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The Dissertation Advisory Committee and the student's Department Chairperson, as representatives of the faculty, certify that this dissertation has met all standards of excellence and scholarship as determined by the faculty.

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INFLUENCES ON ACADEMICALLY SUCCESSFUL BLACK STUDENTS' PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL MUSIC

by

JIMMY EHREN OWENS

Under the Direction of Patrick K. Freer

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the factors that academically successful students who identify as Black or African American perceive to be influential when making decisions with regard to their participation or non-participation in school music at the high school level. I employed narrative inquiry to better understand the lived experiences four academically successful Black students. The findings were organized into the following narrative threads: flexibility with time commitments, instructional support with instruments, and social experiences. Implications for music teachers include finding ways to be flexible with the time commitments of their music ensembles, ensuring that adequate instructional support is provided for students, and working to create an environment where positive social experiences are likely to occur.

INDEX WORDS: Academically successful Black students, narrative inquiry, music education, music participation, high school music

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PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL MUSIC

by

JIMMY EHREN OWENS

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in

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Georgia State University

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my parents, Jimmy and Voncile Owens. Thank you for all of your love and support. I appreciate the foundation that you all laid for me. I hope that you both find solace in the fact that your work was not in vain. Peace and blessings!

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1 THE PROBLEM

For almost a century, members of the music education community have aspired to fulfill the clarion call: “Music for every child; every child for music” (Gehrkins, 1933, p. 37; Heidingsfelder, 2014, p. 47). This mantra not only advocates for the provision of musical opportunities for children, but it also expresses the need for presenting these musical opportunities in a way that is appealing to children. When providing clarity for the intended use of this mantra, Gehrkins (1933) stated,

By all means let us continue to extend musical opportunities until every child in the United States shall have the chance to study music. But let us face frankly the fact that unless we also cause these countless millions to want music, to crave its satisfactions, to continue to seek its consolation, its inspiration, its exaltation... the ultimate result will not be of any great significance in the cultural life of America. (p. 31)

Gehrkins was saying that the success of this mantra, which is determined by the significance of music education in American culture, is dependent upon the music education community’s ability to inspire children to want music by making musical opportunities appealing to children. Furthermore, the extension of musical opportunities, which embodies the goal of “music for every child,” is a prerequisite for the second half of the mantra, “every child for music.”

The music education profession has had considerable success in accomplishing the goal inherent in the first part of this mantra, “music for every child.” Ninety-four percent of elementary schools were reported to have offered music instruction during the 1999-2000 and 2009-2010 school years (Parsad & Spiegelman, 2012). Ninety percent of secondary schools were reported to have offered music instruction during the 1999-2000 school year and ninety-one percent of secondary schools were reported to have offered music instruction during the 2009-

2010 school year (Parsad & Spiegelman, 2012). The high percentage of schools that offer music instruction to students at the elementary and secondary levels supports the goal of offering musical opportunities to every child in America.

Therefore, while the music profession has had success in working towards the fulfillment of the first part of Gerhens' (1933) mantra, "music for every child," the second part of the mantra, "every child for music," has been more difficult to achieve, particularly at the secondary level. Music student participation rates tend to decrease precipitously at the high school level when students are able to choose their elective courses (Shuler, 2011). According to Elpus and Abril (2019), twenty-four percent of high school seniors elected to enroll in a music ensemble during their high school tenure. Academically successful students of all races and ethnicities were more likely to enroll in music ensembles except for students who identified as Black or African American. While academic success has been measured in a variety of ways (Catterall, Chapleau, & Iwanaga, 1999; Johnson & Memmott, 2006; Frey-Clark, 2015; Guhn, Emerson, & Gouzouasis, 2020), student participants in Elpus and Abril's (2019) study were deemed to be academically successful due to their prior academic achievement on a standardized algebra test. The low percentage of students who enroll in music ensembles at the high school level coupled with the low probability of academically successful Black students electing to enroll in music ensembles at the high school level signifies that the music profession has more work to do in fulfilling the second part of the mantra.

Background

The music education profession has endeavored to accomplish the goal of extending musical opportunities for every child with the hopes that every child would be for music on numerous occasions. As chronicled in the written histories of American music education (Mark

& Gary, 2000), a profound attempt to accomplish this goal occurred during the 1960s. This decade marked a time of significant transformation in American society, particularly in the areas of school reform, technology, and civil rights (Mark, 2000). The music education profession's response to the rapid sociocultural changes that occurred during the 1960s was an event that would become an important landmark in the history of American music education: The Tanglewood Symposium (Choate, Fowler, Brown, & Wersen, 1967). The Tanglewood Symposium was the precursor to another major event in the history of American music education: the Housewright Symposium (Madsen, 2000). In this section, I discuss both of these symposia as they relate to the music education profession's goal of providing musical opportunities for all children.

The Symposia

The Tanglewood Symposium was held to discuss and evaluate the functions and roles of music in American society as well as American music education (Choate, Fowler, Brown, & Wersen, 1967). The Housewright Symposium (Madsen, 2000), which was held in 1999, was an attempt to define American music education's place in current American society and to enhance the vision outlined at the Tanglewood Symposium (Piersol, 2000). The attendees of the Tanglewood and Housewright symposia produced declarations, which served as vision statements for the music education profession. These declarations contained agreements that represented the consensus of the attendees at both symposia. The Tanglewood Symposium produced eight agreements that attendees presented in the Tanglewood Declaration (see Appendix A). The Housewright Symposium produced the Housewright Declaration (see Appendix B), which included twelve agreements that were presented at the NAFME conference on March 8, 2000 (Hinckley, 2000). There were agreements from both declarations that

supported Gerhkens' goal for providing musical opportunities for all students. As detailed below, some of the agreements from both declarations bear similarities to each other. These agreements supported the goal of providing musical opportunities for students with regard to stages of development, musical diversity, and personal circumstances.

Stages of Development. First, both declarations contained agreements that supported the provision of musical opportunities at each stage of development. This is important because the current study is focused on music participation at the high school level. The third agreement from the Tanglewood Declaration was similar to the eleventh agreement from the Housewright Declaration with regard to this goal. The third agreement from the Tanglewood Declaration stated, "Schools and colleges should provide adequate time for music in programs ranging from pre-school through adult or continuing education" (Choate et al., 1967, p. 51). The eleventh agreement from the Housewright Declaration stated, "Music educators must join with others in providing opportunities for meaningful music instruction for all people beginning at the earliest possible age and continuing throughout life" (Madsen, 2000, p. 220). These agreements represent the music education profession's commitment to providing musical opportunities to every student at each stage of development. Thus, according to these agreements, academically successful Black students should have the opportunity to participate in school music at the high school level.

While the aforementioned agreements represent each stage of development, attendees of the Tanglewood Symposium further emphasized the provision of musical opportunities at one particular stage: high school. The fourth agreement was centered on the provision of music education for high school students. Music educators agreed, "Instruction in the arts should be a general and important part of education in the senior high school" (Choate et al., 1967, p. 51).

This agreement was a response to the reality that most students were not enrolled in music courses. When discussing critical issues in music education, the attendees of the symposium noted that there were less than 20% of the nation's students enrolled in music courses at the high school level (Choate et al., 1967). This agreement is significant to the current study where the focus is on academically successful black students at the high school level.

Musical Diversity. Next, the second agreement from the Tanglewood Declaration was similar to the fourth agreement from the Housewright Declaration with regard to the inclusion of a variety of musical styles and genres. The second agreement from the Tanglewood Declaration stated:

Music of all periods, styles, forms, and cultures belong in the curriculum. The musical repertory should be expanded to involve music of our time in its rich variety, including currently popular teen-age music and avant-garde music, American folk music, and the music of other cultures. (Choate et al., 1967, p. 51)

The sixth agreement from the Housewright Declaration stated:

All music has a place in the curriculum. Not only does the Western art tradition need to be preserved and disseminated, music educators also need to be aware of other music that people experience and be able to integrate it into classroom music instruction. (Madsen, 2000, p. 219)

These agreements encapsulated the essence of the first part of Gehrken's (1933) clarion call: "Music for every child." By stating that all music belongs in the music curriculum, the attendees of the Tanglewood Symposium and Housewright Symposium were making a concerted effort to be more inclusive of music that might be different, culturally or otherwise, than that of the music educator who is responsible for teaching. This is significant because while the

American student population is becoming increasingly diverse (Banks, 2004), the music education teaching force does not seem to be as diverse (Elpus, 2015; Matthew and Koner; 2017). Furthermore, as Hess (2017) stated in reference to teachers, “Selecting repertoire... reflects our values at teachers, cultural backgrounds, and lived experiences” (p. 71). Thus, in many instances, music educators might consider making concerted efforts, similar to the agreements at the symposia, to include repertoire in the music curriculum that may not be a direct reflection of their cultural background or lived experience. These efforts could impact the participation of students who are similar to the population under investigation in this study.

Personal Circumstances. Lastly, both declarations contain agreements that support that support the provision of musical opportunities for student regardless of their personal circumstances. The seventh agreement from the Tanglewood Declaration stated, “The music education profession must contribute its skills, proficiencies, and insights toward assisting in the solution of urgent social problems as in the ‘inner city’ or other areas with culturally deprived individuals” (Choate et al., 1967, p. 51). While describing an individual as culturally deprived is insensitive and disrespectful to that individual, the ultimate goal of providing musical opportunities to individuals who experience difficult circumstances is aligned with Gerhakens’ mantra. The first agreement in the Housewright Declaration also supports this goal. The first agreement stated, “All persons, regardless of age, cultural heritage, ability, venue, or financial circumstance deserve to participate fully in the best music experiences possible” (Madsen, 2000, p. 219). This agreement more eloquently posits the ideal of providing musical opportunities for all students regardless of their personal circumstance. As it relates to this study, academically successful Black students should have the opportunity to participate in school music regardless of their personal circumstances.

Purpose

The Tanglewood Symposium and Housewright Symposium were significant attempts to promote principles that aligned with the first half of Gerhakens' (1933) mantra, "music for every child." The impact of these national efforts can be represented through the actualization of the second half of Gerhakens' mantra, "every child for music." The actualization of every student being for music becomes more measurable at the high school level when students get to choose their elective courses. At this level, we can determine which student populations are choosing to participate in school music. Elpus and Abril (2019) noted that academically successful students who identified as Black or African American were less likely to enroll in music ensembles than academically successful students from other race and ethnicity groups.

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine the factors that academically successful students who identify as Black or African American perceive to be influential when making decisions with regard to their participation or non-participation in school music at the high school level. Additionally, I examined the lived experiences of academically successful Black students as it relates to their participation and non-participation in school music at the high school level.

Research Question

The research question was as follows: How do the lived experiences of academically successful Black students influence their choice to participate in school music at the high school level? My use of the term lived experiences refers to an understanding about how our unique encounters have brought us to our personal understanding of the influential factors relate to our music participation or non-participation.

Significance of the Study

This study was significant because overall student enrollment in music courses becomes a crucial topic at the high school level when music courses become elective (Shuler, 2011). Consequently, any student demographic that is enrolling in music courses at a level that is less than comparable to their counterparts should become a focus of study. Furthermore, public school music education programs have been the subject of program and budget reductions and eliminations (Fermanich, 2011; Hedgecoth & Major, 2019; Major, 2013; Pergola, 2014; West, 2012). While there are several factors that can contribute to the termination of a music program, low music student enrollment numbers can exacerbate these threats. This is especially true for elective courses at the high school level where electives become optional. At this level, “enrollment numbers can also determine a program’s fate” (Major, 2013, p. 13). Furthermore, “with few exceptions (such as the AP courses), the secondary schools would not continue an elective course unless a minimum number of students enrolled” (p. 13). High school students can greatly impact the existence of their school music programs by choosing to enroll or choosing not to enroll in music courses. While academically successful Black students are only one segment of the student population at the high school level, they are still valuable and included in the second half of Gerhkens’ mantra. Consequently, this study is significant because it involves the examination of the factors that influence academically successful Black students’ decision to participate in school music at the high school level.

My Narrative

In addition to the aforementioned reasons, this study was also significant to me on a personal level. First, I identify as a Black and/or African-American person. Secondly, several of my scores on standardized tests were high enough for me to be labeled as academically

successful during my high school years. However, unlike many of the academically successful Black students in Elpus and Abril's study (2019), I constantly participated in musical activities inside and outside of school during my primary and secondary school years. Therefore, I found it necessary for me to reflect on my personal musical journey as I embarked on this study of academically successful Black students.

As far as I can remember, I have always been a part of the Black church. The church has played a major role in shaping my identity. My earliest life experiences were heavily influenced by this spiritual and cultural phenomenon from the preaching, the fellowship, the service, and the music. The musical aspects of the Black church would prove to have a tremendous impact on me by providing innumerable opportunities for participation. In addition to participating in the musical activities at church, I also remember participating in school music at an early age. Initially, my school music experiences were relegated to the general music classroom of my elementary school, which was a public institution. In the general music classroom, we sung group songs and we learned to play the recorder. I remember these general music experiences being pleasant and fun.

I became interested in playing the drums during the fourth grade largely because of my experiences of watching the musicians perform at church. My interest in playing the drums became evident to my parents when they saw a large number of marks on the stair rails at our house. These marks appeared as a result of me taking wire hangers and playing rhythms on the rails. I was able to capitalize on my interest in a number of ways. First, my parents bought me a drum set and enrolled me into private drum lessons. I would also seek opportunities to play the drums at church. I was allowed to play the drums during the devotional period of some of the church services. Lastly, when I reached the fifth grade, I signed up to be a percussionist in my

elementary school's band and continued to participate from the fifth grade until the sixth grade. I was very excited to have these opportunities to perform.

While in the sixth grade, my experiences of watching the musicians perform at church caused me to become interested in playing a different instrument: the piano. During this time, we had an old piano in our house that was probably there for decoration. I would sit at the piano and pick out melodies and harmonies that I heard at church. On one occasion, my mother walked by as I was playing the piano and was shocked that she could recognize the hymn that I was playing. I continued to try to learn how to play songs from church by ear throughout my sixth-grade year and as I enrolled in middle school.

My middle school years were great for me in terms of music participation in school as well as outside of school. When I enrolled in middle school in the seventh grade, I participated in the school's concert band as a percussionist. I also began to play the tenor drum in the marching band at the high school that I would eventually attend. The experience of playing in the high school marching band during middle school was awesome. I, along with other middle school band students, would get on the activity bus that would transport us from the middle school to the high school each day. We would participate with the high school band students by learning the music, drills, and halftime shows. One of the reasons I enjoyed this experience is because I did not feel that any exceptions were made for me as a result of me being younger than the high schoolers. If I learned everything that I was supposed to learn, which I usually did, I had an opportunity to perform with the marching band at the high school football game each week. This was an exciting moment that included playing music with the band in while in the stands, playing cadences with the drumline in the stands, and performing drills and dances on the football field during the halftime show.

In addition to participating in the middle school concert band and high school marching band during middle school, I also began taking formal piano lessons during this time. Much of my piano playing during this time consisted of me trying to learn songs that I heard at church by ear. When I first met my piano teacher, I was adamant about letting her know that I played gospel music. Luckily, my piano teacher was very familiar with gospel music but also very familiar with classical music. I remember her telling me, "If you learn a classical piece, I will teach you more about gospel." This is an arrangement that continued throughout middle school and high school.

As I matriculated through middle school and transitioned to high school, I continued to participate in school and church music activities. At church, I was given many opportunities to participate such as playing the piano, organ, drums, and eventually, directing choirs. The minister of music at my church would always show me how to play different things on the piano and organ. He taught me about different chords such as the major chord, minor chord, diminished chord, and augmented chord. He also taught me how these chords apply to different keys. With this knowledge, the minister of music at my church would begin to write out songs for me so that I could play with the band at church.

There was one instance that stands out as a pivotal moment for me. On one occasion, the minister of music wrote the chords for a song entitled "Gonna Be a Lovely Day" by Kirk Franklin. This was a gospel rendition that was based on a song entitled "Lovely Day" by Bill Withers. I practiced playing the song with the chords that my minister of music had wrote for me and I became confident in my ability to perform this song. I remember that the children's choir at my church was getting ready to sing this song and I was prepared to accompany them on a Hammond B3 organ along with the other musicians. The minister of music was on the piano at

that time and he asked if I was ready. I responded with an affirmative answer. The minister of music then gets off the piano and positions himself in front of the children's choir in order to direct them. This shocked me because it was normal for the minister of music to direct the choir while playing the piano simultaneously. I was left alone as the only keyboardist playing the song and I was extremely nervous. I remember that my hands were shaking while playing the organ as I focused on the chords that were written on the paper. While my hands were shaking, this did not interfere with the sound that I was producing from the organ. After the song was finished, I was relieved but happy that I was able to finish the song without any major catastrophes. Unbeknownst to me, the minister of music grabbed the microphone and announced to the whole church, which consisted of two to three thousand individuals, that I was accompanying the children's choir on the organ. I received a standing ovation and affirmation from many of the congregants that were present. This experience proved to be a positive source of encouragement for me throughout my high school tenure as I began thinking of myself as a good musician.

I continued to participate in the high school marching band when I enrolled in the ninth grade. My participation with the marching band continued to be a fun experience and since I was actually at the high school, I was able to participate in other events such as pep rally and field trips to feeder schools. Additionally, my participation in the high school marching band provided me with the opportunity to travel to different cities and states to perform in parades and halftime show drills. One trip that stands out as significant was when the marching band was invited to participate in a national battle of the bands' event during my twelfth-grade year. By this time, we had been to numerous events that were outside of the state; however, the national battle of the bands' event was the first time that we would need an airplane to get to our destination. This trip

was filled with a lot of fun activities and concluded with us winning first place at the national battle of the bands' event.

In addition to participating in the marching band, which took place after school, I elected to enroll in my high school's jazz band, which took place during the school day. I alternated between playing the piano and the drums while in the jazz band. This experience was impactful because it provided an opportunity for me to learn music other than gospel or classical and perform with a formal ensemble. The jazz band performed at a number of events in school as well as events outside of school. For example, we would regularly perform at debutant balls that were sponsored different sororities. Performing with the jazz band was another awesome school music experience and it allowed some of the best student-musicians to collaborate in our school.

In addition to participating in my high school's marching band and jazz band, I also participated with my high school's gospel choir. The gospel choir was a student-led, extra-curricular activity that met once or twice after school each week. My participation with the gospel choir afforded me with the opportunity to play the piano during the ninth and tenth grade. Furthermore, this was the first time that I performed gospel music outside of church. Naturally, I would incorporate different techniques that I learned at church into our gospel choir rehearsals and performances. I became the gospel choir director in the eleventh grade and continued in this role during my twelfth-grade year. My role as the gospel choir director required me to teach the choir parts and to ensure that the musicians played their part correctly. I would also accept and book engagements for us to perform. All of our performances were supposed to be approved by our sponsor who was the high school chorus teacher. One of my most memorable experiences with the gospel choir occurred during the twelfth grade when we took a trip to a different state. During this trip, we toured an HBCU and performed at an event that was sponsored by one

of the student groups at the university. We also performed at a local church during their Sunday morning worship service. All of our performances were successful, which contributed to my feelings of accomplishment.

As I was transitioning from the ninth grade to the tenth grade, I received another musical opportunity that would prove to be extremely impactful for musical development. I began to play the piano and organ for a church other than my home church. During this experience, I became more responsible for the songs that were performed during Sunday morning worship services. While at my home church, I could always depend on the other musicians that were present to perform at a high level; however, when I began to play at this other, I had to make more of a concerted effort to ensure that my part was performed well. Eventually, I became the minister of music at this church, which meant that I was responsible for the choir's and musicians' performance during the church services. I had the opportunity to choose, teach, and arrange the songs that were performed. I remember that I arranged a medley of songs that seemed to be very impactful for the congregants. The arrangement began with a song entitled "Total Praise" by Richard Smallwood, then transitioned to another song by Richard Smallwood entitled "My Everything," and ended with a song entitled "For Every Mountain" by Kurt Carr. The choir did an excellent job and the congregants responded in such a way that filled the atmosphere with a high level of energy and excitement.

As I matriculated through high school, I became interested in participating in other extra-curricular activities at my school such as the men's group and technology club. While I was genuinely interested in these activities, I did not feel that I had enough time to dedicate to these non-music activities. I joined these clubs but eventually chose not to continue my participation with them. Participating in musical activities during school and outside of school was, perhaps,

the most important aspect of my adolescent life. Consequently, I began to think about the possibilities of pursuing music in the future. My association with the musical activities that I partook in and my future aspirations solidified my decision to prioritize musical activities during my high school years. My experiences with various music ensembles at the high school level along with my formative music experiences at church led me to make the decision to pursue music as a post-secondary career.

I realized that my lived experiences contributed to my decision to participate in school music at the high school level. I also realized that understanding the lived experiences of other academically successful Black students could help me to better understand why they chose to participate or not participate in school music at the high school level. Thus, reflecting on my musical journey along with my decision to participate in school music at the high school level increased the personal significance of examining the lived experiences of academically successful Black students and their decision to participate in school music at the high school level.

Epistemology

An epistemology is “the individual lens, created through our worldview, that we use to understand knowledge in the world” (Egbert & Sanden, 2013, p. 23). The lens that I use to understand knowledge in the world is social constructionism. Prior to discussing social constructionism, it is useful to understand how constructionism has been defined.

Constructionism

...is the view that all knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between

human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context (Crotty, 1998).

A critical aspect of constructionism is that knowledge is constructed and not discovered. Furthermore, the construction of knowledge is dependent upon the context and human interactions in which it occurs. The human interactions that occur within a context over a period of time essentially develop the culture that permeates throughout that context. Thus, aspects of culture are embedded within constructionism.

Social constructionism is more explicit in its elucidation of the connection between the construction of knowledge and culture. In social constructionism, the emphasis is placed on “the hold our culture has on us...” This hold “shapes the way in which we see things (even the way in which we feel things!) and gives us a quite definite view of the world” (Crotty, 1998, p. 58). According to this view of social constructionism, every human being has constructed knowledge with respect to the culture in which they belong. This epistemological stance further suggests that our perceptions of our lived experiences, which are shaped by the cultures in which we belong, are the canvas on which we construct knowledge. Moreover, our construction of knowledge is the foundation on which we make decisions. Thus, social constructionism is appropriate for this study because it provides the proper lens for the examination of the lived experiences of academically successful Black students as it relates to their choice to participate in school music.

Framework

A conceptual framework provides the context and perspective that the researcher will use to examine a phenomenon (Egbert & Sanden, 2014). The conceptual framework that I employed in this study is Dewey’s concept of experience (Morgan, 2014). Dewey’s concept of experience

is based on the relationship between our beliefs and actions. According to this concept, “the origins of our beliefs arise from our prior actions and the outcomes of our actions are found in our beliefs” (Morgan, 2014, p. 1046). We construct meaning in our experiences through the juxtaposition of our beliefs and actions. Furthermore, the meanings we construct are context dependent because our experiences are culturally and historically situated. In addition to these external conditions in which our experiences are located, our experiences also have an internal element. This internal element refers to the emotions or feelings that our experiences elicit from us. These elements, which are inclusive of our beliefs and actions as well as the external and internal conditions in which they occur, provide a framework for how we interpret and construct meaning in our experiences. This framework is illustrated here.

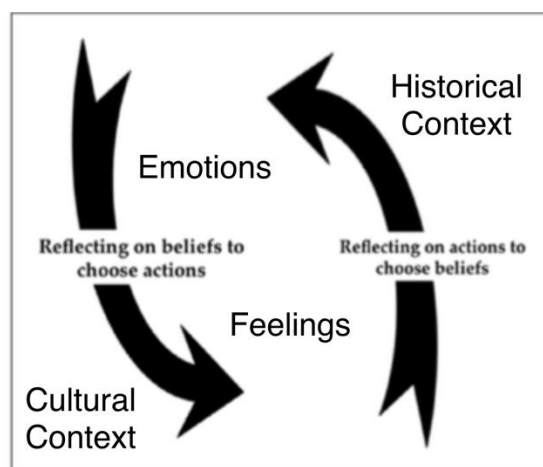


Figure 1. Dewey’s model of experience. Adapted from Morgan (2014)

Figure 1 illustrates the ongoing process of reflecting on beliefs and actions and how these reflections impact both aspects of this process. Furthermore, Figure 1 depicts how this reflective process is situated within historical and cultural locations and how emotions and feelings are situated within this reflective process. This framework is ideal for this current study of the lived experiences of academically successful Black students and how those experiences might influence their choice to participate in school music at the high school level. As academically

successful Black students reflect on their beliefs, they choose whether or not to participate in school music. Similarly, as academically successful Black students reflect on their choice to participate or not participate in school music, they make a choice about their beliefs. This process is situated and shaped within the historical and cultural contexts of the academically successful Black students and impacted by the emotions and feelings of each academically successful Black student.

Conclusion

The focus of this study is devoted to the investigation of the factors that influence academically successful Black students' choice to participate in school music at the high school level. Several aspects of this topic have been previously discussed in music education research. In the following chapter, I review three areas of music education research that are relevant to this topic. First, I discuss research studies that have examined the associations between music participation and academic achievement. Secondly, I discuss research studies that have examined high school music student enrollment data and its association with students from various demographic profiles. Lastly, I discuss research studies that have focused on factors that influence students' decisions to participate in school music.

In Chapter 3, I discuss how I plan to add to the discussion of high school music participation through my examination of the factors that influence academically successful Black students to participate in school music. I also provide more details about how I selected, interviewed, and analyzed data from academically successful Black students in reference to the impact that their lived experiences have on their choice to participate in school music. This examination is vital because it provided one measure for understanding how some academically successful Black students have come to the decision to participate or not participate in school

music. Furthermore, this study provided more insight as it relates to how we might get closer to the fulfillment of the second part of Gerhens' mantra.

2 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The literature review is an important aspect of academic research because it provides a foundation for the exploration of academic inquiries (Xiao & Watson, 2019). The academic inquiry in this study revolved around the influence of the factors and lived experiences of academically successful Black students as it related to their participation in school music at the high school level. There are three entities that are essential to this inquiry: Black students, academically successful students, and the influential factors regarding music participation. Therefore, this inquiry necessitates a review of literature in at least three areas. First, it is necessary to review music education research that highlights the association between music student enrollment and the demographic profile of students as it relates to race and ethnicity. Secondly, it is necessary to review music education research that highlights the association between music participation and academic success. Lastly, it is necessary to review music education research that highlights the factors that have influenced students' decision to participate in school music. The preceding topics constitute the three areas of focus in this literature review. Studies that did not fit into one of these three categories were not included in the literature review because they were deemed to be outside of the scope of this study.

