what I do but of why I do it,” or “coding as craft” (Saldana, 2021, p. 27). Coding continued throughout the writing process.

Trustworthiness

I employed three of Creswell's (2014) strategies for trustworthiness in my research: (a) member checking, (b) rich, thick description, and (c) clarifying bias I brought to the study (pp. 201-202). First, following their interview, all participants received a transcript of the conversation which I asked them to review for accuracy (member checking). I asked them to edit the transcript until they were comfortable with its contents. Second, I used rich, thick description to explain the lived experiences of the participants in teaching for social justice. Giving the reader the sense of a shared experience with the participants was the goal (Creswell, 2014). Third, to clarify my bias, I attempted to separate my experiences with social justice from the participants' experiences. Creswell and Poth (2018) call this "epoche or bracketing" (p. 78). I tried to clearly delineate between my experiences and those of my participants. However, I understood that it was possible for my suppositions and experiences to inform my study. I worked closely with my dissertation chair to remain aware of this and took appropriate action to ensure that my research maintained integrity.

Another way I ensured trustworthiness in my study is that I kept an audit trail which I shared with a colleague who served as my coding auditor. She had extensive experience as a school social worker and as a qualitative researcher which was closely related to my topic of social justice in the choral classroom. Her insight was an invaluable resource for me.

CHAPTER 4

Findings

Music for every child; every child FOR music.

Karl Gehrkins, 1923 Music Supervisors National Conference address

The idea behind this slogan was that we must set ourselves the twin tasks of (1) providing some sort of music instruction for every child, and (2) providing every child with teachers and music of such high quality that he would be fascinated by his delightful experience during the music hour. The slogan has served the Conference well through the years since 1923. (Gehrkins as quoted in Heidingsfelder, 2014, p. 48)

I continuously interacted with the data throughout the analysis process with the goal of presenting a synthesized macro (overall) and micro (detailed) view of my participants' ideas about teaching for social justice in secondary choral classrooms. Analysis began early in the data gathering process and continued throughout as I circulated between reading/re-reading and memoing, organizing, describing (coding), and developing (theming) phases. The description by Creswell and Poth (2018) of "analysis spiral" (pp. 185-186) captures the continual repeating and cycling motion I underwent. During first cycle analysis, I created codes and sub-codes categorizing as I went. Throughout second cycle coding, I re-coded, organized, and categorized again, finally recognizing themes that emerged. I combined similar codes eliminating redundancies. I assigned In-Vivo quotations to each theme and adjusted categorization to simplify and clarify. The process of codifying and categorizing "permits data to be divided, grouped, reorganized, and linked in order to consolidate meaning and develop explanation" (Saldana, 2021, p. 13). According to Saldana (2021), this is coding as "craft" (p. 26) and requires being aware of not only what you are doing but why you are doing it. Throughout the coding process, I strived to take this metacognitive approach. Finally, I felt confident reporting my interpretation of the data. I undertook third cycle coding during the writing process "lumping, also called macro," and "splitting data, also called micro," (Saldana, 2021, p. 33) as I discovered

more logical ways to re-organize the data while composing the narrative. Throughout the coding process, I interacted with my participants to make sure I accurately represented their beliefs, attitudes, and practices in teaching for social justice in their choral classrooms.

In this chapter, I present findings addressing the following research questions:

- How do secondary choral music teachers define teaching for social justice?
- Why do secondary choral music educators teach for social justice?
- How do secondary choral music teachers describe social justice in action within their classrooms?
- How do social justice secondary choral teachers think teaching for social justice affects their students, their school cultures, and the communities in which their schools are situated?

I organized this chapter into three main themes derived from In-Vivo coding: (a) “Because I Love My Students,” (b) “Instruments for Change,” and (c) “When You Sing Together...You Can’t Help but Love Each Other.” Theme one (“Because I Love My Students”) addresses *why* the teacher participants teach for social justice including how they define teaching for social justice in their choral classroom. Theme two (“Instruments for Change”) represents *how* the participants teach for social justice. It includes a sub-theme (It’s Messy! Bumbling Through) which reports teacher and student challenges when incorporating social justice in the choral curriculum. Theme three (“When You Sing Together...You Can’t Help but Love Each Other”) presents effects/results of teaching for social justice including how it affected the teachers, their students, their wider school cultures, and their communities. I used these themes to interpret data found horizontally across participant interviews.

“Because I Love My Students”

At the core of my participant teachers’ beliefs about teaching for social justice and why they do it is a genuine, deep caring for students. “I teach for social justice because I love my

students,” was Sam’s poignant description of student-centered teaching. Christina described her love for students as “having a heart for the underdog” wanting every student to feel accepted and welcomed in her choir classroom. I found these ideas and similar ones across all participant interviews.

As I analyzed data connected with research question one asking the teachers’ definition of teaching for social justice and research question two asking why participants teach for social justice, teachers expressed their love and care for students which I have divided into the following five main ideas or categories (Saldana, 2021):

- teaching for social justice definition
- life experiences
- responding to societal issues/outside influences
- seeing and filling gaps in music for every child
- observing student struggles

Teaching for Social Justice Definition

Teaching for social justice can mean a variety of things. Each teacher’s definition of teaching for social justice depended on their background, individual experiences, and how they saw the world. I divided teacher definitions into the following five ideas:

- care is foundational
- allows for student voice and student driven content
- provides a safe place where everyone matters, and students’ experiences are valued
- addresses ever-growing social justice issues
- teachers’ definition related to their *why*

Care is Foundational

Teaching for social justice in the choir classroom is rooted in teachers' care for students. Kali said her students "don't care how much she knows until they know how much she cares." She said social justice is caring for people and letting them know that they matter to you. She motivated her students to learn about music by showing them she cares about them. She called it a "people first" approach to teaching and attributes it to county-wide successes her students have achieved. Kali and Aaron said their students are more engaged in lessons because they know their teachers care about them as people. Literature supports the link between teacher caring and students' academic success (Rojas & Liou, 2018). Brooke agreed that letting students know she cared for them contributed to her students' success, "kids feel that I'm on their side, that I'm backing them up, that I'm supporting them, that I try to understand what struggles they might be going through." Juliana said her definition of teaching for social justice is "accepting and understanding" students and the social issues they face. Christina agreed that teaching for social justice is meeting students where they are and accepting them for who they are. Students understanding that their teachers care for them was foundational in defining teaching for social justice.

Allows for Student Voice and Student Driven Content

Including student voice in classroom decisions was a key component of teaching for social justice. Juliet Hess, in her model of activist music education, stressed that music education "honor lived experiences and provide means to share them" (Hess, 2019a, p. 161). In this idea, teachers value and include student voice in curricular choices. Kali said, "giving students the opportunity to give their opinions on what they're learning [and] what they want to learn" is critical in teaching for social justice. This does not mean a tokenization of student voice so that

the teacher or institution can claim democratic teaching practices but requires dialogical or back-and-forth constructions of learning between and among students and teachers (Spruce, 2015).

Dialogical music education focuses not on the (re) production of musical objects or their disinterested study, but on the engagement of young people's voice as reflective, thinking musicians and as equal participants in the construction of pedagogy and curriculum and the revealing and creation of music meaning. (Spruce, 2015, p. 14)

Using student voice to drive decisions about content is a necessary part of a socially just music classroom.

Provides a Safe Place Where Everyone Matters, and Students' Experiences are Valued

Teaching through a lens of social justice builds a classroom culture which helps students feel safe, that they matter, and their experiences are valued. Students can fully engage in learning when teachers strive to meet these basic emotional needs. When students feel comfortable and accepted, "they are more likely to ask questions and engage in class in dynamic and meaningful ways—both musically and non-musically" (Carter, 2011, p. 29). Brooke said, "I'm always trying to create that comfortable space, a space of no judgment." Hannah described it as "making sure that every kid that walks in your room feels safe and feels included and feels they are a part...feels that they matter. That's my goal." Jason said, "Teaching for social justice...in my classroom anyway...means that every student's experience should be valued and should be explored. We take time to do that." Kalie said,

Caring about them means caring about what they care about, and social issues are a big thing. And it's important for them to know that you care about what they care about. So, the Black Lives Matter movement is huge right now. And if it's important to my students...then I care about it.

Elizabeth said, “I think it [teaching for social justice] is taking those [student] experiences and trying to incorporate them into what you’re doing.” Participants agreed that teaching for social justice is providing a safe place where everyone matters, and students’ experiences are valued.

Addresses Ever-Growing Social Justice Issues

The definition of teaching for social justice provides room for additional issues which arise. Salvador and Kelly-McHale (2017) described social justice as the equal redistribution of resources and listening to and valuing the “culture and identity of those who are marginalized and subjugated” (p. 6). Using this definition and considering current societal trends, justice issues will continue to arise. Music education which teaches for social justice must continue to evolve and adapt to forthcoming changes.

Social justice issues continue to change and expand. Tiffany said it is more than just race adding that it included religion and culture. Brooke included mental health issues. Participants also discussed the importance of considering gender identity issues and students with disabilities. They said social justice encompassed all marginalized groups of people. Choral music education which teaches for social justice adapts to current issues which arise for students.

Teachers’ Definition of Teaching for Social Justice is Related to Their Why

Teachers’ definitions in the broadest sense concerned centering student needs. Taking a more in-depth view, participants’ definitions reflected their individual experiences, family situations, and understanding of the world. Their definitions reflected their *why*. These provided the foundation for their teaching philosophy and pedagogical practice.

Christina’s definition of teaching for social justice and her *why* centered equity in offering music for every child. Her definition was “music for every child...wherever they are, it is our [teachers’] responsibility to meet them, whether they have a cognitive disability or

anything else, music is something that should be available for every child.” When asked why she taught for social justice, Christina said she always had “a heart for the underdog” wanting “everyone to feel like they are just as important as the next person.” She told me when her students go on a field trip and are eating together, she gives the speech before they depart the bus that “no one eats alone...even if they say they want to be alone because no one really wants to eat alone. They are just afraid you are going to tell them they can’t sit in that seat [beside you].” She talked about having empathy for those who feel different or left out and said that awareness came from her parents who encouraged her to see things from other people’s point of view. Christina strived to provide equity in her classroom throughout her career but her *why* became more defined and urgent several years ago when she and her husband adopted an African American teenager. Facing systemic inequities with him caused an even greater sense of urgency in her teaching for social justice.

Jordan defined teaching for social justice as “noticing problems and addressing them in my classroom in a way that is accessible to all of my students.” When I asked her why she teaches for social justice, she said her Black, gay high school English teacher opened her mind to the “problems in our world” and she believes it is important to do the same for her students. Jordan’s definition of noticing problems in the world is directly related to why she wants to help open her students’ minds in teaching for social justice.

Hannah focused on making sure students know “they’re loved...cared for and that they matter, regardless of their background or their race or parents’ income or any of that, they’re important in this place, in this room.” She said teaching for social justice is “taking into account the students in your room and the issues they face on a day-to-day basis and then taking those experiences or those things that they’re dealing with and trying to incorporate them into what

you're doing." When I asked Elizabeth why she teaches for social justice she said, "Why would I ever ignore it [teaching for social justice]? It's so important to them and that's why we're here...we're here for our students." Hannah simply said, "I teach for social justice because...they [students] matter." Hannah and Elizabeth's definitions reflect a direct relationship between what teaching for social justice is and why they center it in their pedagogy.

Life Experiences Are Why

Participants' definitions and reasons for teaching for social justice are born from their life experiences. Findings addressed research question two which studied why teachers place importance in teaching for social justice. Life experiences which led to their teaching for social justice are: (a) personal experience with prejudice or marginalization, (b) family influences, (c) early teaching environments, and (d) providing positive choir experiences.

Personal Experience with Prejudice or Marginalization

Some teachers centered social justice in their classroom because they experienced prejudice or marginalization. Tiffany, an African American high school teacher, shared the first time she remembered experiencing prejudice which she called "social injustice."

I experienced social injustice as a very young teacher, and it really hurt because I had never experienced that even going to a predominantly White high school in the 80s and then a predominantly White college. While in my first teaching job, I went to a football game and one of the assistant principals—he was a White gentleman--was passing hot chocolate out to all teachers. I reached for a cup, and he said, "Oh, not for you." That really broke my heart.

That experience, though painful, did not change Tiffany's view about White people. It caused her to see that people are individuals who make their own choices. She said,

I look at people as individuals, individual human beings. You know, we're wrapped in different things. I just look at the individual for who they are. Because of that experience, in the music classroom it's just second nature for me to teach for justice for everyone.

Kelly, a White teacher experienced marginalization while studying for her Ph.D. at a state university.

Kelly: I experienced marginalization in my Women's Studies Class at the university. I remember saying to the [other] students, "I know you're not trying to be cruel to me." And they said, "But we are." The class was made up of women predominantly younger than me, with different viewpoints and lifestyles than me. The student who really had it in for me was a young White woman who identified as gay and was married. And a lot of her anger was directed towards me. So, I felt this pressure that I didn't meet their expectations because of who I was.

Kay: Because of their bias and judgment of you? Is that accurate?

Kelly: Yeah. Because I am an older White, married to a doctor, and had three children in private school. So, I was tormented in that class and when I say tormented, it's like middle school. We had to keep a journal and at the end of the class I burned the journal because it was so painful. I called them "The Angry Birds Class" because they were angry. But I was the target. I brought in Chick-fil-A one night and they were offended. It was telling that about a year later when I ran into the professor, and she apologized to me. She said, "I tried, I spoke with them, and I tried." That experience was very difficult for me. Also, I grew up without opportunities. I grew up with a one parent family. I grew up in poverty. So, no amount of me trying to explain that I didn't come from what they perceived caused them to have any grace. There was no grace.

Kelly's said her early experiences growing up "without opportunities" in poverty and in a single parent home along with this more recent experience are "why I teach for social justice...because I know the hurt of being excluded and being hated because of who I am." Her life experiences cause her to pay close attention to providing an inclusive, positive atmosphere in her classroom.

Family Influences

Participants' family of origins and extended family contributed to why they teach for social justice. Brooke came from a military family where frequent moves created an open-mindedness about equity and normalized her experience of diverse people groups working together. Jordan and Hannah spoke of their parents' belief systems shaping them in teaching for social justice. Jordan said she became an activist at an early age because of her mother and father' teachings.

I always kind of grew up with my liberal parents, seeing that there were inequities in society and trying to figure out, you know, what I can do to help that, whether it be LGBTQ issues or Women's Rights or Civil Rights. Because of that, I became a little activist at a young age.

Hannah's family also helped her see the need to teach for equity. She said, "My parents always taught me that we're all God's children, and we should love everybody, no matter who they are or where they come from. And that's just how I've always been." Brooke, Jordan, and Hannah place great emphasis in their classrooms on helping every student feel welcome and valued.

Early parental decisions also contribute to why teachers emphasize teaching for social justice in their praxis. Tiffany said,

I was born in an urban area with basically all African American people, but my parents sent me to an all-White fine arts high school. There were five Black people at my school.

I went to a college that was the same. Only about 5% Black.

She said of her school experiences, “They made me who I am. They broadened my horizons which helped me be more accepting of others. I think it is important to do that same thing for my students.” Because of her life experiences, helping students broaden their world view to help them be more accepting of others is especially important in Tiffany’s teaching practice.

Juliana’s extended family motivated her to teach for social justice.

My older sister is married, and they just had their first child. Her husband is Black. So, I know that does not directly impact me, but through my brother-in-law and her, you know, we as a family, we've had conversations that we didn't have before about how my older sister gets nervous when he goes out for a jog because people see a person of color running. And we were going to the shooting range one time with my dad, a family outing and we invited him, and he didn't want to go because he said, "People don't want to see a Black guy with a gun." Things like that have never crossed my mind before. They've been together eight or 10 years now and that's definitely helped shift my thinking. Those are things I have thought about more now that there is someone in my family who goes through these things.

The struggles her sister and brother-in-law endure brought awareness that opened Juliana’s thinking to social justice issues. These new thoughts “made me more aware and caused me to grow in my teaching.” Personal experiences involving family caused Juliana to see the importance of working to overcome injustice in her teaching practice.

Early Teaching Environments

School environments in early years of teaching were formative in participant's journey toward becoming social justice educators. White teachers teaching in schools where the student populations were predominantly people of color and Black teachers teaching in schools where students were mostly White, saw the need to teach for social justice. Jordan and Juliana, both White teachers, began their careers in schools where their student populations were different from where they had grown up and trained to teach. Jordan said of her first job out of college,

I started teaching at a school that was primarily people of color and that was a turning point for me...where I thought about really addressing the students that I have in my classroom. It was kind of the first thing that made me think, "Okay, I need to do more to learn about my students' cultures."

Juliana's first job helped her see the importance of teaching for social justice because her students' experiences were vastly different from hers. She said,

My first job was in a very rural location. I grew up in a suburb, you know. My parents are still married. They both were home in the evenings. My mom always checked over my homework. And my first year of teaching, it was a huge culture shock...students with broken homes, moms not home, and dads not home. "So, I'm in sixth grade taking care of the baby," you know, just situations I never had to even really think about. I think because of my background in my first year, I was that teacher, "How do you come to school without a pencil?" And now it's like, well, maybe that kid didn't get to sleep because they're taking care of their baby because mom wasn't home and dad's in jail. And you know, so I have changed. Like, you know what? I'm not going to stress about a pencil. "Here's one, if you need it, take it."

Sam, an African American teacher, teaches at a school where most students are White where his experiences influenced his desire to teach for social justice. He said,

I'm teaching at a predominantly White school where there are very few people that look like me and I have, out of 120 plus students in my program, I probably have 15 kids who are minority. And those kids sometimes may not always be seen or heard, and I feel like we need to make sure that they are comfortable and that they are safe. I'm hoping that me being a minority myself does help them feel safer. We must, I must remain equitable amongst everybody, no matter what. That's my job as an educator...all my students seen in the same light. And just all around, I keep going back to this, that we are just all there for a common goal. And that's making music...making sure what I'm doing as a teacher is representing all the cultures of my students and all the values that they have...within reason. Sometimes that's a slippery slope and dealing with public education and doing things that are politically correct, but not always necessarily fair. I'm just hoping that I'm doing the best I can to not be biased but also represent those students who are mostly underrepresented at my current place of employment.

Sam teaches for social justice because he wants all cultures to have voice in his pedagogy. He especially works to make sure underrepresented students are heard and feel safe. Teachers' early teaching experiences brought awareness of social justice issues and the need to address them.

Providing Positive Choir Experiences

Teachers wanted to provide the positive choir experience they had while they were students. Brooke wanted her students to “feel what I felt when I sang, when I participated in music.” She wanted them to love music and feel the accomplishment and success she felt as a young singer. She said, “You just have those these visions as a young teacher, that your kids are

gonna love everything that you love.” Aaron and Kelly wanted to foster the sense of community and belonging in choir that they experienced as students. Kelly said when she was young, the “choir room was a place to belong” and was key to her process of “finding her people” at school. Aaron expressed the same sentiment as he told the story of singing with his choir friends.

I remember just walking down the hall in high school with friends who were in Chorus, just singing our choir songs. And I'm sure we got all sorts of looks from people in high school, but that was just the thing that we did. And so, I know how important that was to me, and I want that community feeling for my students.

Aaron's desire to provide community for his students is motivated by his particular middle school setting where the school population primarily served children of immigrants. Several varying languages were spoken among the students which he said was challenging. He worked to overcome this challenge in his classroom by fostering an atmosphere where all felt welcomed and valued as part of the choir community. Teachers providing positive environments like the ones they experienced in school was an important part of why the educators in my study teach for social justice.

Outside Influences

Changing school and community demographics, required professional development, school regulations, and societal issues also contributed to why participants teach for social justice. When asked why he teaches for social justice, Jason said his school's changing demographic over the last 20 years caused him to see the need.

It's [school demographics] changed a lot. When I first started teaching, we were nowhere near as diverse as we are now. We have way more diversity than other systems. Other schools [in our area] are 5% to 10% minority. And now we are half, pretty much. So, I

think just being involved in seeing that change, I don't know how you couldn't teach for social justice.

Stephanie also spoke of changing demographics as the reason she became more aware of teaching for social justice.

Back in the 90s, I had the same job at the same school for five years. I left to teach at a Christian school. When I came back, eight years ago, the demographic had shifted big time, and that just changed everything.

Jason's school responded to shifts in student demographics by offering professional development opportunities to help in teaching for social justice. His school system's offerings brought awareness and encouraged teachers to educate themselves about social justice issues with the hope that it will benefit their diverse student population. Jason said this was partly because there had been specific racial tensions within their community that directly affected his student population including a segregation lawsuit against his system. He told how his school provided yearly voluntary book studies focused on racial and other social justice issues. He explained that his administration encouraged faculty to engage with them about social justice policies and practice in the school through the studies. Jason said,

One year the book was *Push Out: The Criminalization of Girls in School* about the pipeline from schools to prison for African American females. That book was very illuminating about statistics and showing -- this focused on females--but it gave complimentary statistics about African American males, too...but just in terms of how we discipline and how we react to our Black girls, as opposed to our other girls with the same thing. So that was an example of learning and then being allowed to question our practices at school. Like okay...well, let's see, "What are our statistics that we get our

hands on? What are our disciplinary incidents?” And the school was willing to show us that.

Jason’s school offered voluntary professional development for teachers, but some schools have moved from voluntary training to requiring that all teachers incorporate social justice education into their curriculum. Brooke said in her school system, teachers must,

include African American studies, Hispanic, Jewish Holocaust studies in your class...women's studies, and I can't remember if it's LGBT Q studies, but there are things you have to incorporate in your classroom. It's almost like a checklist.

She said required professional development classes teach specifically how to incorporate these subjects into your curriculum.

Someone came to our school and gave suggestions of what you can do...talk about these historical figures who were or who are representative of these groups. So, there's been a big push recently in our school and our school district.

Whether voluntary or mandated, school administrators and school board policy influence participants’ decisions in teaching for social justice.

Teachers address social justice issues in their classrooms because they are responding to current issues in society. “It’s really not anything I’m implementing as much as it is something I’m responding to,” Stephanie said as she shared her reasons for considering social justice issues in her curriculum. Connecting choir to current events was important to several participants.

Tiffany said,

With all the George Floyd things going on and the White House what they called, “The Insurrection,” whatever you call it...nothing was said about it. I’m not saying something should be, but it was ignored. And when you’re a teacher in the classroom you should not

ignore what's going on. As a teacher, you don't want to impose your opinion upon your students, but you can open up a dialogue in the classroom and let them speak.

Participants teach for social justice in response to the problems they see in society. They want to help students make sense of things. Teaching for social justice happens because students have the chance to talk about difficult issues in safe, encouraging, and positive environments of their choir classrooms. Outside influences affect why music educators teach for social justice.

Observing Students Struggle

Music educators included social justice teaching in their curriculum because they saw students struggle with social injustice. Teachers said their students encountered the following challenges: (a) economic disparities, (b) immigration issues, (c) ELL/ESL challenges, (d) LGBTQ+-related issues, (e) racial disharmony, (f) gender identity issues, (g) bullying, (h) mental health issues, and (i) limited or no opportunities for students with special needs. These issues were the reason teachers in my study taught for social justice.

Music educators teach for social justice because their students struggle economically. Aaron said that students from the larger school district stigmatize his students as the "poor kids." My middle school is not perceived well in the community at large. People look at surface level things of test scores or something like that and they go, "Oh, it's the poor kids or it's the kids that can't pass the test" or whatever the case is. And that's not fair, but it can trickle down into the classroom. The students are not immune to it, maybe the elementary students aren't as aware but, by the time they get to middle school and high school, yeah. They're aware of what other peoples' perceptions of their school is. I think maybe it's not an active oppression, but it is oppressive for the students. Absolutely.

Kali also talked about how life is different for her students, how some students have the mentality that things will never be better for them. She said,

Yes. I mean the experiences they've had, the lives that they've had. They know. They know. And it doesn't matter how young they are. They know that life is different for them.

Music educators center social justice in their curriculum to help students overcome that defeatist mindset which comes when students struggle economically.

Teachers who serve students who are immigrants speaking English as a second or third language, spoke of the difficulties those students endure. Elizabeth spoke of the bias that her Hispanic students face.

A lot of my Hispanic students deal with a lot of stereotyping. A lot of my kids like...I can think of several who...their parents are not here legally, so that creates a lot of problems, especially with anything with school getting a mailing address. That's difficult.

Aaron said that his school system is "not always set up to respect the differences." He talked about the bias which occurs during adjudication process at choral assessments.

I can't tell you how many comments I get about vowels and vowel unification. And it's like, "I hear it and I'm aware of it, but I have five different languages. You should have heard what an "ah" vowel was like in August. And now here's what it is in March. Is it perfect? No. But is it better?" It's 85% better probably than where we started, but it doesn't meet the rubric.