The studies that were included in this literature review were primarily peer-reviewed articles; however, there was a dissertation (Stewart, 1991) and a newspaper article (Sack, 1998) included in this literature review. The studies were limited to the English language. I searched for the studies that were included in this literature review through the GeorgiA LLibrary LEarning Online (GALILEO) search engine, which was available to me through my university. I used the following words to search for studies: music participation, high school music participation, access AND music participation, academic success AND music participation, factors AND music participation, and influence AND music participation. The studies that were included in

this study focused on the association between various aspects of student demography and music participation, the relationship between academic success and music participation, or the factors that influence student music participation.

The studies that focused on aspects of student demography and music participation and were selected for this literature review included information related to the race and/or ethnicity of students. The reason for this decision was that student race and ethnicity was central to this study, which focused on academically successful Black students. As a consequence of this decision, several studies that focused on student demography and music participation were not selected for this literature review. The studies included in this literature review were limited to music studies that range from the year of 1991 (Stewart, 1991) until 2021 (Shaw & Auletto, in press). The reason for this decision was that Stewart's study (1991) was the earliest major study that I found that contained information about student music participation at the high school level and student race and/or ethnicity. Shaw and Auletto's study (in press) was the latest major study that I found that contained information about access to high school music participation.

Music Student Enrollment

National Studies

There have been three studies that used nationally representative data sets to produce an estimate of high school music student demography in the United States (Stewart, 1991; Elpus & Abril, 2011; Elpus & Abril, 2019). Several studies used nationally representative data sets to generate an estimate of music student enrollment relative to academic achievement (Catterall, Chapleau, & Iwanaga, 1999; Miksza, 2007; Miksza, 2010); however, the aforementioned studies (Stewart, 1991; Elpus & Abril, 2011; Elpus & Abril, 2019) investigated a more diverse set of demographic variables and its relationship to music student enrollment. In this current study, I

focus on the music participation of academically successful Black students; therefore, in this section, I discuss these research studies as they relate to music student enrollment of Black or African American students.

Stewart (1991) examined the characteristics of eight thousand seven hundred and ninety-one high school students who elected to enroll in music courses during their senior year in 1982. Stewart also investigated the school factors such as the school's schedule, size, and demography that were conducive to offering elective courses in music. The data set in this study was obtained from the *High School and Beyond* longitudinal study. The results of this study indicated that nearly thirty-one percent of students enrolled in music courses. All students, regardless of race, were equally likely to enroll in music courses; however, non-white students were less likely to enroll in instrumental courses and more likely to enroll in music appreciation or music history courses.

Elpus and Abril (2011) aimed to build a demographic profile of the nation's high school music students based on the data obtained from the Education Longitudinal Survey of 2002. The thirteen thousand two hundred and forty students sampled in this study were, essentially, members of the senior class of 2004. The students answered survey questions related to their participation in music ensembles during their senior year in high school. The results indicated a decline in the music student enrollment from the previously mentioned approximation of thirty-one percent in Stewart's (1991) study. Elpus and Abril's (2011) study indicated that twenty-one percent of high school seniors in America participated in school music; however, participation is regulated to music ensembles such as band, orchestra, and chorus.

White students were overrepresented in this sample as nearly sixty-six percent of music students were White while this demographic constituted approximately sixty-two percent of the

population. While White music students were overrepresented in this study, the only non-white student population that was significantly underrepresented was Hispanic students. Hispanic music students made up approximately ten percent of the music student population while this demographic constituted approximately fifteen percent of the student population. Black music students were overrepresented in this study; however, this overrepresentation was not significant. Black music students accounted for approximately fifteen percent of the music student population and thirteen percent of the overall student population.

Elpus and Abril (2019) updated their 2011 study with an investigation involving the United States high school senior class of 2013. The researchers obtained the data set from the National Center for Education Statistics High School Longitudinal Study of 2009. The updated study (Elpus & Abril, 2019) employed the use of high school transcripts and, as a result, the researchers were able to account for all of the music ensemble courses that the senior class of 2013 enrolled in during their entire high school tenure. The results indicated that twenty-four percent of the high school senior class of 2013 enrolled in music ensembles over the course of four years. Furthermore, if you account for keyboard, guitar, and music technology classes, then the music student participation rate, similar to Stewart (1991), is closer to thirty-one percent.

The two music classes that had the largest enrollment were chorus at thirteen percent and band at eleven percent (Elpus & Abril, 2019). There were no significant student enrollment differences in chorus classes with regards to race. Thus, the racial demographics of chorus classes largely resembled the general student population. Conversely, Black and Latino students were significantly underrepresented in orchestra and band classes at the high school level. While the aforementioned student groups were underrepresented in instrumental music classes, nearly all racial and ethnic student groups were more likely to participate in music ensemble courses as

their academic achievement increased. This was true for all racial and ethnic student groups except for Black students. Therefore, it was important to study of the factors that influence academically successful Black students to participate in school music at the high school level.

Access to High School Music

Music student enrollment numbers can be negatively impacted when schools do not offer music courses or programs. Issues related to the lack of music courses or programs available in public schools seem to be exacerbated at schools the predominately serve students of color. Salvador and Allegood (2014) examined the differences between 50 public high school music programs in Detroit, MI (n = 27) and Washington, D.C. (n = 23) as it related to the number of students of color. Of the high schools examined in Detroit, MI, 15 predominantly served students of color and only 40% of those schools offered music instruction. This contrasted with the other 12 high schools in Detroit, MI that served predominantly served White students and offered music instruction. Similarly, of the high schools examined in Washington, D.C., 8 of the high schools predominantly served students of color and 75% of those schools offered music instruction. Even though access to music instruction for students of color was better in Washington, D.C. compared with Detroit, MI, the researchers concluded that the high schools that predominantly served students of color were less likely to offer any music education courses than high schools that predominantly serve White students.

Shaw (2021) also conducted an investigation about accessibility of music education courses for students; however, Shaw's study focused on public and charter schools in the state of Ohio (n = 3,222). Shaw found that about half of the charter schools and virtually all public schools offered music courses. While most public schools in Ohio offered music courses, high schools in urban communities with lower socioeconomic statuses were less likely to offer music.

Approximately thirty percent of high schools in urban communities with lower socioeconomic statuses did not offer music courses and these schools were predominately attended by students who identified as indigenous, Hispanic, or Black. Furthermore, there was a lower number of indigenous, Hispanic, or Black students who, when compared with the state mean, attended secondary schools that offered music courses.

Shaw and Auletto (in press) examined the degree to which music education programs were equitable, as it related to access, in the state of Michigan. They determined which public or charter schools ($n = 2,496$) had access to music courses through a sample of music teacher employment records ($n = 2724$). Shaw and Auletto found that roughly eighty percent of the high school schools had access to music courses and twenty percent of the high schools did not offer music courses. Schools in urban communities were less likely than other communities to offer music courses. Additionally, schools that were Title I eligible, had a higher number of students from communities with lower socioeconomic statuses, and students of color were also less likely to employ a music teacher and offer music courses.

Predictors of Music Student Enrollment

The lack of music courses or programs may not be the only reason that students of color are less likely to enroll in music courses in some school districts. Alegrado and Winsler (2020) conducted a study to determine the extent to which certain predictor variables were associated with middle school students' decision to enroll in music. The middle school students in this study included 31,322 sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students who had taken part in a longitudinal study in Miami, FL. There were several predictor variables including but not limited to English language learner status, gender, special education, poverty, and ethnicity. As it related to race or ethnicity, most of the participants were students of color with 33% of the students being

identified as Black and 60% percent being identified as Hispanic. The researchers found that twenty-two percent of the students included in the sample elected to enroll in music during their middle school years and Black students were less likely to enroll when compared with students from other ethnic backgrounds.

Kinney (2019) conducted a similar study in a metropolitan area of a midwestern state. Kinney developed a theoretical model that predicted the decision of students to enroll in music courses in 6th grade and their continuous enrollment in music courses in 8th and 10th grade. Kinney conducted this study in a school district that served 49,602 students; 62% of the students were Black and 8.9% of the students were Hispanic. Kinney analyzed the students' elective choices with regard to music courses and included a number of predictor variables, including family structure, mobility, academic achievement, socioeconomic status, sex, and ethnicity. According to this study, during the 6th and 8th grade year, Black students were less likely to enroll in choir. During the 10th grade year, Black students were less likely to enroll in instrumental music courses such as band and orchestra. Interestingly, for an instrumental course such as band, higher socioeconomic statuses were a factor in music student enrollment during the 6th and 8th grade years but not the 10th grade year. This was an interesting finding because it suggested that Black students' lack of enrollment in band during the 10th grade year was not related to the inability to procure an instrument due to a lower socioeconomic status.

In addition to the findings listed, both of the studies in this subsection (Alegrado & Winsler, 2020; Kinney, 2019) found that academic achievement was positively associated with music student participation. The notion that academic achievement or success is positively associated music student enrollment has been researched on numerous occasions (Alegrado & Winsler, 2020; Benner, Boyle, & Sadler, 2016; Elpus, 2013; Frey-Clark, 2015; Guhn, Emerson,

& Gouzouasis, 2020; Hampden-Thompson & Galindo, 2017; Johnson & Memmott, 2006; Kinney, 2008; Kinney, 2010; Kinney, 2019; Miksza, 2010; Sirin, 2005; Shaw, in press; Thornton, 2013). In the next section, I discuss the association between music participation and academic success in more detail.

Music Participation and Academic Success

Mozart Effect

In spite of the aberration noted in Elpus and Abril's (2019) study in reference to academically successful black students' participation in school music, the usual association between academically successful students and music participation has been discussed on numerous occasions in music education research. Perhaps, the most recognizable queries when discussing the association between music participation and academic success revolves around music's capacity to make one smarter (Cox & Stephens, 2006; Demorest & Morrison, 2000). This query gained traction after a research study that documented a higher rate of performance in spatial reasoning tasks by a group of thirty-six college students who had listened to a Mozart composition for ten minutes prior to completing the tasks (Rauscher, Shaw, & Ky, 1993). The group of students who listened to the Mozart composition prior to completing the spatial reasoning tasks were compared with two other groups: a group that listened to a relaxation tape for ten minutes and a group that did not listen to anything for ten minutes.

The preceding study was followed up by a similar study that featured seventy-nine students who were tested in spatial reasoning tasks (Rauscher, Shaw, & Ky, 1995). The seventy-nine students were divided into three groups; the Mozart group, the Silence group, and the Mixed group. The Mozart group listened to ten minutes of a Mozart composition prior to being tested in spatial reasoning tasks while the Silence group were silent for ten minutes. The Mixed group,

however, listened to something different each day before being tested. The results indicated that the Mozart group had the highest score increase of the three groups. Thus, the impact that these compositions had on the participants became known as the “Mozart effect.”

The participants who scored higher on the spatial reasoning tests in these studies (Rauscher, Shaw, & Ky, 1993; Rauscher, Shaw, & Ky, 1995) were college students who listened to a Mozart composition prior to completing the spatial reasoning tasks. However, in a subsequent study (Rauscher, Shaw, Levine, Wright, Dennis, & Newcomb, 1997), seventy-eight preschoolers were divided into four groups and given four different spatial reasoning tests. Three of the four groups were given some type of training before and after the tests. The first group was given piano lessons, the second group was given singing lessons, and the third group was given computer lessons, and the last group did not receive any lessons. Three of the four spatial reasoning tests dealt with spatial recognition and the other test dealt with spatial-temporal reasoning. While there were no significant changes for either group with regard to the three spatial recognition tests, there was a significant increase with regard to the spatial-temporal reasoning test for the group that received keyboard lessons.

The results in this study furthered the idea that participation in music related activities could increase intelligences in other areas. This idea gained so much traction until then-Georgia Governor Zell Miller to spend over one hundred thousand dollars of the state’s budget on classical music for newborn babies (Sack, 1998). Gov. Miller stated, “No one questions that listening to music at a very early age affects the spatial, temporal reasoning that underlies math and engineering and even chess” (Sack, 1998, p. A12). While there were some who supported the idea of the “Mozart effect,” others were skeptical. Several researchers criticized the legitimacy of the “Mozart effect” after conducting experiments that did not yield favorable

results (Carstens, Huskins, & Hounshell, 1995; Newman, Rosenbach, & Burns, 1995; Stough, Kerkin, Bates, & Mangan, 1994; McKelvie & Low, 2002; Steele, Bass, & Crook, 1999).

Demorest and Morrison (2000) echoed the sentiments of these researchers by stating that music does make you smarter; however, it only makes you smarter with music.

Instrumental Music Participation

While there were differing views on the legitimacy of the “Mozart effect,” researchers have continued to highlight the association between music participation and academic success. Researchers have even specified the type of music participation that has a stronger relationship with academic success. For example, Catterall, Chapleau, and Iwanaga (1999) used data from the National Educational Longitudinal Survey of 1988 to track over twenty-five thousand students in grades eight through twelve for a period of ten years. The researchers found that there was a strong relationship between mathematics proficiency in the twelfth grade and students who were consistently involved in instrumental music during their middle school and high school years.

Johnson and Memmott (2006) examined the relationship between standardized test scores and school music programs of varying quality. The participants in this study included over three thousand six hundred students who were in the eighth or ninth grade during the 2004-2005 school year. The results of this study indicated that the eighth or ninth grade students who participated in outstanding school music programs or subpar instrumental programs outscored their counterparts who did not participate in school music or participated in subpar choral programs.

Frey-Clark (2015) sought to determine if there was a link between academic achievement and music achievement in the state of Texas. Frey-Clark compared middle school ensemble scores, which were earned at a music contest, with seventh and eighth graders’ math and reading

scores from the State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR). The results of this study were based on data collected from three of the twenty-eight regions of the University Interscholastic League (UIL) of Texas; therefore, these results should not be generalized for the state of Texas. The result indicated that there was no significant difference in the music contest scores of academically high-performing and low-performing schools with regard to choral ensembles; however, there was a significant difference in the music contest scores of academically high-performing and low-performing schools with regard to band ensembles.

Guhn, Emerson, and Gouzouasis (2020) examined the relationship between music participation and academic achievement among approximately one hundred and thirteen thousand secondary school students in British Columbia, Canada. The results indicated that music students scored higher on math, science, and English exams when compared with non-music students. Furthermore, instrumental students outscored vocal students on these exams.

There could be numerous explanations for why instrumental music students are more strongly associated with academic achievement than choral students; however, the most plausible explanation seems to be linked to the cost associated with instrumental study. The cost associated with instrumental study creates a context of music participation that is more conducive to students who come from families with higher socioeconomic statuses (Elpus & Abril, 2019). This demographic, the students who come from families with higher socioeconomic statuses, also represented the population of students who tend to obtain academic success in general (Benner, Boyle, & Sadler, 2016; Hampden-Thompson & Galindo, 2017; Sirin, 2005). Furthermore, the combination of academic success and higher socioeconomic statuses seemed to increase the likelihood that students who normally participated at a lower rate, such as English language learner students (Elpus, 2014), would participate in school music (Lorah,

Sanders, & Morrison, 2014). The following studies documented the role of students' socioeconomic status in the relationship between music participation and academic success.

Socioeconomic Impact

Miksza (2010) conducted an investigation of the potential relationship between high school student participation in music ensembles and, among other extra-musical activities, academic achievement in the area of mathematics. Miksza used data collected from over twelve thousand high school sophomores who indicated their music ensemble participation in the Education Longitudinal Study of 2002. According to the results of Miksza's study, students who participated in music ensembles had greater academic success as it relates math achievement scores than students who did not participate in music ensembles.

In addition to music ensemble participation, other significant positive predictors of academic success were socioeconomic status, race, and the number of music teachers (Miksza, 2010). Students who had high socioeconomic statuses, were White, and enrolled in schools with a greater number of music teachers had higher mathematics achievement than other students. While there were other positive predictors of academic success, music participation remained a positive predictor for academic success even when controlling for individual effects such as race and socioeconomic status; and, school effects such as amount of music teachers in the school.

Thornton (2013) conducted a study that aimed to compare the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) scores of music students and non-music students in Pennsylvania. Thornton requested PSSA scores from one hundred and eighty-seven school districts in Pennsylvania but only eleven of those districts, representing approximately seven thousand students, responded with usable data. While the results of this study cannot be generalized for the state of Pennsylvania due to the low response from school districts, music students significantly

outscored non-music students on the PSSA. Furthermore, the majority of the students from the eleven districts come from families with mid to high socioeconomic statuses.

Elpus (2013) conducted a study to compare the standardized test scores of music students and non-music students who were the same high school sophomores represented in the Education Longitudinal Study of 2002. Specifically, Elpus sought to determine whether music students scored higher than non-music students on tests when controlling for pre-existing differences such as prior academic success and demography. The results of this study indicated that music students did not outscore non-music students when controlling for pre-existing differences. According to Elpus' study, it is not that music increases a music participant's intelligence in extra-musical activities or subjects; rather, school music participants tend to be derived from populations that already have higher socioeconomic statuses, a higher rate of prior academic successes, and a lower rate of Individualized Education Plans (IEP).

There is sufficient research that documents the association between academic success and student participation in school music. This wealth of research contributes to the intriguing nature of the assertion that academically successful Black students were less likely to participate in music (Elpus & Abril, 2019). Furthermore, this assertion combined with previous research that documents the association between music participation and academic success leads me to inquire about the factors that influence students to participate in music. In the following section, I review literature that has been focused on such factors.

Factors that Influence Students' Participation

Several studies have highlighted factors that influence students to participate in music activities at each level of education. These studies range from the elementary and secondary levels to postsecondary contexts. Furthermore, these studies have sought music participants'

perspectives on this matter in a school context as well as a communal context. In this section, I discuss factors that have influenced music student participation at the elementary and secondary level followed by postsecondary contexts.

Elementary and Secondary Level

Vasil (2013) investigated the external factors that influenced six fourth grade students to participate in an instrumental music program in the northeastern region of the United States. The students had a variety of music backgrounds and were either African American or mixed. Among the influential factors were family, finances, peers, and environment. These factors seem to be prevalent in other research studies.

Demorest, Kelley, and Pfordresher (2017) examined the responses of three hundred and nineteen sixth graders as it related to their future music participation as well as other items. These students, who resided in the northwestern region of the United States, represented five different elementary schools. Each of these elementary schools fed into the same middle school. When responding to questions about their future music participation, the students' overall biggest influence was their family musical engagement followed by their musical self-concept and peer influence.

Chandler and Mizener (2011) surveyed ninety-six elementary music teachers in Texas about their beliefs about the factors that influence student participation in music at the secondary level. The teachers asserted the importance of students having positive experiences in their elementary music classes where they can obtain a strong musical foundation. The students' experiences at the elementary level, according to these teachers, could influence the students' willingness to continue at the secondary level. Additionally, the teachers felt that it was important for elementary music programs to be aligned with the secondary programs.

Communication between the elementary and secondary music teachers is paramount if vertical alignment in music programs is to be successful.

Bennetts (2013) described the music participation that occurred at an all-boys high school in Melbourne, Australia and compared their participation with other coeducational high schools. Over half of the students at the all-boys high school in Melbourne were from Asian countries and the majority of the students were from middle-class families. Bennetts found that students at the all-boys high school in Melbourne were more likely to play the piano and stringed instruments than male students at coeducational high school because of the lack of gendered stereotypes at the all-boys school. This speaks to the influence that peers have on students choosing to participate in musical activities based on perceptions about the masculinity or femininity of instruments.

Ho (2009) conducted a study that focused on over three thousand two hundred Hong Kong students' music participation during the 2005-2006 school year. One thousand five hundred and ninety-five of the students were at the primary level representing grades three through six. The other one thousand six hundred and forty-five students were at the secondary level representing grades seven through ten. This study referred to the students in school as well as out of school music experiences. When discussing the factors that influence students' musical participation, Ho cited student interest and parental encouragement as salient determinants. Furthermore, the school music teacher and instrumental tutor was also linked to the students' involvement in music both in and outside of school.

Law and Ho (2009) surveyed nearly fifteen hundred students in Hong Kong secondary schools about the extent of their parents' support of their musical participation. A portion of the survey was centered on the students' reasons for music participation. Most students responded

that their musical interests resulted from their personal interest in the subject, a yearning to perform music they like, or the idea of learning to play an instrument for relaxation purposes. The students were also asked to list the top three factors and people who influenced their choice to participate and learn music. The top factor was support from their music teacher, followed by the support from their parents and, lastly, personal decisions made by the students.

Hewitt and Allan (2013) surveyed seventy-two musicians who had participated in one of two advanced youth performance ensembles in Scotland. The musicians participated in these ensembles in 2009 when they were between the ages of fourteen and eighteen. This study highlighted these musicians' experiences and reasons for participating in the ensembles. On the subject of continued participation in the ensembles, the musicians cited that musical satisfaction was the most salient factor.

Pendergast and Robinson (2020) conducted an investigation on the preferences of eight hundred and twenty-seven middle and high school students regarding their participation or non-participation in school music as well as their desired learning conditions. Participants were inclusive of students who participated in school music, students who participated in music outside of school, and students who did not participate in music at all. While the students generally preferred a combination of student-led and teacher-led instructional activities, there were differences in other areas. For example, students who participated in school music preferred large group learning more when compared with students who did not participate in music or only participated in music outside of school. Students who participated in music outside of school or did not participate in music at all generally preferred to have more control over repertoire choices than school music students who generally preferred collaboration with the teacher. Interestingly, Black students, Latinx students, and students who noted their ethnicity as Other

also preferred to have more control with repertoire choices. The students' preferences for music participation and learning conditions might be translated into factors that influence their decision to participate or not participate in school music at the secondary level.

Postsecondary Contexts

Bright (2006) examined the factors that influenced five hundred and eighty outstanding band students to pursue a career in music education. These students, who were members of collegiate bands in Arkansas and Oklahoma, were deemed to be outstanding band students due to a variety of high school musical achievements such as honor band. Two hundred and forty-seven of the five hundred and eighty outstanding band students decided to major in music education. The results of this study indicated that the influence of the students' parents and teachers were important factors in deciding to major in music education.

McClellan (2011) examined the relationship between one hundred and forty-eight music education majors' self-concept as a future music educator and demographic factors, academic achievement, and parental influence. The music education majors attended one of three universities located in Idaho and North Carolina. The results indicated that there was a strong relationship between parental influence and the participants' decision to major in music education. While there was some relation between the participants' self-concept as a music educator, there was no relationship between the demographics of the participants and the participants' self-concept as a music educator or academic achievement.

Sichivitsa (2003) examined the responses of one hundred and fifty choir members as it related to their participation in choir. These students were enrolled in at least one of three choir classes at a large university in a southeastern state of the United States. The extent to which the choir members valued music was the strongest determinant of their intentions to continue to

participate in choir classes. The choir members' value of music seemed to be related to their prior experiences in music and their parents' support of their musical endeavors when they were children. According to a path analysis, the prior musical experiences and parental support helped to increase the students' self-concepts of their music ability, which in turn, impacted the choir members' value of music.

Sichivitsa (2007) conducted a similar study to the aforementioned 2003 study; however, in the 2007 study, Sichivitsa examined the responses of one hundred and thirty choir members who were non-music majors. The results of the 2007 study were also similar to the 2003 study. The students who valued music more were more likely to continue to participate in the choir. These results are even more interesting because these students received no other practical benefit for continuing to participate in choir other than fulfilling the university's performing art credit requirement.

Moder (2018) examined factors that influenced non-music majors to participate in band at the collegiate level. Participants consisted of two thousand nine hundred and thirty-three band students representing ninety-five colleges from thirty-seven states of the United States. The primary factor cited for influencing non-music majors to participate in collegiate band programs was the students' enjoyment and love for music. Additionally, the students' high school experiences in band programs and their self-pride as it relates to collegiate band membership were the second and third most influential factors in deciding to participate in band at the collegiate level.

Summary

There are some agreements among the literature presented in this literature review. First, music students often include students who have experienced academic achievement. Elpus and

Abril (2019) found that academically successful students, with the exception of academically successful Black students, were more likely to participate in music courses. This finding was congruent with other literature that referenced the relationship between academic achievement and music participation, particularly instrumental music participation (Frey-Clark, 2015; Guhn, Emerson, & Gouzouasis, 2020; Johnson & Memmott, 2006). While the likelihood of academically successful students participating in school music was an agreement in this literature review, the cause of this relationship was disputed. Some of the studies supported the notion that music makes you smarter (Rauscher, Shaw, & Ky, 1993; Rauscher, Shaw, & Ky, 1995; Rauscher, Shaw, Levine, Wright, Dennis, & Newcomb, 1997) while other studies opposed this notion (Carstens, Huskins, & Hounshell, 1995; Newman, Rosenbach, & Burns, 1995; Stough, Kerkin, Bates, & Mangan, 1994; McKelvie & Low, 2002; Steele, Bass, & Crook, 1999).

Perhaps, a more plausible explanation for the relationship between academic achievement and music participation was found in studies that discussed the role of socioeconomic status and how it related to academic achievement and music participation (Benner, Boyle, & Sadler, 2016; Elpus, 2013; Hampden-Thompson & Galindo, 2017; Miksza, 2010; Sirin, 2005; Thornton, 2013). These studies seemed to allude to the idea that students who have experienced academic achievement and choose to participate in school music typically come from communities with higher socioeconomic statuses. Additionally, communities with higher socioeconomic statuses were more likely to have schools with music programs (Shaw, 2021; Shaw & Auletto, in press). Schools in communities with lower socioeconomic statuses were less likely to offer music courses, which often meant that students of color did not have access to music courses (Salvador and Allegood, 2014; Shaw, 2001; Shaw & Auletto, in press). The idea that students of color did not have access to music courses when compared to White students may seem to disagree with

the Elpus and Abril (2019) finding that students were equally likely to participate in chorus at the high school level; however, Elpus and Abril (2019) also reported that students of color, Black and Hispanic students in particular, were less likely to enroll in instrumental courses. This finding is similar to Stewart's (1991) assertion that students of color were less likely to enroll in instrumental courses.

While the literature stated reasons why some students of color might not participate in school music, I did not find any information pertaining to the factors that influenced students of color to participate in school music. There were several studies that provided information about factors that influenced students to participate in school (Bennetts, 2013; Bright, 2006; Chandler & Mizener, 2011; Demorest, Kelley, & Pfordresher, 2017; Hewitt & Allan, 2013; Ho, 2009; Law & Ho, 2009; McClellan, 2011; Moder, 2018; Sichivitsa, 2003; Sichivitsa, 2007; Vasil, 2013) however, none of these studies specifically talked about students of color. Furthermore, none of the studies that I found discussed factors that influenced academically successful Black students' choice to participate in school music.

Conclusion

The studies in this literature review primarily consisted of peer-reviewed articles but also included a dissertation (Stewart, 1991) and a newspaper article (Sack, 1998). These studies were grouped into three categories as they related to music participation: student demography, academic success, and the factors that influence student music participation. I did not find any studies that were focused on all three categories simultaneously. Thus, the unique focus in this study could fill a small void in the existing music education research by including perspectives from academically successful Black students regarding their participation or non-participation in school music at the high school level. Additionally, since music students were reported to have

experienced academic achievement (Frey-Clark, 2015; Guhn, Emerson, & Gouzouasis, 2020; Johnson & Memmott, 2006), the assertion that academically successful Black students were less likely to participate in music courses at the high school level warranted more investigation.

In the next chapter, I discuss my plan for adding to the body of music education research that deals with student participation. The methodology that I employed for this dissertation research study was narrative inquiry. This methodology was an appropriate choice for this study because the focus was on understanding the lived experiences of academically successful Black students as it related to their participation in school music. Furthermore, narrative inquiry provided the space for the academically successful Black students in this study to share their lived experiences, which I later presented in a narrative form. I discuss aspects of the methodological process that was employed in this study with more detail in the following chapter.

3 METHODOLOGY

The methodology of a research study is important because it provides the strategic plan that is necessary to achieve the major goals of the research investigation. The research methodology “is the research design that shapes our choice and use of particular methods and links them to the desired outcomes” (Crotty, 1998, p. 7). The structure that the methodology provides for the research study not only holds the researcher accountable, but it also helps to ensure that the study is credible and trustworthy. Consequently, the methodological process of a research study is just as significant and important as the findings of the study (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018). Therefore, the researcher must give much thought and consideration to the methodology section of the research study. This methodology section served as the plan of action for my examination of factors that influence academically successful Black students’ choice to participate in school music at the high school level.

Study Design

The methodology that I employed in this qualitative research study is narrative inquiry. Clandinin (2013) defined narrative inquiry as “an approach to the study of human lives conceived as a way of honoring lived experience as a source of important knowledge and understanding” (p. 17). The lived experiences of an individual or a group of individuals are the central focus in a narrative inquiry because the lived experiences provide a unique vantage point in which we can view a phenomenon. Thus, it is the vantage point or perspectives of the lived experiences, which are essentially the stories or narratives, that serve as the source of important knowledge and understanding.

While lived experiences are the preeminent focus in narrative inquiry, they are not the only focus. Narrative inquiry also involves “an exploration of the social, cultural, familial, linguistic, and institutional narratives within which individuals’ experiences were, and are,

constituted, shaped, expressed, and enacted” (Clandinin, 2013, p. 18). These supporting narratives provide a necessary context within which we can better understand the narrative accounts derived from the individuals’ lived experiences. Understanding individuals’ lived experience with respect to the proper context requires thinking within the narrative inquiry commonplaces.

Commonplaces, a distinguishing feature of narrative inquiry, are areas that narrative inquirers should explore simultaneously (Clandinin, 2013). There are three narrative inquiry commonplaces: the temporality commonplace, the sociality commonplace, and the place commonplace. The temporality commonplace focuses on the time-related aspects of lived experiences. The sociality commonplace deals with the social conditions that are inherent in the linguistic, cultural, familial, institutional, and social narratives under study. Additionally, the sociality commonplace highlights socio-emotional aspects of the participants and researchers who are a part of the narrative inquiry. Lastly, the place commonplace refers to the physical locations that are relevant to the events under study. These commonplaces provide the context that is necessary to understanding the lived experiences that are examined in a narrative inquiry.

Another distinguishing characteristic of narrative inquiry is the relationship between the researcher and the participants. The intent of a narrative inquirer is not to be an objective inquirer; rather, the intent is to be a relational inquirer (Clandinin, 2013). As a relational inquirer, the narrative inquirer listens to story of the participant and determines how he, the narrative inquirer, relates to the story. The narrative inquirer is not only examining the lived experiences of the participant, but the researcher’s lived experiences are also examined as they relate to the phenomenon under study or relevant aspects of the participants’ lived experiences. In this way,

the researcher and participants are working together to co-compose a narrative or story that will produce a valuable perspective about the phenomenon under study.

Narrative inquiry is the ideal methodology for this study in which I examined the lived experiences of academically successful Black students as it relates to the factors that influence their participation in school music at the high school level. Narrative inquiry is supported by the idea that we, as human beings, do not only live in stories, we also live by stories (Clandinin, 2013); thus, the decisions we make are in some way a product of the perceptions that have in relation to our experiences or, perhaps, lack of experiences. The perspectives that academically successful Black students could provide are an important source of knowledge and understanding with regard to why, as Elpus and Abril found (2019), academically successful Black students did not participate at a rate that is comparable to other academically successful students.

Narrative Inquiry in Music Education

Narrative inquiry is a relatively new methodology in music education research. According to Nichols and Brewer (2016), the beginning of narrative inquiry in music education occurred at the first Narrative Soundings: International Conference on Narrative Inquiry in Music Education in April 2006. This conference was accompanied by the December 2006 issue of *Research Studies in Music Education*, which featured six authors (Barrett & Stauffer, 2006); the first three authors discussed the nature of narrative inquiry (Bowman, 2006; Bresler, 2006; Clandinin, 2006); the last three authors provided examples for the application of narrative inquiry in music education (Freer, 2006; Schmidt & Canser, 2006). Schmidt and Canser's (2006) narrative inquiry focused on the story of a teacher's quest to enhance his pedagogical skills while Freer's (2006) narrative inquiry was a self-story that detailed his personal experiences with adolescent male students as it related to their singing experiences.

Since Freer's (2006) self-story, there have been several narrative inquiries in music education research that focused on the music experiences of students including narrative inquiries that focused on students at the college or university level (Abril, 2007; Brewer, 2014; Buonviri, 2015); elementary school level (Griffin, 2009; Norton, 2008); middle school level (Hoffman, 2012); piano students (Kang, 2016; Mitchell, 2017); and, transgender students (Nichols, 2013; Palkki, 2020). While there have been several narrative inquiries that focused on the music experiences of students or the experiences of music students, I have not found any narrative inquiries that focused on the music experiences of students at the high school level. Furthermore, I have not found any narrative inquiries that focused on the experiences of academically successful Black students. Thus, this study would be a valuable contribution to the field of research related to narrative inquiry and music education research.

Study Context

This research study took place at a school district in a southeastern state of the United States of America. This school district was an ideal site for this research study for at least three reasons. First, the school district was among the 754 school districts that were named the Best Communities for Music Education in the nation by the National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM) in the year of 2020. The award recognizes school districts for their access and commitment to music education. This designation may be noteworthy in this study in which the focus was on the experiences that influence academically successful students to participate or not participate in school music. The academically successful students in this study would seemingly attend schools that have decent music programs.

Secondly, this site was a large school district that enrolled approximately 100,000 students during the 2019-2020 school year. More than 26,000 students were enrolled at

approximately twenty high schools during the 2019-2020 school year. The large size of the high school population may increase the likelihood of encountering students with diverse backgrounds and experiences. Thirdly, almost 60% of the school district's student population was Black during the 2019-2020 school year. In this study, it was not only important for the students to have had academic success, it was also important for the students' race to be identified as Black because Elpus and Abril (2019) stated that this portion of the student population was less likely to enroll in school music.

Participants

There were four participants in this study that were identified as 10th grade academically successful Black students. Students who participated in this study completed all activities online due to the district's implementation of virtual learning. The student participants were determined through criterion-based selection. Researchers who employ this selection strategy "specify characteristics and attributes of the population to be studied" (Roulston, 2011, p. 81). I employed criterion-based selection by adhering to the following steps: I generated a written and video announcement that was emailed to 10th, 11th, and 12th grade students from three high schools in the school district. Additionally, this email contained a digital flyer, an assent form for the students who were less than 18 years old, a permission form for the parents of interested students who were less than 18 years old, and a consent form for students who were 18 years old. This announcement contained information about the study, alerted 10th, 11th, and 12th grade students about their opportunity to participate in this study, and included instructions about how students and parents could return the assent and permission forms if they were interested in participating. All activities related to this research study occurred after the school's designated instructional hours due to the school district's policy that prevented research studies from interfering with

students' or staff's instructional day. Students who assented to participate and whose parents provided permission for their child to participate were provided with a brief online survey that contained closed and open-ended questions.

The online survey was accessed and secured through a paid subscription of Survey Monkey. Nine potential participants completed this survey during the month of November 2020. In an effort to select participants who possess the characteristics and attributes that are relevant to this study, the participants completed the online survey. Some of the characteristics that I sought included the participants' age, prior school music experiences, socioeconomic status (as determined by the participants' enrollment or lack of enrollment in the free or reduced lunch program), and their self-identification of race. I narrowed the participants down to four students based on their responses to the survey and their classification as academically successful.

In an effort to determine academic success, I collected documents relevant to the participants' most recent statewide-approved assessment. Academic success was determined by the participants' score classification on their most recent end-of-course or end-of-grade assessment. For example, the assessment scores were typically classified in the following categories: Beginning Learner, Developing Learner, Proficient Learner, and Distinguished Learner. Academically successful students were determined to be the students who were distinguished learners in any subject on their most recent statewide-approved assessment. An example of the most recent statewide-approved assessment for 10th graders was the 9th grade end-of-course assessments that were administered in the fall 2019 or the 8th grade end-of-grade assessments that were administered in the spring of 2019. The reason for this was attributed to the cancellation of statewide approved end-of-year assessments during the 2019-2020 school year due to COVID-19 related concerns. As an incentive for participation, I provided each of the

four selected participants with a \$50 Visa eGift Card upon the completion of their part in this study.

Four academically successful students were selected to participate in this study. The pseudonyms for these students were James, Nicole, Jasmine, and Madison. All four students self-identified as Black or African American and were determined to be academically successful because of their scores on one or more end-of-course or end-of-grade standardized assessments. James was a fifteen-year-old tenth grade male student who received free or reduced lunch during the 2019-2020 school year. James was classified as a Distinguished Learner on his Ninth Grade Literature and Analytic Geometry end-of-course assessment. Nicole was a fifteen-year-old tenth grade female student who did not receive free or reduced lunch during the 2019-2020 school year. Nicole was classified as a Distinguished Learner on her Ninth Grade Literature, Analytic Geometry, and Biology end-of-course assessment. Jasmine was a sixteen-year-old tenth grade female student who received free or reduced lunch during the 2019-2020 school year. Jasmine was classified as a Distinguished Learner on her Coordinate Algebra end-of-course assessment. Madison was a fifteen-year-old tenth grade female student who received free or reduced lunch during the 2019-2020 school year. Madison was classified as a Distinguished Learner on her English Language Arts Literature and Social Studies end-of-grade assessment.

Data Collection

The data that were collected in a narrative inquiry were referred to as field texts (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Field texts are records that are constructed by the researcher and participants during the field experience. Examples of field texts include “autobiographical writing; journal writing; field notes; letters; conversation; research interviews; family stories; documents; photographs, memory boxes, and other personal-family-social artifacts; and life

experience” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 92-93). The composition of field texts is a process that relies on the interpretation of the researcher and participants (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). The interpretation is shaped, in part, by the relationship that is developed between the researcher and participant as well as the context in which their interactions take place. In this research study I employed the use of the following field texts: autobiographical writing, interviews, documents, and field notes.

Autobiographical writing is a type of field text that allows narrative inquirers to write about their own life and use their personal recollections of life experiences to provide context in a study (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). While it is possible for a narrative inquiry to be fully autobiographical, “in studies involving participants other than the researcher, autobiographical narrative inquiry is an inquiry starting point” (Clandinin, 2013, p. 44). When composing autobiographical narratives at the start of an inquiry, which is also known as narrative beginnings, narrative inquirers place their stories alongside the stories of the participants (Clandinin, 2013). Furthermore, it is important for narrative inquirers to “think about ongoingness of institutional, social, cultural, familial, and linguistic narratives in which” the lives of the researcher and participants were and are lived. In this study, I composed my narrative beginnings as it related to my participation in school music at the elementary, middle, and high school level. I also considered the supporting narratives that were in progress during that time.

Interviews are used when researchers want to “gain in-depth knowledge from participants about particular phenomena, experiences, or sets of experiences” (deMarrais, 2004, p. 52). The relationship between the researcher and the participants is very important in the interview process (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). The interviewer’s behavior or perceived behavior can impact how the participant responds. Moreover, the setting of the interview, such as the time and

location, can also impact how the participant responds. The four academically successful Black students that were selected for further study shared in-depth knowledge about the life experiences that may have influenced their choice to participate in school music at the high school level.

The four academically successful Black students were interviewed three times over the course of three weeks. Each interview session lasted between forty-five to sixty minutes and took place virtually on a paid subscription of Zoom. The interviews were semi-structured and conducted with the use of an interview protocol. All three interviews occurred over a three-week period during the month of December 2020. I used two devices to record the interview sessions: a MacBook Pro and an iPhone. The virtual interviews were audio recorded on the MacBook Pro through the Zoom application. Once the interview was recorded and downloaded, it was transferred to a secure password-protected folder on the MacBook Pro. The interview was also audio recorded on an iPhone as a backup recording, but these recordings were not needed so they were deleted. The data was transcribed through the use of the Rev transcription service.

Documents consist of electronic or printed material, which “contain text (words) and images that have been recorded without a researcher’s intervention” (Bowen, 2009, p. 27). While it is important for the researcher to develop good relationship and rapport with the participants, documents can help to support and contextualize the information gained during the research process. The main documents that were collected in this study are the End of Grade Assessment from the academically successful Black students most recent statewide-approved assessment. In order to obtain these documents, I first submitted the necessary forms to the applicable office in the school district so that school officials can authorize the release of these scores for the purposes of this study. Next, I requested written permission from the participants and legal

guardians who were enrolled at high schools that were approved to participate in this study by their respective principals. Lastly, I requested the test scores from the principals of students and legal guardians who provided the written permission forms. These scores were used to support the assertion that the students were academically successful.

Field notes are “ongoing, daily notes” that are “full of the details and moments of our inquiry lives in the field” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p.104). The researcher or participants can create field notes; however, I created the field notes in this study. I began taking field notes when administering the survey to the participants and continued during the interviews with the selected participants. All field texts were composed and stored in a password-protected folder on the Macbook Pro.

Narrative Composition

I composed the narratives of the four academically successful Black students after reading and rereading all of the data or field texts from the interview transcripts. As I re-read the field texts from the interview transcripts, I gained a sense of the key elements in each of the participants’ narratives. Next, I sorted and coded the field texts with respect to the three commonplaces: temporality, sociality, and place. Coding involves understanding field texts in relation to their reference to the past, present, and future; understanding the field texts in relation to the institutional, familial, cultural, and social narratives that are imbued in them; and, understanding the commonalities of the physical places that are relevant in the study. Therefore, I sorted and coded the data from the interview transcripts based on “the names of the characters that appear in field texts, places where actions and events occurred, storylines, tensions that emerge, and continuities and discontinuities that appear...” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p.

131). I used NVivo data analysis software to assist with the organizational process of coding and sorting.

This organizational process involved highlighting significant occurrences from the participants' interview transcripts and assigning those significant occurrences to codes that were relevant to the three commonplaces of narrative inquiry: temporality, sociality, and place. The three commonplaces served as the main codes and each commonplace contained subcodes. The subcodes for temporality were pre-school, elementary, middle school, and high school. The subcodes for sociality were cultural narratives, familial narratives, institutional narratives, social narratives, and socio-emotional narratives. The subcodes for place were after school activity, church, pre-school, elementary, middle school, and high school. If a participant stated that they began participating in the school band during the fifth grade, that significant occurrence was coded under the temporality commonplace in the elementary subcode. I followed all the steps in my IRB protocol related to coding.

After I sorted and coded the significant occurrences from the interview transcripts, I began to compose the interim text for each of the participants' narratives. Interim texts are "texts situated in the spaces between field texts and final, published research texts" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 133). The interim texts represented the transformation from field texts to a narrative account. The narrative accounts were nine to twelve pages in length. I determined the sequence of the data that is presented in the narrative accounts by referring to the temporality code for each of the participants. Referring to the temporality code assisted me with ensuring that I presented the events in chronological order.

After composing the interim texts, I emailed the participants to schedule a member checking meeting, which took place on Zoom. Each of the participants attended their own

personal member checking meeting on Zoom. The purpose of this meeting was to ensure that the participants' narratives were portrayed accurately. The participants and I made any necessary changes to the interim texts. James, Nicole, and Jasmine did not request any changes to their narrative account and Madison requested minimal changes to emphasize and clarify her thoughts about certain occurrences. For example, when speaking about Madison's orchestra teacher, I wrote "Madison remembered her orchestra teacher as a passionate teacher who provided encouragement..." Madison wanted to emphasize her thoughts about her orchestra teacher's encouragement so she requested that I change the sentence to "Madison remembered her orchestra teacher as a passionate teacher who provided a great wealth of encouragement..." A review of all requested changes showed no patterns indicating researcher error in the development of the narratives."

The participants read their own narrative and provided feedback. James stated, "I approve of this record and I hope that it adds a little comedic value to the dissertation because I am a quite hilarious person and a lot of those aspects are included." Nicole stated,

Reading this narrative made me really sentimental and happy. To look back on my life like this and see where I've come from and how I'm doing now really puts things into perspective for me. I like it a lot and I feel like it portrays me well, as someone who just likes making music.

Jasmine stated, "I feel like this summary about my musical experience accurately shows, in depth, how I felt during these times and during these moments." Madison stated, "My narrative seems to sum up my tumultuous life in a few pages and it shows my evolution as well as my constant growth." The participants did not make me aware of any biases that I needed to correct. Furthermore, each participant affirmed that their narrative was an accurate portrayal of their

lived experiences and, as a result, the interim text became the final research texts that were presented in this study.

Data Analysis

After the narratives were composed, I began the data analysis process for a paradigmatic-type narrative inquiry. According to Polkinghorne (1995), “paradigmatic-type narrative inquiry gathers stories for its data and uses paradigmatic analytic procedures to produce taxonomies and categories out of the common elements across the database” (p. 5). The stories that were gathered for this paradigmatic-type narrative inquiry were the narrative accounts of the four academically successful Black students. I employed the use of a paradigmatic analytic procedure to produce categories that emerged across the four narrative accounts.

The paradigmatic analytic procedure that I employed was based on Creswell’s (2013) data analysis approach. The first step was to organize the narrative accounts into the NVivo data analysis software. Secondly, I re-read the narratives and began to take note of the similarities and differences between each narrative account. This second step involved me highlighting and typing memos about the participants’ responses. Thirdly, I created codes for each of the participant’s responses that were included in their respective narrative accounts with in vivo coding. This third step resulted in a total of sixty-eight codes for the narratives. Fourthly, I grouped the codes from each narrative account into broader categories.

Some of the broader categories featured codes from two or three of the narrative accounts; however, the categories that emerged across the four narrative accounts in this study were presented as narrative threads. Clandinin (2013) described narrative threads as patterns that can be discerned across narrative accounts. I discerned three narrative threads or patterns from the narrative accounts of the four academically successful Black students as it related to their

school music participation. I completed the coding process twice in an effort to ensure accuracy and consistency. Additionally, it is important to note that I continually visited and revisited the steps in the data analysis process. For example, after I initially created codes for the participants responses, I re-read the participant narratives again to see if there were any responses that I missed the first time. Then I searched for codes that were similar across each of the participant's narratives. This process was not a linear experience where the researcher moves from beginning to end while never returning to previous steps; rather, revisions are continuously considered and employed as necessary (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

Ethical Considerations

My role as the researcher places me in a powerful position as it relates to the vulnerability of the participant. Research has the power to harm and to help others (Tisdale, 2004); thus, it is imperative for me to disclose my ethical responsibilities in this research study. In a narrative inquiry, the relationship between the researcher and the participants is paramount; thus, "relational ethics and considerations of relational responsibility imbue the process" (Clandinin, 2013, p. 201). This means that as a narrative inquirer negotiates field texts, interim texts, and research texts, the inquirer must do so in a way that honors the collaborative process with the participants and protects the participants from potential harm. The relationship with the participants is of the utmost importance and takes precedence over any benefits that could be gained by the information, knowledge, and understanding provided by the participants. For example, it could become necessary to blur or fictionalize the identities, times, and places if the disclosure of these things contribute to making the participants too vulnerable or visible (Clandinin, 2013). The relational ethics that are common to narrative inquiries are supported by the philosophy of deontological ethics.

Under the philosophy of deontological ethics, researchers “have a duty to act in certain ways toward others regardless of the consequences resulting from our actions” (Tisdale, 2004, p. 16). Conducting a study under the philosophy of deontological ethics means that the researcher’s duty and obligation is first to the participants. For example, if a narrative inquirer constructs or interprets meaning from field texts that can greatly benefit the American music education profession but may potentially harm the participants, then the inquirer cannot utilize that information in the study.

In this study, my ethical considerations and responsibilities were guided by the philosophy of deontological ethics, which embody the spirit of the relational ethics of narrative inquiries. In an effort to fulfill my ethical obligations, I considered my ethical responsibilities as it related to the construction and analysis of the field texts, interim texts, and research texts. First, I informed the participants that their participation is not obligatory and that they can adjust the level of their consent at any time. For example, the participants were not obligated to answer every question and may leave the research study at any time if they choose. Secondly, I informed the selected participants of the purpose of my research and any potential conflicts of interest that I had. The students had a right to know of my intentions in and with the research study. Thirdly, I engaged in virtual member checking with the four participants in an effort to maximize the accuracy of the collected data. This is important, particularly when interpreting data with deep and, perhaps, complicated meanings. I also verified that the students were academically successful by reviewing their most recent End of Grade Assessments. Fourthly, I maintained the privacy of the students by using pseudonyms for the students’ name and by judiciously including only the necessary information for the study.

Trustworthiness

The goal of qualitative research is to provide a deeper understanding of human experiences and behaviors (Bogden & Biklen, 2007). In order to accomplish this goal, qualitative researchers must present findings that can be trusted by those who read their report. The qualitative researcher must “persuade his or her audiences (including self) that the findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to, worth taking account of” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 290). Ensuring the trustworthiness of the findings in qualitative researchers necessitates different criteria than that of quantitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In quantitative research, the level of objectivity, internal validity, reliability, and generalizability can determine quality. These criteria are not useful for qualitative research because they do not help qualitative researchers accomplish the ultimate goal of better understanding human experiences and behaviors. Rather, the following criteria are more suitable for the goals of qualitative research: credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, and reflexivity.

Credibility

The credibility of a qualitative research study refers to the “confidence that can be placed in the truth of the research findings” (Korstjens & Moser, 2018, p. 121). There are at least four strategies that qualitative researchers can employ to ensure that their findings will be credible: prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation, and member check (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Prolonged engagement ensures that the amount of time the researcher spends collecting data is sufficient for the findings that will be produced. In this study, I spent five weeks in the field, which consisted of one week for participants to complete the online survey, three weeks for virtually interviewing each of the four participants three times for forty-five minutes to one hour, and one week for virtual member checking with each of the four

participants. This amount of time allotted for being in the field and interviewing the participants is sufficient for fulfilling the purpose of this study.

Persistent observation entails the level of energy that the researcher devotes to viewing and reviewing the data collected in the field (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). It is imperative that the researcher identifies and focuses on the characteristics of the data that are most useful and relevant to the issue that is being examined in the study. In this study, I examined the experiences and factors that have influenced academically successful Black students' choice to participate in school music at the high school level. As I listened to the participants' stories regarding their lived experiences, it was important for me to persistently observe aspects of their story that could have potentially influenced their choice to participate in school music at the high school level.

Triangulation refers to the use of multiple methods of data collection and data sources in a research investigation (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). In this study, I am employed multiple methods of data collection including interviews, documents, and journals. Furthermore, I collected data from multiple sources or participants in this study.

Member checking involves the researcher providing the participants with the data that originated with them so that the participants can confirm or clarify the meaning of the data (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Member checking is imbued in the data analysis process of narrative inquiries (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). In narrative inquiries, the relationship and collaboration between the researcher and participants is paramount; thus, "one of the poignant moments in narrative inquiry is always the moment when the research texts are shared with participants" (p. 135). In this study, I allowed the participants to view my interpretation of the interview transcripts to ensure that I am expressing their views accurately.

Transferability

Transferability refers to the extent to which the findings of qualitative research can be relevant and meaningful to other contexts (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). In an effort to increase the likelihood that findings can be transferred to other contexts, qualitative researchers must provide a rich description of the context of their study. Narrative inquirers can attain a higher degree of transferability by giving much attention to the three commonplaces as they relate to participants' stories. In this study, I aimed to provide a rich description of the contexts in which each of the participants' stories take place so that those who read the findings can better understand the behaviors and choices of the participants.

Dependability and Confirmability

Dependability and confirmability, while different in their objectives, share a similar strategy (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). The objective for dependability is to ensure that the findings are stable or consistent over time. Dependability necessitates that the evaluation and interpretation of the findings are supported by the data given by the participants. Confirmability necessitates that the findings in the study are gleaned from the study and not the researcher's imagination. Thus, the findings should have the capacity to be confirmed by other inquirers or researchers. While the objectives associated with dependability and confirmability are different, they are both ensured by a strategy referred to as an audit trail. Employing the use of an audit trail requires the researcher to transparently describe "the research steps taken from the start of a research project to the development and reporting of the findings (Korstjens & Moser, 2018, p. 121). In this study, I was transparent in my reporting of every research step that I took with regards to the findings of this study.

Reflexivity

Reflexivity involves the inquirer taking time to reflect about his or herself as a researcher (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). This self-reflection includes the investigation of the researcher's personal preconceptions and preferences as well as the researcher's relationship to the participants. In this study, I kept a journal where I wrote down my thoughts, ideas, and feelings about matters relevant to the topic under study. Furthermore, the relationship between the researcher and participants is essential to narrative inquiries (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000); therefore, I also included my thoughts about the relationships that developed between the participants and myself.

4 NARRATIVES

In this study, I sought to gain an understanding about how the lived experiences of academically successful Black students influence their choice to participate in school music at the high school level. In this chapter, I present the narratives from the four academically successful Black students: James, Nicole, Jasmine, and Madison. Each of the students were in the tenth grade and were deemed academically successful due to their classification as a Distinguished Learner on one or more end-of-grade or end-of-course standardized assessments. James, Nicole, and Madison were fifteen years old while Jasmine was sixteen years old. James, Jasmine, and Madison received free or reduced lunch during the 2019-2020 school year while Nicole did not receive free or reduced lunch during the 2019-2020 school year. These narratives provide a context for understanding their decisions to participate or not participate in school music at the high school level.

James's Narrative

Preschool Years

James has always had a fond experience with school music. His earliest memories are filled with positive encounters in preschool. James attended a private preschool and he recalled a few experiences that represented the first of many “fun” experiences in his academic and musical journey. When thinking about his music experiences in preschool, James recalled a song that was sung on multiple occasions. James stated, “We were singing “Jesus Loves the Little Children of the World,” and stuff like that, had a lot of fun.” During this time, James was just one of the kids who enjoyed singing with the class.

As his preschool journey came to a close, James remembered an exciting event that further increased his enjoyment of school music. This exciting event took place at his preschool graduation. James recalled,

And then at graduation, I actually got a solo singing... What is it called? ‘You Are so Beautiful,’ because it was also Mother’s Day at the graduation... I was singing ‘You Are So Beautiful’ as the other kids were passing out roses.”