Teachers teach for social justice because they want to help their immigrant and ESL students overcome bias and prejudice against them.

Teachers' observation of their students struggling with LGBTQ+ issues, including most recently, gender identity issues, caused them to teach for social justice. Brooke, Juliana, Hannah, Jason, and Jordan reported gender identity-related issues with some of their students. They each said students struggling with these issues gives them reason to include it when teaching for social justice. As school choir programs have traditionally included gender-specific ensembles (e.g., Girls' Choir, Boys' Choir, Women's Choir, Men's Choir) and gender-specific performance apparel (e.g., formal dresses and tuxedos), navigation of gender identity issues can be especially challenging. Several participants have made or were considering making at the time of their interviews, the necessary adjustments to accommodate students. However, teachers continued to see their students struggling. Courtney said,

Some of my kids are just now figuring out their sexual identity, and they are so scared to tell their parents or to come out to their friends and to try and experience relationships that are out of the norm for a lot of our students is very difficult for them. We are slowly becoming a more accepting school...slowly. Like I have a sticker on my door, a couple of other teachers have a Gay Pride sticker on their door. My students know that they can come to me, and they talk about those issues with me.

Jason and his co-teacher are sponsors of the Gay-Straight Alliance club at his school to provide a place where students can feel safe in being open about issues that they encounter. Jordan shared about one of her students who experienced bigotry because she was transitioning from male to female.

A lot of my students that are LGBTQ+ identifying struggle with social justice issues at school. I had a student last year, who was openly trans. She was born male transitioning to female, and she'd had one of the surgeries. She told me about how some kids who

knew her before she was transitioned would still call her by her dead name. They were just brutally bigoted towards her. And I said, “If you're experiencing that, I need you to tell me so that I can report that. Because I don't think that's okay at all and there's no way that any school administrator is going to say that's okay. Whether or not their personal beliefs agree with that or not, you know it's pretty clear, like you shouldn't be discriminated against. People you know shouldn't be allowing acts of hate to be happening in your school.”

Seeing their students struggle with LGBTQ+ issues prompted participants to teach for social justice.

Seeing racial disharmony among students and in society is why participants teach for social justice. Aaron said he sees his students from immigrant families “struggle with social justice issues and they don't have an outlet to address it.” Courtney reported about students at her school who included a racial slur in a GroupMe conversation and how she helped her students of color process the situation in a healthy way.

Someone said something rude about another student and with this GroupMe, the screenshots got out into the world. My administration had to have grade-based conferences with all the students, and it was actually never said...our principal never said why they were having these meetings, so my students who it affected came back to my classroom very angry, because nothing was resolved, nothing actually happened. And so, in those...in that instance I had to be very covert. I mean we sat down, with about 20 minutes left in class and they were just livid about what had happened, that nothing, no apologies were made...a crude term was used for an African American student and then, it was laughed about in this GroupMe and none of these students really got in trouble.

And so, we...that type of teachable moment is always difficult to have because I never know how my admin would appreciate it, but I truly believe that if not going to be discussed, it needs to be discussed. And my classroom does foster that atmosphere of “Let's have this discussion, let's not just be angry and yell about it. Let's have discussion.” So, I think my students have come to recognize that if something happens, we're going to talk about it in class and it's their outlet, maybe, of just being able to discuss things in a safe environment.

Students struggling with mental health issues caused teachers to educate for social justice. Brooke said her students want to talk about mental health, particularly anxiety, from which many suffer. She said it is important to her that kids “have someone to talk to about it. Every kid goes through problems.” She devotes class time to talking about these issues with her students. She wants to make sure they all know they are not in it alone and fosters an atmosphere which encourages students to talk about the issue instead of feeling shame.

Teachers reported they teach for social justice because their students experience bullying. The behavior can occur in conjunction with any social justice issues. Social justice educators intervene to help students, perpetrators, and victims stop and find healthy ways to overcome the destructive conduct. Elizabeth, Hannah, Jordan, Kelly, and Stephanie reported student bullying prompted them to teach for social justice. Kelly said she experienced an unusual case of bullying when gay choir students bullied straight students to the point that she almost had to divide them into separate choirs.

Let's talk about social justice...a lot of my students in the past couple of years have identified as homosexual. A lot of girls identified as homosexual, and it began to be a bias. So much so that I had heterosexual students who wanted to be in a separate choir

from the homosexual students. That was a difficult situation. And what I had to do, which you might think, I would have to say, all right, I need you heterosexual students to be inclusive, but that wasn't my problem. I needed the homosexual students to be inclusive because they had, they felt this empowerment from the Pride Movement to where they were bullying the heterosexual students.

Teachers seeing students struggle with bullying caused them to include social justice in their curriculum.

Music educators who teach for social justice include children with special needs in their curriculum. "Music is for ALL students," said Christina who taught one class of self-contained special needs students at her last school. She pointed out research proving that music enhances their cognitive and academic abilities but said that special education students are underserved in school music. Courtney taught a year-round, 45-minute class each day for children with special needs. She designed it to meet their individual educational goals. Jordan and Kelly taught choirs containing typical and special education students. Music educators teaching for social justice included children with special needs in their curriculum.

Participants' life experiences, outside influences, and observations of student's struggling with social injustice helped define why they teach through a lens of social justice. Burke and Collier (2016) explained why educators teach for social justice:

Teachers teach for social justice for a range of reasons, which include helping children to empathize with those in inequitable circumstances, encouraging children to participate in actions that will bring about social change, and illuminating injustices in children's everyday lives. In a larger sense, teaching for social justice permeates life at school. Many educators have made a commitment to teach in a more just way. (p. 272)

Zeke defined “teaching for social justice in the sense that justice is the goal.” Music educators in my study teach for social justice “because they love their students” and want to be “instruments for change.”

“Instruments for Change”

Inherent in the teaching profession is the desire to have positive influence upon students, to “make a difference.” “In the end, it is the teacher who is with students day in and day out. And we all know that teachers, especially those powered by hope and possibility, can and do make tremendous differences in children’s lives” (Westheimer, 2016, p. 7). Teachers in my study believe they create positive social change through teaching for social justice.

Several years ago, Tiffany and I worked together on a project which had a positive social effect on us and our students. Tiffany taught at an urban high school, and I was at a suburban one. Since our students were different in many ways, we believed they could benefit from knowing each other. Therefore, we planned a yearly event four consecutive years. Fundamental to our venture was the hope that we could all learn from each other and bring unity through music to our students and communities. The following conversation illustrates the affect our event had on our students and us. It shows the hope we had in the projects’ purpose to help our students experience the broader world of music and relationships. It also demonstrates teachers “becoming instruments for change.”

Kay: One of the things I remember vividly at the beginning of our work together is both of us coming to the realization that we were able to expand our students’ world by bringing them together. We had two very different student groups. I don’t know if you remember that first year, we were getting on the bus to leave your school after the

wonderfully long day of events, but a bunch of your kids came on our bus as we were leaving.

Tiffany: Hmm hmm...yes.

Kay: And they were all getting each other's phone numbers and...

Tiffany: Yes!

Kay: ...crying. A couple of them cried, you know, and it just impacted me so much that *we* can do so much as teachers.

Tiffany: Hmm mmm. It was so fun! We are changing lives; teachers are the instruments for change in students' lives. They will never forget those moments. And some of them still talk to each other.

Kay: Yeah, I know. That's something that I, and I know you believe this too, but I believe that was something way bigger than the two of us.

Tiffany: Yes, it was.

Kay: I get emotional when I think about it.

Tiffany: I know. Don't make *me* cry! [both laughing]

Becoming an instrument for change requires teachers embark on a journey of personal growth including frank self-examination with an honest assessment of pedagogical approaches and curriculum. They first must be willing to change themselves before leading others on a path of positive social change.

I organized data connected with research question three which asks *how* the teachers in my study taught for social justice into two categories. The first (Teachers Doing Internal Work) centered on the work teachers do internally when learning to teach for social justice. The second category (Learning to Teach) reports the ongoing process of learning to teach for social justice,

including pedagogical and curricular practices of teachers in forming equitable and just music classrooms. Also included in this section is the sub-theme “It’s Messy, Bumbling Through” addressing challenges teachers met in teaching for social justice.

Teachers Doing Internal Work

Scholars say teaching for social justice involves transformative (Heuser, 2016; Navarro, 2018; Rojas & Liou, 2018) “processes that lead people to change their mindsets and/or their actions” (Salvador, Paetz & Tippetts, 2020, p. 198). When discussing transformative learning, it is easy to focus on student growth, but the process of teacher transformation is just as important if not more so. Teachers are the catalyst for student transformation. The transformative learning process begins with teachers’ metacognitive ability to discover, wrestle with, and evolve over time. It is not instant, but requires time, patience, and is tied to teaching context and students.

A theory of practice consistent with justice, however, rejects the narrow view that teaching practice is “simply” what, when or how teachers do things. Rather, from the perspective of justice, teaching practice also involves how teachers think about their work and interpret what is going on in schools and classrooms; how they understand competing agendas, pose questions, and make decisions; how they form relationships with students; and how they work with colleagues, families, communities and social groups. (Cochran-Smith, 2010, p. 14)

This section was organized into the following categories:

- messy journey
- developing a philosophy

Messy Journey

A spiral model best illustrates the messy and imperfect process of social justice educators over their lifetime (Hess, 2018b). Growth in social justice work is not linear. Teachers develop, execute, assess, and re-work ideas and practices many times during their career. Teaching contexts, social events, student needs, and teachers' personal life experiences influence teacher growth. Responding to my protocol question about the imperfect journey toward a social just pedagogy, Courtney talked about her messy process of realizing she needed to teach for social justice and being confronted with the internal work she needed to do to overcome unrealized bias.

It was a process for me because I didn't know I needed to teach for social justice. And it was messy because I thought it was all fine. I thought I could never, I can never think a certain way or not, you know. When I was in my first school, I realized that I had these... unrealized biases...that just really...I was like...what? And so, I had to... I personally had to work through my own stuff to get to the point where I was vulnerable enough and comfortable enough with my students to discuss things that they were going through and that I, even now I actively tell my students, "I need you to explain, I need you to talk to me, and I need to learn, in this instance, what you're feeling, what's happening?" And it is messy. Sometimes I don't do a good job...because I'm a hotheaded person and some of the anger that they...some students would have, it really was like, "Whoa I'm not doing anything wrong, why are you acting like that towards me?" You know that attitude then set us back like ten steps.

Courtney confronted the messy and imperfect inner work she needed to do in teaching for social justice.

Teachers' internal work was influenced by events occurring in society. Sam spoke of how dealing with his feelings surrounding George Floyd and other events involving police contributed to his internal work in teaching for social justice.

All the events that have happened in our country and all the events that are happening in our world. I see it and I feel it. And I'm angry and I'm sad...those feelings, they seem to be really feelings of just grief.

Sometimes, teachers experienced tension between their personal beliefs and their desire to teach for social justice. Zeke said he wanted to be non-judging about gender flux issues despite his personal beliefs that some of his students claim to be non-binary for attention-seeking purposes.

So, where the growth has to happen is for me just to make sure I'm not judging people.

Because when I hear them say they're nonbinary, part of me is like, I feel like it's a power grab. I understand there's societal norms and this, that, and the other, but a pendulum can swing too far one way. And I feel like that's part of what it is. Eventually it'll swing back towards the middle when people start saying, "Oh yeah," because I'm telling you, you can call yourself a female all day long. You're not having a baby.

Jordan talked about the tension she feels in abiding by her district's non-spoken expectations and her own personal beliefs.

In my district there's been contention between, "Are teachers allowed to say Black lives matter?" Because we know we're not supposed to share our political opinions and some people have made social issues into political decisions, and I always equate it to my personal belief that "Human rights should never be a political decision." And yet, here we are. So, I struggle with that a lot in the community that I live in now. You know, like what am I allowed to say? And what am I not allowed to say to my students? And if I'm

not allowed to directly say this, how can I teach it to them in a way that no one can object to?

She also talked about how the death of George Floyd caused her to think differently about her role and purpose in teaching for social justice.

Obviously, the murder of George Floyd was a big one for me that really made me start thinking “Okay, I need to not just be teaching myself and my students how to be better going forward, but I need to be actively undoing all the wrong things that I’ve learned and help my students also to unlearn those things.

Jordan’s thinking shifted which showed that teachers’ thinking about social justice issues is not static. Zeke talked about how his thoughts have changed about societal issues.

You know, the thing that I've noticed in thinking about what you learn is that it always evolves. And so, even when you think you've got your full grasp...you're like, "All right, I got this, we got the understanding of this people and these people and how we can make this all great." And then, you know, "Hey, I'm non-binary." Aw, crap. All right, I gotta figure this one out.

Current issues surrounding gender identity/fluidity have created recent specific challenges for music teachers. Deciding how to manage gender-specific performance uniforms and ensemble names required participants to think how they will address those issues with equity, fairness, and compassion. Some teachers in my study chose to approach the gender issue with performance uniforms by keeping male and female uniforms but allowing students to choose which one they want to wear. Brooke, a middle school teacher, said,

And the uniforms...we've done dresses and tuxedos, or you know, “sort-of” tuxedos, ties and whatever. Last year, I had a boy, in my typical Girl Choir. He just happened to be put

there and I'm like, "Okay well, you can wear like a vest and then I had a transgender male, so he wore the vest and everything and then I had another female who just didn't want to wear a dress and I'm like, "Do I even need to assign what to wear?" Like "What do you want to wear? Do you want to wear the dress? You pick. I don't care. I'll position you in such a way so that all the people with the vests are like in the middle."

She was honest about her first reaction.

I'm aware of students who are transitioning, how they perceive themselves. That's very new. I've been around for a while, but it wasn't really in my face until recently. And for me, you know--like a knee jerk reaction is like, you know "What do I say, what do I do?" But at the same time, I say to myself, "If a kid comes to me and is like, I want to be called this." How's it going to hurt me? How has it changed my life?

Other teachers changed the uniform to a unisex style which all students wear. Regardless of what teachers decide to do, there is a continual re-thinking necessary to keep current as society changes. Hannah, a middle school teacher, said of her internal process regarding performance uniforms:

I don't know. If I were teaching high school, we would go to robes. I just don't know that robes are appropriate for middle school. I thought about doing khakis and a polo but to me that's...like the dress and the tux thing is fancy and it's important and it's dressy...you know. I don't know. I'm still thinking on that one. I'm probably not going to change it this year, because I don't know what I would do. I've seen a lot of choirs that everybody just wears black, whatever black you want to wear...whether it's pants or a dress. I don't know what I will do.

These teachers learned how to teach for social justice by doing internal work which is messy and on-going. They understood that they will never arrive and expressed that they are willing to change as they learn new things and as society continues to change. Those who are not willing to change cannot keep up. Stephanie told of her band director who decided he could not change.

My band director friend eventually got out [of teaching]. He didn't want to change. I needed to. I wanted to. It took me a while, but you know, I would like to think that I've learned, and I continue to learn.

Knowing they needed to change and having the courage to change were important to participants. Teachers realizing they are on an imperfect journey toward a more just practice was important in the internal work teachers must do. Developing a philosophy of teaching for social justice was also crucial.

Developing a Philosophy

The idea of developing a philosophy in teachers' internal work came from data collected when I asked participants to describe their journey to teaching for social justice. Salvador (2019) said becoming a social justice educator begins with self. "As a first step, I believe that teachers must articulate a personal, cohesive, and comprehensive set of core values or beliefs about music, education, and students" (p. 60). She says this philosophy helps guide teachers in decision making, goal setting, and practice.

Participants reported that their philosophies of teaching for social justice were in constant review. The fluidity in their philosophies allowed them to adjust as new social issues arose. Philosophies must also be flexible to accommodate differentiated teaching contexts and students. Jordan, who had been teaching for five years, said of the change in her teaching philosophy,

This past year, when I was kind of going through everything and trying to figure out how to teach online, and you know everything was different, I made the decision that I'm going to stop just teaching to the contest that I'm required to take my students to. Of course, I'm still going to take them and make sure that I'm putting my choir's best foot forward for those things. But that is no longer going to be the first thing that I think of when I'm planning. I'm going to instead focus on "What do I want my students to leave the classroom with? And how do I do that through music?"

Participants' philosophical tenets derive from their personal experiences and teaching contexts, including students. I organized the principles into the following two ideas: (a) The power of music and (b) student-centered classrooms.

The Power of Music.

Teachers' belief in the power of music to make positive social change was evident across most interviews. Christina told of an experience with her students illustrating music's power to emotionally connect people. "

I think we have been offered, as choral music educators, an incredible opportunity to make a difference in our world and in our communities. We did a piece a few years ago called "The Innocence" by Craig Hella Johnson about a young man who had AIDS. You know we teach our kids to be emotionally connected to the music, but there was absolutely no chance at all of singing this song and not being emotionally connected with it. But what it took for them to really "sell it" was understanding his point of view as a man dying of AIDS. I hope that now as my students look back on that experience, they will remember not only that it was such a beautiful song, but they will remember what it was about. You know what I mean?

Participants spoke of the power of music to create vulnerability. When I asked Jordan if she thought teaching for social justice in choir was different from other content areas, she responded,

I think it is different in the way that music is a more emotionally connective subject.

Students in my classroom, and you know I like to think part of it is that I create a safe and welcoming environment for my kids, but I also think just in a choir classroom in general, they're more open to having emotional conversations. Because music is such an emotionally connected subject, we have opportunity to make those impacts and get them to actually be open about what they're thinking and feeling.

Tiffany talked about the power of music when she said it was easier to teach for social justice in the choir classroom because “we know the aesthetic qualities of music, the spiritual, emotional, and mental. All of these bring people together. So, music actually brings people together.” The power of music to emotionally connect and unify people was an important tenet in participants’ philosophies of teaching music for social justice.

Student-Centered Pedagogy.

Participants agreed that student-centered pedagogy was a cornerstone of their teaching practices. It is the second idea in the teaching for social justice philosophy. Being student-centered begins with teachers honoring the cultures of students in their classroom (Hess, 2019a). Differentiated methods and content vary depending on the students in their class at the time.

Getting to know students is fundamental in student-centered classrooms and teachers use various methods to learn more about them. Kali has students complete a questionnaire.

At the beginning of every year, I give out a questionnaire that asks students about themselves...what they want me to know, what they think I should know, and then a little bit about where they're from culturally. And then I look at where the students are from,

and I try to pick music from their heritage, so they feel like they belong...so they feel like they're welcome.

Hannah, Jordan, Juliana, Brooke, and Elizabeth said their curriculum centers in the cultures of their students. Hannah chose to do a Hebrew piece because she had a Jewish student in her class.

I had a Jewish student a few years ago so we were doing a Hannukah piece. I found out that her dad was actually a teacher of Jewish studies, so I asked her if he might want to help me teach the song and help me with the Hebrew. And he did. He really appreciated that I included their culture in my class. She thought it was the coolest thing ever. I just want to get it right, you know, I just wanted to make sure that what I was teaching was correct, historically, that the language was correct, and that also I was including her because I'm not Jewish, and I don't know what the song really means.

Jordan said that she also made curricular choices which centered the cultures of students in her classroom.

At my last school, which was primarily Black, I shied away from teaching a lot of things in Latin that were written by old White men. The kids had absolutely no interest in it, and I immediately understood why. I was like, this is not what they're into, this is not part of their heritage. But they love spirituals, so I had to teach them, you know. And I'm so thankful that I had those experiences there.

Juliana told a similar story of working with a diverse group of students having a significant percentage of students of color.

When choosing music, I include the culture of my students. Singing songs by not just White guys but by other people of color and learning songs in different languages. It's

good to learn about these things and to learn the history behind Spirituals and other cultural musics.

Brooke explained the importance of being aware of her students' culture and "incorporating a reflection of who they are" in her teaching. Elizabeth taught in a middle school which fed into the most diverse high school in her state. She talked about how she approaches religious pieces and the need to be inclusive of all cultures in her classroom.

The high school that we feed into is the most diverse high school in my state, so I have kids from all different religions, all different backgrounds. When I'm choosing repertoire, I have to be very careful in making sure that if I'm choosing a piece that refers to a certain religious belief that we're talking about the musical elements of it. I just make sure that I'm looking at it from that context. And then also just choosing all different kinds of music and having different cultures represented in the repertoire choices as well. I mean, I have a lot of students who speak Spanish. I have some kids that got really excited when I chose a Puerto Rican carol one Fall. They got super excited about it because they knew it, and they could teach their peers about it. When I'm choosing repertoire, I am actively thinking about who's in my classroom. I think about whether I am going to have a student who can't sing this, for whatever reason. Am I going to have a student who's going to feel uncomfortable with this? And I don't think I'm perfect at it, but I just try to be really mindful of what I'm doing and what I'm saying in my room through repertoire.

Celebrating and honoring students by finding ways to represent their culture in curriculum was a key component of student-centered classrooms.

Listening to students and incorporating their concerns is essential in student-centered classrooms. Jason said,

I make a good faith effort in every single thing I put in front of them to think about the biases inherent in those materials, the historical meanings, the cultural meanings, and then I respect and listen to any student concerns. That drives what I do next.

Brooke spoke about her need to slow down and listen to students. She explained that it is difficult to do that in a busy choral classroom. Brooke said, “You can have better conversations if you're empathetic and you listen. And you have to learn, you know, you kind of have to learn that you have to stop yourself and say to yourself, ‘Let me just listen.’” Kali also spoke of the importance of listening to students. “I start by listening. I listen to their stories. I listen to what they have to say and then I build from that.” Listening to students is important in a student-centered classroom.

Using the power of music to bring people together and creating student-centered classrooms were key components in participants’ philosophies of teaching for social justice. Just as teaching philosophies evolve, learning to teach for social justice is a lifelong process for teachers. As Salvador (2019) said, developing a teaching philosophy is the first step in teaching for social justice. Also inherent in teachers’ internal work is acquiring the necessary skills to teach for social justice.

Learning to Teach for Social Justice

Social justice educators doing internal work know that learning to teach for social justice is a lifelong pursuit. Learning to teach for social justice is the second and final category in theme three (“Instruments for Change”). The teachers in my study realized that teaching for social justice is a journey of *becoming*. Rojas and Liou (2018) defined *becoming* as “one’s constant evolution, development, and self-evaluation of their positionality and capacity for social change” (p. 164). This requires teachers being humble in realizing their shortcomings and being willing to

work to overcome them. I divided learning to teach for social justice into the following two ideas: (a) acquiring skills, and (b) overcoming challenges.

Acquiring Skills

To become instruments for change, teachers must acquire skills which help them make pedagogical and curricular choices congruent with a just music classroom. I organized skills into the following three categories:

- teacher preparation/training
- social-emotional
- pedagogical

Teacher Preparation/Training.

Knowing how to teach for social justice is daunting and without proper training teachers can feel lost or inadequate.

Even for teachers who know where to look, sorting through this information [teaching for social justice resources] can be daunting and they [teachers] can be discouraged or dissuaded by *should statements* and *polarized thinking* (among other distortions). For example, “I should have known about this.” “I should know how to do this.” “There is no way that I can include everyone, so what’s the use?” “If I make a mistake by trying to be more inclusive, I will just make everything worse.” (Salvador, 2019, p. 60)

These teachers overwhelmingly expressed a lack of formal training as a reason they felt inadequate at times in their teaching for social justice. Everyone said they valued opportunities to learn more. Training to teach for social justice occurred in the following four ways for participants: (a) preservice training and graduate school, (b) compulsory and voluntary professional development, (c) self-study, and (d) on-the-job training.

Preservice Training and Graduate School.

Preservice programs and graduate schools provided some participants with training, however, most said they received no preparation to teach for social justice in their programs. Aaron, Brooke, Christina, Courtney, Jason, Jordan, Juliana, and Tiffany reported that social justice issues were not covered in their college programs. Brook said of her undergraduate experience, “I was prepared to teach chorus and talk about music.” This lack of training in preservice programs was across all age groups in my participants. Even recent graduates reported little to no emphasis on social justice. State schools offered more than private schools, but training in undergraduate programs was scarce for the teachers in my study.

Some teachers reported “a little” or “a couple of classes” which “touched on” social justice issues. Elizabeth, Hannah, Sam, and Zeke, all teachers under 40 years old said they had some training in undergraduate work. Sam and Zeke, who attended the same private university for undergraduate degrees in music education, mentioned one class they both took.

I wouldn't say it was necessarily geared towards social justice, but we did take a class called “School in Society” so I guess that's the closest thing we would have to social justice. It talked about and we discussed a lot about socio-economic statuses and equity and things of that nature.