This experience was pivotal for James for at least two reasons, First, this experience was the first of many times that James would perform in front of a crowd; and, secondly, because of the presence of a person who has had a tremendous impact on James: his grandmother. When thinking about the impact that this performance had on him, James recalled,

That experience, it is just fun. It got me into music, I guess you could say because I was just standing up there at first, I was nervous, awkward. But then I just started singing and my grandma's face was priceless as I was singing. I specifically remember that and it was fun.

This performance was the perfect segue into James’s elementary school music experience.

Elementary School Years

After James graduated from preschool, he enrolled in a public elementary school ready and primed for school music participation. The fact that his sister had just graduated from his elementary school and participated in school music also provided James with some level of comfort. James recalled,

I went straight into elementary school chorus/music class. It was fun and my sister, right as she left the school right after she graduated from fifth grade, I went into first grade so I was there with the music teacher. I was his ‘star first grader’ singing all the songs, doing all the dances.

James’s musical identity was strengthened at an early age by the acceptance that he felt from his musical teacher. The fact that his sister had already participated in the music program at his

elementary school only provided a sense of normalcy for the experience; however, James always felt like his love for his school music program was a personal experience.

James would continue to participate in the general music classes at his elementary school from the first grade until the fifth grade. In addition to singing and dancing, his general music classes also provided the opportunity for him to learn how to play the recorder, even though he frequently lost the recorders his grandmother bought him. James fondly remembers his grandmothers' support regarding his general music classes and music performances in general. With regards to his grandmother, James stated, "Yeah, she's been in every single one of my events. She got me a recorder a couple of times because I keep losing them. But yes, she's always there." James's acknowledgement of his grandmother's support seemed to be a heartfelt confession about a person whose influence was part of the foundation of his musical pursuits.

During the time that James was participating in the general music classes at his elementary school, he also accumulated a few musical experiences at his church. During the second or third grade, James recalled participating in the "kids choir every second or third Sunday." He further noted, "All of us kids will team up with the church's dance director and we'll either do a song or a dance. The first one that I can remember was a black history one and we did a little step. That was fun." James continued,

Yeah, we did a step. It's like 'Jesus is my friend, provider,' something like that. And we did like a step, we marched in the church then we took our positions. I mean, we stepped through the entire song. That was fun. There were a couple before but I don't 100% remember those.

In addition to singing in the children's choir at his church, James also received piano lessons from the church's music director for approximately one month during the third grade. James recalled,

Yes, piano was fun... I wanted to play piano. We did that thing it was like we meet once a week. And we did that for about a month or two months or a month and a half, something like that. Then we stopped and I kept playing with my piano.

While James fondly remembered some of the musical experiences from his church, his main musical experiences continued to come from his participation in school music.

There are two performances that serve as highlights from James's general music participation in elementary school. James recalled those performances.

The only one that I can vividly remember are all of the fifth-grade performances. I remember one of them. It was Christmas celebration thing and the music teacher had us doing the Christmas rap or something like that. And as we were all rapping, we were dancing and I had a solo where I did this roll flip thingy that I can't do anymore because my bones don't work like that. It was epic. And then the other ones are performances at [a local high school] for the I don't know what you would call it but all the elementary, middle and high school was waiting to perform there. We did a couple of songs, and it was just fun up there with all of my friends. Then me and my best friend had that one song from Empire, "Powerful." Yes, we sang that at one of the performances and that was fun.

At this time, James had not yet begun to play the trombone; however, he had participated in numerous public performances and deemed virtually all of his musical interactions to be "fun."

As a matter of fact, throughout the interviews, James used the word "fun" approximately eighty-

five times when describing his musical experiences and interactions. James's participation in public performances coupled with his perception of music participation as fun contributed to his increasing comfort with performances. When describing his comfort level for performances, James stated,

I mean, I was comfortable. Because I mean, you get used to. I got used to it for the most part. Before every event you get nervous just because it's an event, but afterwards, the last hour before the event, you're like, okay, I'm ready to do this, then I'm ready to go home afterwards.

Most of James's musical performances throughout elementary school were associated with general music; however, midway through the fifth grade, James decided to join the band and play the trombone. James recalled,

Yeah, trombone started halfway through the fifth-grade year, the band teacher for elementary school he roams to several elementary schools so he came to ours because our band started in fifth grade and we all went to the old gym, that's what we called it. And we just sat and then he showed us all the instruments and he was like, 'Somebody in here needs to play trombone, and they need long arms.' And I the tallest fifth grader had to volunteer because I'm the only one with long arms.

James felt like his band teacher's announcement about needing someone with long arms to play the trombone was a direct invitation for him to participate in the school band and this was exciting for him. Additionally, James's enjoyment of school music participation continued to intensify when he joined the band because a new aspect of music participation was introduced: competition.

James enjoyed the idea and practice of competing for first chair in the band. James recalled,

Yeah, I was extremely excited about band, because I was first chair. And it was an intense competition because there was another person and she was right on my coattails every single time. And it was intense, intense, but I came out on top.

Winning first chair did not only contribute to James's enjoyment of band, it also contributed to James's confidence when performing. James's first performance occurred approximately two months after he began playing the trombone and he could not be more confident even though he had to perform a duet during one of the band's performance pieces. Leading up to his first band performance, James jokingly recalled, "...I came in 100% confident as first chair, I knew I couldn't make any mistakes because I was an invincible egomaniac."

While having long arms and competing for first chair contributed to James's initial interest in learning to play the trombone, James also credited the long-lasting friendships that developed while participating in band as a motivating factor. When discussing his motivation for participating in band and learning how to play the trombone, James stated,

Originally, it was the long arms and then it became my competitive drive to destroy the other trombonist. And then it became fun because I met a couple of friends in band from other schools that I eventually was in middle and now I'm in high school with.

James expounded on the beginning of a friendship that began due to his participating in band during the fifth grade.

Yes, it was at [a local elementary school], I mistakenly bumped into one of my best friends 'til this day, while we were running to the bathroom... He was first, second or third chair trumpet. We were just there playing our instruments and then during one of

our bathroom breaks, we were all running to the bathroom... And I saw him, we bumped into each other, I forgot how, I think he tripped or I tripped over him, said 'Hi, I'm sorry.'

Then we didn't talk until he came to my summer camp that summer.

This seemingly coincidental occurrence was the beginning of a long-lasting friendship that started due to their participation in school music and was further nurtured by both of their enrollments in the same summer camp as well as the same middle school and high school.

Middle School Years

James continued to participate in band when he enrolled in his public middle school. In fact, he increased his participation in many ways. For example, while the trombone continued to be his main instrument, James began to explore a variety of instruments including the baritone, tuba, and clarinet. Additionally, James participated in all of the bands that the middle school offered. For instance, when James was in sixth grade, he was enrolled in the cadet band which was intended for sixth graders but he also learned the music for and performed with the intermediate band which was intended for seventh and eighth graders. In addition to this, James participated with the school's jazz band that met twice per week after school.

James certainly made an impression on his middle school band teacher and this was evident by the performance opportunities that his band teacher afforded him. For example, James recalled,

We have a couple of concerts and a couple of events. The biggest though, some of the big things were my first jazz band solo on 'C Jam Blues.' That was fun, because I was a sixth grader doing the solo that eighth graders are fighting over. And the eighth graders were cool about it. They taught me in the workshop little practice room for hours. And then the biggest otherwise was a concert band performance that might have been [at a local high

school]. That was extremely fun, because he never let any sixth graders go except for the extremely good ones. And I fell in that category so I was feeling great.

James's middle school band director also encouraged James to participate in and take advantage of musical opportunities outside of the school bands. One example of this was honor band. James auditioned for the district honor band in the seventh and eighth grade and was ranked as the fifth and second chair, respectively.

Participating in honor band provided James with more opportunities to become friends with students from different schools. When speaking about his experiences in honor band in the seventh grade, James recalled,

...honor band was fun. I did that in seventh grade. My band director wanted me to do it in sixth grade because it's really just all four major scales and the arpeggios, and etude... I passed, I got fifth chair. And that was insanely fun, even though it was really just us sitting in the school playing music for an entire day. It was us sitting in a school playing ... It was fun, because sometimes I'll get to talk with other trombones. I talk to six, seven, five ... No, I was five. What was I? I was five. We got talking to four. Three was being shady on me, not talking to anybody. But still, it was fun talking to the people around me. I made some friends there.

James's participation in school music at the middle school level was at an all-time high.

However, when James was preparing to go to high school, he was not intending to participate in school music at the high school in the same way. James did not want to attend his home high school. Instead, James "pushed extremely hard to get into [his current high] school." James had to apply to get into his high school but he was willing to do so because he was intrigued by the academic offerings that his high school provided.

High School Years

James has always done well in school as it related to academics and was easily able to recall many academic achievements that dated back to first grade. His previous academic successes contributed to his confidence when applying for his high school. James acknowledged that he was not aware of any of the musical offerings at his high school when he applied; however, his initial lack of knowledge about the music program at his current high school did not deter him from trying to attend because he felt that he could satisfy his desire to participate in school music in different ways. For example, James stated,

I always knew I could go back to my elementary school and help younger people play their instruments because I knew a couple of instruments at that point. And I could always, if I really wanted to play an instrument, I could apply for honor band again, because I got in honor band in seventh and eighth grade, or I could go to my home school and be part of their jazz band...

While the musical offerings at James's current school is different from his middle school, they did exist. James would soon learn that his current school had a keyboarding class and a jazz band.

James was actually enrolled in the high school's keyboarding class during his first semester of ninth grade. This was the first time that James was receiving keyboarding or piano instruction since he enrolled in piano lessons at his church during the third grade. James recalled his experience in the keyboarding class and stated,

For me I actually wanted to play keyboarding. And I got like favorite keyboarding songs... One of the songs, "The Entertainer," it was a song that I asked my amazing

piano teacher to let me play and he let me play it. He got the music and everything and I barely remember how to play it without music now, but it was so fun to learn to play. James enjoyed his time in the keyboarding class but he never had the opportunity to perform a piano piece publicly. However, he did have several opportunities to perform publicly with the school's jazz band.

James enjoyed participating with his high school jazz band not only because of his love for music, but also because the jazz band allowed time for James to satisfy other obligations and interests. For example, James noted that his school requires "a lot of work." James continued, "If you don't count in homework, just a lot of studying, and a lot of afterschool programs... that require me to do more work. So, I always am doing some kind of work." James devoted hours each day after school to studying and completing homework assignments.

Furthermore, James participated in numerous afterschool activities including the jazz band, 21st century leaders, FBLA, TSA, reading bowl, literacy initiative, mock trial, and SGA. James had a lot of interests and he wanted to accommodate as many of his interests as possible. Consequently, he did not want to spend all of his time on one musical activity. James illustrated his reasoning by citing the time requirements of the marching band at his home school. He stated, "marching band would take three, four hours out of the time I have to do the different projects and assignments I have lined up for me and that would mean no sleep." James believed that he had an ultimatum: participate in several activities that match his interests or participate in one musical activity. When speaking about this ultimatum, James stated, "Yes, it was either all of these clubs or just marching band." James chose the former.

James recalled a few performances with his high school's jazz band during the ninth grade, including one in which he had a solo. While James expressed confidence in learning to

play his parts in the musical repertoire assigned to him, he desired assistance with learning to play this particular solo. His current music teacher was unable to provide the assistance that he desired so James sought his former middle school band teacher to help him learn the solo part. When recalling this experience, James recounted,

That went okay. It was extremely hard at first, but eventually I went to my middle school band director and he helped me get through parts of it because my high school band director, even though he was a jazz band instructor, he only knows how to play the piano... But I got my middle school teacher to help, well walk me through it.

James's former middle school director was able to provide him with the support that was necessary to learn the solo for his current jazz band participation.

James really enjoyed performing with the jazz band during his ninth-grade school year; however, James credited the social experience of the jazz band as one of the most memorable aspects. James recalled,

...jazz band was fun because it was jazz band and because it was a social group. Because the thing about [my high school] is nobody talks and you don't get to know the upperclassmen because you rarely have classes with them.

There was one social event in particular that stood out for James. James recounted, the "most memorable moment in social aspect, we had a Christmas party. That was extremely fun because I did karaoke and I fell, but there's no video evidence of it, so everything's okay."

James continued to participate in the jazz band during his second semester at his high school but his participation was ended prematurely due to the COVID-19 pandemic. When James began his tenth-grade school year, he still participated with the jazz band even as the

meetings, rehearsals, and performances transitioned to a virtual platform. James provided an explanation for how the jazz band performed virtually. James stated,

...so, in jazz band, of course, since we can't meet up face to face because of COVID, we are doing this video thing where we have the songs, you record the video ... Well, you record a Flipgrid of yourself playing it. Then the jazz band teacher, director, he puts it all together in one music video.

James also stated that the jazz band is able to play on the same beat because they are playing along with a rehearsal track. James was able to continue to his participation with the jazz band as well as other afterschool activities that also shifted to virtual platforms during his tenth-grade school year.

James has participated with school music in some form for his entire academic career and he planned to continue to participate in some form of music when he transitions into adulthood. However, he planned to pursue career options outside the field of music for his main profession. When speaking about his career goals, James stated that he wanted to be “some kind of scientist, probably aerospace or a physicist or a mathematician. One of the three...” While James did not plan to pursue a music career, he still had an overwhelmingly positive experience with school music and maintained that the most enjoyable aspect of school music participation is the social aspect. When discussing how the social experience was the most enjoyable aspect of music participation, James explained,

It would have to be the social aspect because I met one of my best friends in band. I got another one of my best friends interested in band. I got a couple of my best friends interested in band, actually. That’s how I met a whole bunch of the upperclassmen and younger underclassmen in like middle school and the upperclassmen in high school. And

when I was in honor band, had the best time. I think my seventh-grade year, I was like fifth chair and I got to meet the [student who was fourth chair] and the [student who was sixth chair] and the people in front of and behind us and we were talking and messing with each other at lunch. That was fun. And then in eighth grade, I got second chair and messing with the first and the third chair and them messing with me during lunch and stuff like that. It was fun. Just meeting new people, I guess you can say.

James affirmed his positive musical experience by stating that the least enjoyable aspect is cleaning his instrument.

Nicole's Narrative

Elementary School Years

Nicole's earliest memories of experiencing music in a meaningful way date back to when she was six years old. During this time, Nicole remembers music filling the air from the time that she woke up until the time that she went to sleep. This musical experience was consistent for her when she stayed with her dad as well as when she stayed with her mom and step dad. Nicole described each of her parents' affinity for music. She stated,

My mom usually, nowadays, she got a taste more to the rap side of music, but she still like, hip-hop is her thing. R&B is her thing... Whereas, my step-dad, he's like old [school] music, I'd want to say. It's like old-old, but stuff from the '70s, the '80s. That's sort of his thing. And my dad, he's more of the jazz/rap person.

Nicole reflected fondly on these memories and attributed the actual occurrences to helping her positively adjust her mood. For example, if Nicole was frustrated, the musical environment of her home would help to shift her focus from the frustration that she was feeling and place it on the music.

In addition to the musical environment of her home, Nicole was also captivated by the music of some of her favorite cartoons as well as the cartoons themselves. She noted that two of her current passions are art and music and it was reasonable to conclude that the music of her home environment coupled with her infatuation with cartoons, or animation in general, are the genesis of these passions. When speaking about her passion for art, she stated, “I’d say my entire life, from the moment I could learn how to actually put stuff on paper I’ve been very passionate about it.” Nicole credited the music of her favorite cartoons for helping her to become receptive to different musical genres that she did not consider to be a part of her cultural norm. When discussing the music from some of her favorite cartoons, Nicole stated,

In a lot of the ones I watch, like regular show, maybe *Adventure Time*, what was it? There was one, *Gumball*. They have a lot of alternative music, I would say. Because it's not just like rap and then hip-hop, what I'm used to. It's stuff like, I remember it's this song called “Mississippi Queen.” I've been so attached to it ever since I first heard it on regular show. I think stuff like that introduced me to more genres of music than the norm, so that's why I'm attached to it.

These initial experiences in music helped Nicole to not only have an open mind when it came to exploring music, but also be hopeful and excited about the possibility of learning music in school.

Nicole’s initial school music experiences occurred in the general music classroom of her public elementary school. Nicole remembers her excitement about being in the general music class in second grade and showcasing what she learned to anyone that cared to listen. Nicole recalled learning “Hot Cross Buns” on the recorder and stated,

I think it was very fun because when I first learned how to play Hot Cross Buns, I was just feeling myself. I was like, "Oh, yeah. Y'all want to hear me play Hot Cross Buns?" Everybody's, "Sure." And then I was just playing it. I was like, "Oh, yeah, I'm getting it," but it probably wasn't even really that good. But I was getting it.

Nicole's excitement about performing "Hot Cross Buns" on her recorder was rooted in her love for music and the opportunity to become a part of the music-making process. She was so enthralled by this idea of contributing to the music-making process that she developed a desire to want to learn more about how to play an instrument. After Nicole reached the fourth grade, she sincerely believed that she would be able to capitalize on that desire because that was the first year that band instruction would be offered at her elementary school.

Nicole remembers hearing the announcement and wanting to sign up to join her elementary school band. At this point in her life, Nicole wanted to learn how to play the trumpet largely due to a character in her favorite animated movie, *The Princess and the Frog*. When Nicole was discussing her inspiration for learning to play the trumpet, Nicole stated,

Well, my favorite movie back then was *The Princess and the Frog* and I really liked that dude. I think his name was Louis and he played the trumpet. I was just so mesmerized by it, I was like, "I got to do that." Because the trumpet is actually a really beautiful instrument.

Nicole's eagerness and excitement regarding her opportunity to learn how to play the trumpet would soon be met with disappointment when she actually joined the band. While Nicole really wanted to learn, she did not feel as if her band teacher was providing the type of instruction that she needed. When discussing her first band experience, Nicole recalled,

...I was under the impression that there would be somebody there that could teach me, just give me some tips and tricks, teach me how to play it. Because, I mean, sure, you got a [nine]-year-old kid. There ain't no way they're going to know how to play a whole instrument like that. So of course, you have to have somebody there to teach them how to do it or at least have somebody who could help them. But no, no. He just gave me a book and told me do that. I couldn't understand it. And then when I asked him a question, the band director, he said, "Oh, I don't know." I was just left in the dust.

Nicole's frustration with her first band experience can still be noticed as she described it years later. She further detailed her struggles to make a nice sound with the trumpet and stated that her efforts, as well as the efforts of many of her classmates, were futile. Nicole blatantly stated, "All we did was sit there and make noise. That's literally it." She concluded that the teacher must not have known how to play the trumpet because she did notice that the teacher provided assistance to the students who were learning to play the flute.

Nicole did not remain in the band for long. After approximately four classes, Nicole did not return to the band class. This was possible because the band class was structured as a "pull-out session" at Nicole's elementary school, and in this case, it was optional. Disheartened, Nicole took her trumpet home and tried to learn the trumpet on her own. This did not work out for Nicole either so she put her trumpet in the attic where it remained for years, unbeknownst to her father who was still paying for the trumpet.

Middle School Years

This unfortunate experience could understandably deter students away from wanting to participate in school music but Nicole still had a desire to participate in school music because of her passion for music. When Nicole reached her public middle school in the sixth grade, she was

enrolled in a general music class that had a special focus on learning to play the piano. Learning to play the piano was a better experience than learning to play the trumpet and Nicole attributed this to her sixth-grade music teacher. When speaking about her sixth-grade music teacher, Nicole stated that her sixth-grade music teacher “seemed like she actually cared about her job. She actually cared if I excelled in playing the instrument and she gave me meaningful feedback. It actually helped me in the end.” Nicole valued the support and instruction that her sixth-grade music teacher provided for her and credited the teacher for her success in learning to play the piano. Nicole felt that she was successful in the class and that was evident due to her sixth-grade music teacher using her as an example in the class. When discussing the in-class performances, Nicole fondly recalled that the performances “usually went well for me. I was, not to brag or anything [or] toot my own horn, but I was usually the model for everybody else, though.” This was encouraging for Nicole as she pursued her quest to learn to play an instrument.

Nicole transferred to a different public middle school for her seventh and eighth grade years and she continued to be enrolled in general music classes that had a special focus on the piano. She continued to excel in these classes and she continued to credit her music teacher, in this case her seventh- and eighth-grade music teacher, as a critical part of her success. When speaking about her seventh- and eighth-grade music teacher, Nicole stated,

...that teacher, he was exceptional. I'm telling you; he was one of the best music teachers I've ever had. Because not only did he know about the piano, he also knew about anything else I could ask questions about. But going back to piano, yeah, that was kind of his thing...

Nicole valued the support she received from her seventh- and eighth-grade music teacher and was excited about the fact that she viewed him as a valuable resource.

Nicole's experiences in general music classes in elementary and middle school were generally positive. Additionally, her middle school general music classes' special focus on the piano helped to cultivate her love for playing the piano so much that she ended up getting her own keyboard in the eighth grade. Nicole's band experiences during that stretch of time were unfortunate by comparison. In addition to her futile attempt to participate in her elementary band, Nicole also sought to participate in her middle school band during her seventh and eighth grade years. She asked her father about joining the middle school band and her father was a little hesitant because of the elementary school band experience.

Nicole's father's hesitance was attributed to the fact that Nicole did not continue with the trumpet and stored the trumpet in the attic while her father was still making payments on the instrument. Since both Nicole and her father began to shift their focus from band at that time, Nicole believed that her father began to perceive Nicole's potential participation in band as a waste of financial resources. However, Nicole's father relented and provided his approval for Nicole's participation. Nicole described a typical encounter with her father regarding this issue. Nicole recalled,

My dad was traumatized by the trumpet, so he was like, "Well, if you go in the band again, you got to actually stick with it." I was like, "Yeah, I'm going to stick with it." He was like, "Okay."

Nicole had her father's permission to sign up for band and attempted to enroll in the band class but to no avail. Nicole was unsure of the reason behind her not being able to enroll in the band class during her middle school years; however, she still maintained a desire to participate in school music at the high school level.

High School Years

There was a problem with Nicole's desire at the time; Nicole was not sure if the high school that she enrolled in even had a band. She enrolled in her school due to the academic reputation that the school possessed and not for musical purposes. Nicole was pleasantly surprised when she learned that her school had a band at a club fair in ninth grade. She recalled,

It was the club fair and they were all set up in the cafeteria. I actually didn't know that we had a band until then, so I was just looking around, and I was like, "Whoa. We got a jazz band? I thought this was a school for academics. Jazz band? What is this doing here?" So, I was like, "Hmm. I'll sign up for this." It was really a spur of the moment thing because I knew my dad probably wouldn't have been very happy about it, but I ain't care a bit. I just signed up for it anyway. I knew that my hands weren't ... Because even though I do excel on the piano a little bit, I'm not excelling to the point where I feel comfortable with moving my hands across all of the keyboard at that point. So, I decided to just go with my second choice, the one that I've not had that much experience in, but the one that I learned anyway, the saxophone. So that's why I put my instrument down as saxophone. Nicole was so excited about the fact that there was a jazz band at her school that she neglected the normal protocol of asking her father's permission before signing up to participate. She also spontaneously signed up to play an instrument that she did not have any experience playing or even own at that moment.

Nicole pleaded with her father to allow her to participate in the jazz band but her father had the same reservations for the same reasons. Nicole's father wanted to ensure that Nicole would continue to participate with the band if he made arrangements to acquire the saxophone for Nicole. The first meeting for the jazz band was approaching and Nicole's father had not yet

acquiesced to her request to participate in the jazz band. Nicole described her successful attempt to convince her father to let her participate. Nicole recalled,

I had to talk him into it so bad... I had to just keep telling him, "Now, Dad, you know there's a first jazz meeting." It was August-something. He was like, "Yeah, yeah, yeah. But if you show me that you're going to stick with it, then I'll get you a saxophone." I'm like, "Okay." So, I just kept reiterating and he was finally like, "Fine. Get in the car. We're going to [the music store]." I was like, "Okay."

Nicole was able to obtain a saxophone and attend the jazz band meetings and rehearsals, which were held after school beginning in August of her freshmen year in high school. She was ready to participate in the jazz band but would soon be met with a challenge that was similar to the one experienced in elementary.

When she began attending the jazz band meetings and rehearsals, she discovered that her jazz band teacher did not know how to play the saxophone and would not be able to provide much assistance with her specific needs related to the saxophone. While the jazz band teacher did not provide much assistance related to her instrument, he did assist her with general aspects about how the song should be played such as rhythms, melodies, harmonies, accents, etc. Luckily, Nicole received help related to her specific needs on the saxophone from two jazz band members. Nicole discussed the assistance she received from the two jazz band members. Nicole stated,

There were two seniors and they had the same type of saxophone, alto sax, everything. I'm trying to figure out a starting point. They're like, if I needed to know how to play something or how to quickly shift gears, they helped me with that. They also helped me with reading music because I had a lot of trouble with reading music, just because I was,

basically, I would say, a beginner. Because I didn't really have a whole lot of experience, not only with the saxophone, but I only had a basic knowledge of music. So, with the songs, it could get a little confusing some times, but then we just came together and we worked through it. I listened to them play it so I can know how I'm supposed to sound. Then I played it, and if I had any errors, they would tell me about it. But, yeah, it was mainly just them just giving me a helping hand when I needed it.

The assistance that Nicole received from the two jazz band members was helpful but she still had a difficult time learning to play the saxophone. The majority of the learning relied on Nicole's ability to figure things out on her own.

In addition to the challenge of learning the saxophone, Nicole would experience the pressure of trying to learn two songs within the first two months of becoming a saxophonist. The jazz band was learning how to play an arrangement of "Mercy, Mercy, Mercy" by Joe Zawinul and "C Jam Blues" by Duke Ellington for a performance that was scheduled for October. The process of learning the songs was difficult for Nicole and required her to dedicate hours of her time. Nicole recalled,

It was very difficult at first because I had a sense that I needed everything to be perfect by our first performance, which I think that was in like, what, two months after the initial meeting? Yeah, that sounds about right, one or two months. Even though they did help me a lot, a good portion of learning how to play rested in my hands. So, I had to take extra hours out of my days and weeks to get to where I needed to be. So, in the beginning, it was pretty difficult. But as I slowly started getting the hang of it and recognizing what buttons play which note and how I play different types of notes, it got easier as the months went on.

Learning to play the saxophone was a challenging process for Nicole. The time that she spent learning how to play the songs for her first concert conflicted with other school obligations. Ironically, the main conflict occurred with a subject that represented Nicole's other passion: art. Nicole recalled,

Oh, first semester ninth grade, I had this big art project. Art was like my hardest class back then because it called for so much work. I was just taking three hours to just get it perfect. Then, all of a sudden, I realized oh, shoot, I got to work on "Mercy, Mercy, Mercy." Then I was like aw, man, but I got to do this art thing. It's due on Thursday because it was a Tuesday right then, so I had to try to choose between that because I can't. I feel bad practicing later than 7:30 because people will be trying to wind down, and I don't want to be a public disturbance. I'm like okay, do I finish the art work or do I practice the instrument? I decided to just binge on the art work that night and then binge on the instrument the next day.