Stephanie, who graduated in 2003 with her master's degree, said that in one class the teacher “covertly” presented social justice issues. When I asked her to explain what she meant by covert, she said,

I mean we would be pointed to book reviews or to watch a movie, but we wouldn't talk about it. It almost felt like propaganda, you know when people throw things at you, and they let it lie there, and it's like you have to grapple with it. And you know, it bothered

me that I felt like there was a covert message. I wanted to engage in conversation, but I didn't have opportunity.

Regarding social justice training, Brooke said her graduate program included one class, where social justice was probably woven throughout. It was a more of a curriculum class where you used all of the other subjects to create a lesson to teach one particular song. It definitely emphasized figuring out where a song came from, its history, anything socially with the text, and that kind of a thing. That would be the closest thing [to covering social justice issues], but it was not a specific class. So no, I didn't have specific training on social justice.

Jason, who recently completed his master's degree at a state school, said they discussed social justice issues' impact on education in a "couple of classes." Kelly said the only training she had was courses in Women's Studies at a state school during her doctoral work. Most participants received little to no training during their undergraduate degrees. A few had training during master's and doctorate degrees, but all felt their programs had not fully prepared them to teach for social justice. They all expressed a desire for more training.

Compulsory and Voluntary Professional Development.

Teachers gained training during compulsory and voluntary professional development. Brooke said professional development is primarily where she has learned to teach for social justice.

Every year, and I'm talking this is pretty recent, we have teacher workdays. During a recent one, someone came in and spoke to teachers about seeing the bigger picture of where students are coming from. Just knowing that broad spectrum can let you focus on

the actual problem. So, you know thinking about someone's cultural background can help teachers.

She also talked about a compulsory professional development where,

someone came to our school and gave some suggestions of what you can do [to incorporate social justice issues]. [They said you can] talk about these historical figures who were or who are representative of these groups. There's been a big push in our school and our school district.

Her school district recently implemented a policy mandating teachers to include social justice issues in their curriculum. She said the mandate and professional developed provided by her school system helped educate her about social justice issues and provided methods of including them in her classroom. It has also prompted her to do more self-study so that she complies with the mandate. Kali said diversity training she attended with her principal and self-study have been important in her growth process as a social justice educator.

My principal took me to a lot of the principal diversity trainings which are so enlightening because then you take what you've learned, and you bring it back to your classroom and to your coworkers. And I think every educator is on a different page in the book in their growth. And the only way to teach people is to let them learn on their own time. You can't force someone to be where you are. I can't look at the teacher who's been teaching for 40 years who refuses to accept the fact that they can't say certain words in class anymore. Like, "Oh, well I've been doing it for 40 years." Change won't come easy. And it's just a process of, "Okay, what can we get you to change? What can we get you to adjust?" So maybe these couple of things get a little bit better. And then once those things

are better, maybe a little bit more, cause no one's going to be where you are and you're not going to be where other people are. It's a process.

Jason takes part in Professional Learning Plan (PLP) programs at his school to learn more about social justice issues having to do with students. The training is compulsory, but teachers are allowed to choose from a variety of topics. Jason usually took part in book studies having to do with social justice issues.

So as part of our Professional Learning Plan (PLP) programs we've been allowed to choose...a part of fulfilling those requirements have been book studies. And usually there's a couple of different ones that someone's organizing. The school pays for the book if you ask them to, which also is another way of helping facilitate participation. I have chosen to take part in those where social justice issues are highlighted.

He found the book studies offered as part of his school's PLP's helpful. Teachers gained skills in teaching for social justice from compulsory and mandatory professional development.

Self-Study.

Teachers initiate self-directed study in their process toward providing more just music classrooms. Jason chooses to read books as part of his journey.

Reading a book like *Ishmael*--I don't know if you've heard of--but you know it takes the civilization of the world, the movement of civilizations into other areas of the world and it breaks it down. Just seeing a different perspective of power versus not power or control versus oppression. And not always looking at it as necessarily good and bad, but cause and effect...and those kinds of things. Reading similar books, *I Buried My Heart at Wounded Knee* about the Native American experience. From that, all of a sudden, I realize all the things that are happening right now, the debate about "Oh, we shouldn't

even be teaching that in schools because that's going to make our kids think that our country is horrible," and it's like, "Well, we are." But doing that on my own and kind of branching out. That is all tied into those big experiences creating crevices [in my thinking about social justice issues] that I didn't really know I was trying to fill, but that's what I was doing.

Jordan also reads as part of her process.

This summer I really started digging into specifically the anti-racism work that I've been doing and reading a lot more literature by people of color and not just, you know, analyses by White people of what they think people of color are going through...which you know, to me, previously wouldn't necessarily have been a problem. I'm reading about this culture, but I'm not reading works by someone who's actually lived it. And now, you know, I'm looking at things like *Way Down in Beulah Land?* which speaks to the appropriate way to teach music from Black culture and things like that. I mean like I had not put emphasis on reading something that was actually written by a Black person until these past few years.

Brooke took a video course in her self-study last Summer about Black Lives Matter and said it was "very eye opening." Jordan took part in a study group which a friend led.

Last summer, a friend of mine started a group. She's from my alma mater and was about two years ahead of me. She actually just graduated with her doctorate in choral conducting with an emphasis in decolonization of the music classroom. She was adopted by a White family, but she's Filipino. So, she has a really interesting background. She started basically an "unlearning racism group" for us, and we would meet virtually once a month and discuss different topics. There's about five or six of us that would show up.

Courtney talked about the importance of attending conferences in her social justice work. She explained that hearing Tesfa Wondemagegnehu speak about the *Justice Choir Songbook* inspired her to seek out and use social justice resources.

On-the-job Training.

Teachers in my study also learned how to teach for social justice on the job. Sam talked about how his preservice training did not prepare him to teach for social justice, but he felt his teaching experiences have shaped him. When I asked him if he felt prepared to teach for social justice when he finished his undergraduate degree, he said,

To make a long answer short, “No.” But I taught at Colburn for my first two years of teaching and now I teach at Baldwin, which are two totally different schools and cover different cultural settings. I feel like I got the best of both worlds as a Black male teaching at a predominately African American school and as a Black male teacher at a predominantly White school. Certain things affected me more so than my students, and just personally, for me, I had to work through issues on how to address certain situations without having any like strong biases and trying to be fair to myself, as well as to my students.

Courtney said she also learned how to teach for social justice on the job, having had no prior training in her college program. When I asked her to comment on Carl Gehrkens’ slogan “Music for every child; every child FOR music,” she did not recall ever hearing that phrase and while she said she thought it should be true, she lamented that music education does not provide music for every student.

I don’t know that I’ve actually ever heard that slogan before, but I believe it to be, it should be very true. However, music education doesn't do that... or I wasn't specifically

taught to do that. In college, when I was asked to choose music, it was very specific music. When we included Spirituals or folk songs or anything like that, we never discussed where they came from or how to approach them with students. So as an educator, I have had to learn that, as I have taught...how to make music for every child and it be FOR them.

Juliana said her experience in teaching for social justice has been something she has “just kind of figured out and navigated it on my own.” Her early teaching posts helped her learn, and the process continues as she learns and adjusts to the needs of her students.

Teachers in my study trained to teach for social justice through a variety of sources. A few received training in their degree programs, some worked for supportive school districts which provided opportunities both mandated and voluntary, but most participants continued to do social justice work through self-guided methods. Reading, taking courses, joining study groups, attending conferences, and learning through teaching experiences are how the teachers in my study furthered their training. These are all important learning tools in teaching for social justice.

Social Emotional Skills.

Teaching students to develop social emotional skills is important when teaching any subject but may be even more important when teaching choral music. Juliet Hess (2018a) says activist music education “teaches for ensemble as togetherness and fosters positive and mutually supportive learning environments” (p. 38). Teachers in my study said that teaching for social and emotional connectedness in choir is easier because choral music is emotional to begin with. Tiffany said, “it is so much easier teaching for social justice in the music classroom because we know the aesthetic qualities of music, the spiritual, emotional, and mental aspects.” Singers’

instruments are their voices, part of them, which provides an automatic platform to tie in social emotional learning. I organized data into the following five categories:

- easier to teach and different in choir
- emotional connectedness happens in four directions
- requires teachers to be vulnerable, ask questions, and listen
- building choir community
- teacher-student relationships

Easier to Teach and Different in Choir.

Compared to other content areas, participants thought it easier to experience emotional connectedness in choir. This was because of the social aspects of working closely with others to create music and the sense of team which occurs in performing music as distinct parts of a whole. Jason said the cohesiveness in the choir classroom comes because “we have community goals that are built in. We have an automatic built-in need for our students to identify with each other and our students and teachers can immediately feel when that’s working.”

Social emotional learning looks different in the choir classroom than in other content areas. When I asked Brooke if teaching for social justice was different in choir than other subjects, she said,

I think choir is just different in general, you know it's probably different in that you have to do things with other people, you have to work together, you have to be close to one another and be comfortable around one another because you're sharing something very personal which is your voice. So, I think that it is more important, probably in my class to feel comfortable with each other than other classes, where you can kind of fade back and

do your own thing. I think our class in general is different, you have to be more trusting of one another.

Courtney said choir classrooms are more vulnerable in general. She said, “We have more vulnerability built into our teaching and our rooms and hopefully our students. They feel comfortable with us.” Participants said teaching for social and emotional connectedness in choir was easier and different than other content areas.

Four Connection Points.

Teachers said they use multiple ways of connecting emotionally to teach students for social justice. Four connection points for choir students and their teachers in focusing on emotional connectedness across the ensemble are: (a) connecting their personal experiences with those of composers and songwriters, (b) emotional connection with the musical elements (e.g., text, chordal harmony, rhythms, etc.), (c) social connection with each other (teacher and students), and (4) as performers, connection with their audiences.

Teachers helping students connect their personal experiences to composers’ and songwriters’ life experiences is an important aspect of teaching for social emotional connectedness. Sam explained,

I always tell my kids and all my other colleagues that composers and songwriters have their life experience in their music. And that's the way that I help my students connect personal experiences that they have to the music. I always try to do that. High schoolers, you got to mold them and get them to that sweet spot where they can truly tell the story of the music. It takes time, it really does take time because they're just not used to showing those specific emotions to get the music to come alive.

Students connect with the music and with each other. Kelly said choir teachers have magic to help students connect emotionally to each other and to the music. In talking about other content areas compared to music, she said,

In my opinion, it is worlds apart because we have the magic, and the magic is the music. And the music helps students to have this aesthetic experience that you can't recreate. I can't say, "I'm going to have chills. Now, I'm going to feel connected to this chord." It just happens. So, we have this physical reaction that comes from beautiful music or beautiful chords, and we have that little magic that connects us all to each other.

Sam said making great music is about teaching students to connect emotionally with the music, to each other, and to their audience. It is an important method in how he “promote[s] social justice.”

To make great music, I tell my kids all the time, “I know you can see these notes on the page and can get these rhythms, but how can we connect to each other, to our audiences? How can you make sure to connect with those people that we are singing for, that we are performing for?” So, we have those inner conversations. I'm very much an emotional person. I give my whole self to my students. And they see it like when we have those tender moments in the repertoire, and I am trying to get them to phrase it correctly. I express how I feel about it and let them see the connection we need to make in order to personally connect it to yourself...how we connect emotionally. And I think that's the best way, one of the best ways, to go about it. Those students who aren't really affected by it, they can develop empathy of how this other group of students is feeling. It is complex, I would say but it is 1,000% how I, in my classroom, promote social justice.

Participants used four emotional connections points to teach for social justice.

Teachers Being Vulnerable, Asking Questions, and Listening.

Teaching for social emotional connection in the ensemble requires teachers being vulnerable, asking questions to learn, and listening to others. Jason talked about when his school was dealing with racial tension issues, his administration and other African American faculty members offering opportunities “for teachers to ask questions and allow us to look dumb and to be vulnerable without fear of losing respect or hurting somebody.” This was something he found helpful in his growth. Other teachers like Hannah and Jordan asked friends to help them make sense of social events. Jordan said in her quest to better understand and connect with her school’s growing population of Hispanic students,

I started reaching out to Hispanic friends that I had and talking to them, and that was probably the first time that I like actively sought out people from a different culture to ask them about things. For me, seeking someone out and directly asking for their opinion about, and their critical opinion, about what I had been doing, was a turning point for me.

Hannah said asking and listening was important for her.

Last year when all the riots happened and in all that was going on, I just picked up the phone and called my friend who was our custodian at my school, and I was like, “What do you think about all this? As a Black woman, what do you think and we just had an honest conversation, you know, because I want to know, and I want to understand. I just feel like talking matters and listening even more, which is hard.

Being vulnerable, asking questions to learn, and listening to others are important skills teachers develop in their journey toward more just music classrooms.

Building Choir Community.

Building a positive choir community where students feel supported and emotionally connected was an important social emotional skill for participants. Juliana wanted her classroom to “be a supportive place where they can be themselves. I want it to be a positive environment because kids learn better in a positive, accepting, and loving environment.” Christina said she creates a classroom community where “everybody feels valued, everyone feels encouraged to share their own ideas, even to respectfully disagree, but every student is valued for what they bring to the table.” Participants said teachers are primarily responsible in building positive and supportive classroom atmospheres.

Teachers supporting students was important to Aaron as he builds a sense of choir community in teaching for social justice. His school population is mostly children of immigrants. Many of his students come from Hispanic cultures but they speak multiple variants of Spanish. He also has French-speaking, Creole-speaking, and English-as-first-language speakers. Because of the diversity in his classes, Aaron emphasizes finding common ground among his diverse group of students and making choir a place where they feel they belong since many of them are newcomers to the United States and have left everything to come here. Aaron believes that building a strong choir community within his school community is key to meeting student needs of belonging. Important to this idea is that everyone matters and a sense of teamwork.

I say to my students all the time...I tell them all the time, it's back to that community idea, I tell them in math, if you don't do your part, everybody else still learns math and the class still goes forward. But in here, if you don't do your part, if you don't meet the expectations, you don't come to everything, it holds everybody back. And so, building that sense of teamwork and community, yeah, is unique to teaching in choir.

Aaron's school administration recognized his "community within a community." He told the following story of his school administration recognizing how this approach meets their students' needs.

The idea of building the community and the sense of belonging and the connectedness within the classroom is largely beneficial because I have a wide range of students. as everybody does, and I have students to get in trouble. They do something silly in the bathroom, in between classes, or they got mad at somebody, get in a fight, and do something, and sometimes those students are the ones who are attracted to music, regardless of their cultural background. I have a student; I have several that jump out to me as I'm thinking about that. Students that have been in chorus for a year or two, or maybe they're in the second or third year and the school sort of starts to view them as my student. I remember I had a boy on the day of the Spring Concert...something had happened in his last period class. I don't really actually think he was the one at fault, but I wasn't there. Anyway, a teacher called the assistant principal to have him removed from the class. And the assistant principal brought him to me and said, "I know he has a concert tonight. This is what just happened in this other class. You know what, I don't want to suspend him because then he can't be at this concert tonight. Can we all three of us, talk?" The principal recognized that individual as a part of the choir community. And I don't know, he probably said something to the principal like, "You can't send me home. I have a concert tonight." And then for me to be able to go one-on-one with that student and say, "You know, look, I will go to bat for you with another teacher or principal or whoever else...as long as you're above board, I will fight for you 'til the end." And so, I think my students respond to that and to having an adult on their side which is not

something they're always used to. I have another story. I could go on about a number of instances like that with students. But I had a girl who I had for three years. She was an absolute terror everywhere else on campus. She would get into fights. She cursed teachers out and walked out of the room. And I never had a problem with that girl in three years. I don't know if that was just that she loved to sing, I don't know if we made some connection. I'd like to think that it was because she felt connected in the room. Even if I was gone, if I had a sub, she was a terror. I would know when I came back whose name's going to be on my list from second period from the sub. And I pull her aside and I say, "Look, you know." It's the same thing as like, "I will go to bat for you." "I will defend you as long as you give me a reason to." So, creating that sense of buy-in and that sense of community and the idea of I'm on your side in this community and I'm connected to you, and I'm invested in you is something they respond positively to.

Aaron's support of his students helps them feel emotionally connected and builds a positive classroom environment.

Providing a supportive classroom atmosphere is helping students feel safe where they are celebrated, and their ideas are valued. Jordan said that students feel comfortable to share personal things in her classroom that they are not able to share in other places.

A good portion of my students are students that don't feel like they can express their political views or their personal identities at home because their parents either "don't believe in it" [air-quotes] or would "disown" [air-quotes] them or you know, whatever. I think of a few of my students that are gay that are not *out* to their parents or they're trans and they're not *out* to their parents. School is the place where they get to be themselves and feel safe.

She strives to provide a safe place for students to be themselves. Courtney also said that her students know that her classroom is a safe place where they have hard conversations about things that happen like the George Floyd murder and racial conflict in society.

So about hard subjects...I think my students have come to recognize that if something happens, we're going to talk about it in class and it's their outlet, maybe, of just being able to discuss things in a safe environment.

Juliana also strives to help students feel comfortable by accepting them as they are.

I had a student come to me saying they wished me to call them by another name. "She's like, I know it's the end of the year, so I know it might be hard, but I just want to let you know." I've had the student for three years and I said, "Okay. Yeah, I'll do that. I will do my best." And this student told me, you know, "Thank you so much because you're the only teacher that actually is making an effort to call me by this new name or these new pronouns." And that was huge for me. While again, I may not understand all of that fully, if I can, you know, if one little, small change can make that student feel loved and accepted and safe in my classroom, then I will absolutely do that.

Like Juliana, Kali accepted students as they are. She provided a place where students can "feel how they need to feel and say what they need to say."

Conversations in my classroom are very open. Students are allowed to feel how they need to feel. They're allowed to just say what they need to say. They're allowed to talk about what they need to talk about. If they're really, really angry, we go into my office, and they're really allowed to be honest. Like, I don't filter or monitor what they say. I'm like, listen, if you need to cuss, get it out. Don't do it in front of everybody else but get what you need to say out.

Kelly and Sam also wanted to provide a safe place where students feel comfortable in being who they are. Kelly said, “When you see them every day, sometimes you can just make the classroom environment so comfortable that kids can be who they are.” Sam said,

I want my classroom to be as inclusive as possible making all students feel comfortable, helping students feel valued. And if they see what I’m doing and they see a piece of them, their culture, their way of being, it will make them even more comfortable and know that they really do have a place, and that is not just something that is said, it's something that is shown, something that we're actually doing. So, I totally appreciate the values of my different students. I try to make it a point to sit down and realize “Okay, what can I do that will, first of all, teach them something AND help them feel included and valued and loved.”

A large part of Zeke’s approach in teaching social emotional connectedness is honoring the specific cultures of his students. He reported an activity centered around cultural holidays of his students.

I wanted to find different ways to celebrate the different cultures of my students. At the end of the year, we did a series of potluck parties. The music appreciation class was perfect [for this] because I had an almost equal split. So, I had each group bring in specific dishes on different days, but I wouldn't tell the kids which one it was. They had to figure it out. They had to come in and say, "Oh well, this dish has such and such in it. Is this Hispanic Day?" This is African American day or whatever. And it was cool to see the students respond well to that.

Providing a safe environment where students are celebrated encouraged them to feel comfortable and free to express their ideas. This promoted a positive classroom environment.

Participants reported that teaching for social justice means that teachers provide a classroom atmosphere where students know they matter, and everyone is valued for who they are. Juliana said she did that with activities inside and outside the classroom. She told of her sixth-grade choir involved in a holiday door decorating contest.

I taught them how to make the paper snowflakes, you know, cutting. We all just worked together and had fun doing that. We even put them on the windows facing the road so everybody saw as they went by, "Oh, I made that one, I made that one." This wasn't music-related at all, but we were decorating the door and wall and I cut out 75 music notes by hand and wrote every student's name on a music note and taped it up. You know, even just something so little like that...they were so excited to see it. And I think it doesn't have to be grand gestures to say "You're included. I love you." You know, I think just little things like that, letting them know that they are a part of something. That means a lot to them, I think.

Juliana and her students emotionally connected through a simple craft activity that instilled pride and built community within choir at her school. Hannah connects with her students by letting them know they are important to her. She and the other choir students value, love, and care for each other.

My goal is...I mean of course, I want to teach them quarter notes and half notes and eighth notes, but more importantly, I want them to feel like this is a place that when they come every day, they know that they're valued, and they're loved, and they're cared for and that they matter. Regardless of their background or their race or their parents' income or any of that, they're important in this place, in this room.

Teachers creating choir community where students feel supported and emotionally connected was an important social emotional skill for participants

Teacher-Student Relationships.

Participants in my study said teaching for social-emotional connections relies on building strong teacher-student relationships where each learns from the other. Teachers in my study built relationships with their students by listening to students and allowing their students to become their teachers, having respectful conversations about hard subjects, and building trust between themselves and their students.

Strong teacher-student relationships happen when the teacher listens to students and allow their students to become their teachers. Kali said in building healthy relationships with her students, she “starts by listening, listening to their stories.” Although Brooke began her teaching career wanting students to share her love of music, she realized listening to her students to get to know them was more important.

I started at the beginning just wanting to sort of get to know who they were, get to know their thoughts, their passions. I've always done things [classroom activities] where I tried to pull out what their interests are, what music they like...I've always built relationships with my students.

Jason said he thinks efforts to build strong teacher-student relationships are an investment in his students. “The more you invest in somebody’s person, the easier it is to help them learn and to help them grow.”

Positive teacher-student relationships involve teachers learning from students. Kelly reported when the musical *Hamilton* first came out, during a long bus trip, a student introduced her to the musical soundtrack. The student wanted Kelly to love the music as much as she did.

On the way home from Orlando, a student made me listen to the entire soundtrack of *Hamilton* and at the end she was like, “Do you get it?” And I went “Oh, my head is, my ears are bleeding and no, I don't, I don't, but I love you” [laughing]. At that moment, I became the student. She was teaching me. But I needed to visually see it. So, not long after that while my family was in New York, I went to see the musical, and I enjoyed it. It was beautiful, amazing, and sexy. When I came out of the musical, I went straight to Barnes and Noble and bought the book. And it took me months, but I read it. When I finished, I had a better understanding of all of it.

Kelly became the student allowing her student to share a passion and to teach her. In the process, she connected emotionally with the student strengthening their teacher-student relationship.

Teachers learning from their students was important in building teacher-student relationships.

The second part in building strong teacher-student relationships was teachers getting to know students on a deeper level through having respectful conversations about hard subjects. When I asked Sam how he teaches for social justice in his classroom, he said, “First and foremost, it is through conversations with my students and just breaking that barrier—of course, keeping it professional--but also really having those deep conversations with my students about what is happening in our world.” Conversations with students helped teachers get to know them on a deeper level. Christina said students provided her opportunities to talk about social justice in her classroom.

I don't know if there is not a day that there is not something going on, something in the hallway, that's not brought into discussion. So, they offer me the opportunities—it's my job to recognize them—but they offer me good opportunities to discuss social justice and how to handle it.

Teachers gained skills in leading class discussions in teaching for social emotional connection within their ensembles. Brooke liked to begin conversations with a subject with which all students can identify. "I try to find common ground for every student that connects all of the students together." She begins her middle school classes with a variety of bell-ringer questions designed to engage her students.

I pick things that every kid has an opinion about. Sometimes it applies to the music that we're singing, sometimes it applies to the month, if something's going on during that month, or something that's going on in the world, you know. I choose things that really make them think, where they might have differing opinions, but we can have a healthy banter. That's one of the best ways I've found of talking about what's going on in the world.

Jason purposely planned less performance responsibilities to allow time for more education. His philosophy allowed more time for conversations with students about social issues.

Most of the people I talk to, most of my colleagues teach way more music than we teach here at Hardin and, in fact, when my co-teacher got here, the first couple years was a struggle in terms of adjusting to our program. We only do two concerts a year. We do a Winter concert and then a Spring concert. And our Winter concert, because we have so many ensembles and I'm a big believer that anything good, if it lasts too long becomes un-good. [laughing] You know, on our big concerts, we might have each choir maybe sing three pieces. Usually it's just two, and so that opens up more opportunities for deeper education on everything we do. We have more time to go into theory, we have more time to go into sight-reading, we have more time to talk about music history, and we have more time to talk about social justice things that come up naturally. I mean, you know, I

don't...it's very rare that I feel so pressured in our regular choirs. Sometimes in show choir it might be different, sometimes in Chamber Choir. But it's very rare that if something comes up, that I don't feel comfortable taking 20 minutes of class to just stop and say, "Hey! This is important; let's talk about this."

Making time to talk about social justice issues built strong teacher-student relationships.

Teachers needed to be unbiased and non-judgmental when conducting successful class conversations about hard subjects with students. Christina said it is hard to be un-biased but that she works to present a "journalistic" perspective so that all student viewpoints are welcome. This creates an atmosphere where her students can form their own opinions without undue influence from her.

I do my very best—it's hard as a teacher to be unbiased, like a journalist presenting an unbiased story—but I had a really incredible government teacher when I was a senior in high school. When we started debating, she said she didn't care if we were for or against the side that you are assigned, but it was our job to debate it. So, I've always remembered that. When we have these topics come up, I'm gonna be the devil's advocate sometimes...whether that is my true belief or not...so that they are opened to other ideas.

Jason said something similar about helping students develop their own ideas and beliefs.

I view the role of teachers differently than I think some do. I really think it's important that our students, as much as possible, have a germ-free environment to grow. And germs can be good or bad right, right? And so that's kind of how I view it. If I'm too vocal about what I think, then I don't always...I can't control how that, where that ends up, and I don't want to control that. I want them to develop their beliefs and their systems for them. I had one of my seniors this year that graduated who came in at the end of the year and said,

“Okay, I haven’t asked this for four years, but I just...I really want to know what you believe.” You know, and I’m like, that’s interesting. “You’re right. I don't want people to know that, not because I don't know what I believe, but because I don't think that's part of our job in the classroom.”

Tiffany said students should develop their own opinions independently of teachers’ influence.

You don't want to impose your opinion upon your students; that's one thing I learned in undergrad with my religion teacher, we never knew what religion he was because he taught all religions with the same amount of passion. To this day, I don't know what religion he was. Same thing with us [choir teachers]. Our job as teachers is to open up a dialogue in the classroom and let the students speak. I just feel like if we teach nonbiased and just teach the subject that we're supposed to be teaching and not offer our position or our opinion about everything, just let the students do that, I feel like that will help tremendously.

Brooke said letting students share their ideas helps them to “think about things in multiple ways” which is important in successful classroom conversations about hard subjects.

Discussing difficult subjects like social justice issues requires the teacher to take risks to lead discussions balanced with respect and protectiveness for students who show vulnerability.

Brooke said teachers develop “a finesse” in leading discussions about social justice. Kelly said her skill in leading successful conversations comes from experience. She said,

You know, I once had a leading psychiatrist tell me, "You don't want to open a door that you can't shut again." You have to be careful how much you unpack in that classroom.

Because they might have a very vulnerable moment and then regret that they've opened up. So, you know, you're constantly gauging the room and the environment, and it can get

really messy. So, you want to invite conversation, but just like an elementary teacher, there's the kid who's like this [incessant hand raising motion]. You've got to make sure you give equal time and too much is not given to students only needing attention. You have to be intuitive, know how to manage your time in the classroom and how much they need to unpack, and when to cut it off or when to change gears. It's very difficult to do that, to invite conversation and then to be careful to keep the conversation sometimes PG 13 or not hurtful. It is messy. And sometimes when I would have, "Okay, you hate this song. All right, I'll tell you what. You sing this song that you hate. And then the end of class, I'll give you five minutes and you play a song for me." So yeah, teaching is such a fragile balance. And when you add social justice, which is so necessary, but you are able to guide the conversation, students can leave with a renewed hope in themselves, whether they're on this side or on that side.

The goal of teachers in my study when having conversations about difficult subjects was helping students become vulnerable and learn to express their thoughts and emotions. Skilled teachers use finesse to guide conversations in healthy and productive ways so that learning takes place. However, some students do not want to be vulnerable. Courtney said,

Most of them are with me and want to discuss what's happening in the world and their issues, what they're going through. Some of them aren't open to it. Some of them are going through issues and are not yet vulnerable enough...like some of my younger kids...because I'm just always vulnerable...like I will sit there and cry in front of them and just be happy about it, you know. But there are some who are just so angry with the world that they won't or can't open up. They don't want to talk about what's happening in

the world. It's great when my students really want to open up and discuss things, but then on the flip side it's kind of hard when they are not all on board with it.

Teachers found that setting guidelines helped protect vulnerable students and promoted mutual respect in their classroom. Jordan said,

I was very clear in all the conversations that I would open up to my kids that we are not going to call anyone names, we're not going to call opinions stupid, or anything like that. You can say that you disagree with something, but you can't say that it is stupid, you know, because that is someone's opinion and they've thought through it, hopefully, you know. And it's not stupid to think through things, no matter what your opinion is. And also, we were not going to have a good discussion if we're all just sitting here in an echo chamber.

Courtney sets guidelines to create an atmosphere in her classroom where students can talk about difficult subjects by “having discussion, not just being angry and yelling about it,” but they have respectful discussions “in a safe environment.” Teachers promoting healthy, respectful conversations about difficult issues, yet protecting vulnerable students built strong teacher-student relationships.

The third component of teacher-student relationships is building trust between teachers and their students. Having a classroom atmosphere where students know they are valued, loved, cared for, and that they matter builds teacher-to-student and student-to-student trust. Elizabeth builds trust in her classroom by creating a caring environment where students feel comfortable being vulnerable, social emotional skills are valued, and students understood that everything she did focused on their needs.

My goal is to foster an environment where they [students] feel like they can be vulnerable and can express musicality, but also emote the emotion of what they're singing about...I mean that's the goal, that's my end goal...is that they can do that. The students that I have now since I've moved schools are the same students I had at my old school. So, they've had me...some of them, for four years, which is really neat. I think that sometimes kids are a little skeptical at first, because they're like, "What is this, what are you about to tell me, what are you about to say?" Especially with all the things that are going on in the world, but I just try to make it known that my purpose is always them.

Letting students know that it is about them builds trust in the classroom. Hannah said her students feel welcomed in her classroom and they know they can talk to her about anything.

I think my kids know they can come talk to me. Sometimes I wonder if I need to get a counseling degree, because there's days that they will come in and say, "Hey, me and so-and-so need to talk to you in your office," and I always drop everything and will do that because I want them to know that they can come to me with whatever it is. That's a good thing...I guess that says they trust me...that's what I want them to know. So, hopefully, they're picking up when I'm throwing down, you know.

Jordan reported that her attention to "getting it right" for students builds trust in her classroom.

A lot of my students are gay, and I have quite a few trans students or students that are questioning. And I'm really proud to say that my students are never afraid to correct each other when they use the wrong name, or the wrong pronouns and it's never taken as like a shameful thing. I start off every year asking the kids send me an email containing their legal name, their name that they would like to be called, and the pronouns that they would like to be called. And then, who can I say those pronouns to, so I know what their

identity is without them having to say it out loud and I know who I can share that with. And for the students that are open and out to everyone, I make sure that I'm using their correct pronouns in front of the entire class, so that their classmates whether they've been specifically told or not will know, like oh this kid goes by "he" or this kid goes by "they" and it just makes me so proud when I hear them like at lunch and they're talking to each other, and someone will say the wrong thing, and the other kids are...they just say like, "Oh, they." And then the kid says, "thank you," you know and like moves on. That's something that I'm really proud of. To see that has been fostered in my classroom and around my classroom and even when I'm not there watching them, to know that that's still happening tells me that they've actually learned it, and they're not just doing it because I've told them to.

Hannah reported that one way she builds teacher-student relationships is by doing activities designed to know her students better and by getting to know her students' families.

I do all kinds of activities with kids about...tell us about yourself--I try to get to know the kids on a more personal level and make relationships with them. That's important to me...it's important to me that I get to know their families. I have a couple of kids who have two moms and one girl who has two dads. It's important that I get to know their families, because that is something that is diverse especially in my school system. It's not something you see a lot of, so those kinds of kids are excluded a little bit. So, I try to get to know their families...I just try to make relationships, I think that is key.

Hannah said making the effort to build relationships with students was important in teaching for social justice.

Choir teachers and students form deep, meaningful relationships because of the length of time students are in choir, because of extensive time spent outside of class, and because of the connectiveness of music. Music teachers spend several years with most of their students. Juliana taught at a school which serves grades six through twelve, therefore she spent up to seven years with her students. Middle school teacher participants have students for up to three years and high school teachers keep students for up to four years. Jason talked about his extended time with students.

One of the great things about what we do is that we see our students over time. We don't have just nine months to get this idea and this concept and then that's it--we have four years, often...to help them grow and also for us to learn from them.

Juliana reported this allows teachers to “make great [emotional] connections” with their students. Christina moved from an affluent, suburban school to a school in a small town which served a community which was diverse and had a much lower socio-economic level. Teaching at her new school could have been seen as less desirable than her previous teaching post. She reported the following story of her first day at her new school.

When I first went to Macon, the very first day of school, I had a young man say, “Where are you going when you leave here?” And I said, “What? I just got here. Are you already getting rid of me?” [laughing] But he said, “Nobody ever stays. They always leave here.” And I said, “Well, I’m not going anywhere. I chose to come here. I was given an opportunity to go to a different school in the county, and I chose this one. So, I’m not going anywhere.”

Choir teachers spending years with students builds trust.

Teachers use time inside and outside of class to build trust with students. Elizabeth said that a lesson she taught online with her students during Covid helped build trust in her classroom. As her students became more comfortable with her, they asked her about current events which were troubling them.

When we did a lesson about Spirituals, a lot of my kids started feeling really comfortable with me and then they started bringing up things that were happening [in society]. They wanted to talk to me about issues with police officers and all of these things.

Sam said that trips, local and overnight, allow him to “get to know students more than their math teacher or their science teacher.” Through trips and being with students outside of class, he said, “I really see my students in their pure form, which I love. It’s crazy sometimes [smiling and meaning the energy level of high school students], but I connect with them.”

Singing together innately builds trust in the choir classroom. Brooke reported the personal nature of using voice as instrument, proximity of performing, and the team aspect of choir encourages trust between teachers and students.

I think choir is just different in general, you know it's probably different in that you have to do things with other people, you have to work together, you have to be close to one another and be comfortable around one another because you're sharing something very personal which is your voice. So, I think that it is more important in my class to feel comfortable with each other than in other classes where you can kind of fade back and do your own thing. I think in our classes you have to be more trusting of one another.

Jason talked more about the intimacy created when people sing together. Trusting each other is a natural outcome of singing together.

You know, we talked about how you are vulnerable when you're performing anything, but when I'm performing on an instrument, there's a buffer. When you sing.... that's your instrument. No buffer. Your voice is literally a part of you. I think that is a part of what is so incredible about our classes, because we are sharing and being vulnerable just in the act of what we do in our class.

Trust is built through choir relationships during years together. Time spent together and activities inside and outside the classroom provide for more intimate social exchanges and singing together promotes comradery and strong emotional connections.

Pedagogical

The following sections focus on pedagogical skills teachers gained while actively teaching for social justice in the secondary choral classroom. Data was organized into the following three categories:

- schools/context
- classroom and rehearsal activities
- performing

Schools/Context.

The teachers in my study differentiated their methods in teaching for social justice according to their students and teaching contexts. At the time of their interviews, some had just begun to think of themselves as teaching for social justice and expressed that they had much to learn. They hoped that they would continue to grow in their understanding of how to teach for social justice. Several were moving schools and expected their techniques would change to fit new students and school settings. Sam reported how he teaches for social justice, "It depends on a variety of factors...students, school culture, the community." Hannah said teaching for social

justice is “different in different places.” She previously taught in a school which was racially diverse and then moved to a school which is mostly White. She said teaching for social justice looked different in the two schools because the students needed different things. Students, schools, and communities in which the schools are located effect pedagogical methods and curricular choices when teaching for social justice. I divided this section into (a) choir is different than other content areas and (b) changing how things have been done in the past.

Choir Is Different than Other Content Areas.

Participants said choir provides a natural “gateway” to teaching for social justice. Tiffany said, “As far as social justice for a music teacher, music is...it's literally a gateway to focus upon social justice without preaching about it.” Brooke said music teachers can purposely teach for social justice easier than other subject area teachers.

I think, because so much of what we do can encompass more...like there are a lot of ways to tie it [social justice] into our subject, where it might be more difficult if you teach math or social studies. I think it's broader for us, we have more freedom. I think just the nature of music...like I always try to do all different kinds of music from different cultures allowing students to experience those cultures through music...a lot of social justice can tie in that way.

Christina reported that in considering recent social events and the current climate, music teachers have “more of a platform, opportunity, and obligation. That’s a very unique opportunity that other educators don’t always get.” Courtney thought choral teachers have more resources to teach for social justice than other content area teachers. She said, “We can choose a piece like “I Dream a World” [with text by Langston Hughes] and discuss why this piece was written. That

makes it so easy.” Participants said that teaching for social justice is different than in other content areas.

Changing How Things Have Been Done in the Past.

Music educators are willing to change how things have been done in the past when considering teaching for social justice. Jason said it is important, to drop things being willing to recognize that maybe we're doing something that is not okay because I think anything can be done if it's in the right environment and if it's prepared the right way and those kinds of things, but some of those variables are not under our control. For example, I think if we know this song by whomever...we know that culturally it would be okay, and we can explain it this way, but if our class or someone in our class is not ready for that or is not open for that, then we should be willing to change and drop that and revisit it later.

Hannah reported how a particularly rowdy group of middle school boys caused her to change to a more democratic way of teaching choir.

I had a group of boys two years ago...I love telling this story. They were just being eighth grade boys. They didn't care about singing and they didn't care about working and all they cared about was making fun of each other and making noise...being disrespectful. It was after Christmas, and I had them right after PE. It was just a mess and I called one of my mentor's bawling my eyes out about, "What am I going to do with these boys?" We brainstormed for a while and came up with this idea. We wrote a Choir Constitution. I had them write it, and this was like in February. Now I do it at the beginning of the year. They decide what matters and what's important and they did it in groups. They all had to sign it. I try really hard to just make sure that they all have a

voice. I didn't write it, I mean now, there were some things that were non-negotiables like we're going to sing every day. This is choir. But they wrote "We the Boys Choir, in order to form a more perfect choir..." It was hilarious and so much fun!

Hannah had never done that activity before but was willing to change her methods to reach those students. Juliana said changes to curriculum are necessary "to successfully connect with our students and make them feel accepted and loved. It is an adjustment for us, but I think it's needed."

Participants reported curriculum modification which accommodated students who experienced gender change. Several years ago, Hannah, who teaches middle school, divided her students into gender-specific choirs which research said at that time was best teaching practice. In re-considering her goal of making everyone feel welcomed in her choirs, she considered changing her choir program to accommodate this issue.

I fought really, really hard to separate my boys and girls...because vocally, it's the right thing to do. But in considering my LGBTQ students and social justice, I questioned myself if that was a good idea. I want to make sure that I'm doing the right thing for the kids.

Juliana also considered the same issue with her choirs.

I've thought a lot about that issue in the choral world. Because it has always been very Men's Choir, Women's Choir and nowadays you can't just assume. Some students identify as something else or don't identify as either or identify as both. I don't know. So, you know, I've thought about that a lot because in the choir world am I going to have to change it to Treble Choir and Bass Choir instead of naming the choirs by genders?

For Juliana, a teacher in her seventh year of teaching, these issues were new and not something she felt was covered in her pre-service training. She related this evidence of her dilemma when students asked her which voice part to sing,

What do I say to students? You know, so I've had to say, "Sing whichever part you're more comfortable with now." I call it Part One and Part Two, instead of, you know, male and female parts. I'm trying to be inclusive even though I may not fully understand all of that. I'm trying to be more accepting of it with my students. And you know, if they tell me they have certain pronouns, I will do my best to use those. It's a very new thing because they do not teach you this in college or even teacher training. Yeah. So, it's all, it's very new.

Juliana changed the way she was doing things to help achieve her classroom goal of everyone feeling welcomed. Twenty-six-year teaching veteran middle school teacher Hannah reported that she constantly re-evaluates how she teaches social justice issues. She said,

I just want to make sure I'm doing it right and that what I thought was the right thing is still the right thing. You know? I'm always questioning. just like wearing dresses and tuxes, I mean. Does that really matter? Like that's the thing I'm looking at right now about changing our uniform. Because does that really matter? It doesn't really matter. So anyway...I'm just always questioning and reevaluating.

Tailoring curriculum to specific students and teaching contexts and to changes in society, students, and the teachers themselves are important skills when teaching for social justice in the secondary choral classroom.

Classroom and Rehearsal Activities.

There is no required curriculum in music, therefore, teachers used a variety of materials, resources, and pedagogical techniques. Elizabeth said teachers “have more freedom” than other teachers in choosing how and what they teach in their classrooms. Curricular and pedagogical choices connected to teachers’ background, training, experience, and educational student goals. When combined with teachers’ desire to meet the needs of students in their classrooms, many variables exist when teaching choir for social justice. I divided this section into the following three main ideas: (a) cultural, (b) repertoire, and (c) reaching across content areas.

Cultural.

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2014) has been long associated with equity and justice in education and was central in participants’ teaching methods. Cultural considerations are innately part of choral music education. Teachers centered culture in choir pedagogy and curriculum in the following three ways: (a) through connecting choir to real life, (b) by including students’ culture, and (c) in teaching students about other cultures.

Connecting Choir to Real Life.

Teaching for social justice involves showing relevancy between school music and real life. Students are motivated to learn about music when teachers consider their interests. Kali motivates students through music they like. She reported, “I start building relationships through music that they like, and they enjoy. And then we start talking about it and then they get better at it.” Kelly motivated her students with rap music in a lesson she taught during the Covid pandemic about the musical *Hamilton*.

I had a student who was new to choir. And he was from...let's just say that his musical experience was very limited. He dressed in a way that made him seem like he might be in

a gang. He had been in my enrichment class the year before. But I was able to engage him through the musical style of Hamilton because it was familiar. And then I taught the value of the story, first and foremost, that it was an American story, our history, and that the people were real people, and they had the same problems we have. I connected it to real life. The value of that story on a shallow level is entertaining, but on a deeper level, it is very thought provoking and provocative. As teachers, you have to be able to present it in a way beyond entertainment for the kids to get it.

Zeke talks about the emotional power of music to inspire his students to learn.

For my beginning choirs, my music literacy classes, and even my piano classes, I have a presentation that I do that talks about different areas of music, how music affects you emotionally, how not to take for granted music in movies and things like that. So, my thought is what will “sell” the kids on music? Because if you get that first impression, that's like, "Okay, I get this," they're going to stay with it. They'll stick with it a lot more or be more willing to stick with it longer than it would have had it just been "Okay, here's your list of requirements, here's your instrument."

Students are motivated to learn when music is connected to real life.

Teachers plan class activities to help students learn about social justice issues. Courtney's students participated in a project which centered student expression and student choice in her curriculum.

I've just recently discovered that each month is something...we have Black History Month, we have Pride Month, Asian American Month...in January, my students had to choose a month to research and to discuss. So, whatever was important in their lives, they could choose a month to be celebrated and it was very fun...like I got a couple of

religious ones, I got a couple of very personal ones like specific mental health disorder ones. They enjoyed researching and talking about what they had researched because most of them just know surface level stuff. We all really benefited from listening to each other. Students are motivated to learn when teachers center them and their interests in pedagogy. When I asked Kali to define teaching for social justice, she said, “Student voice...giving students the opportunity to give their opinions on what they're learning and what they want to learn.” She said project-based learning gives students choice and allows them to express their opinions.

The first project I do with my students is a thematic playlist. Students choose a theme. And a lot of times this past year I had a lot of Black Lives Matters, women's rights, LGBTQ. And the kids are like, “Am I allowed to do this project?” And I said, “Of course you can, it's whatever you want to give a voice to.”

Kali uses projects with her students involving musical and poetry composition, creative writing, and artwork. She designs her projects to help students know themselves, why they believe like they do, and to expose students to differing ways of thinking.

I do a lot of projects, like a LOT of projects because it all ties to what students believe and what's important to them. They find a lot of it is listening and finding music that pertains to these things that they didn't realize. Finding choral music that pertains to social justice...and voicing why. I don't just let them choose. I want them to explore why they chose something. *Why* is always the question, “Well, *why* is this important? *Why* does this fit this theme? *Why* do you care about this? *Why* did you choose this subject? Don't tell me it's because your parents said it was important. You need to go do some research, because if you are going to value something, you're going to know why you

value it.” For example, we say the Pledge of Allegiance every day and I had a couple of kids who wanted to kneel. Okay, cool. Why? And someone was like, “Well, because I can.” I said, “Of course you can, but why?” I said, “I know why, I know why you're doing it. I want you to know why you're doing it.” And they went and figured it out and they came back and some of them said, “I'm just going to stand.” Some said, “I'm going to continue to kneel.” Because I said, “You can do anything you want as long as you know why you're doing it.”

Participants reported that social justice pedagogy connects activities in the choir classroom to real life and centers student choice and input.

Including Students' Culture.

The second way participants centered culture in choir pedagogy in classroom and rehearsal activities is by including the culture of their students. Juliet Hess (2019a) stated that teaching for social justice in the music classroom means celebrating and honoring the culture of students. Brooke purposely incorporates activities which celebrate students' heritage.

We are always talking about family, family background, where you come from, you know that kind of thing, so I try to like tailor things to that. I do a lot of music listening, so when the kids come in, they're listening to music. In January and February, I did music of different countries and I tried to make sure to ask them where their families are from, about their family history. I want to make sure that I have music from as many of these places as I can you. I'm trying to show them that I'm interested in them and their heritage.

That's important to me.

She said recently it was important to include Spanish music in her classroom.

Recently I have gotten a lot of Hispanic students. They all speak English, but I make sure, if I have Hispanic students, I make sure to sing in Spanish. Their eyes light up if we do something in Spanish. They love it and they love to watch me struggle with it. [laughing]. I know how to sing in Spanish generally and I'll like speak it and say, "Alright guys, this is how you say this word." And then I pause, and I look at them and if they're laughing, I'm like, "Okay, all right, how did I do?" That's fun!

Christina reported that she learned the importance of including student culture when she worked with some students to arrange of a rap version of the Pledge of Allegiance. They performed it for one of their public concerts.

I had some African American boys, and we were singing patriotic music. We started it at the beginning of the year because, "Who starts Christmas at the beginning of the school year?" Right? [laughing] So... we are working on this piece and in the middle is some accompaniment and you lead the audience in the pledge. So, these African American boys came to me and asked if they could just rap it. Inside I'm thinking that is not the way it is written [laughing]. But instead, I said, "Just let me think about it, ok?" giving me some time to think about how to respond. So, I looked over it and thought, "That is their culture. That is their culture, you know? And that is what they love. And I'm asking them to do something that they see as more my culture," and I thought, "Why do we have to lead the audience in the pledge? Why can't we let these guys come to the front and rap it?" And so, I told them that throughout the next few weeks I would give them time to go in the hallway and work it out. I said, "Y'all let me hear it and we will go from there." And it was awesome! It was just awesome! It opened my eyes as well to "Don't forget!" Just like I don't like the same music as my husband, my daughter, my son, they should be

free to do something that speaks to them. I can't say I've ever heard a choral concert with rap programmed in. Right? So why not give them that opportunity?

I learned a lot from that experience.

Participants reported including the culture of students was significant in teaching for social justice.

Teaching Students About Other Cultures.

The third way participants centered culture in their choir pedagogy was teaching students about other cultures. Music educators have long recognized the value of teaching music from varied cultures. The Tanglewood Symposium brought attention to the need for music education to take a multicultural approach. The teachers in my study included teaching music from varied cultures. Elizabeth said,

My goal is to expose my kids to as many different cultures as possible through music and through issues that, you know, are affecting students in the classroom so that hopefully they can take those things and let it inform how they think about other issues.

Kali taught her middle school choir students about Hanukkah and Jewish culture.

We also learn Western cultures. And like, I do a lot of Hebrew stuff and the school I came from, they never met a Jewish person ever. They didn't know what Jewish was.

Because I'm like, "Hey, we've got to learn some Hanukkah music." They're like, "What's that?" I'm like, "Okay, here we go."

Sam said he works to choose curriculum which includes "an eclectic variety" which will help his students connect to social justice issues.

I teach high school, so I have the opportunity and just the room to have more in depth conversations about the current situations that are going on in our world. But I also have

to walk that fine line of not saying something that will cause more issues, I would say. But I just try to do my best making sure that I'm picking out music and repertoire and having activities and resources that are not just covering one specific genre, skill set, or a specific group of people. I like to give my students an eclectic variety of music and activities so that everybody is represented. And that's just so good for all the students because they're culturally aware. In teaching predominately White students, that's my goal. Because nine times out of ten, they have never heard of this music or done this certain thing outside my classroom because this music is not commonly known to the general population of our state, our district, the whole student body in general. So, I just feel like it's my job to expose them to that and have those conversations about certain aspects of music that will make them connect to it [social justice issues] even more.

Teachers bring in culture bearers or experts to instruct students about other cultures.