School work has always been a top priority for Nicole. Nicole's dad instilled in Nicole the importance of earning good grades in all of her classes. Nicole agrees with her dad's perspective regarding earning good grades even though the actualization of this goal has often been stressful. When describing these stressful moments, Nicole stated,

I would say a lot last year and a lot this year in particular, because I'm starting to get a lot of work, and I find difficulty in balancing my schedule sometimes. Sometimes I have to pick between... getting whatever homework I need to get done because it's only a certain amount of time I can force myself to stay up before I pass out.

Nicole's stress has been attributed to the struggle for academic success in a number of courses throughout her academic journey; however, her stress level was intensified because of her ninth-

grade art class due to the workload, her passion for the subject, and her attempt to balance the course requirements with much needed jazz band practice.

Nicole's hard work allowed her to play one of the two songs at the jazz band performance. Nicole was able to play "Mercy, Mercy, Mercy" at the performance and she considered this a success. The performance occurred at the school in front of the entire student body. Nicole was nervous before the performance but was comforted by members of the jazz band as well as her friends who were in the audience.

After Nicole's first jazz band performance concluded, she was met with a new challenge. The jazz band was preparing for the Christmas concert, which was two months away, and Nicole was preparing to play four songs at this concert. While Nicole felt supported by her jazz band teacher and fellow jazz band colleagues, she often felt overwhelmed by the pressure of learning the songs in preparation for the concert that was scheduled to take place in December. Nicole recalled,

I still relied heavily on [the jazz band members who played the saxophone] and my teacher. But I found that as time went on, it was getting harder and harder to push myself to do it because it felt like, "Oh, it's too much. I just can't do it." So, I just kept trying to tell myself like, "Okay, just do what you can. Just do what you can." And I kept trying to give myself breaks because I have a habit of just going, going, going until I burn myself out. I tried not to do that, and I've luckily succeeded because I played in the [concert].

But yeah, so I tried to not so much put so much pressure on myself.

Nicole was able to perform at the Christmas concert and she credited the support and encouragement that she received as a vital component of her preparation. When elaborating about the encouragement she received from her jazz band peers, Nicole stated,

My friends in jazz band, they were like my backbone at that point because if it wasn't for them just uplifting me and telling me that I could do it and to just do it and just not worry about it, then I don't think I would've been where I'm at now.

Nicole credited the encouragement that she received from her jazz band peers as helping her to perform at the Christmas concert as well as with her continued musical development.

When speaking about her actual performance at the Christmas concert, Nicole acknowledged that she performed better on songs that featured longer tones. For example, Nicole stated that her performance on "I'll Be Home for Christmas" by Kim Gannon, Walter Kent, and Buck Ram was better than her performance on "This Christmas" by Donny Hathaway and Nadine McKinnor. Her reasoning was that her part on "I'll Be Home for Christmas" featured long unaccented notes while her part on "This Christmas" featured shorter accented notes that were rhythmically challenging. Still, Nicole was happy with her performance at the Christmas concert and her progress on the saxophone in general considering that she had only started playing the saxophone four months prior.

After the Christmas concert, the jazz band had a social event to end off the semester. Nicole fondly remembered this social event and laughed uncontrollably when she described an event that occurred. Nicole recalled,

The Christmas party was very nice. I can tell everybody let loose, after a very tough performance. But it was good to see them... We were just eating pizza and wings, and I came up with the idea like, "Hey, let's do karaoke." So, everybody was like, "Yeah." So that's what we were doing majority of this time. I remember one very funny experience: My friend the trombone player, he was singing some song, and you know those little carts that you carry the big rolls of paper on? He sat his tall self on top of that, and he was

letting my other friend push him around. He did a death drop and I could see his life flash before his eyes. It was very funny.

Nicole concluded that this social event was necessary for her because of the challenges and triumphs that she had experienced during the semester. While Nicole felt that she did a good job with overcoming many challenges during the semester, she believed that the social event was a good way to relax and enjoy her friends in the jazz band.

In addition to continued participation in the jazz band, Nicole was also enrolled in a keyboarding class during the second semester. She felt confident about her ability to be successful in the class due to the knowledge and skills that she acquired in her middle schools' general music classes. Nicole described her experience in the keyboarding class as fun and congenial. While the jazz band was also fun for her, she realized that she had to work harder in order to be successful. There were two performances that she had to prepare with the jazz band and both performances were Black history performances scheduled during the month of February. The jazz band was going to play the same two songs that they played during their first of the first semester: "Mercy, Mercy, Mercy" by Joe Zawinul and "C Jam Blues" by Duke Ellington. During the first performance in October, Nicole was only able to play "Mercy, Mercy, Mercy." By February, Nicole was able to play both songs during both Black history performances. Nicole described the performances where she played "Mercy, Mercy, Mercy" and "C Jam Blues" as liberating. She felt liberated because she had finally overcome a challenging song that prevented her from taking full part in a previous performance.

Nicole was preparing to perform new music with the jazz band after the Black history performances; however, the jazz band's activities abruptly ended in March due to school policies that were implemented as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Nicole stated that she continued

to practice while school was in session but lost hope during the summertime because of the lack of support. When the next school year began, Nicole continued to participate with the jazz band, which met virtually because of the pandemic. Nicole stated that the jazz band meets and rehearses virtually and prepares virtual performances. While Nicole understood the jazz band's virtual interaction, this was antithetical to the aspect of school participation that she enjoyed the most, which was being around and sharing experiences with the members of the jazz band.

Jasmine's Narrative

Preschool and Elementary School Years

Jasmine's initial music experiences occurred at her church when she was four years old. Jasmine, along with her mother and siblings, attended a church where virtually all of the congregants were Caribbean American. She remembered reading the bible, dancing, and singing group songs with the other children who attended children's church. Some of the songs that the children sang during children's church were also sung in an annual week-long summer event called vacation bible school. Jasmine remembered and sung one of the songs that was frequently featured in children's church and vacation bible school. The song, "How Far from God," was originally composed by Sister Rosetta Tharpe and released in the 1940s in a mid-tempo, blues style. The Caribbean-styled version that Jasmine sang had a faster tempo, different rhythms, and a different melody than the original version. The children who attended children's church and vacation bible school were also taught how to do a dance that accompanied their version of the song. Jasmine continued to participate with the group singing that occurred during children's church and vacation bible school until the age of ten.

There were at least three individuals that noticed Jasmine's singing ability when she participated in musical activities in children's church and vacation bible school: the spiritual

education director for the youth, the church's musical director and worship leader. The spiritual education director coordinated all the youth activities during children's church and vacation bible school; the music director was responsible for coordinating all of the musical activities during the entire church service; the worship leader was responsible for coordinating aspects of the church service that dealt specifically with the praise and worship. *(While the term praise and worship can be used to describe the ultimate purpose for the entire church service, this term has also been used to describe a particular part of the church service that involves singing songs. Jasmine was referencing the part of the church service that involves singing songs.)*

These three individuals became familiar with Jasmine's singing ability at an early age and would provide Jasmine with tips related to vocal technique. The worship leader also provided Jasmine with the opportunity to sing with the worship team at the age of six. The worship team consisted of a group of individuals who were selected to sing songs of worship in front of the church congregation. Jasmine participated with the worship team until the age of seven because of issues with transportation. While Jasmine participation with worship team ceased temporarily, she still participated in other musical activities at the church.

Around this time, Jasmine was in second grade and she had been participating in musical activities at her elementary school, which was a theme school. Jasmine recalled a Christmas concert that she participated in along with her second-grade class. The class performed "Joyful, Joyful" from *Sister Act 2* at this concert. Jasmine liked the song but she had a problem with the performance. The students were not allowed to sing the song; instead, they were told to lip sing. If the students did not follow this directive, they were not allowed to participate in the concert. Jasmine recalled, "I really liked the song, so it was hard for me not to sing to it. I didn't get pulled off the stage or anything, I'm just saying it was just not enjoyable to do it." This directive

bothered Jasmine, not only because of her desire to sing a song that she liked, but also because she enjoyed singing and had become accustomed to singing in church. Jasmine felt that the performance was not an authentic music-making experience.

Jasmine would get a chance to have an authentic music-making experience a few months later when she joined the music club, which was sponsored by her music teacher. The music club met after school and consisted mainly of singing a variety of songs with some songs being accompanied with choreography. The music club performed a Ghanaian song entitled “Sansa Kroma” at the elementary school’s Black history program. Jasmine remembered being happy about performing a song, which she described as fun, alongside her friends who were also in the music club.

Jasmine continued to participate in the music club when she entered the third grade. At this time, Jasmine was thrilled because the music teacher selected her to sing a solo for a song that was performed by a gospel singer named Yolanda Adams. Jasmine recalled,

I was excited because it was a song that I would listen to because coming from church and everything, so I was excited and this time my friends weren't in the music club with me, it was different people but I was still excited to do it either way.

Jasmine’s excitement emanated from the opportunity to have a school music experience that was similar to her church music experiences. This excitement, however, would soon dissipate. Jasmine recalled,

We never got to perform [the song by Yolanda Adams]. Something happened with [my music teacher] or the music club in general and I can't remember after that what happened, because I don't remember being in the music club after that...

This unfortunate occurrence marked the end of Jasmine's participation in the music club at her elementary school. Furthermore, while Jasmine was enrolled in several general music classes throughout her elementary and middle school years, she did not participate in another school music performing group until she reached high school. Jasmine's lack of participation in school music performing groups from the fourth to the eighth grade was not attributed to Jasmine's lack of desire or interest in school music; rather, this lack of participation was attributed to the absence of relevant school music opportunities available at Jasmine's elementary and middle school. There were no other school music performance group opportunities for singers at Jasmine's elementary school after the music club discontinued during Jasmine's third grade year.

Middle School Years

When Jasmine enrolled into her middle school, which was also a theme school, she noticed that the only school music performance group opportunities for students were band and orchestra. Jasmine would have been interested in signing up for chorus, but that was not an option. Consequently, Jasmine's main music experiences continued to occur at her church. While considering this reality, Jasmine acknowledged, "It would have been nice to have an experience outside of church with music but I never got that experience." Jasmine endeavored to not focus on the absence of a choral music program at her middle school because doing so would have caused her to become upset. Instead, she focused on the music-making opportunities that were available at her church.

Jasmine's continued participation in her church's musical activities helped her to come to the realization that she did not only enjoy singing, she was also good at singing. Additionally, the music director, worship leader, and the other youth that she grew up with recognized her as a good singer. Jasmine reflected on this and stated, "I grew up around [the other youth] and the

choir director [and they would say] ‘you know you really have something.’ And I kind of knew I had something too.” With this realization in mind, Jasmine rejoined the worship team at her church during her middle school years; however, during this time, she was tasked with leading the worship team during service for the first time. Jasmine described what the experience of leading worship at her church entailed. She stated,

...we would have youth Sunday, and that's when the youth would take over the worship.

They'll take over the word and kind of take over the hosting. So, when I would have to

sing lead... [I would also] have to kind of direct the backup where to go and all that.

Jasmine was fourteen years old when she had her first experience leading worship; however, this initial experience was not as impactful as she had hoped for it to be. Jasmine was extremely nervous and she felt that her nervousness impacted her preparation. Her thoughts and feelings about her performance were supported by her family. Jasmine recalled,

I can remember coming back home from church and asking everybody in the house how

did you feel about it, because I already knew I didn't really feel great about it. And they're

like, “It could have been better and all that.” And I appreciated them telling me that...

After this experience, Jasmine continued to participate with the worship team as a backup singer. She valued this time as a backup singer because she thought that it was necessary for her to learn how to become a better worship leader.

Jasmine had other opportunities to lead worship at her church and she gradually became more proficient in her ability to guide the worship team, musicians, and congregants through a suitable worship experience. However, there was one experience in particular that stood out amongst the rest. Jasmine was fifteen years old and she was tasked with leading a song entitled “Let Praises Rise” written by A’Leithia Sweeting. While Jasmine remembered being nervous

prior to leading this song during worship, her nervousness did not outweigh her preparation and confidence. Jasmine recalled,

I tried to block out my nervousness and I didn't look at the crowd as much as I did last time and... I had more confidence in what I was doing because I knew the song and I wanted to sing the song because I felt connected to the song, and it was great. And everybody [was] worshiping and everything so that made it even more great to see it impact somebody.

This experience epitomized Jasmine's ultimate purpose with regards to music, which was to sing music that was impactful for others. Furthermore, her successful attempt at leading worship in this instance helped her to increase her belief that she could have an instrumental role in creating valuable experiences with her music-making abilities.

Jasmine's experiences participating with and occasionally leading the worship team at her church were much needed, especially since she did not have any relevant opportunities to participate in school music during her middle school years. By the time that Jasmine finished middle school, she was no longer focused on participating in school music. When it came to school, Jasmine was purely focused on doing well with her academics and she was succeeding in that area. Jasmine's success with academics in middle school was newfound. Jasmine remembered, "from kindergarten to fourth grade, I didn't really have good grades, but in fifth grade, I got better. Middle school, it was just A's and B's." Jasmine primarily accredited her improvement with academics to her own realization that she could perform better in class. She began to take more initiative with her learning by reading and studying supplementary materials that were relevant to her classes.

High School Years

Empowered by her academic achievements in middle school, Jasmine applied to get into her high school which had a reputation for having an academically challenging program and preparing students to be successful in college. When discussing her decision to enroll in her high school, she noted, “[my high school] had more opportunities for college and everything, and I thought I would've been more prepared if I would've went through [my high school] instead of the regular high schools.” After Jasmine enrolled into her high school, she noticed that one of her classes was keyboarding techniques. She initially thought that this was a computer technology class but soon discovered that she would be learning to play the piano. While in keyboarding class, Jasmine learned that her keyboarding teacher was also the jazz band sponsor and he was in the process of recruiting members for the jazz band. Jasmine initially thought that her teacher’s recruitment appeal was only for students who played what she considered to be traditional instruments. Nevertheless, Jasmine informed her teacher that she is a singer. After Jasmine told her teacher about her musical ability, she soon found out that her teacher’s recruitment appeal was also for her. Jasmine recalled,

I think we were in [keyboarding class], my teacher was trying to recruit some band people and I thought that I could sing but I don't want to [play a traditional instrument], so it wouldn't work out for me and he was like, "Well, singing is an instrument too." I was like, "Okay, cool." Then I joined.

Jasmine cautiously joined the jazz band because she was concerned about the jazz band being a good fit for her, musically as well as socially. However, once she began participating with the jazz band, she determined that her jazz band mates were nice and the overall experience was exceptional. Jasmine stated,

I wasn't automatically in because I already had my suspicions about if I was going to actually like the club, if I was going to be comfortable, but the people were nice, they were playing their instruments, they're cool...

The jazz band members' dispositions allowed Jasmine to be at ease because she felt that she was joining organization where positive social experiences would likely occur.

Jasmine's most memorable experiences from her participation in jazz band occurred during her preparation for and her performance in the Christmas concert. This concert stands out for Jasmine because she had such an integral role. Jasmine had a part in seven songs, which was the most she has ever had in one performance. Moreover, Jasmine's role for the songs varied. Jasmine sung two songs with an ensemble, "Feliz Navidad" by José Feliciano and "Carol of the Bells" by Mykola Leontovych. She sung "This Christmas" by Donny Hathaway and Nadine McKinnor with a trio. She sung "Let it Snow" by Sammy Cahn and Jule Styne as a duet with one of her friends. She had a special harmony part during the B section of "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas" by Hugh Martin and Ralph Blane. She sung one of the background parts for "What Christmas Means to Me" by Anna Gordy Gaye, George Gordy, and Allen Story. Lastly, Jasmine sung "The Christmas Song" by Mel Tormé and Robert Wells as a solo.

Out of all of the songs that Jasmine had a role in, Jasmine credited her role in the "Carol of the Bells" performance as the most significant. Jasmine felt like this particular performance required the most preparation and precision related to notes, rhythms, dynamics, and tone color. When reflecting on the performance of the "Carol of the Bells," Jasmine stated,

I liked it because everything was planned and in place because of the Carol of the bells, there are certain notes that you have to get or it's not going to sound right or as good as someone else that's on YouTube or something, so I really liked that performance.

Jasmine remembered that her music teacher assigned the vocal parts for each ensemble participant. Jasmine stated, “My teacher, he established the parts... he played out the notes and then he assigned everybody their part.” Learning her part and being in sync with the other ensemble participants required hard work and Jasmine was glad that the efforts were rewarded with a great performance.

While Jasmine enjoyed participating with the jazz band, she was concerned about having a good balance between her academic coursework, jazz band, and her personal life. Jasmine spent an extensive amount of time outside of school studying and doing homework during her ninth-grade year. Jasmine recalled,

In ninth grade, I was still trying to figure out what was a good schedule for me and everything, so I kind of spent too much time on school work, and my grades were turning out okay but I didn't get enough sleep. So now, I'm trying to time everything correctly, and I am trying to go to sleep at a certain time and then wake up at a certain time.

Jasmine remembered spending six to eight hours on school work outside of school and sometimes not going to bed until midnight or one o' clock in the morning. Additionally, she would bring her homework to jazz band rehearsals, which took place after school. Jasmine remembered, “I would stay back to do jazz band, but sometimes I would be practicing and I would do my homework at times if I knew I had a lot.” While Jasmine would sometimes bring her homework to jazz band rehearsals, she generally tried to make arrangements so that her jazz band participation did not conflict with her school work. If she was not able to finish her school work within a certain timeframe, she would sometimes make a decision to not attend a jazz band rehearsal. Jasmine stated,

I already know the days for jazz band, so I'm trying to prep myself so I'm not behind, and I do more work on a certain day. So, I can do jazz band on some days. Some days I can't, so I'll cancel...

Jasmine was able to continue her participation with the jazz band because of her persistence coupled with her jazz band teacher's willingness to allow her to multitask during parts of the rehearsals or miss some rehearsals.

Jasmine continued to participate in the jazz band during her tenth-grade school year even though her participation was through virtual media platforms because of the physical school closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Her jazz band commitment required her to attend weekly meetings and rehearsals, practice her parts for the songs that she was assigned, and upload her part on an online platform. This process could be time consuming, particularly when she has a lot of school work, but Jasmine felt like she was managing her time better during her tenth-grade school year compared with her ninth-grade school year. Jasmine valued her participation in her school's jazz band because she enjoyed her experiences and realized how those experiences can be beneficial for her in the future.

Madison's Narrative

Preschool Years

Madison's earliest memories of music stem from moments that she shared with her mother when Madison was three years old. Madison's mother was a professional R&B and soul singer who toured parts of the United States of America and Europe. In addition to singing around the world, Madison's mother would also sing while she was braiding Madison's hair. Madison could not fully hear her mother's singing at the time because Madison was born with an impairment that impacted her hearing in both ears. This impairment caused Madison's hearing to

be muffled, faded, or even result in hearing loss for periods of time. Still, Madison fondly remembered those moments with her mother and credited her mother's singing with calming her when she was younger.

Elementary School Years

Madison also credited her mother with her own personal start as a musician. Madison's mother encouraged her to play instruments and bought her a guitar when she was five years old. Madison began to receive formal guitar lessons at her private school in the first grade when she was six years old and continued with these lessons during the second grade. When thinking about this experience, Madison recalled, "it was fun and I liked the experience and I liked the way [playing the guitar made me feel]. And in fact, I'm about to pick it up soon..." This experience ultimately impacted Madison's decision to learn how to play the violin when she reached the fourth grade and joined the orchestra at a different elementary school.

The elementary school that Madison attended from the fourth grade until the sixth grade was a magnet school that made it mandatory for each student to participate in a musical ensemble. Madison participated with the orchestra during fourth and fifth grade and enjoyed her experience, mainly because of her music teacher. Madison remembered her orchestra teacher as a passionate teacher who provided a great wealth of encouragement but who was also strict.

When speaking about her orchestra teacher, Madison stated,

...he was very encouraging and he's still a teacher I think about, because he was very passionate. He was strict, but that's because he has a lot of experience and he can play so many instruments... every now and then he'd bring a different instrument that he could play and there'd be so many. And I was just shocked and I wanted to get on his level one day...

She looked up to him because he possessed a wealth of experience and was able to play a variety of instruments.

Madison described a memorable experience that she shared with her orchestra teacher when she was in the fifth grade. She recalled,

...we were preparing for the winter concert and he was picking out parts and... everybody wanted to be first violin and nobody wanted to be second or third violin, but... you just can't have that. You can't... The melody has... to have something to back it up with. So, he was explaining to us why each person would be suited towards [the first, second, or third part], that he wasn't doing this to say that we weren't good at it, but we were more suited towards it. And I got second and third on two different pieces. So, I was a little upset, but then he explained it and it just, that has always been my favorite part to play in any instrument.

Madison respected her orchestra teacher even more after he was steadfast in explaining a hard truth. Although this hard truth was difficult for Madison to accept initially, Madison eventually understood and agreed with her orchestra teacher's rationale.

Madison remembered her fourth and fifth grade school music experience in a positive manner; however, she did encounter some challenges because of her hearing impairment. Madison's peers in the orchestra class would sometimes exacerbate this issue by the way that they responded to her when she asked for help. Madison recalled,

...my hearing would sometimes go out [during] a key point and I'd have to ask for the person to say it again. I got a little bit of a tease for that when I was in elementary school, but I really couldn't control it. Because I'd be that friend that would always ask them, "So maybe repeat that. What did you say?"

Madison was not only teased for not being able to hear certain things during class, she was also teased for the sound of her voice. She was teased by her classmates as well as her close friends and this ridicule had a negative impact on Madison's self-esteem. Madison recalled,

I would say I got teased a lot and mocked a lot because of the way I speak, because even though I still sound a little bit weird how I speak right now, it was worse when I was younger. So, I would get teased in my first saying certain words or I'd be called slow or stuff. And even my friends that are my closest friends now, they'd mock me in a joking way. I know they didn't mean anything by it like some of the other kids that did it then, but it still hurts and they still do it sometimes in a funny way. So, I've gotten used to it. So, it really doesn't affect me as much as it did my self-esteem when I was younger...

Everybody has their insecurities, but my voice for the longest time was one of my biggest insecurities.

The teasing and mocking antics that Madison endured may have been normal in some settings; however, this ridicule did not take place very often during her orchestra class because her orchestra teacher emphasized respect and did not tolerate that kind of behavior.

Madison's orchestra teacher was a major factor in her overall enjoyment of school music during her fourth and fifth grade school year; however, Madison had a desire to experience school music through a different medium. When Madison reached the sixth grade, she decided to join the band and learn how to play the clarinet. Madison's decision to learn to play the clarinet was fostered by her aspiration to learn how to play a variety of instruments as well as the realization that many of her friends were already participating in the band. Madison had high hopes for her sixth-grade band experience but some of those hopes were met with disappointment due to the lack of support that she received from her sixth-grade band teacher.

While Madison acknowledged that her band teacher was a good person, she felt that his expectations were not suitable for first-year band students such as herself. Madison recalled,

...[my sixth-grade band teacher] was trying too hard to rush us, to get with the other people. So, it ended up making me miss certain things I had to fill in when I got to my next band program, which was in seventh grade. So, I got the basics but I didn't learn as much as I should have.

Madison's sixth-grade band teacher's expectations impacted the first-year band students in different ways. One of Madison's friends, a first-year trumpet player, excelled in the sixth-grade band class while another friend, a first-year student, chose not to continue with band because of the lack of support. Madison, however, continued to participate in the band even though she struggled initially.

Madison began the sixth-grade in beginning band but was promoted to intermediate band during her first semester. Even though Madison's promotion to intermediate band in such a short time might seem like an acclamation of Madison's progress with the clarinet, Madison did not feel like she was adequately prepared for the challenge of intermediate band. As Madison participated in the sixth-grade intermediate band, she was met with criticism from other band students who had participated in a band class since the fourth grade. Madison could not understand why certain classmates were critical of her when they benefited from two additional years of band class. Madison recalled,

I honestly don't think it was a good move because I felt judged by my peers whenever I would mess up. And I felt like I wasn't good enough to play the instrument at the level that everybody else is playing at since they had been playing since fourth grade, when I had just only been playing a year. They wouldn't acknowledge that I had only been

playing a year whenever I messed up. So, they'd giggle or make little faces. And I felt like I was doing pretty well for myself. I had only started a few months ago when they had been playing for two years and not to sound cocky, I was almost at their level. I did feel like I was good enough to be up to part of them, but I'd just miss a few things and... they'd drop my confidence level all the way down when they laugh or giggle.

Madison's experience in the sixth-grade intermediate band was pervaded with challenges that Madison eventually overcame. Interestingly, Madison's fourth and fifth grade orchestra teacher assisted her with overcoming some of these challenges by providing Madison with after-school clarinet lessons. Additionally, Madison's orchestra teacher assisted her with applying to an arts school because he saw her potential as an instrumentalist. Madison was accepted into this arts school but decided not to attend because she wanted to participate in sports as well as music.

Middle School Years

After Madison graduated from elementary school, she enrolled into the magnet program of a middle school and continued her participation in school music as a clarinetist in her middle school's intermediate band. Prior to participating in her middle school's band program, Madison suspected that her middle school band experience would be pleasant because her older brother participated in the same band program with the same teacher and he had a good experience. Furthermore, Madison attended some of her brother's performances when he participated in the middle school band and considered those performances to be exemplary.

Madison's suspicions about having a pleasant band experience in middle school proved to be true. She developed a deep respect and admiration for her middle school band teacher not just because of her ability to teach and manage the band program but also for her ability to encourage students. Madison was recipient of her middle school band teacher's encouragement.

In addition to the intermediate band that met during the school day, there was a symphonic band that met after school; however, interested students had to audition to become a part of the symphonic band. Madison recalled,

...in seventh grade it was hard to get into the symphonic band and I felt like I wasn't good enough or at the level I should be for symphonic band. So, I didn't try out. But at the end of class, at the end of the tryouts, [My middle school band teacher] pulled me aside and asked me, she was like, "Why didn't you try out? You know you would have made it, you're really good." And I was like, I was really shocked because I didn't know and I didn't think I was good enough to be in it... the next year I tried out and I made it because I couldn't try out the year before because after that, after the audition that all the spots were filled out. But the next year, I tried out and I made it and we were supposed to go to New York to perform at Carnegie Hall.

Madison received much needed encouragement from her band teacher in seventh grade after receiving unwarranted criticism from peers during her sixth-grade band experience. Moreover, this encouragement helped Madison's self-confidence.