Hannah said that it is impossible for one teacher to be the authority in all things. She said, "I say all the time, 'If I don't know, I'm going to tell you I don't know. I'm not going to pretend that I know, but I'll find somebody who knows.'" Participants invited local professionals, parents, and other teachers to share with their students about other cultures. Jordan brought in teachers from Indian and Hispanic dance studios as part of a unit she taught on music from other cultures. The dad of one of her students from Trinidad came in to play and talk with her students about cultural practices from his homeland. Jason asks other teachers at his school to come in and perform for his students or teach them a song. Hannah said, "We did a Spanish piece a couple years ago and had the Spanish teacher come help with the translation and the pronunciation because I'm not the expert in Spanish." Teachers bring in culture bearers and experts to teach students about other cultures. Connecting pedagogy and curriculum to real life, including students' culture, and

teaching students about other cultures were important to music educators in teaching for social justice.

Repertoire.

Participants reported teaching choir for social justice occurred through repertoire choices. When I asked Christina if teaching for social justice in her classroom was connected to repertoire choices, she said “That is a big yes for me. That’s like our textbook, like a history textbook. It’s perfect for us.” “That’s where we spend so much of our time,” said Elizabeth. Jordan said “Repertoire is the first thing I go to when I’m trying to address things in my classroom. Repertoire is basically my entire curriculum, so if I want something to happen in my curriculum, it has to happen in the repertoire.” She said she uses repertoire “as a vehicle for those hard conversations. It so much easier for me to start those conversations after introducing a piece of music that I’ve chosen for that purpose.” This section is divided into (a) choosing repertoire which highlights social justice issues, and (b) digging into the text.

Choosing Repertoire Which Highlights Social Justice Issues.

Participants chose music specifically to highlight social justice issues. Juliana said she chooses literature to represent diversity and inclusion because she needs “to be teaching other things besides White music.” Stephanie chose the spiritual *Wade in the Water* to prompt conversations about injustice with her students.

When we talk about spirituals, and we go into history. We sang *Wade in the Water* and, oh my gosh, they absolutely love it. The meaning behind that song and the history of it is a signal song. Why did they go into the water? So the dogs wouldn’t smell them. And students are like, “What?” and I’m like “Yeah, it’s totally not fair and it makes you mad, right?” And we grapple with those things and it's like “that's not right!” Well, no, it's not

right. When choosing music, the first thing I think is, can they do it? Does it have a good message? And is this something we can really grapple with and can really engage in? Some of the music is just so dark and it ends dark and it's just so that we can feel. Okay, what do you do with that? I mean, I don't want to leave them there. Now, I'm not like a Pollyanna or anything, but I mean to help them to see maybe how they can benefit or so they can see how blessed they are, how they can open their eyes to people who are not like them or whatever. It is just to give them an opportunity to see that this life is pretty darn good, and they've got it really good. They are really well taken care of, and I try to help them understand their blessings, because we really are blessed.

Jason purposely chooses music which represents the students in his classroom.

I want to pick composers that represent all of my students, which means there's going to be White females, there's going to be White males, but also there's needs to be some Hispanic composers and some Black composers and Asian...anything I can find.

Knowing that I may not be able to find everything every time, but just being intentional about making every effort I can.

Jordan has used online resources in her search for repertoire “specifically not written by White people.”

I've really been trying to select repertoire that is specifically not written by White people, stuff that's not even necessarily foreign language but it's representative of the culture, and the person who wrote it is from that culture and can speak accurately to that culture.

Fortunately, in the last few years, people have developed databases where you can look up composers of color just by typing in the criteria that you're looking for. That's been

really helpful to me and even things as simple as the “I’m a choir director” Facebook page where other directors give suggestions can help.

Kelly said choosing social justice literature was a platform to help students explore issues through meaningful conversations and musical expression.

The beauty of choral music is that you can pick a platform through your literature that helps them understand history and that social justice is not a new problem. In a multitude of different ways, your literature should enhance their high school experience. And that to me means including things like empowerment for women. Singing a song like "Lineage" does that. It talks about your history and where you came from, whether it was good or bad. Or in my adaptive ensemble not singing music that is juvenile or simple because they can understand musical concepts. Bringing in popular music so that the kid who doesn't want to sing the Brahms Requiem can still express themselves through something that they identify with. The basic skills for music reading, music literacy, is like a puzzle. So, if you build upon that, kids who may not necessarily match pitch can have a deeper understanding that they can be musical in another way. That’s music academics. Being inclusive to me is a process of picking the right literature, of having the right conversations, of inclusion for every child. And that means the exclusive need to be inclusive. And maybe you're asking for what seems impossible, but when you see them every day, sometimes you can just make the classroom environment so comfortable that kids can be who they are. And then the conversations began to reflect the diversity of the class and bring it into a unified mission through a meeting of minds and an expression of music.

Participants had freedom to purposefully choose literature which highlights social justice issues.

Digging Into the Text.

Text, words, language is what separates choral music from all other music. Participants use text as criteria when choosing music to teach for social justice. Learning to use text to its fullest in teaching is a journey for most teachers. Teachers do not usually finish their preservice training automatically knowing how to choose texts or how to teach for social justice using texts. Brooke, who has taught for 17 years, talks about her process of learning to use text to teach for social justice.

You start as a teacher and you just say, “Well, I want to make a program that includes a whole spectrum of things, you know? You want to have them learn different languages and when you start out teaching, you’re kind of doing what you learned when you were in high school and middle school; you’re going by what you did. So, you throw in a Spiritual or you do something in Spanish, something in Italian, whatever. I started out maybe saying a little about it, even reading the first page when the composer or the arranger wrote something. I mean, how terrible am I? And then you just do the song...like it’s great that you’ve done it and they’ve experienced it and you do a little note at the beginning, and then you move on. I’ve always been good about including things in my program and that’s probably been fine for the administration. They think, “Oh she’s being inclusive, she’s doing all these things.” But I realized I had just been like going through the motions...and that’s with every song. I mean it [digging into the text] has been a struggle for me because you have to stop and take a day to talk about the meaning of the lyrics. You can’t just sing the song. That been a huge hurdle for me, just to take the time. But I find that every time I talk about, when I dig into a song, it’s so much better. I just don’t know why I don’t do it with everything.

Kelly chose songs that help students “unpack things.” Her Women’s Choir sang “Lineage” about strong women. Kelly’s purpose in choosing that song was to address equality of women and to empower and encourage her female students. She said the following when I asked her how she uses text to teach for social justice.

In the song “Lineage” instead of just saying, you know, “my grandmothers were strong,” [singing] they’d have to say “my grandmother was…” and they’d have to name their grandmother. Some of them burst into tears because they just lost their grandmother or some of them didn’t know their grandmother or some of them had sick grandmothers or… it was just, I mean, it ended up being a window into the student’s home experience. So yeah…but it just takes time. So, if your number one goal is to make sure that your cutoffs are clean and that’s important…but you’re just going to have to take the time to delve into the story of the song and then the kids…if you give them a tool to express themselves, if you reach across to them, like yeah, it works. But you’ve got to spend time on your lit. to be able to unpack those things.

Zeke, an African American teacher, also uses text to instruct his African American students about their culture. He said the following when I asked him if his teaching for social justice was connected to his repertoire choices.

My time here in my current position has opened my eyes to some issues that I didn’t even realize existed in the sense that when I walked into this job, these kids were doing lots of Spirituals and lots of Gospel and things like that. At first, I thought, “Well, we’ve got to work on some of this blah, blah, blah.” And I thought to myself, “Wait, wait, wait, no, we don’t. No, we don’t. No, not at all. This is what they do here.” It’s the same thing as if I were to go to a predominantly White school and they sing songs that might be performed

at their church and songs that might be more European heritage type music. It's the same thing. It's no different at all. So, in essence, I kind of figured that I could dig more into our culture and history because I think that unfortunately in our country, a lot of our culture is lost. We continue to try to re-identify it every so often. But I mean it was stolen from us. So, I try to teach them...when we pick up a piece of music, it's always, we have to go in depth. We've got to talk about the *why*. Like if this is a Spiritual...was this a work song? Was it something that was used as code? Is it something that was used more as just passage of time? Is it really a gospel message? What is the purpose of this song? There are two very distinct waves of Spiritual music. There's the original Spirituals that actually were more or less the work songs that were in place. And then you have the Spiritual Revival music, like Moses Hogan and Stacey Gibbs and all that. We have this very jubilant Fisk Jubilee Singers music and some of my students in my music literacy class were shocked when I played my first example of a Spiritual and it had no words. And they were like, "When are they gonna start singing?" I said, "There are no words in the song. It's just the guy playing on the drum and somebody's playing a flute. That's a Spiritual, too. You just have never been introduced to it that way. You did not realize that Spirituals did not always have words." So yeah, absolutely. It [teaching for social justice] is connected deeply with my repertoire choices. And those teachable moments are just riddled throughout the entire process.

Christina said the language found in repertoire "can be that springboard for us and we have the opportunity to take it a little further...to make sure we are always progressing...that we are always learning...either improving for the good or improving upon what we don't want to

repeat.” Learning to choose texts and learning how to use them is a process that teachers improve along their journey of teaching for social justice.

Reaching Across Content Areas.

The third main idea in classroom/rehearsal activities which teachers use in teaching for social justice in the secondary choral classroom involved reaching across content areas. Juliet Hess (2018a) says that reaching across content areas “locates youth at their own cultural centers” (p. 38). Participants recognized the benefit for students when teachers connect other school subjects to choir. Jason said,

I'm a huge proponent of trying to connect everything that's happening in the school to everything we're doing in our classroom and vice versa. I think that's because of my college experience. Going to a small liberal arts school where everything was connected. It was smaller than my high school, so you knew everybody, and everything affected everything else. The professors operated that way. So, I think that definitely was a kind of a seed planted for me in my teaching now. To me, with the cross-discipline stuff, you're saying to students, “I don't care just about your voice, I care about what you're learning in English and what you're learning in Math and Science, and I care about that because all that comes together to make who you are.” When they're working on poetry in English and I have them write a melody and then put words to it...let's say they're learning about rhyming schemes or those kinds of things. We can complement that in our class, and it doesn't take any more work, it just requires focus.

Jason also tries to “read all the books they're reading.”

I think that is a very important thing. If they're reading a book for English that I haven't read or haven't read in 20 years I'll go and read it because I can bring that up in class and

I can say “Hey, remember, you know, in *Fahrenheit 451* when this is happening?” And they're like, “Wait, what?” “Like yeah, that's a great book. Let's talk about it.” We have so many issues in education, but part of our problem is that we're so compartmentalized now. Students feel like they have to be specialized and that nothing matters except for getting a grade.

Kelly agreed by saying “any time an educator reaches across content areas, it can strengthen what you are teaching.” Courtney said connecting other content areas in choir is “so easy for us. It's not like it is a hardship to connect our subject to math when we are teaching time signatures and English when a composer is using text declamation to ensure that the important words are on the important beats.” Aaron also believes that school subjects connect.

I think as you progress through education, you realize more and more that nothing is really a discreet content area a hundred percent. There's undoubtedly specialization and specifics to be had in each content and discipline, but it's all interrelated.

Tiffany said,

I love reaching across content areas. I love it! I love tying in instead of putting music as a separate entity. For instance, with math, we will break down a measure, quarter notes, half notes. Okay, how many sixteenth notes does it take to make four beats? Also, with social studies--that's a no brainer-- because it speaks to everything that we talk about, even if we're talking about the Renaissance, Baroque, Classical, or Romantic periods. That is history. And we also discover that slavery was going on at the same time, I think it was during the Renaissance period. That reaches across. During the Renaissance period music was blossoming and everything was, you know, in Europe and then over here [America] we have slavery going on, so this was simultaneous. We talked about that and

that's how I infuse social justice ideas and practices is by combining and reaching across the different content areas.

Elizabeth, who teaches a diverse group of middle schoolers, reported that her students were more engaged in her lesson because they recognized the connection between choir and history class.

This past semester my students and I did a unit on Spirituals. We learned about where they came from and how we know that the Spirituals we have today are actual Spirituals. How do we know that they came from the people who were enslaved? We dived into it, we talked about it, and my kids were so engaged in that lesson because they were learning parts of history that went along with the other things that they learned in history class.

Zeke said he partners with his school administration and the other departments using school data to decide other content areas to emphasize in his classes.

What I try to do is, while I'm in those terrible beginning of the year meetings, and we're talking about everything under the sun, except for what I have to do [laughing]. In those meetings I listened to some of the broader things that are being said like our students are struggling in math. So, I'm like, okay...let's see, let's work on some music theory. When the principal's saying, "We're going to be overhauling math this year," I'm like, "All right, music theory is going to be our thing." Science? Well, we will talk about the anatomy of the human body and things like that and different acoustics. History...I mean, it's history. As long as I'm teaching some levels of history, I'm going to touch on the history that they're doing in their classes. With literature...my students work on a council and one of the positions is historian. They are in charge of looking at the literature for the songs. One of their tasks is to ask members of the choir their thoughts about the songs. They can

even put quotes in the program. So yeah, when students hear about what they're talking about in other classes in my class, that hits them, but when they realize that they've heard something from many of their classes in my class, it hits a new type of home, and they start looking at this class being the most important class they've got. And that's teaching the whole student.

Participants reported that reaching across content areas grounded students and helped them see the value in their complete education. This adds value to choir class and to school in general.

Performing.

Providing students with performance experiences which reinforce social justice concepts was essential to participants in their social justice pedagogy. Jason said, "It's so important to create experiences, not just concepts."

Secondary choir does not have a required curriculum, but an expectation of every group is that they will perform. School choirs represented in my study devoted much of their time and energy performing concerts during the school year. Some performances were for the other students in their school. Other home concerts were open to the public, happened 2-3 times per year, and were usually attended by family and friends of the performers. Yet, other performances took place in various settings and required travel being part of a larger public event which included other performing groups. Teachers used their performance experiences to teach for social justice. Jason said he

plans concert events with other choirs that are not the same as us, economically or racially. We try to create situations where students from the different choirs can have conversations, not necessarily anything deep...just talk, you know eat a chicken biscuit

and talk about Tick Tock because a big part is recognizing our differences, but it's also recognizing our similarities.”

Courtney took her choirs to perform in nursing homes, at the local library, and to a halfway house in her community. She reported that with the Covid pandemic, many of their opportunities this past year were canceled, but she said, “I've recently gotten money to buy an excellent sound system and it's portable. I'm really hoping that this next year we get to go into the community and show that what we're doing is very important.” Several years ago, Tiffany and I did an event together that involved our students. She taught in an urban setting and my students were from a suburban setting. This is her accounting of our experience.

Music actually brings people together, just like it did when you and I had four consecutive years of the Unity Concert. And we don't know the background of every child. We don't know who came from a racist family or who didn't. We don't know, but all we did know was that all those kids enjoyed each other, and they accepted each other, because they were exposed, I believe. A lot of this is about exposure, exposing children to those different than themselves and to different types of music. So, it's pretty easy to me.

Tiffany said that performing to help students broaden their worldview is easy in choir. In teaching for social justice, teachers provided students with performance experiences which exposed them to people and music different from themselves with the purpose to broaden their worldview and bring people together.

“It's Messy! Bumbling Through”

Concepts of social justice are important, but achieving justice requires action. When teachers act upon concepts and beliefs, their human nature comes into play and a host of

variables ensue. Teaching for social justice is a process which teachers learn over a lifetime of successes and mistakes. Juliet Hess says that social justice work is inherently messy because of our human weaknesses (2018b). Zeke agreed with Hess.

Yes, doing social justice is messy. I think the messiness is that it feels like you're bumbling through life together with your students. You're going to bumble through the process and bumble through societal issues. So yeah, it's gonna be messy and overwhelming at times. But ultimately keeping things organized is the best you can do. It's like somebody said, "Music itself is just organized noise." Yet beauty comes from it. And so, it's like the same thing with teaching for social justice. This is going to be ugly, but the goal is that we can arrive at a peaceful end point or a resolution even though throughout the process, we were having to put things together that otherwise we would have never even tried to approach. It's just the fact that everything's going to be jumbled for a while for us to finally get to that resolution.

Zeke is hopeful that we will experience peace and resolution in music education someday, but he knows the challenges. "It's Messy! Bumbling Through" is a sub-theme of "Instruments for Change." Teachers in my study reported many challenges in teaching for social justice in the secondary choir room. I organized them into the following three main categories:

- lack of support/de-valuing the music program
- teacher-related
- student-related

Lack of Support/De-valuing the Music Program

Participants reported lack of support for their programs and the de-valuing of choir is a challenge in teaching for social justice. Choir is an elective class for most secondary students

represented in my study. Therefore, unlike core teachers whose classes are needed for graduation, the success of choir teachers' programs depends on their ability to attract and retain students. Short-sighted administrative decisions, ignorance or apathy of stakeholders, and a lack of dedicated resources threaten secondary choral music programs across the United States.

Administrators do not realize the educational value of choir and may opt to replace it with another program. Aaron reported that in his district "middle school chorus tends to get dropped" from the curriculum if it is not perceived to be a "strong program." When I asked him why that happened, he said,

Part of what I know is that at least, in some regards, even though the district emphasizes music a lot and we are a large district and we're one of the NAMS best communities for music education and all that for like the last five or six years...but principals can individually elect to just remove a program for no cause. There is no teacher tenure anymore in my state. Anyone hired after 2009 is not eligible for tenure. So, they can be non-reappointed at the end of the year for no explanation and no cause and then the principal can just remove the program. And I know in many cases, principals remove the program because they want that teaching unit for something else. They want to have a culinary program, or they want another reading teacher or whatever the case may be. And that correlates, and I don't know, it's kind of a question of which came first, the chicken or the egg, but it sometimes correlates with programs that you might not objectively consider a strong program. But it's a double-edged sword, you know, I don't want to place the blame on the teacher because I don't know what else is happening there, but I do know I have seen it happen. One of my friends was teaching middle school chorus. By

traditional standards, hers' wasn't a strong program. The new principal came in like February of the year and removed her and just removed chorus. It's no longer there. When I asked Aaron what the markers were in his district for a "strong program," he said enrollment was "easily the top thing." He based that on his recent experience with school administration.

This past Spring, I had to go kind of toe to toe with a guidance counselor because they wanted to remove my keyboard class. They said, "Well, there's not enough student interest." And I said, "What do you mean there's not enough student interest? The class is always full. There's only one section." So, I went to the assistant principal who's in charge of the master schedule and I asked why they wanted to remove the class. I said, "I have kids all year long walking up to me wanting to join keyboard. And I have to say, there's not any seats left." She said, "Well, guidance can want what they want, but I have to have electives for the kids to go into. I'm not taking out elective classes, and you have kids in there." It immediately becomes at least a logistical problem to remove it. And you know, my state is a pretty competitive music world, so contest ratings configure in, but I don't think they're the only thing. I don't think most principals will call you into the office if you don't get a superior at contest. I mean, it can be a defense of the program, but it could also not be, you know it kind of depends, from what I've seen in my area, it also depends on the choir teacher. I'm just going to say their ability.

Fortunately for Aaron, his Assistant Principal recognized the value in his keyboard class and chose to override the guidance counselor's decision to drop the class from the curriculum. However, short-sighted administrative decisions are a challenge in teaching for social justice.

Stakeholders who do not understand and support the educational goals of teaching for social justice are challenging. Sometimes other teachers show bias toward marginalized students. Aaron teaches in a middle school made up of mostly children of immigrants for whom English is a second or third language. He explained about colleagues who were not willing to accommodate their students.

Teachers just say, “Well, they don't speak English. There's nothing to do about it. They're not going to get it. They don't put in any effort.” or they say, “Well, I can't speak Spanish, so I can't talk to them.” Well, like what opportunity are you giving that kid? I mean, maybe you don't speak Spanish, but most of them are trying [to be successful in school]. They want to, they're trying. And even if they don't really want to, I mean, you're being sent here seven hours a day. It's your job!

Courtney also reported that her students told her about colleagues who she thought were insensitive to marginalized students.

I had a student come to me and say that a teacher had a word on one of their worksheets that was old and outdated and it made her feel uncomfortable as an African American student. She and another of my students sent him an email, and he sent back a very generic non-apology email. The students came to me, sat on my couch, and were just distraught... and this teacher has been teaching for years and has never changed his thought process. And they were having to go to his class every day, but then they actively choose not to. They got their work done at home and then they came to me. You know...so it's...they have had a hard time. And with Covid, the teachers who would actively choose not to wear masks and then just walk around. Some students felt

uncomfortable. Still a lot of our teachers don't see that some of what they're doing is making our students uncomfortable.

Kali said the diversity trainings she has attended have helped open her eyes and that she has grown as a teacher from her attendance. She also talks about “bringing back what she has learned to her co-workers” and the challenges she faces.

But I think every educator is on a different stage or on a different page in the book. And the only way to teach people is to let them learn on their own time. You can't force someone to be where you are, so it's messy because I can't help the teacher who's been teaching for 60 years who refuses to accept the fact that they can't say certain words in class anymore. Like, “Oh, well I've been doing it for 60 years.” Well, they're probably not going to change.

Other stakeholders including parents also can be a challenge for social justice educators. Brooke said her students reflect the differences of opinion and disunity of their parents at school with each other.

I would say the students are kinder to each other than the parents are. The parents are...you know there's a big thing. I hear it amongst the kids sometimes and they're just talking...you hear their parents talking through them. Some like, “Oh my parents, oh my gosh...they can't believe that we have to wear masks.” And then you have, “My parents are so glad that we have to wear masks.” And it's like, you can hear the political sides through them. The parents are the ones who...you've got half of them marching to do this and half of them marching to do that. So, you know, everybody's marching and it's like half and half and there's no happy medium.

Tiffany talked about her challenges with differing viewpoints represented in her students.

Challenges also come in when the students come from different homes where we don't know what's being said and taught or demonstrated in those homes. So, they bring it all to school. You know, and some people don't impose that upon their peers while others do. She expressed another challenge that she was not able to give her students experiences which would help her teach for social justice like she wanted to. When I asked her what was holding her back, she said,

Money and parental support. And because of teaching in an urban area, a lot of times we don't have strong support. Now, we do have strong support from the churches in the community, we do. But a lot of times I've had a concert with 50 kids in there and three parents showed up; they drop their kids off to perform but don't attend the concert.

Students in urban areas are less likely to be involved in music classes and do not have the level of parental support enjoyed by their suburban counterparts. That was a challenge for Tracey.

Lack of resources, financial and curricular, is the third challenge participants reported. Like Tracey, Courtney said she lacked financial support at her school to buy music which would help her teach for social justice. "I was just having to teach the music that was in my library because we didn't, we don't have any money." Choir programs of teachers in my study were self-supporting and received no financial support from their districts or schools. Teachers were responsible for raising support through student fees, fund raisers, and donations.

Teachers reported the lack of choral music curriculum supporting teaching for social justice is a challenge. Jordan shared her frustration trying to find authentic music to perform with her students.

It's not even simple to get suggestions of repertoire that fits [teaching for social justice] because that hasn't really been a thing in choral education, at least to my knowledge, and

I've been doing this for six years. I think, for the most part people thought like I did in the beginning, where it was like, "Well, I'm doing the song that's in Spanish, so I'm doing my job of connecting with Hispanic students." Even though it was arranged by a White person, or you know even a Black person, someone that's not from that culture. And I thought that was enough. But now I'm like, that's kind of appropriated, and I don't want to support that. But then it's been exceedingly more difficult to find stuff that is written by people from that culture. Then you throw in the factors of considering the level of difficulty the ensemble can sing. A lot of stuff that's written authentically is pretty difficult because it's not practices that the kids are familiar with. Or it's something that's new that I have to learn that will be kind of an uphill battle for me. You know, a lot of it is written for the collegiate level, so I'd have to pare it down somehow or find something that's simpler.

Lack of financial support and curricular resources contribute to a lack of support teachers reported as challenging to teaching for social justice.

Participants said the general disregard for the value of choir was a challenge to teaching for social justice. Jason reported that lack of support from school systems and administrations causes music educators to be,

hesitant to really embrace maybe what we think probably should be done because we're worried that at the beginning stages of that change, before it produces results, we could lose our program and our jobs...easily. The system still sees--and I'm going to talk choir because that's my experience--the system still sees choir as an elective, not necessary and for the most part, as the marketing tool of the school or *a* marketing tool of the school. If they have a meeting, they want to look good or have some entertainment for, then we're

usually asked to sing for that. The same for the school board meetings we're asked to perform at...you know, those kinds of things. And that's kind of how we're viewed. I think it is our fault because we don't push back hard against that. But part of that is also because that's the way it was set up, and they don't have the money to fund us. So I feel like if it's going to ever happen, which I don't know that it ever will, it's going to have to be some type of the combination from both ends...from the teachers saying "This is really what music should be," and the system and the people, the powers that be going okay, we're willing to help fund this and give you some protection as you take on this new idea.

Teachers reported that the lack of stakeholder support, scarce resources, financial and curricular, and the general disregard for the importance of choir were challenges in teaching for social justice.

Teacher-Related

Teachers met challenges related to their role and their own inner struggle when teaching for social justice. Participants' teacher-related challenges were divided into the following three categories:

- teacher authority as responsibility/saying and doing the "right" things
- time-related challenges
- teacher bias

Teacher Authority as Responsibility/Saying and Doing the "Right" Things

Teachers responded that they felt pressure to say and do the right things when teaching for social justice. When I asked Brooke to name her challenges in teaching for social justice, she said she felt the responsibility as the authority in her classroom to "say the right thing the right

way because my students listen to me. What I say matters to them.” Kali said students “are impressionable.” Stephanie said, “I definitely understand the power that the teacher has on the classroom culture; my classroom depends on me.” Teachers reported that feeling the weight of responsibility “to get it right” was a challenge in teaching for social justice.

Social justice can be a controversial and sometimes difficult subject to talk about with students. Brooke talked about difficulty in some lessons the first time she taught them.

I think you as the teacher, you have to try to make sure kids feel heard and you try and make a lesson plan and it's, maybe it's clunky. It's the first time you're doing something, and you are hoping your kids will react one way and they don't. You say the wrong thing, whatever it is...but I think kids probably appreciate that you're trying. They see, they're smart, they see what you're doing, what you're trying to do...that you're trying to go further, or at least address what's going on in the world. You don't know all the things to say, but you just have to be like, “Look, I'm going to do my best.”

Jason said that “different values and different approaches” to teaching for social justice are a challenge. Jordan said she was continuing to grow as a social justice educator and sometimes talking about social justice issues in class was not something she felt “100% solid on right now.” She reported feeling the pressure to,

have all the answers, or else how can I be doing what I'm doing? And you just CANNOT have all the answers when it comes to social justice because it's such a moving target.

Also, being a person that in a lot of situations is in the majority, knowing that my experiences are usually not what other people on the opposite side are experiencing. And not even necessarily knowing when I'm doing something wrong is probably the messiest thing for me.

Pressure to “get it right” when teaching for social justice also affected Sam. He shared the tension he feels between holding to his personal beliefs and feelings as a person of color but speaking in an unbiased and professional way which he feels helps his mostly White students.

It's just trying to keep the peace, you know. But also, I have these feelings, personally. I know my students [of color] do as well. So, we struggle with it. I definitely struggle with just trying to be as unbiased and professional as I can be, but I have my true feelings, too. I don't think I could express them in the way that would come across as well-tempered...I would say. There's always two sides.

Sam said the difference between his personal beliefs and feelings and striving to do what is right for his students is sometimes a struggle. Teachers said the controversial nature of social justice issues was a challenge in their teaching.

Participants felt the rapid pace of societal changes also made social justice issues difficult to talk about and understand. Hannah, 26-year teaching veteran, reported her struggle to keep up with societal changes about colorblindness (Hess, 2017b).

Honestly...I always thought I was the girl that didn't see race. I'm going to see you walking down the street, I know if you're Black, White and I know all that, but, I mean, I don't care. That's what it means when I say I don't see race, but apparently that's a bad thing to say now. You're not supposed to say, “I don't see race.” You're supposed to see race and you're supposed to notice race and to notice differences. I just never--my parents always taught me that we're all God's children, and we should love everybody, no matter who they are or where they come from. And that's just what I've...that's how I've always been. That's how my friends were...I mean, it's just the way I've always been. So, I don't

know, it's weird because I just didn't know that was not a good thing until recently. I've always just been like if I like you, it's got nothing to do with what you look like.

White teachers in my study said fear of appropriation was a challenge when singing music from other cultures. Courtney reported a newfound confidence in singing Spirituals because of "intense" conversations with her students which she said helped to overcome the challenge.

I've recently started delving into the world of Spirituals and not being afraid to do Spirituals...because previously, I have avoided them...not because I don't want to do them, but because I'm afraid of doing them incorrectly. This past school year, my students wanted to do this piece that they had learned at a conference, and it was "I Sing Because I'm Happy." It's a great piece, and so I asked them...I sat down in front of them, and I said, "I love this piece, I want to know exactly how you want to sing it. What makes this the most culturally appropriate and not just we're going to end our concert with this," because they chose the order of our concert as well, and they wanted to end with it. And so we had really great discussions about what it would look like in a church setting and then we also had really great discussions about some of our White students being very vulnerable saying, "I don't know if I can do this because I feel like I'm appropriating your culture and I don't want people to think that I'm not being sincere." And so, we had these great discussions about how once we've discussed everything that's happened, it's perfectly acceptable for you to have a great time doing this piece like our students wanted to do it. And it intense...we had that discussion over the course of a few weeks. And my students were like, "I mean I get it; I want to do it, I just want to make sure that no one thinks that we're doing anything wrong or making fun of anyone's culture." And I thought

it was really profound. My students have very deep, very deep conversations with each other about these topics and it's...I'm just kind of facilitator...I'm like yeah, we'll spend time on this... sure, go ahead.

Knowing how to help students experiencing gender identity issues also posed challenges to participants. Juliana said in helping her students she wants to “be inclusive and more accepting of my students even though I don’t understand all of it.” She said this is new for her because it had only recently surfaced with her students. About helping her students adjust in class, Juliana said, “I am trying, and you know, they do not teach us this in college when a student comes to you and says, ‘I don’t know if I should stay on the girls’ part or boys’ voice part, because I don’t identify as either.’” Issues about gender identity posed challenges to teachers.

Lack of teacher training was a significant challenge for most participants in knowing how to talk about and respond to students. Despite their desire to teach for social justice, most participants felt unprepared. Courtney said, “I never had a teacher or class telling me, ‘This is how you should address social justice through music education.’” Hannah said her lack of training in teaching for social justice was “because it’s been such a long time since I went to college. I don’t know that anybody has had that kind of education except for maybe the ones there now.” Christina reported a lack of training for music educators when instructing students with special needs.

As music educators, we are not really typically taught in school—that’s almost along the lines of music therapy—but we’re not typically taught how to reach students with special needs. We are not special education teachers...so I think teachers experience feelings of inadequacy. “Can I reach these students? Do I know how to teach them?”

Teachers said that lack of training was a challenge in teaching for social justice.

Participants reported feeling misunderstood as a challenge when teaching for social justice. They feared saying the wrong thing, being criticized, and making pedagogical or curricular mistakes. I asked participants what they thought about Hess' tenet of teaching for social justice "actively addressing oppression in their classroom through music and conditions that affect youth" (2018a, p. 38). Brooke said although her district required teachers to discuss social justice issues in their classroom, it made her "nervous" because of the differing perspectives on social issues in her classroom. She found using historical oppression more comfortable.

I talk about U.S. history. I go back to things that we can all agree on and use that. For Martin Luther King, I talked about the music during Civil Rights and the march on Washington. We talked about the music that was involved and there was a lot, you know. But all the kids can agree on that. But the recent stuff, it's an open wound.

Jason found it challenging to find ways to talk about sensitive issues "without offending and then running people out of my program." He reported the self-doubt he felt when a beloved student called him "racist." He said he felt misunderstood by the student, but that it caused him to self-evaluate and grow. Jordan said she fears her school system or students' parents will misunderstand what she said in teaching for social justice.

My greatest fear, honestly, as a social justice music educator is saying something that is misconstrued. I mean well and I mean to help all of my kids...and I know what I'm doing is right. But what does my school corporation think is right and wrong? And my kids' parents? You know, like what am I allowed to say? And what am I not allowed to say to my students? And if I'm not allowed to directly say this, how can I teach it to them in a way that no one can object to.

Jordan said she “means well.” However, even though teachers have the best intentions, things can go wrong. Elizabeth said,

You know, you can dive in and really think that what you're doing is ...well, you have good intentions and you deliver your instruction and then you didn't think about this... or you have this or that comes up or there may be an issue that I don't even know about, that I glossed over because I'm not thinking about it.

Teachers reported that sometimes things do not go as planned. Hannah designed a class activity to develop social-emotional wellness within the group that went painfully wrong despite her good intentions.

I did an activity with my girls two years ago where they have a piece of paper and they put their name on this piece of paper. Then they write a compliment about each person, and they pass it around the circle. I've done this activity every year for twenty-something years, and I've even had kids come back that are grown with kids and say, “Do you still do that activity? I still have mine.” So, I know that they think it's special and I used to have everybody turn theirs in and then I would go through and pick like a TOP 10 things that people said so that it wasn't repeated 100 times, but that takes forever. We have 200 students. So, this was the first time I had ever let them do it on their own. And the day that I passed them out to the kids I would call them up, one by one and I would read a couple of things on their piece of paper, and I was making a big deal out of it. And then I would add my thing about this person and get my pen and write it down, and it was just this great teachable everybody's-happy moment. And I look up and one of my girls is in tears and I said, “What is wrong?” She brought her paper over and one of the girls had written on her paper “ugly” backwards. The word was backwards, and the letters were

backwards so you couldn't really tell what it said. So, when I looked at hers--and I had gone through them all--I didn't notice that. I didn't see it and I had talked about bullying and about only using positive words, about only being uplifting...and it crushed my spirit. I cried about it for two days because the whole purpose of that activity was the opposite of what that child went through, and I felt responsible...because it happened on my watch, in my room, under my guidance. I called her mom and apologized for myself. But anyway, all that to say, I think I actively try to keep oppression, or you know bullying or anything like that from happening but even in our best efforts, on our best days, when we think we're doing the greatest things, crap happens. And that's just part of teaching. And I couldn't fix it. Like I remember when I called her mother, I said, "I can't fix this" and she was like, "There's nothing to fix...you didn't do anything wrong." I know that, but still I felt responsible. So, I took her paper, and I wrote over that word like five kind words.

An activity that for many years was uplifting and positive for her students this time ended with Hannah feeling like she had failed her students, especially the one who had been targeted in the meanness. Even with the best planning and intentions, things go wrong.

Teachers found their pedagogical and curricular mistakes to be challenging. When Jason, who had taught 25 years, first began teaching, he said he did not give much thought to teaching for social justice when choosing repertoire.

I taught a Civil War Medley because that music was in the library. It was Men's music and well I was always looking for guys music for middle school and so I thought, "Hey, this works." One of the songs in there was a Confederate song and I look back on it and there was nothing overtly or blatantly racist about the song or any of it, but I remember

after the concert, the one Black boy that was in that choir, his mom attacked me and rightfully so. And I did not defend myself because I didn't know how to, and I think that was one of those first like, "Oh well, if I can't defend that, then why did I do it?" moments. And I remember that feeling I had...a feeling like I failed.

Teachers make mistakes when teaching for social justice. Zeke said "mistakes are inevitable" because teachers and society are always changing and evolving.

Time-Related Challenges

The second teacher-related challenges are limited time/preparation and class/rehearsal time and not devoting time to teaching for social justice. Aside from teaching classes, choir teachers put in long hours planning and conducting after-school rehearsals, concerts, performances, trips, assessments, and other events designed to meet educational needs of their students. Many of them use their one planning period per day, lunch, or before school time for additional rehearsals and meetings with students and colleagues in addition to their night and weekend work. Brooke, a middle school teacher who said getting to know her students is important to her, said the number of students she serves makes developing a relationship with them challenging.

Having so many students is a struggle...when do you actually have those like deep conversations? It's when you're waiting for their parents, you know. When they're waiting for their parents, you can actually talk to them, one on one. Or before or after class, if you hold them back.

Sam only has his Men's Choir students for one semester which makes it difficult to build relationships with them to a point where he feels comfortable talking about social justice issues.

Elizabeth said, “making sure you are doing what is best for all your students is challenging and takes a lot of time.”

The challenges of too little time caused teachers to be too busy and forget why they teach for social justice. Brooke said she tends to be in her “own little bubble” and that when she realized it, she “has to stop and say, ‘Why am I doing this? For what purpose?’” Stephanie said music educators face challenges in teaching for social justice by being “too stuck” in their own world and apathetic.

Teachers said a challenge they faced was being unaware of the need to devote time to teaching for social justice. Courtney said,

Coming from my hometown and college background, we did not discuss social justice issues. We didn’t have students who had experiences that were different from mine.

When I moved to my first school job, it wasn’t at the forefront of my mind because I didn’t know what I was doing. I was just trying to stay afloat.”

Juliana said when she started teaching seven years ago, “honestly, I didn’t think about ‘Do I have a piece that was written by a Black musician on my program?’” Teachers said in the beginning of their teaching careers, not knowing about teaching for social justice was a challenge.

However, Juliana said, “As I grow in my teaching and as I grow up myself, I have become more aware and start to make changes.”

The third time-related challenge participants reported related to purposefully devoting time to navigate teacher-student cultural differences. When teachers are from a different culture than their students, working to understand their students’ culture brings positive results to the music classroom. Teachers must undergo a process which requires not only being open to learning about their students and their culture but realizing and addressing personal bias’s that

may be present. Developing strong teacher-student relationships is important for teachers because students can be the most effective teachers in overcoming this challenge. Courtney said that when the violence against Asian Americans in Atlanta happened, her students wanted to talk in class about what happened. "I was schooled about my Asian American students." She said the class discussion and a one-on-one conversation with an Asian American student helped her to better understand his culture and to empathize with his feelings. Kali, who is White and in the minority at her school, learns about her students' cultures by listening.

I don't understand what it's like to be scared of police officers. I don't understand what it's like to walk through the store and have someone follow you. I'll never understand what that's like, but I can listen. I can listen and I can empathize. I can be humbled by their experiences, and I can try to learn from that, but I will never understand what my students have to go through. That is my biggest challenge.

Juliana stayed involved with current events to better understand student cultures different from her own,

Me being White, I don't know what it's like to be Black. If a Black student is going through something, I can't totally share what they're going through. But I try to stay involved in current events and things going on so I can learn the facts.

Sam, an African American, teaches mostly White students. He said his challenge is knowing how to bring awareness to his students about social justice issues considering he is in the minority at his school. He described his school as

The majority of our staff is White, the majority of our students are White. I think totaling all the people of color in my school and there are about ten of us. So, I sometimes feel I'm in that territory where I can't really do much.

When I asked him if there was anything he wanted to do better in teaching for social justice, he said,

I would like to just be more courageous through it all. Like I have my own personal feelings about it, with which I talk to my close friends. I talk to my family about it, and, of course, those people that I'm most comfortable with, of course. And I will show my true self to them. But I always want my students to feel respected and valued. They are children; I am the adult, but, at the end of the day, we are all people. They have those feelings [which are different from mine] and they are valid, and I try my best to hear them out. But I would say, those are some things I would like to improve upon for myself personally, just how to do it better, how to have those conversations and knowing how to start them, knowing how to work through them.

Teacher Bias

Teachers reported that personal bias is a challenge in teaching for social justice. Brooke strived to lift the “veil from her eyes” which stemmed from her background being very different from that of her students. When I asked Courtney if teaching for social justice was messy, she said,

I think it is. Absolutely! Because it was a process for me that I didn't even know I needed. And it was messy because I thought it was all fine. I thought I could never, I can never think a certain way or not, you know. When I was in my first school, I realized that I had these...what are they called?... unrealized biases...that just really...I was like, “What?” And so, I had to... I personally had to work through my own stuff to get to the point where I was vulnerable enough and comfortable enough with my students to discuss things that they were going through and even now, I actively tell my students, “I need

you to explain, I need you to talk to me, and I need to learn, in this instance, what you're feeling, what's happening?" And it is messy!

Jordan also reported unrealized bias when I asked her what she thinks is messy about teaching for social justice. She answered,

I think the messiest thing for me personally is me learning and unlearning things I've always known to be the truth or the norm. Also, being a person that in a lot of situations is in the majority, knowing that my experiences are usually not what other people on the opposite side are experiencing. And not even necessarily knowing when I'm doing something wrong is probably the messiest thing for me.

Zeke talked about White teachers who,

have no idea what you said that was offensive or that was derogatory towards students of color and their culture, not a clue. But it happens all the time and you could be the most aware person in the world. It is still going to happen to you. It's difficult. Now don't run out there, you know, with your heads and your neck stuck out because yeah, you'll get it chopped off. But what you do have to do is continue to educate yourself. And as you continue to have these awakenings and have these understandings within yourself and with your surroundings, you start learning which types of steps to start taking.

Teachers recognizing challenges related to them personally or their role as teacher is not easy.

Music educators in my study understood that challenges are opportunities for growth in teaching for social justice.

Student-Related

Most challenges in teaching for social justice reported by participants related to the teachers themselves or their teaching practice, however, a few challenges related to students.

Teachers in my study said that navigating student differences is challenging when teaching for social justice. Students differ from each other in every conceivable way. When talking about students who deal with social justice issues, Courtney said, “I have members of the LGBT Q plus community, African American students, Asian American students, Mexican American students, and all the rest who are all going through different things.” Jason said teaching for social justice can be complicated in his school setting because of the diversity of students.

We have...I don't remember the exact numbers, but I know we're around 46% nonwhite with the majority of that being African American. I think that's around 30%. We have some students that are very wealthy, probably a small percentage of very wealthy, and then we have a good percentage of students who are under the poverty level for sure. And then we have a lot in between. We have students from all over the Middle East and Asia, so we have large populations of Muslims and other religions which I think is fairly unique to our area. So yeah, we have a lot of differences.

Aaron and Kali teach in schools where for most students English is not students' first language and sometimes it is a struggle just to communicate with them. One of Aaron's students only recently immigrated from Haiti,

and spoke practically no English, but was very smart, loved to sing, and had a beautiful voice. I was her first period teacher every day. We made a connection because she loved to sing, and she would run up to me every day and kiss me on the cheek. And I was like, I get it. And I understand that in other cultures that's okay. But you cannot do that in a middle school to a male teacher in the United States. And so, I was like, I had to go get the guidance counselor who spoke Creole. And I was like, can you please help? I'm glad she's excited to be here, and I don't want to dampen that enthusiasm.

The custom of kissing on the cheek was acceptable in the student's culture but was not proper behavior between teacher and student in the United States. Teachers found student differences to be challenging in teaching for social justice.

In addition to differences, teachers expressed challenges because students do not mature at the same rate. Courtney said she had a particularly difficult class of ninth graders in 2020 when the Covid pandemic ended in-person school in March.

Some were just so angry with the world that they wouldn't open up. They didn't want to talk about what was happening in the world and, eventually...that was the year that we had Covid...so we were two months in and then we had to leave, and I was...I was kind of not that upset [that we had to leave] because that class was really hard. But on the flip side, it would have been excellent to see them become vulnerable throughout the rest of the year. So, it's great when my students really want to open up and discuss things, but then on the flip side it's kind of hard.

Elizabeth also talked about a lack of maturity in her school which housed eighth and ninth graders. "They are not the nicest, well, they are just not nice and it's difficult."

Student-related challenges in teaching for social justice are inevitable. Hannah said, "When you try to do anything valuable with teenagers or preteens, it's definitely messy. I think anything with kids is messy." Participants overwhelmingly reported that teaching for social justice was worth overcoming the challenges to positively affect their students and communities.

"When You Sing Together...You Can't Help but Love Each Other"

"When You Sing Together...You Can't Help but Love Each Other" is the third and final theme of teaching for social justice in the secondary choral classroom. The title came from an In-Vivo quotation from Tiffany when she described singers' emotional response while making

music together. When I asked her about teaching emotional and musical connectedness within the ensemble, she said,

One thing I feel is that people will never forget how you made them feel no matter what you said or did or taught, they will never ever forget how you made them feel. And we know that music is definitely an emotional connector. It promotes unity, because when you sing together, you're sharing a magical, spiritual and emotional experience. You're creating beauty, so you can't help but love each other.

Performance is born from a process shared between singers and their director. They spend hours working intricacies of breathing, posture, language, syllabic stress, notes, melody, phrasing, harmony, balance, blend, dynamics, tempo, drama, accompaniment, team, performance etiquette, and more to produce the final product for a performance. It is a labor of love...love of music, love of singing and making music, and love for each other all shared out and culminated in *that* moment before the audience. The process of preparing a song for an audience is much the same process of teaching for social justice in that teachers and students work together toward a common goal. Both parties are equally responsible for the results, but the teacher leads as instigator, guide, and example.

In this study, I organized findings into the following three themes. (1) “Because I Love My Students” reported *why* participants recognized the need to teach their students through a lens of social justice; (2) “Instruments for Change” presented *how* the teachers taught for social justice in their educational settings; and now, in (3) “When You Sing Together...You Can’t Help But Love Each Other,” I tell what happened *when* participants taught for social justice. Data contained in Theme Three answers research question four asking how social justice music educators think teaching for social justice affects their students, their stakeholders, and

communities in which their schools are situated. Additionally, I included how teachers grow in teaching for social justice. I organized the data into the following three categories.

- student growth
- teacher growth
- beyond the classroom

Student Growth

Teachers in my study reported that they taught for social justice to help their students develop as musicians and experience personal growth. Jordan said,

I now see my job as teaching my students to be good people who listen to other people's lived experiences. It's listening to them and learning from them knowing that there are other perspectives besides the ones that you grew up with or the ones that you've been around your entire life. Being a social justice music educator means that I am using my vehicle of music to create the best, most welcoming, most inclusive people that I can, and then sending them out into the world with those open-minded, accepting ideas.

Kali said she is teaching "humans to be human." She said in teaching for social justice, "I want them [her students] to be better than me, just like my teachers and my parents wanted me to be better than them." Zeke called it "teaching the whole student." Teachers in my study reported that teaching for social justice centers teaching students to be better people. Hannah's goals for her students have changed from when she first started teaching.

My goals are that everybody feels like they matter. Of course, we want to learn some music and we want to learn some theory and but that's not the most important thing to me anymore. It was when I first started teaching because it was all about me at the beginning and now it's all about them.

In teaching for social justice, positive results occur when music teachers devote instruction time to help students grow emotionally and socially. Elizabeth said that her “end goal” with students in her classes was to “foster an environment where they feel like they can be vulnerable, get into the musicality, including the emotion of what they’re singing about.” She explained that she and her students benefitted from the emotional bonds they form. Courtney said using music to teach for social justice had “profound” effects on relationships within her choirs because close emotional bonds developed between members. Sam said he works to create an atmosphere where,

we all love each other...even if you don’t like each other [laughing]. Because through our ensembles and through what we teach, we create little families. These kids perform together, they sit by each other every day, they are at sectionals together. They do so much together in my class and outside of class, they hang out with each other. It's just not because of me. For example, every one of my Men’s Choir members talks to each other every day. They make genuine connections and friendships.

Connecting through friendships and general caring for each other had positive effects on Juliana’s students in accepting and supporting a student undergoing identity change.

And the students, what I do love is they seem to be very accepting of each other. I had Katelyn who told me she wanted her name changed to Steven. She told me this in confidence and all her friends knew. So, when I called roll, I said, "Steven is here. Okay, Beth is here, Timmy's here." And what I loved is the other kids weren't like, "Who's Steven? What, we have a Steven?" The kids are just very accepting of each other.

Courtney said her students show genuine care and concern for each other. “My students want to know what the others are going through and want to be there for them. I try really hard to make

that happen...taking time out of the day to do that.” Participants reported positive results when they devote instruction time for students to build strong interpersonal relationships.

Students developed empathy for others as their teachers designed pedagogy and curriculum to help them gain a broader worldview. Tiffany said,

I feel like my students have a clearer perception of our world and all of the races and cultures that it comprises. I believe that it has opened their eyes that we live in a world where we have many, many similarities as humans, but we do have those differences. I feel like those differences sometimes are superficial. You know the color of your hair, whether you have fake hair, whether you have real hair. We are more alike than we are different.

Jason said, “Teaching for social justice really helps all of our students see a bigger perspective and realize that their experience is not everyone's experience.” Stephanie reported that she asked questions to “get them to think outside of themselves.” Zeke said he works to help his students “think critically” about people who hold differing viewpoints.

Critical thinking...that's really it. Like, I just want them to think critically. I want them to be understanding of others and try to see their point of view. Not that you have to sympathize with their point of view...but at least try to understand it. Like after the January 6th situation, the “insurrection,” [air quotes] if you will, at the Capitol, I said to some of my students, "Here's your challenge? How do you understand their [people with opposite views from the students] point of view? Because this is a tough one." If you understand their point of view, you can have a conversation with them and actually, possibly come to a level of compromise. If you don't understand somebody's point of view, how do you compromise?

Students recognizing the bigger picture and developing empathy for others are empowered to enact positive social change.