Another memorable band experience that occurred during Madison's seventh and eighth grade school years was an annual event that featured a partnership between her middle school band program and a high school band program. Madison's middle school was a feeder school for this particular high school which sponsored the event. During this event, Madison along with her middle school band classmates interacted with and performed alongside high school marching band students. This excited Madison for at least two reasons. First, Madison appreciated the opportunity to talk to band students who were older and had more experience than she had because advice and mentorship that the older students provided. Secondly, she enjoyed

performing with the high school marching band because the performance nearly always included dancing. Madison stated that playing the clarinet and dancing simultaneously was exhausting but also fun. Additionally, this annual band event was always held during the week that the middle school band participated in the band festival. Madison remembered that her middle school band received high scores, which also contributed to the excitement of the annual band event.

Madison participated in this annual band event during her seventh and eighth grade school years. She thoroughly enjoyed her band experiences during this time; however, her middle school band experiences had a sad conclusion. Madison's middle school band teacher passed away during in the November of Madison's eighth grade school year. Madison was greatly affected by her middle school teacher's passing because of the indelible impact that her teacher had on her as well as others. The middle school band program was also affected, which was evident by the band students who chose not to finish the school year in the band class. Madison decided to continue her participation in the band but she noted the differences at the final spring concert. She recalled,

...it wasn't a fun experience. I felt like the band didn't do as well. The band was much smaller because a lot of the people after my first eighth grade teacher had passed, a lot of the people quit so we had a small band to begin with. And like I said, the second eighth grade teacher didn't know how to conduct our band properly. And she, at the time she was also the orchestra teacher. So, she literally had to go back and forth in between the orchestra and the band. And we didn't sound that bad because we were good, but we didn't sound as good as we could have.

This was an unfortunate end to Madison's middle school band experience. Furthermore, Madison decided not to continue with band when she enrolled in her high school.

High School Years

Madison did not attend the high school that sponsored the annual band event when she was in middle school. She attended a different high school that required prospective students “to apply” and “be accepted” before being admitted. Madison wanted to attend her high school because her “main options for a career” were to become “an environmental lawyer or a gynecologist.” She believed that enrolling in her high school provided her with an opportunity to accomplish her career goals.

Madison knew that her high school would be challenging and she wanted to ensure that she could balance her obligations with her interests. She stated, “I knew [my high school] had a very rigorous workload and I knew it’d be a lot for me to balance.” Even with this in mind, Madison admitted that she would have participated in band if she attended the high school that sponsored the annual band event for her middle school. Her reasoning was that the high school band, which sponsored the annual band event for her middle school, produced a more engaging performance than the band at her actual high school. The high school band, which sponsored the annual band event for her middle school, would not only perform music at a high level, but they would dance and captivate the audience with their performance. While the band at her high school performed music at a high level, they did not measure up to the other high school’s showmanship and overall performance quality.

In addition to the difference in the bands’ performance quality, Madison did not care for the rigidity of the commitment expectations of her current high school band program. Madison stated that students who signed up for the band class at her current high school were required to stay after school to satisfy other band obligations. This requirement conflicted with Madison’s interest in participating with other extracurricular activities. Madison stated,

I wanted to be in multiple things other than band and I knew band would take up the most of my time. Right now, I'm in track, I'm in FBLA, I'm in TSA, I'm in Girls Who Code.

So, I felt like band would have taken me over academically and sports-wise, which I've seen with like some of my other friends who are in band.

Madison placed value on being able to explore multiple interests and activities. One of the interests that Madison still had was participating in band; however, she did not want to participate in band at the expense of all of her other interests. Nevertheless, Madison would have been willing to make a concession and participate in her high school band if their overall performance level was on par with the high school band that sponsored the annual event for her middle school band.

While Madison was not participating in school music at the high school level, she still acknowledged her love and passion for music and the music-making process. She wanted to continue her music learning journey by receiving lessons on the first instrument that she ever encountered: the acoustic guitar. Madison stated,

...I feel like I'm always going to be playing an instrument. I've always played an instrument. I hope to always play an instrument. Like right now, I've got my guitar, so I'm going to start lessons in the new year, so I feel like music is an important part of my family. Yeah, music has always been an important part of my family and my life, so I feel that it was a good experience, but it is going to be something that I cherish throughout my whole life, and something that I'm always going to do. Music not only calms me but music is also a way for me to express myself when words are not enough.

Madison was coming full circle in her music experience, yet, she sensed that her musical journey was far from over. She valued the challenges and triumphs that experienced in school music.

Madison believed that her participation in school music had greatly impacted her life and provided her with invaluable lessons that transcended the music classroom. When thinking about some of those lessons, Madison concluded,

[My participation in school music] taught me more to believe in myself and it taught me that I need... Well, I'm the more open-minded person. I'm the most open-minded one in all of my friend groups and it taught me that sometimes I do need structure. Sometimes structure is good and that I need to believe. It also taught me that I need to believe in myself more and not really listen to others who may side-eye me... it taught me I need to have more self-confidence and more self-belief. And I do think that [my school music participation] helped bring up my self-esteem and my confidence.

Madison's school music experiences not only helped her to become a better musician, but they also aided her personal development. Madison was more equipped to engage in other areas of interest, in part, because of her participation in school music.

5 ANALYSIS OF NARRATIVES

The purpose of this study was to examine the factors that academically successful students who identify as Black or African American perceive to be influential when making decisions with regard to their participation or non-participation in school music at the high school level. In an effort to understand such factors, I interviewed four academically successful Black students about their lived experiences related to their participation and non-participation in musical activities. Subsequently, I composed a narrative for each of the academically successful Black students as well as my own personal narrative. In this chapter, I discuss my analysis of the narratives and how they address my research question. My research question was as follows: How do the lived experiences of academically successful Black students influence their choice to participate in school music at the high school level? The methods of analysis that I employed were aligned with a paradigmatic-type narrative inquiry (Polkinghorne, 1995) and based on the data analysis approach of Creswell (2013). My analysis of the narratives culminated with three narrative threads that emerged from the four current academically successful Black students' narratives.

I organized this chapter by first introducing the three narrative threads. Secondly, I described how each of the participants' narratives were related to the threads. Thirdly, I provided further analysis in the conclusion subsections of each thread. I discuss how these three narrative threads are related to previous research in chapter 6.

Narrative Threads

There were three threads that emerged from the narratives of the four Black academically successful students. These threads were indicative of the external factors within their lived experiences that the academically successful Black students perceived to be impactful in their musical journey; thus, these external factors were influential when making decisions with regard

to their participation or non-participation in school music at the high school level. The threads that emerged from the students' narratives were as follows:

- Flexibility with time commitments
- Instructional support with their instrument
- Social experience within their school music ensemble.

I define instructional support as any assistance related to the attainment of music skills or knowledge provided to a music student. Instructional support can be provided to a music student by the music student's current music teacher, former music teacher, or peer.

Flexibility With Time Commitments

Each of the four academically successful Black students in this study expressed a desire to participate in school music throughout their educational journey; however, they also indicated that there were activities and obligations other than school music that were significant, important, or interesting to them. These non-music activities and obligations required the academically successful Black students to devote the necessary time and energy in order for the activities and obligations to be completed or fulfilled successfully. In this subsection, I discuss each of the academically successful Black students' activities and obligations that necessitate adequate time for successful participation and completion.

James's Activities and Obligations

James positively expressed his feelings about school music on numerous occasions. These notions have been supported by his continued participation in school music during his elementary, middle, and high school years as well as his desire to continue his participation in a music ensemble when he reaches adulthood. While James wanted to continue his participation in music, he also developed other interests which were evident through his selection of

extracurricular clubs and activities. James was a part of eight extracurricular clubs and activities at his high school including the jazz band, FBLA, 21st century leaders, reading bowl, mock trial, TSA, literacy initiative, and SGA. James's participation in these extracurricular clubs and activities was contrasted with his non-participation in his home school's marching band.

Regarding this matter, James stated, "Yes, it was either all of these clubs or just marching band." James viewed marching band as an activity that would take up a lot of his time without leaving much additional time for other interests. As a result, James chose to participate in eight extracurricular clubs and activities, with one of those activities providing him with the opportunity to participate in school music, rather than one school music activity such as marching band.

In addition to participating in number extracurricular clubs and activities, James stated that participating in a time-consuming school music activity such as marching band could also hinder him from his first priority, the successful completion of his school work. James stated that his high school required

...a lot of work. If you don't count in homework, just a lot of studying... So doing marching band would take three, four hours out of the time I have to do the different projects and assignments I have lined up for me and that would mean no sleep.

James mentioned that he typically spent two to three hours per day doing homework and studying for class. The time commitments that James allotted for his extracurricular activities and his school work were feasible and did not produce any conflicts.

One aspect that seemed to elucidate James's reluctance to devote more time to school music was that his main career goal revolved around a profession that directly involved mathematics and science. James stated that he felt that he has been good at school since he was

in the first grade but realized he had a special affinity for math in the second grade. This affinity for math eventually expanded to science and led James to consider careers that were related to those subjects. When I asked James about his career goals, James stated that he wanted to be “some kind of scientist, probably aerospace or a physicist or a mathematician. One of the three...” James’s career focus seemed to be one aspect that impacted his prioritization of school music during his high school years. James stated that he would be interested in taking private lessons if he wanted to pursue music as a full-time career goal but he did not want to pay for private lessons for something that would be a hobby. This meant that James would be willing to spend more time with music if he planned for music to be a primary career goal.

Nicole’s Activities and Obligations

Nicole had sought opportunities to participate in school music during her elementary, middle, and high school years. These efforts were largely unsuccessful during her elementary and middle school years; however, Nicole joined the jazz band during her high school years as a saxophonist. Nicole enjoyed participating with her high school’s jazz band but her first passion had always been art. Nicole discussed her love of cartoons and how she was fascinated with the juxtaposition of animation and music that is found in cartoons. Nicole began to demonstrate her love for art at an early age by drawing pictures and images. When discussing how long she had been drawing pictures and images, Nicole stated, “I’d say my entire life, from the moment I could learn how to actually put stuff on paper I’ve been very passionate about it.” Nicole mostly drew cartoon pictures and images during her elementary school years but began to include more realistic art and photography during her middle school years.

When Nicole reached high school, she was enrolled into an art class that required a lot of her time. Nicole noted that the time required to complete her art assignments after school

sometimes conflicted with the time that she wanted to devote to learning to play the saxophone.

Nicole recalled an instance that illustrated this time conflict. She stated,

Oh, first semester ninth grade. I had this big art project. Art was like my hardest class back then because it called for so much work. I was just taking three hours to get it perfect. Then, all of a sudden, I realized oh, shoot, I got to work on ‘Mercy, Mercy, Mercy’. Then I was like aw, man, but I got to do this art thing. It’s due on Thursday because it was a Tuesday right then, so I had to try to choose between that because I can’t... I feel bad practicing later than 7:30 because people will be trying to wind down, and I don’t want to be a public disturbance. I’m like okay do I finish the art work or do I practice the instrument?

This dilemma that Nicole described is significant because of her passion for art; however, this dilemma is also emblematic of issues revolving around the time conflicts that she had with participating in school music and satisfying the requirements of her academic coursework.

When recalling the amount of time that needed to be devoted to her academic coursework in general, Nicole stated,

I would say a lot last year and a lot this year in particular, because I’m starting to get a lot of work, and I find difficulty in balancing my schedule sometimes. Sometimes I have to pick between... getting whatever homework I need to get done because it’s only a certain amount of time I can force myself to stay up before I pass out.

Nicole’s use of the phrase “force myself” was her way of expressing the pressure that she felt regarding her academic coursework. This pressure was instigated in part by her parents’ expectations for her grades. This expectation for good grades influenced Nicole to prioritize her school work but has also caused her to experience stress. In an effort to mitigate the stress that

she has felt regarding the successful completion of her academic coursework, Nicole sought to find a healthy balance between her academic coursework and her participation in the high school jazz band. This healthy balance has often necessitated the need for flexibility with the time requirements of the high school jazz band.

Jasmine's Activities and Obligations

Jasmine struggled with being successful with her academic coursework during her elementary school years; however, Jasmine began to improve with her academic coursework when she enrolled in middle school. Jasmine attributed this improvement to her own initiative when completing and understanding her academic coursework. Jasmine continued to employ this initiative as it related to her academic coursework when she enrolled into her high school. This initiative propelled Jasmine to devote as many as eight hours per day to completing and understanding her academic coursework during her high school years. The length of time that Jasmine spent focused on her academic coursework outside of school impacted her ability to get enough rest during her ninth-grade school year. This Jasmine stated,

In ninth grade, I was still trying to figure out what was a good schedule for me and everything, so I kind of spent too much time on school work, and my grades were turning out okay but I didn't get enough sleep. So now, I'm trying to time everything correctly, and I am trying to go to sleep at a certain time and then wake up at a certain time.

Jasmine's academic coursework was her top priority during her high school years. Consequently, she would need flexibility with the time that she devoted to her participation in the high school jazz band. Sometimes, this need for flexibility would be represented with Jasmine completing homework assignments during the jazz band rehearsals. Jasmine stated, "I would stay back to do jazz band, but sometimes I would be practicing and I would do my homework at times if I knew

I had a lot.” Jasmine was able to mitigate the time conflicts between completing her academic coursework and participating in the high school jazz band. The flexibility that the jazz band provided with regard to time commitments enabled Jasmine to continue her participation in the jazz band while accomplishing the tasks associated with her academic coursework.

When Jasmine enrolled in the tenth grade, she continued to work towards managing the time conflicts that sometimes arose between her participation in the jazz band and the successful completion of her academic coursework. This time management involved Jasmine preparing for the jazz band meetings and rehearsals by attempting to get ahead on her academic coursework on the days that she had a jazz band activity. If Jasmine was unable to get ahead on her academic coursework, she would not participate with the jazz band on that particular day. Jasmine stated,

I already know the days for jazz band, so I’m trying to prep myself so I’m not behind, and I do more work on a certain day. So I can do jazz band on some days. Some days I can’t, so I’ll cancel...

Jasmine attended classes virtually during her tenth-grade school year due to school closures caused by the COVID-19 pandemic; however, she continued to participate in the jazz band as the jazz band continued to be flexible with regard to the time commitments.

Madison’s Activities and Obligations

Madison participated in school music during her elementary and middle school years but elected to discontinue her participation in school music when she enrolled in her high school. Madison’s decision to discontinue her participation in school music at the high school level was intriguing because of the positive encounters that she had during her middle school music experience. Madison’s middle school music experience was inclusive of an annual band event that was sponsored by the local high school’s marching band; however, Madison explained that

the high school marching band that she participated with in her middle school years was not the same marching band at the high school she actually attended. Madison enrolled in a different high school and she asserted that the marching band at her high school contained talented student musicians who produced good music. While Madison asserted some positive aspects of the band program at her high school, she did not want to participate because of the strict after-school requirements associated with students who signed up for band class during the school day.

These strict after-school requirements were not pleasing to Madison's preferences because Madison became interested in other extracurricular activities that convened after the school day. Madison became interested in and began to participate with the track team, FBLA, TSA, and a club that focused on coding. Additionally, Madison understood that she would need to focus on her academic coursework in order to be successful in school and she believed that participating in band would make focusing on her academic coursework more difficult. When discussing her decision to not participate in her high school band program, Madison stated, "I knew [my high school] had a very rigorous workload and I knew it'd be a lot for me to balance." Madison believed that participating in band would make it difficult for her to balance the requirements that come with her academic coursework because of the amount of time that band students were expected to devote to rehearsals.

Madison continued, "Because I wanted to be in multiple things other than band and I knew band would take up the most of my time." This statement demonstrated the impact that a school music program with strict time commitments could have on a student's decision to participate, particularly when that student is interested in other activities and is concerned about her academic success. Madison's claims about the strict time commitments associated with her high school band and how those strict time commitments would impact her other interests and

obligations were supported by the experiences of her friends. Madison stated, “I felt like band would have taken me over academically and sports-wise, which I’ve seen with some of my other friends who are in band.” Madison was interested in participating in her high school band, but not at the expense of her other interests or academic success. Furthermore, Madison stated that she would have participated in the band at her high school in time commitments were more flexible.

Conclusion

Each of the four academically successful Black students in this study expressed that they were interested in participating in school music at the high school level but they felt that they needed time for their academic studies. This prioritization of academic coursework demonstrated what they felt was most important in their school experience and what enabled them to achieve their academic successes. They believed that their academic success in school would prepare them for the success that they hoped to attain later in life. Thus, their focus was primarily on being academically successful. If these students believed that they would pursue music as a main career option later in their life, then they would ensure that school music was more of a focal point in their academic experience.

Even though these students did not want to pursue music as a main career option, they still desired to participate in school music. However, the academically successful Black students, particularly James and Madison, also had interests in participating in many activities other than school music. These interests caused the students to become more selective about the type of music ensembles that they desired to participate in during their high school experience. They did not want to participate in an ensemble, such as the marching band, that would prevent them from participating in other areas of interest or make it difficult for them to complete their academic

coursework successfully. These students valued their time as well as organizations that had time commitments that were flexible enough for them to participate in other organizations.

Instructional Support With Their Instrument

The second thread that emanated from each of the four academically successful Black students centered on their desire to receive instructional support with their instrument. These students expressed this desire at various levels of school as well as various levels of expertise. Furthermore, each student encountered a moment where instructional support was necessary or, at least, preferred. Consequently, in some cases, the lack of instructional support with instruments produced negative feelings for the academically successful Black students.

James's Desire for Instructional Support

James expressed a lot of excitement and confidence when discussing his ability to play the trombone. He characterized his elementary school band experience as a fun battle with another student for first chair. His middle school band experience was characterized with participation in multiple school bands as well as district honor band. He also performed special parts and solos on the trombone during his elementary and middle school experience.

James never expressed a need for any special instructional support with playing the trombone during his elementary or middle school band experiences; however, he did seek additional instructional support when he was learning to play a solo for the jazz band at his high school. James's high school jazz band sponsor would provide general instruction related to how a song should be played but did not provide specific instructions related to how a song should be played. As a result, James sought instructional support from his middle school band teacher, who he also described as a trombone player, when he was trying to learn how to play the solo. When discussing the process of learning the solo, James stated

That went okay. It was extremely hard at first, but eventually I went to my middle school band director and he helped me get through parts of it because my high school band director, even though he was a jazz band instructor, he only knows how to play the piano... But I got my middle school teacher to help, well walk me through it.

James's desire for instructional support with the trombone prompted him to visit his middle school band teacher because of his high school jazz band sponsor's inability to provide the instructional support that was necessary for him to learn the solo. The middle school band teacher was able to help James learn a solo that was initially difficult for James to learn on his own.

Nicole's Desire for Instructional Support

Nicole's desire for instructional support was noticeable during her first experience in school music. Nicole joined her elementary school band with the hope of learning to play the trumpet but to her dismay, she did not receive the instructional support that she desired from her elementary school band teacher. Nicole recalled,

...I was under the impression that there would be somebody there that could teach me, just give me some tips and tricks, teach me how to play it. Because, I mean, sure, you got a [nine]-year-old kid. There ain't no way they're going to know how to play a whole instrument like that. So of course, you have to have somebody there to teach them how to do it or at least have somebody who could help them. But no, no. He just gave me a book and told me do that. I couldn't understand it. And then when I asked him a question, the band director, he said, "Oh, I don't know." I was just left in the dust.

This unfortunate occurrence ultimately led to Nicole discontinuing her participation in the elementary school band even though she was sincerely interested in participating in school music.

While Nicole had an unfortunate experience during her elementary school years, she remained interested in participating in future school music opportunities. She eventually joined her high school's jazz band as a saxophonist when presented with the opportunity during a club fair. As Nicole began attending the rehearsals, she learned that while the jazz band sponsor provided general instruction about how the songs should be played, he would not be able to provide specific instruction related to playing the saxophone. Instead, Nicole was able to rely on instructional support provided by other jazz band students who played the saxophone. Nicole stated,

There were two seniors and they had the same type of saxophone, alto sax, everything. I'm trying to figure out a starting point. They're like, if I needed to know how to play something or how to quickly shift gears, they helped me with that. They also helped me with reading music because I had a lot of trouble with reading music, just because I was, basically, I would say, a beginner. Because I didn't really have a whole lot of experience, not only with the saxophone, but I only had a basic knowledge of music. So, with the songs, it could get a little confusing some times, but then we just came together and we worked through it. I listened to them play it so I can know how I'm supposed to sound. Then I played it, and if I had any errors, they would tell me about it. But, yeah, it was mainly just them just giving me a helping hand when I needed it.

Nicole valued the instructional support that was provided by the two jazz band students who played the saxophone. The instructional support provided by these two jazz band students was necessary for Nicole who, at that time, was a beginner on the saxophone.

Jasmine's Desire for Instructional Support

Jasmine briefly participated in a school music performance group during her elementary school years and did not participate in another school music performance group until she enrolled in her high school. Jasmine began participating with her high school jazz band as a vocalist during her ninth-grade school year and she was tasked with singing a variety of songs. Of all the songs that Jasmine sang during her ninth-grade school year, she stated that the most memorable singing experience occurred while preparing to sing her part on “Carol of the Bells” by Mykola Leontovych. Jasmine felt that her preparation to sing was the most memorable singing experience because of the instructional support provided by her music teacher. Jasmine stated, “My teacher, he established the parts... he played out the notes and then he assigned everybody their part.” The instructional support provided by Jasmine’s music teacher was meaningful because of the structure and accountability that was required to sing the correct vocal parts and perform the song with precision.

Adhering to the structure of “Carol of the Bells” and being held accountable for singing the vocal part with precision required more work than the other songs that Jasmine was tasked to learn. The additional work, however, contributed to Jasmine’s reason for selecting “Carol of the Bells” as the most memorable musical performance during her ninth-grade year. When describing her thoughts about the preparation and performance of “Carol of the Bells”, Jasmine explained,

I liked it because everything was planned and in place because of the Carol of the bells, there are certain notes that you have to get or it's not going to sound right or as good as someone else that's on YouTube or something, so I really liked that performance.

Jasmine desired to have instructional support because this support helped her to learn vocal parts that she may not have learned independently. Furthermore, the instructional support helped her to feel a greater sense of accomplishment after performing the song in front of others.

Madison's Desire for Instructional Support

Madison participated in school music during her elementary and middle school years. She joined her elementary school's orchestra during her fourth-grade school year and began to admire her orchestra teacher because of his classroom management as well as the instructional support that he provided. Madison discussed her orchestra teacher's expertise as well as his ability to effectively communicate complicated matters and encourage students in the midst of providing instructional support. When discussing her orchestra teacher's expertise, Madison stated,

...he was very encouraging and he's still a teacher I think about, because he was very passionate. He was strict, but that's because he has a lot of experience and he can play so many instruments... every now and then he'd bring a different instrument that he could play and there'd be so many. And I was just shocked and I wanted to get on his level one day...

Madison's acknowledgement of being impressed by her orchestra teacher's expertise provided a context for her receptiveness of the instructional support provided by her orchestra teacher, particularly when she did not initially agree with what she was tasked to do. Madison explained,

...we were preparing for the winter concert and he was picking out parts and... everybody wanted to be first violin and nobody wanted to be second or third violin, but... you just can't have that. You can't... The melody has... to have something to back it up with. So, he was explaining to us why each person would be suited towards [the first, second, or third part], that he wasn't doing this to say that we weren't good at it, but he was more suited towards it. And I got second and third on two different pieces. So, I was a little upset, but then he explained it and it just, that has always been my favorite part to play in any instrument.

Madison's recollection of this occurrence signified that the provision of instructional support does not only involve explaining how to do something but also involves explaining why something must be done.

Madison received instructional support from her orchestra teacher during her fourth and fifth-grade years when she was a part of the school orchestra. However, she continued to receive instructional support from her orchestra teacher after school when she transitioned to the school band during her sixth-grade school year. Madison valued the after-school instructional support that she received from her orchestra teacher during her sixth-grade school year because she did not feel that she was receiving adequate instructional support from her band teacher during that time. Furthermore, she felt that she was being rushed to learn music even though she was new to the band. Madison stated,

...[my sixth-grade band teacher] was trying too hard to rush us, to get with the other people. So, it ended up making me miss certain things I had to fill in when I got to my next band program, which was in seventh grade. So, I got the basics but I didn't learn as much as I should have.

While Madison received after-school instructional support from her orchestra teacher, she still believed that the lack of or rushed instructional support from her sixth-grade band teacher prevented her from learning as much as she could have learned.

Conclusion

Each of the four academically successful Black students recounted positive or negative experiences involving the instructional support they received or did not receive with their instrument. The value that the students placed on the instructional support that they received with their instrument was not predicated on who provided the support. The instructional support did not have to come from their music teacher for it to be valued. Nicole received instructional support from fellow schoolmates, James and Madison received instructional support from a former teacher, and Jasmine received instructional support from her current teacher; yet they all discussed how they valued the support.

While the instructional support did not have to come directly from their music teacher, it was important for the music teacher to offer guidance and help in other ways. Nicole and James stated that they received instructional support from individuals other than their music teacher, but their music teacher would help them with general aspects of the music such as rhythms, notes, and phrasing. Madison, on the other hand, stated that her music teacher rushed her during her first band class experience and, as a result, missed some of the basic concepts associated with her instrument.

These students valued instructional support regardless of their personal expertise because of the confirmation it provided when practicing or performing with their instrument. James exuded a high level of confidence with his instrument but still elected to receive instructional support from his former music teacher. Jasmine discussed how she learned some songs on her

own but she valued the song that her music teacher helped her to learn the most. In these instances, the students who were usually self-sufficient received instructional support, which confirmed the accuracy of their performance during their practice sessions. This confirmation allowed the students to feel more assurance about their performance.

Social Experiences

Lastly, each of the four academically successful Black students discussed how aspects of the social experiences from their school music ensemble(s) impacted, directly or indirectly, their participation in school music. The students in this study had varied social experiences when they participated in school music ensembles and these students addressed their experiences in different ways. In this subsection, I discuss some of the social experiences that each of the four academically successful Black students encountered during their participating in a school music ensemble.

James's Social Experiences

James discussed the wonderful experiences that he had while participating in school music ensembles during his elementary, middle, and high school years. Many of those experiences were pleasant due to the direct musical participation activities in which James was a part such as performances, solos, and honor band. While James thoroughly enjoyed those musical experiences, he noted that the most enjoyable aspect of his school music experiences was the encounters that he had with his peers. For example, James discussed being first chair in his elementary school band but his focus was not on the music that he had to perform to earn the first chair spot; rather, his focus was on the friendly competition with the other trombonist that ensued prior to earning the first chair spot. James stated,

...I was extremely excited about band, because I was first chair. And it was an intense competition because there was another person and she was right on my coattails every single time. And it was intense, intense, but I came out on top...

James went on to describe how this friendly competition with the other trombonists motivated him to learn to play trombone and participating in school music at the elementary level. When discussing his motivation for learning to play the trombone and participate in school music, James referred to his “competitive drive to destroy the other trombonist” as a primary factor. The friendly competition with classmates was not only motivational, it was also a fun aspect of James’s participation.

James continued to discuss how the social experiences that emanated from his school music experiences were the most enjoyable aspects of his school music experience. When discussing this directly, James stated,

It would have to be the social aspect because I met one of my best friends in band. I got another one of my best friends interested in band. I got a couple of my best friends interested in band, actually. That’s how I met a whole bunch of the upperclassmen and younger underclassmen in like middle school and the upperclassmen in high school. And when I was in honor band, had the best time. I think my seventh-grade year, I was like fifth chair and I got to meet the [student who was fourth chair] and the [student who was sixth chair] and the people in front of and behind us and we were talking and messing with each other at lunch. That was fun. And then in eighth grade, I got second chair and messing with the first and the third chair and them messing with me during lunch and stuff like that. It was fun. Just meeting new people, I guess you can say.

The social experiences that James encountered during his school music participation allowed him to meet other students that he continued to consider to be valuable acquaintances or friends.

Furthermore, in some cases, these acquaintances or friends contributed to the enjoyment of school music activities for extramusical reasons such as playful conversations.

Nicole's Social Experiences

After Nicole's brief stint in an elementary school music ensemble, the next school music ensemble that she joined was her high school jazz band. Nicole had just started to learn to play the saxophone when she joined the jazz band during her ninth-grade school year. Nicole's newness to the saxophone contributed to the difficulties that she experienced when trying to learn the jazz band music. Nevertheless, she persevered and made great progress in her quest to learn how to play the saxophone while learning the jazz band music. As Nicole reflected on her difficult journey to learn how to play the saxophone while learning the jazz band music during her ninth-grade school year, she credited the social experiences that she shared with her jazz band mates as being helpful.

These social experiences allowed her to release some of the tension that she had at the time. One such experience occurred when the jazz band was preparing to perform at a Christmas concert. Nicole had numerous parts that she was about to play at the concert and was feeling a lot of pressure before the concert started. When remembering this occurrence, Nicole stated,

My friends in jazz band, they were like my backbone at that point because if it wasn't for them just uplifting me and telling me that I could do it and to just do it and just not worry about it, then I don't think I would've been where I'm at now.

The encouragement that Nicole received from her jazz band mates was valuable because she was feeling anxious about an impending concert. Furthermore, the support that Nicole received from

the jazz band members was valuable because it aligned with Nicole's desire to participate in school music.

After the concert, Nicole attended a jazz band social event. While the social event was optional, Nicole felt that it was necessary for her to attend due to the pressure that she experienced during the semester. Nicole recalled the events that occurred during the jazz band social event with uncontrollable laughter. Nicole stated,

We were just eating pizza and wings, and I came up with the idea like, "Hey, let's do karaoke." So, everybody was like, "Yeah." So that's what we were doing majority of this time. I remember one very funny experience: My friend the trombone player, he was singing some song, and you know those little carts that you carry the big rolls of paper on? He sat his tall self on top of that, and he was letting my other friend push him around.

He did a death drop and I could see his life flash before his eyes. It was very funny.

The positive social experiences that Nicole encountered seemed to offset the pressure-filled moments that she experienced due to her endeavor to learn to play the saxophone as well as the jazz band music. Additionally, through Nicole's recollection of this social event, she was able to demonstrate how necessary positive social experiences could be for music students who feel stressed throughout the school year.

Jasmine's Social Experiences

Jasmine alluded to the importance of positive social experiences in her high school jazz band experience when she discussed her initial decision to participate. Jasmine remembered that her music teacher was recruiting students to be in the jazz band. Jasmine recalled,

I think we were in [keyboarding class], my teacher was trying to recruit some band people and I thought that I could sing but I don't want to [play a traditional instrument],

so it wouldn't work out for me and he was like, "Well, singing is an instrument too." I was like, "Okay, cool." Then I joined.

Jasmine stated that before she officially joined the jazz band, she wanted to observe the jazz band members to ensure that they were nice people to be around. When discussing the moment in which she officially joined the jazz band, Jasmine recalled,

I wasn't automatically in because I already had my suspicions about if I was going to actually like the club, if I was going to be comfortable, but the people were nice, they were playing their instruments, they're cool...

Jasmine's suspicions were grounded in her hesitancy to participate in a school music program that would not produce positive social experiences. However, after her observations of the jazz band members, she determined that she would be comfortable participating alongside students who seemed nice and productive.

Madison's Social Experiences

Madison had a myriad of social experiences that resulted from her participation in elementary and middle school music. Some of the social experiences that Madison endured during her participation in elementary school music were unfortunate. Madison noted how her peers would tease and mock her while participating in the elementary school orchestra during the fourth and fifth grade. Madison's orchestra classmates were teasing her because of a hearing impairment that impacted Madison's ability to hear as well as the sound of her voice. Madison recalled,

...my hearing would sometimes go out [during] a key point and I'd have to ask for the person to say it again. I got a little bit of a tease for that when I was in elementary school,

but I really couldn't control it. Because I'd be that friend that would always ask them, "So maybe repeat that. What did you say?"

When discussing the peers that mocked her because of the way that her voice sounded, Madison stated,

I would say I got teased a lot and mocked a lot because of the way I speak, because even though I still sound a little bit weird how I speak right now, it was worse when I was younger. So, I would get teased in my first saying certain words or I'd be called slow or stuff. And even my friends that are my closest friends now, they'd mock me in a joking way. I know they didn't mean anything by it like some of the other kids that did it then, but it still hurts and they still do it sometimes in a funny way. So, I've gotten used to it.

So, it really doesn't affect me as much as it did my self-esteem when I was younger...

Everybody has their insecurities, but my voice for the longest time was one of my biggest insecurities.

While Madison's orchestra teacher would ensure that these occurrences were rare during the orchestra class, Madison was still teased and mocked by some of her orchestra peers during her fourth and fifth-grade school years.

Madison transitioned to the elementary school band during her sixth-grade school year but was still met with criticism. Madison was in a class with students who participated in the elementary school band during their fourth and fifth grade school years while Madison participated with the elementary school orchestra. While many of Madison's peers had more experience playing their instrument in the elementary school band, Madison felt that some of her band mates judged her negatively when she committed a musical error. Madison recalled,

...I felt judged by my peers whenever I would mess up. And I felt like I wasn't good enough to play the instrument at the level that everybody else is playing at since they had been playing since fourth grade, when I had just only been playing a year. They wouldn't acknowledge that I had only been playing a year whenever I messed up. So, they'd giggle or make little faces. And I felt like I was doing pretty well for myself. Because I had only started a few months ago when they had been playing for two years and I was almost at their level. Not to sound cocky, but I did feel like I was good enough to be up to part of them, but I'd just miss a few things and... they'd drop my confidence level all the way down when they laugh or giggle.

These negative social experiences that Madison endured during her elementary school years did not cause her to discontinue her school music participation as she enrolled into middle school.

Madison continued to participate in school music, in part, due to the prior knowledge that she had about her middle school band director. While Madison did not discontinue her participation in school music when she reached middle school, she did proceed with diminished confidence. Madison discussed how her lack of confidence prevented her from auditioning for the symphonic band when she was in the seventh grade. Madison stated,

...in seventh grade it was hard to get into the symphonic band and I felt like I wasn't good enough or at the level I should be for symphonic band. So, I didn't try out. But at the end of class, at the end of the tryouts and the auditions, [My middle school band teacher] pulled me aside and asked me, she was like, "Why didn't you try out? You know you would have made it, you're really good." And I was like, I was really shocked because I didn't know and I didn't think I was good enough to be in it... the next year I tried out and I made it because I couldn't try out the year before because after that, after

the audition that all the spots were filled out. But the next year, I tried out and I made it and we were supposed to go to New York to perform at Carnegie Hall.

Madison's middle school band teacher provided Madison her with encouragement and created a positive social experience that somewhat combatted the negative social experiences that Madison encountered previously. Some of the social experiences that Madison encountered during her elementary and middle school years were hurtful for Madison; however, Madison continued to participate in school music during those years. Moreover, as Madison continued to participate in school music, she developed strategies for dealing with those negative social experiences and focused on the positive social experiences that emanated from her participation in school music.

Conclusion

Each of the four academically successful Black students illustrated the importance of having positive social experiences while participating in school music. Nicole expressed how a positive social experience allowed her to release some of the stress and tension that she was experiencing at school. Jasmine discussed how she wanted to ensure that the jazz band members exhibited positive behavior before joining them because she did not want to be in an environment that was filled with negativity. The students did not wish to spend time in places that would contribute to the mental stress that they may have been experiencing; rather, they preferred to spend their time in an environment that would ease that stress.

Madison shared some of the negative social experiences that she endured while participating in school music. Madison did not cite these experiences as encounters that drew her into participating. She cited these obstacles as encounters that she had to overcome in order to continue participating in school music. Furthermore, these negative social experiences occurred during Madison's elementary and middle school years. Students might be less likely to work

towards overcoming the obstacles of negative social experiences as they get older and enroll into high school music programs.

James social experiences in school music seemed to contrast with Madison's social experiences. While Madison endured some negative social experiences during her elementary and middle school years. James's elementary, middle, and high school music participation seemed to be filled mostly with positive social experiences. James developed friendships during his school music experiences that increased the overall value of the music experience so much that James cited the social experiences to be the aspect of school music participation that he valued the most. Just as students who have a wealth of negative social experiences might be less likely to continue their participation in school music, students who have an abundance of positive social experiences might be more likely to continue their participation in school music. James is an example of a student whose positive social experiences have influenced him to continue his participation in school music.

Conclusion

These threads might appear to be applicable to other student populations; however, they were also relevant to the lived experiences of the academically successful Black students in this study. While the desire for positive social experiences might be relevant to other populations for similar reasons, the desire for flexibility with time commitments and instructional support with instruments is relevant to the students in this study for particular reasons. As it related to the desire for flexibility with time commitments, these students valued their schoolwork in a way that I, as a teacher, have rarely witnessed from students. The top priority for these students was succeeding in school and, oftentimes, that meant spending extended hours studying or completing assignments. While there may be genuine interest in participating in school music

courses or activities, the practice, rehearsal, or performance requirements could potentially conflict with their top priority. Additionally, these students may have interests in other school activities or courses that require less time than the school music opportunities afforded to them. Thus, the finding that these students desired flexibility with time requirements was important because it urges us, as teachers, to recognize the other identities of our academically successful Black students.

The finding that the academically successfully Black students desired instructional support was also noteworthy because a teacher might assume that students who have experienced academic achievements do not need or desire instructional support. An assumption could be that these students prefer to figure out things on their own. It was important to note that the academically successful Black students in this study disagreed with this assumption, sometimes with their words and other times with their actions. When disagreeing with their words, the students spoke positively or negatively about instances where they felt that they were or were not provided with adequate instructional support with their instrument, respectively. When disagreeing with their actions, the students spoke about instances where they actively sought or were receptive to instructional support with their instrument from individuals other than their current music teacher. Thus, the finding that these students desired instructional support with their instrument was important because it urges us, as teachers, to not take the academic achievements of our students for granted by ensuring that they receive the instructional support that they desire.

In the next chapter, I provide an overview for this dissertation research study. I also discuss how the threads presented in this chapter were related to the findings from the previous research included in chapter two. Additionally, I discuss how my narrative, which was presented

in chapter one, and the academically successful Black students' narratives, which were presented in chapter four, are related to the three commonplaces: temporality, sociality and place.

Surprises, implications for action, suggestions for further research, and final conclusions are included in the following chapter.

6 DISCUSSION

In this study, I focused on the experiences of academically successful Black students and how those experiences impacted their decision to participate in school music at the high school level. In this chapter, I present a summary of the study and conclusions drawn from the findings presented in Chapter 5. Furthermore, I discuss the implications for action and suggestions for further research.

Overview of the Problem

Members of the music education community have aspired to fulfil the clarion call, “Music for every child; every child for music” (Gehrkins, 1933; Heidingsfelder, 2014). The music education profession has been successful with providing music education opportunities for children (Parsad & Spiegelman, 2012) but has struggled with attracting children to participate in school music, particularly at the secondary level when music classes tend to become optional (Shuler, 2011). The decline in music student participation at the secondary level is exacerbated by the disproportionately lower number of academically successful Black students who participate in school music at the high school level (Elpus & Abril, 2019). The music education profession and community has worked to make music make music education available to all children on numerous occasions, but perhaps most profoundly at two landmark symposia during the twentieth century: the Tanglewood Symposium and Housewright Symposium.

Purpose Statement and Research Question

While these symposia were noteworthy, the problem of decreased participation in school music at the high school level persisted (Shuler, 2011) and academically successfully Black students were underrepresented among other student groups (Elpus & Abril, 2019). Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine the factors that influenced academically successful Black students’ decision to participate or not participate in school music at the high school level.

The research question was as follows: How do the lived experiences of academically successful Black students influence their choice to participate in school music at the high school level?

Review of the Methodology

I employed narrative inquiry to address the research question in this study. Narrative inquiry was the most appropriate methodological approach for this study because narrative inquiry is used to value lived experience as a valuable resource for understanding (Clandinin, 2013). A unique feature of narrative inquiry is the commonplaces: temporality, sociality, and place. The temporality commonplace is focused on when a lived experience occurs. The sociality commonplace is focused on the institutional, cultural, and/or familial qualities that are inherent in a lived experience. The place commonplace is focused on where a lived experience occurs.

Narrative inquiry has been employed in a variety of music education studies (Abril, 2007; Barrett & Stauffer, 2006; Bowman, 2006; Bresler, 2006; Brewer, 2014; Buonviri, 2015; Clandinin, 2006; Freer, 2006; Griffin, 2009; Hoffman, 2012; Kang, 2016; Mitchell, 2017; Nichols, 2013; Norton, 2008; Palkki, 2020; Schmidt & Canser, 2006). While there have been a variety of music education studies that have used narrative inquiry, none of those studies focused on the lived experiences of academically successful Black students. Furthermore, none of the studies focused on how the lived experiences of academically successful Black students influence might influence their decision to participate in school music at the high school level.

Study Context

This narrative inquiry took place in a large school district in a southeastern state. The participants in this study were self-identified as Black or African American through an online survey. The participants were determined to be academically successful after I reviewed the score classification from their most recent end-of-grade or end-of-course standardized test. If a

student was classified as a Distinguished Learner, then he or she was deemed academically successful for the purpose of this study. After I reviewed the online surveys and most recent end-of-grade or end-of-course standardized test score classifications, I selected four students who met the requirements to participate in this study. The pseudonyms for the participants were James, Nicole, Jasmine, and Madison.

Data Collection

The data collected in this study were referred to as field texts. There were several field texts collected in this study including interviews, documents, and field notes. I interviewed each participant three times within a three-week period. The interview sessions, which were semi-structured, took place on Zoom and lasted between forty-five minutes and one hour. The interviews were audio recorded and transcribed with the Rev transcription service. The documents that I collected in this study were the participants' end-of-grade and/or end-of-course standardized test scores. The participants' test scores were reflected on the most recent statewide assessment that each participant completed. These scores were used to determine that each participant was academically successful. Lastly, I created field notes while the participants completed the online surveys and throughout the twelve interview sessions.

Narrative Composition

After interviewing each of the four academically successful Black students, I composed a narrative for each participant. In order to compose the narrative for each participant, my first step was to read and re-read the interview transcripts. Secondly, I coded the information in the transcripts as it related to the temporality commonplace, sociality commonplace, and the place commonplace. Next, I composed the interim text of each participant's narrative. After the interim texts were composed, I scheduled a meeting with each participant so that they could verify that

their narrative accounts were accurate. Ultimately, each of the participants confirmed that their narrative account was accurate; thus, the narrative accounts became the final texts that were presented in Chapter 4 of this dissertation.

Data Analysis

Once the participants confirmed that their narratives were accurate, I used their narratives as the data in the data analysis process. The action of treating narratives or stories as data in the data analysis process is aligned with the paradigmatic analytic procedures used in paradigmatic-type narrative inquiry (Polkinghorne, 1995). The paradigmatic analytic procedure that I used in this study was based on the data analysis approach of Creswell (2013). My first step was to upload each narrative into the data analysis software. My second step was to re-read each narrative, highlight the responses from the participants' narratives, and type memos about the responses from the participants' narratives. Next, I created in vivo codes for each of the participants' responses and grouped the codes from each of the narrative accounts into broader categories. The categories that emerged in each of the four narrative accounts were presented as narrative threads in Chapter 5 of this dissertation.

Narrative Threads

The analysis of the four academically successful Black students' narratives produced three narrative threads: flexibility with time commitments, instructional support with their instrument, and social experiences. The narrative threads were representative of aspects of the four Black academically successful students' lived experiences. Furthermore, the narrative threads represented commonalities among the participants' lived experiences.

Flexibility With Time Commitments

The four academically successful Black students professed their desire to participate in school music at one point or another during their school experience. Nevertheless, their desire to participate in school music during their high school experience was divided with other obligations and interests. For example, each of the academically successful Black students acknowledged that they attended high schools that required them to devote a lot of time to studying in order for them to successfully complete the rigorous workload. The time devoted to studying sometimes provided a potential or real conflict with school music requirements. Nicole discussed a time when finishing her art project conflicted with her practicing her saxophone for jazz band. Jasmine stated that she would not attend her jazz band rehearsals if she had too much school work. James and Madison discussed how their decision to not participate in marching band was impacted by the time commitments of the marching band coupled with the time needed to study.

In addition to these students prioritizing their school work, they also pursued their interests in other school clubs or activities. Time consuming school music activities such as marching band was also a deterrent because it would prevent some of the students from participating in other activities. For example, James stated that he was a part of eight different clubs at his high school including SGA, literacy initiative, TSA, mock trial, reading bowl, 21st century leaders, FBLA, and jazz band. James preferred to participate in a variety of activities instead of one activity such as marching band. According to James, if he participated in marching band, he would not have time to pursue any of his other interests. Similarly, Madison chose not to participate in her high school band class because of the requirement to also

participate in the marching band. Madison preferred to participate with the track team, FBLA, TSA, and a club that focused on coding rather than only participate with the high school band.

The desire of having flexible time commitments seemed to support the notion that students who may be referred to as music students possess a variety of student identities. In addition to being music students, these students may also be referred to as art students, technology students, student athletes, academically successful students and so forth. Understanding that music students have multiple student identities can help music teachers approach their students with a more holistic perspective. This holistic perspective could assist music teachers with implementing time requirements that are conducive to their students' other obligations and interests. The question then becomes how do music teachers ensure that their school music ensembles are high quality while also being flexible with the time commitments of their music ensembles? A solution to this question could be offering band, orchestra, or chorus ensembles that have low-stake performance obligations. Another solution might be offering music courses other than the traditional band, orchestra, and chorus courses. I discuss both of these potential solutions in the implications for action section.

Instructional Support With Their Instrument

Each of the academically successful Black students valued instructional support with their instrument. For some of the participants, this instructional support was a necessity and for others this instructional support was preferred. James expressed his confidence with his instrument during his elementary school band years, middle school band years, and high school band years. However, when James was given a solo in his high school jazz band, he sought instructional support from his middle school band teacher because of his high school music teacher's inability to provide the specific instruction that he desired. Nicole discussed a negative

experience in her elementary band years that caused her to discontinue her participation in the band. This negative experience was directly related to the lack of instructional support that she received from her band teacher. When Nicole reached high school and joined the jazz band, she expressed her gratitude for receiving instructional support from two of her jazz band peers.

Jasmine expressed her desire for instructional support when discussing the most memorable song that she sung during her ninth-grade school year. Jasmine remembered singing a variety of songs but she valued her part on “Carol of the Bells” by Mykola Leontovych the most due to the instructional support that her music teacher provided with that song. Madison contrasted the instructional support she received from her fourth and fifth grade orchestra teacher with the instructional support from her sixth-grade band teacher. She stated that she admired her orchestra teacher’s expertise with a variety of instruments and ability to explain matters related to performance. Conversely, Madison stated that her sixth-grade band teacher rushed her development which caused her to miss some of the basics.

The value that these students placed on receiving instructional support with their instruments seemed to suggest that the academically successful students desired to learn and were willing to seek opportunities to receive instructional support. This willingness to seek opportunities to receive instructional support sometimes led the students back to former teachers or to other students to receive assistance. While these alternate sources of instructional support helped the academically successful students in this study, students in other settings may not be able to access those alternate sources of instructional support. Students in other settings may be forced to rely on their music teacher for all of the instructional support that they receive. The question then becomes, how do music teachers provide instructional support to students, particularly in areas where the music teacher might need additional support? I mention that some

music teachers might need support in some areas because in this study, two of the academically successful students, James and Nicole, stated that their music teacher did not know how to play their instrument. Consequently, they received instructional support from other sources. If other music teachers find themselves in a similar situation, a solution might include the music teacher transitioning from the source of instructional support to the facilitator of the resources that can be used for instructional support. I discuss this further in the implications for action section.

Social Experiences

Lastly, the academically successful Black students expressed ways in which their social experiences influenced their participation in school music. James discussed the friendly competition he had with a fellow trombonist in elementary school for first chair, meeting new people while in honor band during his middle school years, and the fact that he met one of his best friends during a band event. Nicole stated her positive social experiences in jazz band were helpful during a time when she endured tension and stress. She remembered a specific social event that occurred after a Christmas performance with joy and laughter, which was needed during that time.

Jasmine desired to be in a group that would yield positive experience and this desire impacted her decision to join the jazz band at her high school. Jasmine stated that when she initially joined the jazz band, she was skeptical about her comfort level but decided to commit to the band after having some positive social experiences with members of the band. Madison discussed some of the negative social experiences that she endured during her elementary school years. She stated that some of her peers would make fun of her because of the way that she talked. When she joined the band, she felt that her peers judged her negatively even though she

was a beginner and they were more advanced at the time. These negative experiences impacted Madison's desire to try out for the advanced band when she went to middle school.

Social experiences seemed to be an important non-musical attribute for the academically successful students in this study. Positive social experiences facilitated a positive mood for students and a release from the tension or stress that was present. Negative social experiences created obstacles that had to be overcome by students. The social experiences that were expressed in this study typically revolved around student-to-student interactions. The question then becomes, how do music teachers create an environment where positive student-to-student interactions are likely to occur? A solution to this question could include music teachers emphasizing the importance of mutual respect from all and between all the students in the class. I continue this discussion in the implications for action section.

Findings Related to the Literature

The findings in this study were presented as three narrative threads: flexibility with time commitments, instructional support with their instrument, and social experiences. These findings were reflective of the lived experiences of four academically successful Black students who were enrolled in high school. Unlike the other two findings in this study, I did not find other music education studies that shared my finding that students valued flexibility with time commitments when choosing to participate in school music. This finding was unique to this study and to the four academically successful Black students who participated in this study. However, I did find a non-music education study that found that high school students' academic achievement decreased as their extra-curricular participation increased (Fredricks, 2012). Furthermore, Freer (2012) acknowledged that even school music courses can be perceived as extra-curricular due to various after-school requirements, which, in some cases, may necessitate strict time

requirements. Therefore, it was reasonable for these academically successful Black students to perceive certain school music participation opportunities as a potential detriment to their academic achievement.

The other two findings resonated with previous music education research that focused on factors that influence student participation. For example, social experiences seem to be an important factor when participating in school music. This assertion is aligned with one of the findings in Vasil's (2013) study. Vasil examined factors that impacted six fourth grade students' decision to continue their participation in school music and found that students' peers were influential in that decision. Similarly, Demorest, Kelley, Pfordresher (2017) surveyed three hundred and nineteen sixth graders about their future music participation and found that peer influence to be one of the predictors for participating in school music. Bennetts (2013) compared the music participation at an all-boys high school with the music participation at other coeducational high schools and found that students at the all-boys school were more likely to play the piano and stringed instruments. This preference was attributed to the influence that peers had on students when making choices to participate in school music.

Instructional support with instruments was another assertion that resonated with the findings in other research studies. The academically successful Black students in this study valued instructional support with their instruments whether it came from their current music teacher, a past music teacher, or fellow students. The value placed on the support that is received by music students from individuals who are perceived to have a level of musical expertise is not unique to this study. Ho (2009) surveyed over three thousand two hundred students in Hong Kong about their music participation and found that support from the school music teacher and private instrumental tutor impacted the students' decision to participate in school music as well

as music outside of school. The students also stated that their musical knowledge came from their school music teacher or private instrumental tutor. Thus, the students valued the support that came from individuals that they perceived to have musical expertise.

Similarly, Law and Ho (2009) examined responses from almost fifteen hundred secondary students in Hong Kong about music participation and found that a support from the music teacher was an important factor in the students' participation. Additionally, Pendergast and Robinson (2020) notes that students who participated in school music, students who participated in music outside of school, and who did not participate in music at all preferred a combination of teacher-led and student led instruction. This supported the notion of the current study that academically successful Black students valued instructional support from a variety of sources.

Commonplaces

The lived experiences of the four academically successful Black students that were explained through narratives in chapter four occurred almost two decades after my personal lived experiences, which were explained through a narrative in chapter one. While each narrative was unique, there were some commonalities as it related to my personal narrative and the narratives of the four academically successful Black students. These commonalities can be expressed through the three commonplaces of narrative inquiry: temporality, sociality, and place. In this section, I discuss how my lived experiences, as expressed through my narrative, are situated amongst the commonplaces of the lived experiences of the four academically successful Black students, as expressed through their narratives.

Temporality

The temporality commonplace is focused on aspects related to the time when events actually happen during a lived experience. My personal timeline regarding music participation has several associations with the music participation timeline of the four academically successful Black students. Many of the events that were chronicled in the narratives were recorded with reference to the following temporal designations: elementary school years, middle school years, and high school years.

Elementary School Years. James, Nicole, Jasmine, and I shared a common experience during our respective early elementary school years. We participated in general music courses that involved learning group songs, learning about musical instruments, and learning how to play the recorder. These experiences seemed to be pleasant for James, Nicole, and myself; however, Jasmine did not seem to enjoy her general music experiences in elementary school. Madison did not participate in general music during her elementary school years. Instead, Madison participated in a guitar class. Madison's divergent experience might be attributed to the fact that she attended a private school during her early elementary school years while James, Nicole, Jasmine, and I attended public schools.

James, Nicole, Madison, and I shared a common experience during our later elementary school years. We participated in a school music ensemble. James began to play the trombone in his elementary school's band, Nicole began to play the trumpet in her elementary school's band, Madison began to play the violin in her elementary school's orchestra, and I began playing percussion instruments in my elementary school's band. While Nicole's elementary band experience was short lived, James Madison, and I continued to participate in school music ensembles as we transitioned to middle school.

Jasmine did not participate in any school music ensembles during her later elementary school years; however, she was participating in various musical activities at her church.

Jasmine's participation in church music activities throughout her elementary school years resembled my own experiences with church music participation during my elementary school years and, to a lesser extent, James's participation in church music activities. Jasmine and I continued our involvement in church music activities as we began middle school.