The whole idea of *Hamilton* was people striving for independence and to be heard, right? So, it was an easy parallel for kids who feel marginalized in high school for them to understand that number one, you can't do it alone. You have to work together. So, you have to find the common factors between you and the people who agree with you. And then number two, you have to find common factors between you and the people who don't agree with you to be able to have a voice and to change things.

Christina recognized the process in her students when she said, “I like to think of it as a journey toward a more positive culture, a more positive model of relationships, seeing people as people no matter what.” Jason said, “Positive relationships allow students to start asking questions and look at what’s actually happening [with social justice issues.]” Teachers encouraged students to work together in prompting positive social change. Sam said, “our students can be a light in our world and help bring about social justice and equality for everyone.” Teaching for social justice does not only result in student growth, but teachers reported positive results in their journey.

Teacher Growth

Participants reported feeling isolated in teaching for social justice. Choir teachers are one-of-their-kind in their school buildings with the nearest colleague being at least a school away if choir is offered in every school in their district. Sometimes it is not. Teaching choir, by its nature, is different from teaching any other content area and finding other choral educators who teach for social justice to join with was difficult for participants. School districts offered little training and did not supply adequate resources to support the teachers. Many teachers reported

that participation in my study was helpful in providing a forum to voice their thoughts, feelings, and experience working for social justice and that they grew from the experience. Aaron said,

Participating in your study has been very eye opening for me because this is a lot of things that I've kind of internally wrestled with and sort of thought about, but never had to vocalize and explain to somebody else. So, I appreciate the design of this. It made me think.

Brooke said she felt “uplifted” as a result of being part of the study and that it “got her in the right frame of mind” for her work with her students in the coming school year. Jason said our conversations “gave him insight” into the “way he does things” in his class. He was excited to take what he had learned from the study back to his co-teacher and said it would be helpful in their work together. My study gave the teachers opportunities to examine their how they think about and act on teaching for social justice.

Participants reported that teaching for social justice is a life-long journey filled with opportunities to correct and expand their thinking. Teacher growth happened when educators were honest, transparent, and humble when reflecting on teaching for social justice and realized that they still had much growing to do. When I asked Brooke what she could do better in teaching for social justice, she said she needs to speak up more.

I still have a veil over my eyes. I come from my own personal experience and even being a woman. You put up with a lot of things that you didn't realize you shouldn't have to put up with. So even now realizing like some old guy at church choir tapped my butt one time. And that was okay because he's old? Like I should have been better at speaking up and saying, “This is not okay.” So, I need to be aware of things that are not acceptable. You know, and then just branching out and trying to be more empathetic and seeing

where people are coming from and listen to them and talk to them and don't be afraid to talk to many people about their experiences. Just not live in my little bubble.

When I asked Courtney what she wanted to do better, she said she wanted to be “MUCH more intentional with programming...using different composers, not just picking what I have in my library and then making do with social justice, but actually choosing pieces for teaching social justice.” Elizabeth said,

When I'm planning my lessons and looking at this stuff [social justice], I just want to make sure that I'm really doing my research with the things that I'm saying so the things that I'm teaching my kids are accurate.

Hannah expressed that sometimes in the “messy journey” of teaching for social justice, “there's times that you feel like...there's days that things are just not going well and you have to regroup.” When reflecting honestly on her practice, Jordan reported how she grew from the realization that she had made students uncomfortable.

I always want people to criticize my teaching and to tell me what I could be doing better, especially in reference to social justice issues. For instance, before I knew better, I used to tell my students in my class, “If I miss-gender you, please correct me.” And, looking back on that I'm like, “Oh my God, what a terrifying thing I just asked that kid to do, to interrupt the teacher in the middle of class and ask them to correct their pronouns in front of the entire class.”

Jordan grew from making mistakes and learning along her journey. Music educators in my study grew in thinking about teaching for social justice in a variety of ways.

Participants said Covid pandemic and the and social turmoil during the shut-down caused them to grow as social justice educators. Jordan said,

The biggest catalyst for change in my life honestly was this last summer. I mean, people have been saying Black lives matter before this last summer and I believed that, but it was really during the pandemic that helped me see so much inequity even like in our healthcare and our social programs. I saw where people of color that come from low-income areas don't have access to health care and they're dying at a much higher rate than White people because they don't have access to the same things that we do. Also, the murder of George Floyd was a big one for me that really made me start being like “Okay, I need to not just be teaching myself and my students how to be better going forward, but I need to be actively undoing all the wrong, too.

Elizabeth said during Covid when she was teaching online, her students “became so focused” when talking about social justice issues. She said she was able to build trust with the students because they had more focused time to talk about issues. During that time, she became better at leading successful discussions about social justice issues. When I asked her how her teaching would be different going forward, she said, “Oh, there are so many things I’ve done in Covid that I’m keeping. It wasn’t all perfect, but there are many things my students understood better because we dived into them.” The Covid pandemic slowed the classroom pace enough so that teachers had time to think about content without the usual performance pressures. The pandemic and social events which happened during the pandemic caused teachers to explore different ways of teaching choir for social justice.

Because of recent social events, teachers reported feelings of empowerment in teaching for social justice. Courtney said,

We had a George Floyd rally that I attended at the park right beside our school. And there were only three teachers there...not many students. I think that was because there had

been rallies in a nearby city that had gotten violent. But just knowing what happened outside of the rally and the people who showed up who weren't for the rally, it is going to be hard...but I'm...as long as I'm there, I think my students are going to know that I'm for that. And if we can get into the community more this next year, I think slowly, we'll see... like my band director is also very much social justice oriented, very vocal on all types of social media, and he has a much larger group of people that follow him in our community than I do. He's received relatively well so I'm hoping once I get into the community and do what he does, something will happen.

Sam said,

I see it happening and all the events that have happened in our country and all the events that are happening in our world, I see it, and I feel it. And I'm angry and I'm sad and I have those feelings, they seem to be really feelings of just grief. Yet also, just how can we “reach across the aisle” to get everybody to be on the same page in regard to making something happen and making that change happen.

He said he hopes,

it [his school] can be different, because I noticed some things...like my students, we don't have a Black History Month. I'm going to talk to my principal about starting a Black History Month program because we need it for the school. We need to see it because we have a big Veterans Day program; the band performs and the whole student body is there, and they see the value of that and that is very important. I was talking to another teacher about it. But I know our principal would fully be on board with it. And I think that would totally start to open that door of allowing everyone to see what you have and the opportunities that you get are not always the same for other students.

Beyond the Classroom

Participants said that choir teachers and their students have opportunities to affect positive social change beyond their choir classrooms. Christina said,

I think we [teachers] have an opportunity to show students how positive change happens...and how they can not only be participants in that that but leaders in that change. And I think, when that happens---because social justice is not a subject, it's a concept—to me—and I think when that happens, it impacts our communities. Because when I have a student that comes through and I have him longer than his mom and dad have him, he's learning these things in my classroom and in your classroom and in John's classroom and in Susie's classroom, it is creating a difference in the school culture, and then he takes that home. And Johnny's little brother comes through the school a few years later and it just creates this revolving door. We've impacted our community even more than we know.

Jason said partnering with other areas of his school has greater impact. He said he purposefully cultivated relationships with his sports colleagues to garner a larger contingent of social justice-minded adults. He said bringing awareness to and recruiting fellow teachers will have greater impact in his community.

I hope it doesn't sound like I'm bashing because I'm not. I love athletics, but here at Hardin, our athletic department is really an entirely separate institution and I understand why. I don't want to be in that world because I can't imagine the pressure being a coach here, where you have to win to validate your worth. But I feel like there's not a lot of work happening in those areas. And I don't think anyone is even questioning that because they're not, because it's not a part of education but unfortunately, it's a huge impact on our

educational environment and community. So, I had just started, the year before Covid was the first year that I had actually made any type of connections with some of the younger coaches, and even just starting to kind of scratch at these kinds of ideas just trying to plant seeds in what I believe is true. And it's that old stupid Spider Man thing, "If you have great power, then you have great responsibility." And the most powerful people in our school are our coaches. There are many of them that are really good, but I wish that they would see this side of it, I wish they would see that they actually could control and have a huge impact on our culture and our climate. So, I've started those kinds of conversations and I think, maybe that would be my answer back to social justice, or what I would like to do better is branch out to other teachers with these ideas.

Christina, who works in two schools (a middle school and a separate high school), said her schools' faculty and administrators working together is "changing the culture."

There's more a familial work structure than I think I have ever been part of. I mean, you have your different departments, but we all operate as a team. We respect each other in our differences as colleagues and we are leading by example and modeling—not maybe realizing it—for our students...and then in our classrooms we have opportunities to address [social justice issues] ...noticing ways we can address it properly. All of that together is changing the culture.

Teachers acknowledged that they want to improve in affecting their communities. When I asked Sam how his teaching for social justice affected the community where his school is situated, he said,

I'm working on that...long story short, it just needs work and just time and really just thinking about it and figuring out what's the best approach to getting more people involved, getting people to understand.

Christina said she hopes her teaching affects colleagues in her schools to teach for social justice so that it is “infused in every part of the school.” She believes they are already making positive social change in the community but wanted to see more. Jordan said she is “pushing forward” her school and community in social justice and equity practices because she said, “there are HUGE problems in my school and my community that I’m seeing that really upset me...that I want to change.” Music educators in my study, along with their students, endeavored to affect positive social change in their schools and communities.

Conclusion

In this study, I conversed with secondary music educators who taught for social justice in their choir classrooms. I explored (1) why they taught for social justice, (2) how they taught for social justice including the challenges they encountered, and (3) the effects of teaching for social justice on them, their students, schools, and communities.

Through semi-structured interviews, I found that participants teach for social justice “Because They Love Their Students,” which I called Theme One. Love for students was at the center of their motivation. I discovered that training, life experiences, and student-centered approaches shaped how they teach. I reported this finding in Theme Two “Instruments for Change.” The teachers said that centering social justice within choir pedagogy was an imperfect journey teachers and students take together. Therefore, “It’s Messy! Bumbling Through” is the sub-theme where I reported teacher challenges in teaching for social justice. I described the effects and results of teaching for social justice on teachers, students, stakeholders, and

communities in Theme Three, “When You Sing Together...You Can’t Help but Love Each Other.”

In this chapter, I presented findings using evidence found in the data and made connections to existing literature which connected with teacher experiences. I shared the implications of this study for music educators, highlighted future research which could build upon this work, and re-visited my positionality to report how the study has changed me in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5

Discussion

But let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

(Holy Bible, English Standard Version, 2001, Amos 5:24)

I began this study wanting to learn how self-identified social justice music educators think about teaching secondary choir through the lens of social justice. I wanted to know how they defined teaching for social justice, what motivated them to do it, what it looked like in their classrooms, and how they thought teaching for social justice affected their students, stakeholders, and communities. During my doctoral course work, I focused much of my studies on how school music pedagogy and social justice intersect, and though there is ample literature about theory, philosophy, and teaching for social justice in higher education, I found few practitioner articles about teaching secondary school choir for social justice. However, I knew secondary choral teachers who were doing wonderful social justice work in their classrooms. I was curious about their experiences. My desire to study choral music teachers' perspectives and tell their stories shaped my phenomenological research design. I addressed the following research questions through this study:

- How do secondary choral music teachers define teaching for social justice?
- Why do secondary choral music educators teach for social justice?
- How do secondary choral music teachers describe social justice in action within their classrooms?
- How do social justice secondary choral teachers think teaching for social justice affects their students, their school cultures, and the communities in which their schools are located?

In this closing chapter, I applied Hess' music activist pedagogy and other literature to my findings, discussed implications of my study for the field of music education, and made

recommendations for future research which will build upon and add to my research. In conclusion, I revisited my positionality to discuss how my classroom teacher experience affected my research design and data interpretation as well as how the research affected me and my teaching practice.

Theoretical Foundation

I used Juliet Hess' (2018a) tenets of an activist music education as a tool to capture the "common essence" (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 75) of teaching for social justice in the secondary choral classroom. Her pedagogy is based on the following ideas:

- teachers honoring their students' culture by providing ways for students to see themselves in the curriculum including their voices in curricular choices
- finding ways to address oppression in the classroom
- reaching across content areas
- teaching emotional and musical connectedness within ensembles (pp. 37-38)

Through semi-structured interviews, I discovered participants' definitions of teaching for social justice answering Research Question 1: How do secondary choral music teachers define teaching for social justice? In the beginning of this study, I found through the literature that many scholars and teachers define it differently causing the absence of a stipulatory idea of teaching for social justice. Implementing the idea is more difficult if scholars and practitioners do not agree upon the basic definition. Rapid changes in society contribute further to the difficulty of finding common ground. I assumed I would find the same overall ambiguity about teaching for social justice in my participants' definitions, but I was wrong. While literature reveals myriad definitions, my participants' definitions were consistently student-centered. This became clear in similar words they used. Participants agreed that teaching for social justice was

meeting the needs of students and helping them to become agents for positive social change. I organized participants' definitions of teaching secondary choir for social justice into the following main ideas: (a) teachers center students in pedagogy and curriculum and (b) movement toward more just choral classrooms could and should be used to affect people and society for the greater good.

Motivated to teach for social justice from a deep care for their students, participants' definitions of teaching for social justice focused on students first. As in Hess' activist pedagogy (2018a; 2019a), they centered their students' lived experiences and cultures and valued student voice (Spruce, 2015) in their pedagogy and curricular choices. Valuing students "emphasizes the worth, dignity, and preciousness of individual human beings" (Jorgenson, 2015, p. 10). Teachers in my study agreed that their foundational goal in teaching for social justice was to create a caring atmosphere where everyone felt they mattered and belonged. Utilizing students' music in curricular choices ensures that all students see themselves in the curriculum (Hess, 2018a; Hess, 2019a; Hoffman, 2012) and connects home with learning at school (Bond, 2017; Doyle 2014a; Gay, 2013; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Shaw, 2012; Shaw 2016).

Participants also agreed with Hess (2019a) that including musics from other cultures helped students see life from a broader perspective. Helping students understand the world beyond themselves through culturally diverse repertoire guides them in greater social awareness (Fitzpatrick, 2012) and encourages deeper engagement in learning (Hoffman, 2012). Seeing life from different perspectives opened students to having meaningful conversations, part of strong relationships within the choir classroom. Through open communication, students become more aware of the needs of others and form deeper relationships with their teachers and other students. Silverman (2016) called this "love as action" (p. 158). She stated that,

engaging in reciprocal teacher-teacher and teacher-student discourses for social justice that privilege love as action, rather than privately held feelings, may help to guide arts educators to work beyond artistic techniques and support the intellectual and political ideals of education for democratic engagement. If we love those around us, we more openly and willingly assume responsibility for, and accept accountability within, the relationships we are a part of. Through love-as-action, we enter these relationships fully, not as individuals filling roles, but as people caring for people.

Genuine caring for each other builds strong interpersonal relationships and trust in the classroom. Trusting allows students and teachers to engage each other in a safe environment where they are encouraged to empathize with others. Laird (2015) showed that music making was particularly significant in helping students develop empathy. Silverman (2016) stated, “until students understand and empathize with and for each other, they cannot participate in and for social justice” (p. 158).

Past educational theorists and scholars such as Dewey, Freire, Rugg, Counts, W.E.B. Du Bois, and Booker T. Washington saw education as the solution to bringing about a more just society. As students and teachers expand their worldviews, they think critically about problems they encounter and seek to find solutions (Freire, 1970/2005; Generals, 2000; Scott, 2011).

“Problem-posing education,” a component of Freire’s (1970/2005) critical pedagogy, posited that men and women develop their power to perceive critically the way they exist in the world with which and in which they find themselves; they come to see the world not as a static reality but as a reality in the process of transformation. (p. 12)

Together teachers and students are empowered to approach the world as *problem-solvers*. Heuser (2011) reported that music instruction can “play a role in fulfilling the greater mission of education, which is to create a just and equitable society” (p. 294).

Jorgensen (2015) stated music teachers’ “commutative justice” (p. 19) responsibilities include service to their students and secondly, to the “wider public” (p. 19). Participants had a clear grasp of their responsibility to teach for social justice within their own classrooms. However, teaching for social justice in service to their communities was less developed in their consciousness. At the time of their interviews, some were just beginning to understand the connection between what they did in their classrooms and the wider community. I conducted the interviews in the wake of Covid pandemic school shutdowns which contributed to teachers’ inability to see influences of their teaching beyond their classrooms. The prohibition of face-to-face social involvement with their students and communities was fresh on their minds. When I asked participants what they would like to do better in teaching for social justice, several said they wanted to positively affect their communities. Time spent reflecting upon their teaching practice during the pandemic helped them realize they wanted to go beyond just teaching music to teaching for social justice through their pedagogy and curriculum.

When asked about actively addressing oppression through music and issues involving their students (Hess’ second tenet of activist music education), teachers in my study said they felt uncomfortable with the idea of “find[ing] ways to actively address oppression” (Hess, 2018a, p. 38). They associated “actively address[ing] oppression” with leading their students in demonstrations and other social actions which might be construed as radical in their school communities. Several teachers said their students and stakeholders were divided about social justice issues and pedagogy. Teachers expressed insecurity about knowing how to approach the

subject of “oppression” with their students. They had difficulty knowing what it would look like and faced ambiguity knowing where the practice might lead. This was rooted in anxiety of perceived criticism or losing their job. Jason said he feared “offending and running people out of [his] program.” Hess (2018a) stated this as part of the “stickiness of activism in schools” (p. 39). Music teachers in my study were generally a positive group of people who use music to uplift, encourage, and unify, so pointing out systemic oppression was a difficult concept for most participants to envision doing in their classroom. They said it was easier pointing out unjust acts which occurred in history because recent events are “an open wound” (Brooke). Some said although they felt uncomfortable addressing systemic oppression, they did address oppression involving individuals. Bullying, when they saw it happening, and incidents involving student or teacher bias were easier to address. Teachers reported having meaningful conversations about issues with students as a successful method of helping students realize and overcome situations. However, some teachers said they felt ill-prepared to lead class discussions and hesitated to bring up issues. Other teachers said they deliberately selected particular repertoire as a basis for discussing oppression. They reported feeling more comfortable having conversations about topics when prompted by the music. Hess (2018a) said addressing oppression “through music and through issues and conditions that affect youth...fosters critical thinking” (p. 38) about how the world works connecting school music to real life.

Most teachers in my study had only recently felt the impetus to use music to address social justice issues. Passionately committed to a social justice agenda, Jordan had the most advanced and strategic plan for teaching for social justice among my participants. During the previous year, she planned and implemented a concert highlighting various kinds of oppression through repertoire choices. She felt confident that the concert accomplished her goal of bringing

awareness to her students and the community about oppression both from a “socio-historical and socio-political” viewpoint (Hess, 2018a, p. 38) which Hess said is “crucial to an activist music program” (p. 38). Jordan strived to present ideas that everyone could agree on and reported that she felt the concert was successful. In contrast, other teachers chose a song or two to bring awareness, rather than devoting the entire program to a particular issue. Many participants reported that it was especially difficult finding songs about social justice that were written on a difficulty level appropriate for middle and high school students. All teachers in my study reported the need for more resources and training and said they wanted to be “more courageous” (Sam) in teaching for social justice.

Expanding across content areas is innate in teaching for social justice in the choral classroom. Hess (2018a, 2019a) said this connects students to their cultural roots and allows them to expand beyond their current realities. Participants reported teaching the following interdisciplinary concepts through repertoire: (1) history and context of songs (history/social studies/cultural studies); (2) language of songs (English/foreign languages); (3) vocal production and acoustics (science); and (4) music theory (math). They also invited experts in other content areas and culture bearers to teach their students across content areas. Kali, a STEM trained teacher incorporated science, technology, engineering, and mathematics into her music instruction. She believed the integration of other content areas helped ground her students in their education and increased its value in their lives.

Some teachers expressed a desire to work cross-curricularly with other content area teachers at their school. However, they cited lack of time, absence of common planning time with other departments within their school, and “siloeing” as challenges. Sam wanted to partner with colleagues in other content areas. He said,

I feel like some of my colleagues, they have their job to do and that's the only thing they are really worried about. I fully understand that, but we are all here for a reason, to support our students and help them feel valued.

Choir teachers saw reaching across content areas as essential best practice in teaching for social justice.

Students and teachers became emotionally and musically connected because teachers focused on building a choir community where students felt welcomed and celebrated. Hess (2018a) said activist music education “teaches for ensemble as togetherness and fosters positive and mutually supportive learning environments” (p. 38). She focused on “highlighting the connections between youth themselves” (p. 38), but my teachers posited teaching for social justice meant working for strong teacher-student relationships grounded in mutual trust which developed through years of singing together (often four or more years). As in the literature addressing culturally responsive pedagogy (Abril, 2012; Bond, 2017; Fitzpatrick, 2012; Shaw, 2016), caring teacher-student relationships provided the capstone upon which these teachers built their social justice pedagogy.

Caring teacher-student relationships allowed for deeper musical instruction and developed social-emotional skills for students and teachers. Several participants said that strong relationships allowed them to focus on teaching the “whole child” (Bond, 2017, p. 167). Kali attributed her success at music festivals to her heightened focus in forming trusting relationships with students. She began helping them make the connection between home and school by including their music in her curriculum. Through this practice coupled with strong inter-personal relationships, students can identify as musicians and understand what school music can offer them. Fitzpatrick (2012) called this “identity development” and stated, “by authentically aligning

our music curriculum with the music that our students value, we can find better ways to connect more effectively with their personal identities” (p. 54). Kali showed her students that she values their culture first which allowed her to lead them in discovering a broader view of music.

Teachers in my study became more aware of the importance of emotional connections with their students during online instruction because of the Covid pandemic. Bond (2017) reported that teaching the whole child allowed for a deep connection to occur between students’ school and home life. Elizabeth said online instruction gave her a more realistic look into students’ home life and allowed her to “get to know” her students better. Online instruction helped form stronger bonds between her and students as they suddenly had individual time to talk one-on-one while waiting for other students to join or after class was officially over.

Dialoging about social justice issues was a valued skill among my participants. Jordan, Jason, Juliana, and Brooke said they feared saying the wrong thing or people misunderstanding them. While some teachers expressed insecurity and fear in opening up classroom discussions about social justice issues, as was expressed in the literature (Bradley, 2007; Hess, 2014; Hess, 2017b; Hoffman & Carter, 2013), most felt comfortable sharing with small groups or individually with students. Elizabeth’s online instruction experience helped her connect to her students in ways she never realized were possible. She felt closer to her students after the online class experience.

Teachers understood they are on a “messy” (Hess, 2018b, p. 128) journey with their students toward a more just classroom. It is messy because of outside challenges (lack of support and resources) and because of challenges within and between teachers and students. Being in relationship with other humans is messy because of human shortcomings. However, teachers and students experienced growth as they worked together.

And lastly, teachers expressed a desire to be more purposeful, to do more, in teaching for social justice. Covid restrictions had worked as a double-edged sword for the teachers in my study. In one respect, the lack of face-to-face interactions with students and opportunities to perform in their community worked to thwart their efforts in teaching for social justice. They felt emotionally disconnected from their students, families, and communities, making it difficult to see past the negative situation. Looking at Covid from another perspective, the time away from the physical classroom, helped teachers reflect on their teaching practice, seeing ways they wanted to improve. Overwhelmingly, participants said after reflecting, they were coming back stronger than before. Being away from their students helped them understand how little time they really had to develop strong interpersonal relationships with their students. They learned that conversations are incredibly important and must occur in tandem with purposeful activity. Working together, music educators and their students “unleash [music’s] full potential” (Elliot, 2012, p. 27) to affect positive social change.

Implications and Recommendations

“Music for every child; every child FOR music,” Carl Gehrken’s slogan from his 1923 speech to the Music Supervisors National Convention is still true. Music educators in my study continued to aspire to the ideal that every child should have the opportunity to study music in school. However, they expressed that music education has not achieved Gehrken’s vision in the almost one hundred years since he said it. They expressed their dismay that their choir rooms often did not reflect the diversity found within their student bodies and they said they did not have the remedy to this dilemma. Teachers feeling overwhelmed by practical and systemic level changes needed within music education, had trouble knowing how and where to start.

Pre-Service Training

Systemic changes needed to bring about more just choral music classrooms begin with pre-service training. In my study, most participants received little to no training in their undergraduate music programs, no matter how old they were. Given that social justice education is a recent addition to many music teacher training programs, one would think that only the older participants reported no training. However, all participants reported that they felt ill-prepared to teach for social justice when they graduated college and felt more training would have helped. The literature also shows pre-service students wanted more training (Fisher & Fisher, 2020; Perkins, 2019). Some colleges and universities are doing great work in this area, but others can improve.

If not currently included in teacher preparation curriculums, I recommend colleges and universities institute classes focused on providing pre-service teachers experience with tough social issues. Pre-service teachers leading and taking part in choirs within the carceral system (Abrahams et al., 2012, Weber, 2021), taught them empathy and that every person is valuable. Through becoming aware of human-trafficking, students became engaged in advocacy work with local law enforcement and non-profit organizations (Fisher & Fisher, 2020). Pre-service teachers benefitted greatly from these experiences and gained skills which they will likely take into their teaching practice.

Students struggle with social justice issues, and the choir teacher is uniquely positioned because of content, emotional connection, and strong teacher-student relationships to help their students make sense of difficult issues. Social issues have become more complicated. Classes or units in existing classes could teach psychology, sociology, and human development which

emphasize the changes in current society. This could help pre-service teachers better navigate these issues as they secure employment and begin their careers.

In-Service Training

Teachers in my study wanted more training specific to teaching for social justice in the choral classroom. Several participants said the only training they received was reading on their own and self-study. They expressed the need for administrators of their school systems to take a more active role in supplying pedagogical training focused on social justice issues.

I recommend administrators provide professional development dedicated to helping in-service teachers move their classrooms to more just practices. Teachers need general professional development applying to all subject areas and also training devoted specifically to meet the needs of choral music educators.

Additional Literature and Organizational Support

More research and curriculum are needed in teaching secondary choir for social justice. Practitioners need to publish and present their work at conferences so teachers can learn from each other. Pre-service teacher educators and secondary choral teachers contributing their work will greatly impact and encourage others in teaching choir for social justice. Song writers, composers, and arrangers need to contribute repertoire which addresses social justice issues on the difficulty level appropriate for middle school and high school choir students. Research and dedicated curriculum will help teachers in the field, but it could also help gain notoriety necessary to secure additional civic support.

Finally, I would like to see more practitioner articles on secondary social justice pedagogy in music education published in state, national, and international journals. Because secondary music educators are extremely busy, it is difficult for them to find extra time and

energy to publish and present at conferences. Many times, this is left to university faculty. In recent years, national organizations have implemented programs to support and encourage publications and conference presentations from in-service teachers. I encourage practicing teachers to contribute more. Our profession could benefit from meaningful action research grounded in praxis.

Recommendations for Further Research

As I conducted this study, I worked to answer four research questions. In the process, I encountered more questions to consider about social justice within the field of music education. Following are the questions and a brief description of recommended research to build upon and expand my research:

- How does teaching for social justice affect choral music students in sixth through twelfth grade? How do these students define social justice? Why is it important to them? How are they affected by social justice pedagogy? How can choral music teachers do a better job of teaching for social justice? A study created to capture student perspectives of social justice pedagogy applied to the choir classroom could be developed. The study could employ qualitative methods featuring interviews and focus groups or a quantitative student survey to capture a larger sample of student perspectives.
- Do choral music pre-service teachers, who have determined to teach for social justice during their teacher certification programs practice their ideals when they are in their first teaching jobs and beyond? What does teaching for social justice look like in their classrooms in comparison to what they thought it would look like during pre-service training? What are the challenges in teaching for social justice in your first teaching job?

A longitudinal study following them from pre-service methods courses through their first three years of teaching could be developed to answer these questions.

- How do choral music pre-service teachers keep the commitment to teaching for social justice in choir over time? How does it change? A longitudinal study could track teachers from years 3-5 to find out how their perspectives and practice change as they mature as teachers.
- How does professional development training affect in-service choral teachers? How does it improve their practice, if it does? This research could study choral teachers who identify as social justice educators and those who do not through a series of professional development experiences to find out how the added training affects their perspectives and practice.

Positionality Revisited

I began this research with many years of varied teaching experience having taught music at the preschool, elementary, middle, high school, and university levels. I homeschooled my own three children for nine years, taught in a homeschool cooperative school, private church school, and public secondary schools. In church, I taught graded choirs at all levels. I have guest conducted with many choirs over my almost forty-year career in choral music. I taught private studio and in schools of music and have led worship for four decades in the United States. I also had the pleasure to lead worship and choirs in Europe and Africa.

When I was nineteen, I traveled to several countries in southern Africa on a mission trip. In the airports teenaged young men walked around with AK-47 rifles. Bunkers lined street corners with machine guns peeping over sandbags. I had never seen anything like it. As we were walking down a street, I saw two police officers beating a young boy who looked to be about

eight years old. I wanted to intervene, but the missionaries I was with said my involvement would jeopardize the good work being done there. It was best to “let it go.” I have never forgotten the rage and helplessness I felt as they hustled me past. That experience and others helped me notice tensions between people groups. I determined to try to bring unity and new understandings between people wanting to make the world better using music.

The research design of this study, the questions I asked, how I responded to their answers, how I interpreted the data, and how I reported what I found, reflect my lived experiences and teaching practice. It was as if I were doing action research as I could not separate my own classroom experiences from those of participants. I was one of them because I had only left the high school classroom a year earlier. I discovered towards the end of data analysis how much my experiences influenced the processual thinking in Chapter 4. Having gotten a job teaching pre-service teachers during my research helped me take a wider approach to the problems they encounter. At first, I struggled with knowing how greatly I had affected the research. I wondered if I allowed who I am to influence the research negatively. After sufficient grappling and reading more about qualitative research methods, I decided to “lean into” my experience and use it to the enhance and enrich the study. I hope my efforts will help our profession in meaningful ways.

Not only did my lived experiences, personal and professional, affect the study, but the research affected me in profound ways, too. Though I studied social justice in the choral classroom for three years during doctoral coursework, applying it in my classroom as a practicing teacher, I almost abandoned the topic. Right before time to declare my topic and begin my dissertation work, I decided that teaching for social justice in the secondary choral classroom was too vast and complicated. I tried to find something more easily defined and predictable.

Then George Floyd was murdered on May 25, 2020, the country erupted in civil unrest in the aftermath, the Covid pandemic shut down the country, and I was drawn back to my original topic. I felt the world needed to hear stories of teachers working for positive social change now more than ever. The sixteen precious music educators in my study deserved to be heard.

This dissertation research is my participants and me joining together *with* hope that what we have done can *bring* hope. Action is the only way to change. Many times, music teachers feel helpless like I felt when I saw the police beating the boy in Africa. We see the turmoil around us, in our students, in ourselves, and think that what we do is so small it cannot make a difference. Teaching for social justice seems daunting especially when you consider the almost impossible goal of providing music for *every* child. Knowing and understanding that systemic and practical change needs to happen is easy. Teachers in my study grappled with *how* to bring about the changes...where to start? Dr. Nancy Barry, my wise dissertation chair, taught me how to approach large tasks by asking, “How do you eat an elephant?” and answering, “One bite at a time.” That is how music teachers must approach the messy process of becoming powerful tools of change for students and beyond the classroom. Step by step, shoulder to shoulder, we act in moving our pedagogies toward more just practice. In their prison choir project, Abrahams, Rowland, and Kohler (2012) stated, “The mission of the choir, framed in the context of social justice, is to move beyond barriers to create communities of hope that restore, enlighten, and transform lives through music” (p. 67). When we *focus* on where we are going, *employ* hope, and *do* something, anything...we make a difference. This study stands as a testimony to the possibilities. I pray we all embark on that journey allowing ourselves to be instruments for change as we “*do* justice, *love* mercy, and *walk* humbly” (*Holy Bible, English Standard Version*, 2001, Micah 6:8).

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TABLE 2

Research Questions/Protocol Questions

Research Questions	Protocol Questions
RQ1: How do secondary choral music teachers define teaching for social justice?	<p>In 1923, Karl Gehrrens, then president of NafME coined a phrase in his presidential address at the national conference. You may know this slogan, “Music for Every Child; Every Child FOR Music.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please share your thoughts about the slogan, “Music for Every Child; Every Child for Music.” • How do you define teaching for social justice?
RQ2: Why do secondary choral music educators teach for social justice?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What caused you to see the importance of teaching for social justice? • Describe your journey to implementing social justice into your teaching practice. What experiences or background shaped your teaching through a lens of social justice? • “I teach for social justice because...”
RQ3: How do secondary choral music teachers describe social justice in action within their classrooms?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is teaching for social justice in choir different from teaching for social justice in other content area classrooms? For example, social studies, English, etc. What causes you to answer that way? • Juliet Hess (2019a) posits four (4) tenets of teaching for social justice in the music classroom; the first one is teachers must honor the culture of their students. Have you considered that before and how might that idea impact what you do with your students? • Tell me about teaching for social justice in your classroom. Is it connected to repertoire, based in conversations about hard subjects or “teachable moments”? Can you tell me about particular activities you have done? • Hess’ second tenet is about “actively addressing oppression in the classroom both through music and through issues and conditions that affect youth” (Hess, 2018a, p. 38). How have you encountered this idea in your classroom with your students? • Hess’s fourth and final tenet has to do with teaching emotional and musical connectedness within the ensemble. She says it fosters positive and mutually supportive learning environments for students in the ensemble and in the students’ larger community. What are your thoughts on this, and have you encountered this idea in your teaching practice? • What are the challenges in teaching for social justice? • Is there anything you would like to do better in teaching for social justice? • “When considering social justice and my classroom, my hopes for the future are...” • If you have unlimited funds, no one will critique you, what specifically would you do in your classroom to promote social justice? Why?
RQ4: How do social justice high school choral teachers think teaching for social justice affects their students, their school cultures, and the communities in which their schools are situated?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell me about your students’ response to your teaching for social justice? • Do your students struggle with social justice issues? Tell me about that. • In teaching for social justice, what are your goals for your students? • Music education scholars talk about movement toward achieving social justice as a process or a journey that teacher and students take together, one that is not perfect. Juliet Hess talks about it as the “messiness of equity work,” meaning that it is not a perfect journey. What are your thoughts on Hess’s phrase “the messiness of equity work?” • Describe your goals for your students in the journey toward social justice. • Tell me about how your teaching for social justice has affected your school culture. What about the larger community, including parents, where the school is found?

Appendix A: Invitational Email

Subject: Social Justice and the Secondary Choral Classroom

Dear (*name of choir director*),

I hope your semester is going well. My name is Kay Dick, Ph.D. Music Education candidate and Graduate Teaching Assistant at Auburn University. I am writing to ask for your help with my dissertation research project entitled “Intersecting Social Justice and the Secondary Choral Classroom: A Phenomenological Study of Social Justice Teacher Perspectives.” Your experience makes you a rich resource for my study; I hope you can participate.

The purpose of my study is to understand the varying beliefs, attitudes, and practices of secondary choral music teachers who teach through a lens of social justice. My research questions are:

- How do secondary choral music teachers define teaching for social justice?
- Why do secondary choral music educators teach for social justice?
- How do secondary choral music teachers describe social justice in action within their classrooms?
- How do social justice secondary choral teachers think teaching for social justice affects their students, their school cultures, and the communities in which their schools are situated?

The study will require a 40–45-minute initial interview with you via Zoom. There could be possible brief follow-up emails to clarify details. Once I have completed a transcript of our conversation, I will email it and preliminary findings from the data to you for approval. At that time, I would like to schedule a second brief Zoom meeting to discuss the findings to make sure you are satisfied with the results. The study will be conducted using the strictest confidentiality procedures.

If you can participate in my study, please reply to this email stating your desire to participate and include your phone number, if possible. I would like to call you to set up an interview time. If you cannot participate, please reply with a recommended colleague, or friend whom you think would be a good fit for my study.

Please feel free to contact me at dkd0012@auburn.edu or by phone 205-834-0581 if you have any questions. I look forward to speaking with you. Thank you, in advance, for your time.

Sincerely,

Kay Dick
dkd0012@auburn.edu
Ph.D. Candidate, Music Education
Auburn University

Appendix B: Invitational Phone Call (Follow-Up to Invitational Email)

Hello *name of choir director*

My name is Kay Dick. I am a graduate student at Auburn University and recently sent you an email inviting you to participate in my dissertation study entitled “Intersecting Social Justice and the Secondary Choral Classroom: A Phenomenological Study of Social Justice Teacher Perspectives.” Have you had a chance to read the email?

[If answer is yes, they have read the email]

Thank you for considering being part of my study. Do you have any questions? Can you participate? *[If answer is yes...]* I am excited to interview you about social justice in your choir classroom. *[Skip to AGREE section below.]*

[If answer is no, they have not read the email]:

Based on my knowledge of your teaching practice, I believe that you may be ideal to participate in my study. I want to interview secondary choir teachers who consider teaching for social justice important. I know you are busy, so I have designed my study to require as little of your time as possible. Initially, I will need about 45-minutes for your interview. The focus of the interview will be to explore your beliefs, attitudes, and teaching practices about the importance of social justice in your classroom. I will provide you with a list of questions before the interview to give you time to put your thoughts together. The interview will be conducted using Zoom to give more time to focus on content rather than traveling to a place. I will record our conversation. Afterwards, I will email you the transcript and initial findings. I will use pseudonyms for your name and all identifying information to maintain your anonymity. I hope this will instill freedom for you to share authentically about this very important subject. Once you have had the chance to review the transcript and findings, I would like to discuss the findings in a short follow-up meeting, again using Zoom.

I understand this may be a lot of information. Do you have any questions about this research, the methods, or anything else I just said?

[Answer questions/continue to next section]

If I have answered all of your questions, would you like to participate in an interview for this research study?

(AGREE)

Wonderful! Thank you so much! Do you have a moment to find time for the initial Zoom interview? Now that we have set a time, I will send you a confirmation email containing our day, time, a Zoom link, an Information Letter, and a review of what we talked about today. Is your email *(confirm email address)*? Again, thank you for agreeing to participate and I look forward to our interview on *(day)* at *(time)*. I will send the confirmation email shortly. Have a great day!

(DECLINE)

Thank you for your time and consideration. I wish you the very best. Perhaps we will meet again in the future.

Appendix C: Information Letter



COLLEGE OF EDUCATION CURRICULUM & TEACHING

INFORMATION LETTER

for a Research Study entitled

“Intersecting Social Justice and the Secondary Choral Classroom: A Phenomenological Study of Social Justice Teacher Perspectives”

You are invited to participate in a research study seeking to understand the beliefs, attitudes, and practices of secondary choral music teachers whose praxis reflects a desire to teach for social justice. For this study, social justice educators are defined as educators who, as evidenced in their teaching philosophy and practice and according to their own opinion, include in their curricula and place emphasis on, teaching about social justice issues in their classroom. The study is being conducted by D. Kay Dick under the direction of Dr. Nancy Barry in the Auburn University Department of Curriculum and Teaching. You were selected as a possible participant because you are a secondary choral music educator who has self-identified as teaching through a lens of social justice and are 19 or older.

Participation. If you decide to participate in this research study, you will be asked to complete an interview lasting approximately 45 minutes. The interview will take place using Zoom video conferencing software and will be recorded. A short second meeting, via Zoom, will be conducted to share initial finding and ensure you are completely satisfied with the information.

Confidentiality. To protect your identity and allow for more candid conversation during the interview, you will be assigned a pseudonym as will your school identification. All participants are asked to refrain from naming any student, parent, or other individual that has not provided consent/assent to participate in this study. In the event where an individual that has not provided consent/assent to participate in this investigation is named, pseudonyms will be provided for these individuals so they may remain anonymous and unidentifiable in the research findings. Sections of the transcribed interview may also be removed to further secure confidentiality. The interview will be transcribed and information obtained through your participation will be published in the investigator’s dissertation. Participants will be provided with a transcription of their interview and emerging themes prior to publication.

Benefits. You may benefit from participation in this study, but there are no direct benefits to you.

Will you receive compensation for participating? There will be no compensation for participating in this research.

Are there any costs? If you decide to participate, there is no cost to you.

5040 HALEY CENTER
AUBURN, AL 36849-5212

TELEPHONE:
334-844-4434

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334-844-6789

www.auburn.edu

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Are there any risks or discomforts? There are no known risks associated with participating in this study.

If you change your mind about participating, you can withdraw at any time during the study by simply telling the investigator. Your participation is completely voluntary. If you choose to withdraw, your data can also be withdrawn. Your decision about whether or not to participate or to stop participating will not jeopardize your future relations with Auburn University, the Department of Curriculum and Teaching, or the investigator.

If you have questions about this study, *please ask them now* or contact Kay Dick in person, by phone at (205)834.0581, or by email at dkd0012@auburn.edu. You may also contact the Faculty Principal Investigator, Dr. Nancy Barry, at nhb002@auburn.edu.

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Auburn University Office of Research Compliance or the Institutional Review Board by phone (334) 844-5966 or e-mail at IRBadmin@auburn.edu or IRBChair@auburn.edu.

HAVING READ THE INFORMATION PROVIDED, YOU MUST DECIDE IF YOU WANT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS RESEARCH PROJECT. IF YOU DECIDE TO PARTICIPATE, THE DATA YOU PROVIDE WILL SERVE AS YOUR AGREEMENT TO DO SO. THIS LETTER IS YOURS TO KEEP.

Investigator's signature

Date

Co-Investigator's signature

Date

Investigator's printed name

Co-Investigator's printed name

Appendix D: First Interview Protocol

Introduction

Thank you so much for agreeing to contribute to this study which is in fulfillment of requirements for my dissertation at Auburn University. Thank you for your contribution to the choral art and the important work you do with secondary choral musicians. I am one of you and therefore I know the hours you put in, the sleepless nights, and the unmistakable difference you make in kids' lives every day by just being who you are. I taught secondary choir for 13 years and have led and sung in community and church choirs for more years than should be possible because I'm not that old. Because of my experience, no amount of thanks is adequate to express my respect, my deep appreciation, and my gratitude for all that you do with your students and for this investment in me as we talk together about the very important topic of social justice in the secondary choral classroom.

The purpose of this interview is to investigate your perspectives about teaching for social justice in your classroom. I am here as a researcher, not to judge you or your teaching practice or to judge if you actually teach for social justice or not. When I taught, I considered myself teaching through a lens of social justice, therefore, I understand some of the challenges and the benefits. Of course, those are from my perspective because social justice education can mean many things; it depends on who is talking. I am interviewing you because I am studying how choral music education and social justice intersect.

For this study, I define social justice education using Hess' (2019) "multi-faceted pedagogy" (p. 150) of music education for social change, "a model that celebrates community, honors lived experiences, provides musical means to share them, and encourages a praxis of noticing and resisting injustices" (p. 161).

Validity

This interview will last approximately 45 minutes. I will ask a series of questions, most of which will be open-ended and designed to capture your beliefs, attitudes, and practices about teaching for social justice. We are conducting and recording this interview on Zoom. A transcript is produced using the "record" function. After the interview, I will manually edit the transcript to accurately reflect what is said today. I will create a pseudonym for your name and the name of your school during the transcription process to ensure full confidentiality. I will return the manuscript to you, a process called "member checking" so that you can also check for accuracy along with initial findings from data analysis. Once you have the chance to read the results and transcript, I will schedule a follow-up Zoom meeting for a short discussion and to make sure you are satisfied with the results. The recordings we are making today will be stored on my personal computer and in Box, a secure Auburn-supported cloud storage system until they are no longer needed, at which time they will be deleted. No one other than me and my dissertation chair will have access to the recordings.

If at any time during the interview you would like to stop, please let me know and I will pause the recording. We will resume if and when you are ready. If you do not feel comfortable with a question, please let me know and we will skip it.

Ethics

I provided you with an Information Letter. Your agreement to provide data will serve as consent to participate. Before we begin, may I have your verbal consent to participate? So: do you consent to participate in this interview and research project?

Again, thank you for investing your time in this project. Do you have any questions?
Are you ready to begin?

Questions

The following questions are about you:

- Please state your name.
- What is your title and at which school do you work?
- How do you classify your school? As urban, suburban, rural, something else?
- What is the size of the city where your school is located?
- What is the cultural make-up of students in your school? In your classes in percentages?
- What classes do you teach?
- How long have you been in your current position?
- How long have you taught?
- What is your race?
- What is your age group? 20-30, 31-40, 41-50, 51-60, over 60
- What college did you attend?
- Were you required or did you take any classes dealing with issues of social justice or did any classes you took emphasize social justice? If yes, which ones?

These next questions are about your ideas of teaching for social justice:

Social justice is a multifaceted idea or problem, depending on how you look at it, and many scholars and teachers define it differently. It is not an easy concept to grasp because it encompasses so many issues that continue to expand and it means different things to different people.

In 1923, Karl Gehrkins, then president of NafME, coined a phrase in his presidential address at the national conference. You may know this slogan, “Music for Every Child; Every Child FOR Music.”

- Please share your thoughts about the slogan, “Music for Every Child; Every Child FOR Music.” Do you think music education has achieved this motto?
- How do you define teaching for social justice?
- What caused you to see the importance of teaching for social justice?
- Describe your journey to implementing social justice into your teaching practice. What experiences or background shaped your teaching through a lens of social justice?
- Is teaching for social justice in choir different from teaching for social justice in other content area classrooms? For example, social studies, English, etc. What causes you to answer that way?
- Juliet Hess (2019a) posits four (4) tenets of teaching for social justice in the music classroom, the first one is teachers must honor the culture of their students. Have you considered that before and how might that idea impact what you do with your students?
- Tell me about teaching for social justice in your classroom.
 - Is it connected to repertoire choices?

Is it based in conversations about hard subjects or “teachable moments?”

- Can you tell me about particular activities you have done?
- Hess’ second tenet is about “actively addressing oppression in the classroom both through music and through issues and conditions that affect youth” (Hess, 2018a, p. 38). What do you think about that idea? Have you considered it?
- Hess’ third tenet of teaching music for social justice is teachers reaching across content areas. She says this “locates youth at their own cultural centers” (Hess, 2018a, p. 38). How have you encountered this idea in your classroom and with your students?
- Hess’ fourth tenet of teaching music for social justice has to do with teaching emotional and musical connectedness within the ensemble. She says it fosters positive and mutually supportive learning environments for students in the ensemble and in the students’ larger community. What are your thoughts on this, and have you encountered this idea in your teaching practice?
- What are the challenges in teaching for social justice for you? For other teachers?
- Is there anything you would like to do better in teaching for social justice?

The following are questions are about you and your students’ journey together:

- Tell me about how your students respond to your teaching for social justice.
- Do your students struggle with social justice issues? Tell me about that.
- Music education scholars talk about movement toward achieving social justice as a process or a journey that teacher and students take together, one that is not perfect. Juliet Hess talks about it as the “messiness of equity work,” (Hess, 2018, p. 128) meaning that it is not a perfect journey. What are your thoughts on Hess’s phrase “the messiness of equity work?”
- Describe your goals for your students in the journey toward social justice.
- Tell me about how your teaching for social justice has affected your school culture. What about the larger community, including parents, where the school is found?
- In summary, complete the following statements:
 - “I teach for social justice because...”
 - “When considering social justice and my classroom, my hopes for the future are...”
 - If you have unlimited funds, no one will critique you, what specifically would you do in your classroom to promote social justice? Why?

Thank you SO much for your time, which I know is precious because you are a busy music educator. I have learned a great deal from you today and appreciate ALL that you do for your students and for our choral art. You are on the front line of contact for so many students’ and you truly are making a difference in their lives. “Don’t grow weary in well-doing.”

It is my desire that you are uplifted and encouraged as a result of your participation in my study. Thank you for your contribution! I will email a transcript of today’s interview and preliminary findings for your approval soon. Once you have had a chance to read them, I will contact you to set up our final meeting to discuss them. Do you have any questions or thoughts for me? (*Answer questions.*)

One final question: Whom should I talk to in order to learn more? (*Wait for answer.*)
Again, thank you! All the best to you and your students! Goodbye!

Appendix E: Second Interview Protocol

Thank you for meeting with me again to discuss the transcript from our first interview and my preliminary findings from the study. Your time is valuable, so this is designed to only take a few minutes. Again, thank you for contributing to the very important and relative subject of how teaching choral music and social justice intersect.

The first thing I would like to do is ask you if you have any edits, changes, or alterations to the transcript I sent you from our first interview. Do you have any? (Make any suggested changes to the transcript.) Are you satisfied with the accuracy of the document now?

Secondly, I shared a document with you which shows my research questions compared with some preliminary findings of the data coding process after the first round of interviews were conducted. Let us look at them together.

- What about the findings did you expect?
- What is surprising to you about the findings?
- Do you have anything to add to the findings?
- What are your thoughts about the research questions I was trying to answer? Do you think I answered the questions? How or how not?

I value your opinions greatly. Is there anything else you would like to add to my study?

Thank you SO much for contributing to my study. Not only have you made it possible for me to realize a lifetime dream of earning a doctoral degree, but you have helped make a significant contribution to the literature about teaching social justice in the secondary choral classroom. I am forever in your debt and will keep you posted on my dissertation and subsequent publication progress.