Middle School Years. James, Madison, and I continued to participate in school music ensembles but by this time, Madison had already transitioned from playing the violin in orchestra to playing the clarinet in band. James continued to play the trombone but began to explore other instruments such as the clarinet, tuba, and baritone. Madison and I also began to participate with local high school marching bands where our respective middle schools served as feeder schools. Nicole and Jasmine did not participate in any school music ensembles during middle school even though they were both interested. Nicole wanted to participate in her middle school's band but was not schedule for the class and Jasmine wanted to participate in a vocal music ensemble but her middle school did not have a chorus.

Jasmine and I continued to participate in church music activities during our middle school years and we both had memorable experiences during this time. Jasmine led her worship team in singing praise and worship songs for the first time and I accompanied the children's choir on a Hammond B3 as the only keyboard accompanist for the first time. Both of our experiences were valuable and greatly contributed to our learning as musicians. In addition to participating in school and church music activities, I also began to take private piano lessons. None of the participants reported taking private music lessons at any time.

High School Years. James, Nicole, Jasmine, and I participated in our respective high schools' jazz bands. While my high school jazz band was a class that met during the school day, James, Nicole, and Jasmine participated in their high school jazz band after school. James continued to play the trombone, Nicole began to learn to play the saxophone, and Jasmine was a vocalist in their high school jazz band. I alternated between playing the piano and the drums for my high school jazz band. In addition to participating with my high school jazz band, I also continued to participate with the marching band and began participating with the gospel choir. Madison did not continue to participate in school music when she reached the high school level.

Sociality

In this study, the sociality commonplace mainly focused on the social conditions that were relevant to institutional narratives from institutions such as school and church. Each participant in this study highlighted aspects of the social conditions that were present in their school music experience; therefore, I discuss some of the main aspects of these social conditions and how they are situated with my personal experiences.

James had positive memories with regard to his participation in school music activities. He recounted his friendly competition with other students for the first chair in his elementary and middle school bands as well as playing in the honor band during middle school. While James enjoyed the actual music activities that he has participated in during his school experience, he mentioned that he enjoyed the social aspect of school music participation the most. James supported this assertion with details about how he enjoyed performing in school music ensembles with his friends and how he even met one of his current best friends at an elementary school music event.

Nicole discussed the many twists and turns in her musical journey. She shared the difficulties that she endured with trying to learn how to play the trumpet in elementary school and the saxophone during high school. Nicole had some successful encounters with learning to play the saxophone while being a member of her high school jazz band but these successful encounters were largely a result of her hard work and dedication. After dedicating so much time and energy towards learning the saxophone, Nicole stated that the social event that was planned at the end of the semester was a necessity. Nicole fondly remembered this event and was laughing uncontrollably when she was recounting that experience. Nicole also credited her participation in the jazz band with allowing her to meet other students at school that she would otherwise not know.

Jasmine has had few opportunities to participate in school music outside of the general music classes that she took during elementary and middle school. When Jasmine enrolled into her high school, she became interested in joining the high school jazz band. Jasmine mentioned that the jazz band sponsor invited her to participate in the jazz band but she did not make a decision to commit to the jazz band until she determined that the jazz band members were nice people to work with. The social makeup of the jazz band was important to Jasmine and it was critical to her willingness to continue her participation.

Madison participated in school music ensembles during her elementary and middle school years. During her elementary school years, Madison endured ridicule from other students because of her hearing impairment and because of the way that she sounded when she spoke. As Madison continued her participation, this kind of ridicule subsided; however, Madison faced another challenge when she switched from playing the violin in the orchestra to the clarinet in the band in the sixth grade. Madison was being ridiculed for not being on the same level as the

other clarinet players even though the other clarinet players had been playing for a longer period of time. In spite of the issues of ridicule that persisted during Madison's elementary school years, Madison continued to participate in school music at her middle school and she enjoyed this experience. She greatly respected her middle school band teacher who, in addition to being a great teacher, was also an encouraging person. Madison's participation in the middle school band also afforded her the opportunity to participate in the local high school marching band during an annual event. She recounted how she enjoyed participating in this event with and learning from the high school marching band students.

My personal school music experiences were more closely aligned with James's experiences in that I generally have positive memories of participating in band during my elementary, middle, and high school years. I enjoyed performing with my friends but I also felt that music was sort of a calling so I believe that I would have continued my participation in school music with or without my friends' involvement. However, my friends' involvement made the experience very enjoyable.

As far as I can remember, I have always had friends who participated in band so I did not approach my participation in the way that Jasmine did. While Jasmine needed to verify that the jazz band students would be nice to work with when she was in high school, I was already a part of the marching band when I made it to high school and I already had some sort of relationship with many of the marching band members. Furthermore, most if not all of the jazz band students at my high school were also members of the marching band. As a result, I knew most of the jazz band members as well. Of course, I continued to meet new people throughout my school music experience, but I never consciously felt that I needed to examine any student's personality or behavior before I agreed to participate.

Madison dealt with some unfortunate ridicule mostly during her elementary school years because of her classmates' insensitivity towards her physical impairment. I have never experienced this kind of ridicule due to a physical impairment. Madison also recounted her experiences with the middle school band teacher and participating in an annual event with the local high school marching band. I share a similar experience with Madison in this regard because I also participated with a local high school marching band when I was in middle school and I understood the feeling of getting an opportunity to learn from and participate with high school marching band students as a middle school marching band student.

Nicole fondly remembered her high school jazz band's social event and how she felt that this event was needed due to the challenges that she overcame during the semester. Nicole also mentioned that her participation in jazz band allowed her to become acquainted with students that she would not have known otherwise. I understand and share similar experiences with Nicole regarding these occurrences. Many of the social activities that I participated in during my high school music experiences were embedded in the musical activities. For example, on one occasion we visited at an amusement park when we went on a band trip to perform. Additionally, like Nicole, I also benefitted from knowing and forming relationships with students at my high school primarily due to our participation in a school music ensemble.

Place

Similar to the institutional narratives that were the focus of the sociality commonplace, school, from a holistic perspective, represented the primary place commonplace for the four academically successful Black students' music experiences. James mentioned some early experiences with participating in a youth choir and a brief experience with piano lessons at his church. Jasmine recounted some meaningful experiences with participating with her worship

team at her church. However, as a collective group, the most meaningful music making experiences for the four academically successful Black students in this study occurred at school. Therefore, in this subsection I discuss how my elementary, middle, and high school characteristics are situated among the elementary, middle, and high school characteristics of the four academically successful Black students with regard to the place commonplace.

Elementary school. Each of the four academically successful Black students in this study attended a different elementary school located in a large suburban area. For the purpose of this study, a large suburban area is defined as a “territory outside a principal city and inside an urbanized area with population of 250,000 or more” (NCES citation). James’s elementary school housed 567 students during James’s fifth-grade school year. Of the 567 students, 539 students were identified as Black students and over 95 percent of the student population was eligible for free and reduced-price meals. Nicole’s elementary school accommodated 911 students during Nicole’s fifth-grade school year. Of the 911 students, 843 students were identified as Black students and approximately 82 percent of the student population was eligible for free and reduced-price meals.

Jasmine attended a theme school during her elementary years. Jasmine’s elementary school housed 724 students during Jasmine’s fifth-grade school year. Of the 724 students, 703 students were identified as Black students and approximately 81 percent of the student population was eligible for free and reduced-price meals. Madison attended a private elementary school during her first and second-grade school years; however, she was enrolled in a magnet school during her fourth, fifth, and sixth-grade school years. Madison’s magnet elementary school accommodated 225 students during Madison’s fifth-grade school year. Of the 225 students, 200 students were identified as Black students and approximately 53 percent of the

student population was eligible for free and reduced-price meals. I attended a public school during my elementary school years. My elementary school housed 819 students during my fifth-grade school year. Of the 819 students, 776 students were identified as Black students and approximately 54 percent of the student population was eligible for free and reduced meals.

Middle School. Similar to the elementary schools, each of the four academically successful Black students in this study attended a middle school located in a large suburban area. James and Nicole attended the same public middle school. Their middle school accommodated 771 students during their eighth-grade school year. Of the 771 students, 701 students were identified as Blacks and approximately 86 percent of the student population was eligible for free and reduced-price meals. Jasmine attended a theme school during her middle school years. Jasmine's middle school housed 768 students during their eighth-grade school year. Of the 768 students, 751 students were identified as Blacks and approximately 66 percent of the student population was eligible for free and reduced-price meals. Madison attended a magnet school during her middle school years. Madison's middle school accommodated 837 students during Madison's eighth grade school year. Of the 837 students, 794 students were identified as Blacks and approximately 79 percent of the student population was eligible for free and reduced-price meals. I attended a public school during my middle school years. My middle school housed 1,432 students during my eighth-grade school year. Of the 1,432 students, 1,361 students were identified as Black students and approximately 50 percent of the student population was eligible for free and reduced meals.

High School. Similar to the elementary and middle schools, each of the four academically successful Black students in this study attended a high school located in a large suburban area. James, Nicole, and Jasmine attended the same high school during their ninth and

tenth-grade school years. Their high school housed 307 students during their tenth-grade school year. Of the 307 students, 237 students were identified as Black students and approximately 65 percent of the student population was eligible for free and reduced-price meals. Madison's high school accommodated 1,230 students during her tenth-grade school year. Of the 1,230 students, 1,179 students were identified as Black students and approximately 51 percent of the student population was eligible for free and reduced-price meals. I attended a public school during my high school years. My high school housed 1,822 students during my tenth-grade school year. Of the 1,822 students, 1,757 students were identified as Black students and approximately 35 percent of the student population was eligible for free and reduced meals.

Surprises

Narrative Threads

After reviewing literature regarding music student participation and the factors that influence music student participation, I was surprised that some of those findings were not discerned in this current study about the influences on academically successful Black students' participation in school music. For example, several studies suggested that students of color were less likely to participate in instrumental music courses (Elpus & Abril, 2011; Elpus & Abril, 2019; Stewart, 1991) and schools that predominately served students of color or students with lower socioeconomic studies were less likely to offer music instruction (Salvador & Allegood, 2014; Shaw, 2021; Shaw & Auletto, in press). Each of the students in this study self-identified as Black or African American and three of the students enrolled in instrumental courses throughout their school music journey. The students did not report any issues associated with the necessity of procuring of an instrument to participate in school music. Jasmine was the only student who

did not participate in school music as an instrumentalist but this was due to her being a vocalist and not because of issues associated with the procurement of an instrument.

Additionally, the students in this study attended schools that offered music education courses during their elementary, middle, and high school years. It should be noted that while Jasmine attended schools that did not offer opportunities to participate in vocal ensembles during her fourth through eighth grade school years, she did participate in general music courses during that time period. Therefore, the academically successful Black students' lived experiences related to music participation were not negatively impacted by their socioeconomic statuses as previous research suggested. Moreover, with the exception of Jasmine's fourth through eighth grade school experiences, these students had access to music education courses and performing ensembles. Thus, the lived experiences of these students might allow them to have a different level of appreciation for music education when compared with other students of color referenced in previous research.

As it related to factors that influenced music student participation, several studies concluded that parents and/or family members had an influence on their child's decision to participate in school music (Demorest, Kelley, & Pfordresher, 2017; Ho, 2009; Law & Ho, 2009; Vasil, 2013). The academically successful Black students in this study did not cite their parents as a motivation for participating or not participating in school music at the high school level. Each of the students credited various family members with being supportive as well as an influential force in their lives. The family members supported the academically successful students in whatever they decided to do. The students' responses about parental support could be attributed to the fact that I did not specifically ask about their parents' support relative to school music participation. Nevertheless, the academically successful Black students' decision to

participate in school music seemed to be motivated by their own personal desires to participate based on the flexibility with time commitments that was afforded by the school music organization, the instructional support that they received with their instrument while participating, and the potential or past social experiences associated with school music participation.

COVID-19

The world was much different when I initially began writing the first three chapters of this dissertation. During this time, the world was what I would call normal. As I wrote my prospectus, particularly the methodology, I envisioned that my data collection and interaction with the participants would be different. I envisioned that I would physically travel to the high schools to meet the high school principals who were contacted in an attempt to recruit their high school students. I thought that would be a way to ensure that my initial email to those principals would not be overlooked. I also envisioned that I would physically travel to the high schools that were included in this study and meet the potential participants and selected participants in person. However, by the time that I defended my prospectus, I and much of the civilized world were still in quarantine because of the health and safety measures that were associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

I successfully defended my prospectus during this pandemic through virtual means due to the protocols that were implemented by the university. I knew that there was a possibility that this study would also be conducted through virtual means but I had hoped that the health and safety concerns associated with the COVID-19 pandemic would have been resolved for numerous reasons, which included those that pertained to the goals of this dissertation. Nevertheless, the health and safety concerns as well as protocols were still in place.

Consequently, the data collection process and any contact with individuals related to the data collection process were conducted through virtual means.

One of the main drawbacks with conducting the data collection process through virtual means was the lack of responsiveness from many of the high school principals in this study. I emailed over twenty high school principals several times about allowing their high school students to participate in this study. While most of the high school principals did not respond to the email, three of the high school principals confirmed that they would participate and sent the necessary information to their students. I do not know if most of the high school principals overlooked the emails or saw the emails and chose not to participate. I do believe, however, if this study had taken place before the COVID-19 pandemic changed our world, I would have been able to physically travel to the high schools to meet with the principals in addition to sending them emails. This would not necessarily mean that more high school principals would agree to allow their high school students to participate but it could possibly help with confirming more of their responses.

In addition to a lack of responses from the high school principals, I was also surprised about the lack of responses among high school students who attended high schools that were approved for participation in this study. I initially sought to select six students for participation in this study but due to the impact of the pandemic, I was only able to select four students for participation. There were nine students who responded to my invitation to participate in this study and out of the nine students, only four met the preestablished qualifications. These high school students were all attending school virtually at the time in which the data was collected in this study. I'm not sure whether the students who attended these high schools overlooked the information that was disseminated to them regarding this study or if they received the

information but chose not to participate. I believe that I would have been able to receive more responses from the students relative to their interest in participating in this study if I was able to present my study to the high school students in person.

I believe that the protocols that were implemented to address the COVID-19 pandemic were understandable and necessary to assist with the health and safety of us all. However, some of the byproducts of these protocols seemed to hinder the data collection process. These hindrances were not expected when I initially envisioned this research project; thus, I included the impact of these protocols in this section.

Conclusions

The music education profession has made considerable progress with realizing Gehrken's mantra, "Music for every child; every child for music" (Gehrken, 1933, p. 37; Heidingsfelder, 2014, p. 47), especially the first half of the mantra (Parsad & Spiegelman, 2012). While the progress has been noteworthy, members of the music education profession must continue to seek ways in which Gerhken's mantra can be realized in its fullest manifestation. Fulfilling this mantra requires members of the music education profession to work towards the provision of music education opportunities for students and to present those opportunities in a way that attracts the student populations that we serve. After reading Elpus and Abril's (2019) research study, I became aware of the assertion that academically successful Black high school students were not participating in school music at the same rate as other student demographic groups. Consequently, I sought to understand reasons why academically successful Black high school students might not participate in school music at the rate as other student demographic groups.

In an effort to understand reasons why academically successful Black high school students might not participate in school music at the same rate as other student demographics, I examined the lived experiences of four academically successful Black students as it related to musical journeys. My examination of the lived experiences of these four academically successful Black students produced three findings that were presented as narrative threads. These narrative threads resonated with aspects of Gehrken's (1993) mantra. For example, the assertion that academically successful Black students valued flexibility with the time commitments of their school music organizations suggested that academically successful Black students might be more likely to participate in school music at the high school level if they have adequate time to complete school work and participate in other activities of interest. Furthermore, if academically successful Black students were more likely to participate in school music because of the flexibility in time commitments from their school music organizations, then the music education profession would be one step closer to realizing the second half of Gehrken's mantra: "every child for music" (Gehrken, 1933, p. 37).

The assertion that academically successful Black students valued instructional support with their instrument suggested that academically successful Black students would be more likely to continue their participation in school music if they received adequate instructional support from individuals who have more musical expertise than they possess. The mere provision of a musical opportunity without adequate instructional support can be discouraging for academically successful students. The provision of a musical opportunity without instructional support could include providing the academically successful student with a music book and requesting that they teach themselves or rushing the academically successful student through basic musical concepts. The lack of instructional support can cause academically

successful Black students to become overwhelmed and seek ways to discontinue their participation in school music. Thus, the provision of instructional support with academically successful Black students' instruments also resonated with the second half of Gehrken's mantra: "every child for music" (Gehrken, 1933, p. 37) because the provision of instructional support could increase the likelihood that academically successful Black students would continue their participation in school music.

Lastly, the assertion that academically successful Black students valued social experiences suggested that if academically successful Black students have positive encounters with their peers, then they would be more likely to participate or continue to participate in school music. These positive encounters could occur over the course of a rehearsal, performance, or a social event. In any case, the academically successful Black students fondly remembered social experiences when they were positive and these experiences seemed to add fuel to their desire to participate. Therefore, an environment where academically successful Black students are likely to have positive social experiences could increase the likelihood that academically successful Black students would participate or continue their participation in school music.

Implications for Action

The findings in this study might be helpful for music teachers of academically successful Black students at the high school level. Student enrollment and participation in school music is optional at the high school level and, consequently, there is usually a decline in the number of students who choose to participate in school music at the high school level (Shuler, 2011). Additionally, music education programs in public schools have been the topic of budget eliminations and reductions (Fermanich, 2011; Hedgecoth & Major, 2019; Major, 2013; Pergola, 2014; West, 2012). Therefore, Elpus and Abril's (2019) study, which asserted that academically

successful Black students were less likely to participate in school music at the high school level, supports the idea that music teachers could benefit from the findings in this study.

First, music teachers of academically successful Black students should work to find ways to be flexible with the time commitments of their music ensembles. This might mean that music teachers could offer more musical opportunities for students to participate in large group ensembles such as band, orchestra, or chorus that include low-stakes performance obligations. Music teachers might be inclined to increase the time requirements of their ensemble because they may feel it is necessary to prepare for high-stakes performance opportunities such as large group performance evaluations, halftime shows, or performances with large audiences. If music teachers developed more ensembles that did not include these major obligations, they might be more receptive to having flexible time requirements for students.

Another way for music teachers to be flexible with time commitments could include teaching music courses or sponsoring extra-curricular music activities other than the traditional band, orchestra, and chorus ensembles. This might include courses such as piano, guitar, music business, music theory, or music technology. Teaching music courses or sponsoring extra-curricular music activities other than the traditional ensembles could assist music teachers with feeling comfortable with flexible time commitments.

Secondly, music teachers of academically successful Black students should ensure that they are providing adequate instructional support for their students. This could mean remaining attentive to students, particularly when introducing concepts that may be new to the students. If a music teacher feels that they are unable to assist a student with a certain musical concept, then that music teacher should seek resources such as music research, online resources, or other music educators who may be more experienced or knowledgeable with that musical concept. It should

be noted that sometimes other music students might be knowledgeable about certain musical concepts or the mechanics of certain instruments and these students could be a valuable resource as well. Additionally, music teachers should ensure that musical concepts are not rushed when initially taught. Music teachers should be aware of their students' instructional needs and seek to address them as fully as possible.

Thirdly, music teachers of academically successful Black students should ensure that they are working to create an environment where positive social experiences are likely to occur. This type of environment would emphasize mutual respect between students. Mutual respect becomes even more important when students encounter differences between each other, whether those differences are related to demographics or musical skill levels. Without mutual respect, students could feel underappreciated and, as a result, might be hindered from having positive social experiences. In addition to emphasizing mutual respect, music teachers might also consider incorporating extra-musical events into the schedule. Extra-musical events could include mid or end-of-year social gatherings at the school as well as school-sanctioned activities that occur outside of the school building.

Suggestions for Further Research

There are at least two ways in which the study of academically successful Black students' participation in school music at the high school level can be furthered. One way in which this research study can be furthered is to replicate this study in other public schools and school districts. Narrative inquiry is a way to regard the lived experiences of a group of individuals as a sufficient source of understanding; however, a single narrative inquiry study could not sufficiently provide information that would be generalizable across a group of individuals. Furthermore, a narrative inquiry is not intended to provide this type of information. Therefore, it

is necessary to continue this research to determine if other groups of academically successful Black students respond in a similar or different manner as the academically successful Black students in this study.

Another way in which this research can be furthered is through quantitative research. Survey research would be an appropriate type of quantitative research to employ when examining the factors that influence academically successful Black students' decision to participate or not participate in school music at the high school level. Furthermore, would present an opportunity to examine the responses of a large group of academically successful Black students. This large group of academically successful Black students could be representative of a single high school or an entire school district. In any case, this type of quantitative research study could provide information that might be generalizable for academically successful Black students in a particular high school or school district.

Concluding Remarks

Through this exploration into the lived experiences of four academically successful Black students, I have learned that these students are focused individuals whose academic successes were not achieved by happenstance but because of their hard and consistent work. I also learned that these students are thoughtful individuals who have given careful consideration to their current and future endeavors. After their careful consideration, these students were still interested in school music participation but were more likely to participate when certain conditions were met. This matters because it is possible that other academically successful Black students who are interested in participating in school music may not participate unless certain conditions are met. If those of us who represent the music education profession are able to accommodate academically successful Black students who are interested in school music but do not participate

because of a variety of circumstances, then we could possibly increase the rate at which academically successful Black students choose to participate in school music. As I continue to on my personal musical journey, I hope to learn additional ways in which interested academically successful Black students can participate in school music at the high school level.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

THE TANGLEWOOD DECLARATION



The intensive evaluation of the role of music in American society and education provided by the Tanglewood Symposium of philosophers, educators, scientists, labor leaders, philanthropists, social scientists, theologians, industrialists, representatives of government and foundations, music educators and other musicians led to this declaration:

We believe that education must have as major goals the art of living, the building of personal identity, and nurturing creativity. Since the study of music can contribute much to these ends, *we now call for music to be placed in the core of the school curriculum.*

The arts afford a continuity with the aesthetic tradition in man's history. Music and other fine arts, largely non-verbal in nature, reach close to the social, psychological, and physiological roots of man in his search for identity and self-realization.

Educators must accept the responsibility for developing opportunities which meet man's individual needs and the needs of a society plagued by the consequences of changing values, alienation, hostility between generations, racial and international tensions, and the challenges of a new leisure.

Music educators at Tanglewood agreed that:

- (1) Music serves best when its integrity as an art is maintained.
- (2) Music of all periods, styles, forms, and cultures belong in the curriculum. The musical repertory should be expanded to involve music of our time in its rich variety, including currently popular teen-age music and avant-garde music, American folk music, and the music of other cultures.
- (3) Schools and colleges should provide adequate time for music in programs ranging from pre-school through adult or continuing education.
- (4) Instruction in the arts should be a general and important part of education in the senior high school.
- (5) Developments in educational technology, educational television, programed instruction, and computer-assisted instruction should be applied to music study and research.
- (6) Greater emphasis should be placed on helping the individual student to fulfill his needs, goals, and potentials.
- (7) The music education profession must contribute its skills, proficiencies, and insights toward assisting in the solution of urgent social problems as in the "inner city" or other areas with culturally deprived individuals.
- (8) Programs of teacher education must be expanded and improved to provide music teachers who are specially equipped to teach high school courses in the history and literature of music, courses in the humanities and related arts, as well as teachers equipped to work with the very young, with adults, with the disadvantaged, and with the emotionally disturbed.

Note. From "The Tanglewood symposium: Music in American society," by R. Choate, C.

Fowler, C. Brown, and L. Wersen, 1967, *Music Educators Journal*, 54(3), p. 51

(<https://doi.org/10.2307/3391187>). Copyright 1967 by MENC: The National Association

for Music Education

Appendix B

The Housewright Declaration

Whenever and wherever humans have existed music has existed also. Since music occurs only when people choose to create and share it, and since they always have done so and no doubt always will, music clearly must have important value for people.

Music makes a difference in people's lives. It exalts the human spirit; it enhances the quality of life. Indeed, meaningful music activity should be experienced throughout one's life toward the goal of continuing involvement.

Music is a basic way of knowing and doing because of its own nature and because of the relationship of that nature to the human condition, including mind, body, and feeling. It is worth studying because it represents a basic mode of thought and action, and because in itself, it is one of the primary ways human beings create and share meanings. It must be studied fully to access this richness.

Societal and technological changes will have an enormous impact for the future of music education. Changing demographics and increased technological advancements are inexorable and will have profound influences on the ways that music is experienced for both students and teachers.

Music educators must build on the strengths of current practice to take responsibility for charting the future of music education to insure that the best of the Western art tradition and other musical traditions are transmitted to future generations.

We agree on the following:

1. All persons, regardless of age, cultural heritage, ability, venue, or financial circumstance deserve to participate fully in the best music experiences possible.
2. The integrity of music study must be preserved. Music educators must lead the development of meaningful music instruction and experience.
3. Time must be allotted for formal music study at all levels of instruction such that a comprehensive, sequential and standards-based program of music instruction is made available.
4. All music has a place in the curriculum. Not only does the Western art tradition need to be preserved and disseminated, music educators also need to be aware of other music that people experience and be able to integrate it into classroom music instruction.
5. Music educators need to be proficient and knowledgeable concerning technological changes and advancements and be prepared to use all appropriate tools in advancing music study while recognizing the importance of people coming together to make and share music.
6. Music educators should involve the music industry, other agencies, individuals, and music institutions in improving the quality and quantity of

music instruction. This should start within each local community by defining the appropriate role of these resources in teaching and learning.

7. The currently defined role of the music educator will expand as settings for music instruction proliferate. Professional music educators must provide a leadership role in coordinating music activities beyond the school setting to insure formal and informal curricular integration.
8. Recruiting prospective music teachers is a responsibility of many, including music educators. Potential teachers need to be drawn from diverse backgrounds, identified early, led to develop both teaching and musical abilities, and sustained through ongoing professional development. Also, alternative licensing should be explored in order to expand the number and variety of teachers available to those seeking music instruction.
9. Continuing research addressing all aspects of music activity needs to be supported including intellectual, emotional, and physical responses to music. Ancillary social results of music study also need exploration as well as specific studies to increase meaningful music listening.
10. Music making is an essential way in which learners come to know and understand music and music traditions. Music making should be broadly interpreted to be performing, composing, improvising, listening, and interpreting music notation.
11. Music educators must join with others in providing opportunities for meaningful music instruction for all people beginning at the earliest possible age and continuing throughout life.
12. Music educators must identify the barriers that impede the full actualization of any of the above and work to overcome them.


Note. From “Vision 2020: the Housewright Symposium On The Future Of Music Education,” edited by C. K. Madsen, 2000. Copyright 2000 by MENC: The National Association for Music Education

Appendix C

Hello (name of principal),

My name is Jimmy Owens, [REDACTED]. I am currently working on my dissertation research study at Georgia State University. My dissertation is focused on the influences on academically successful Black students as it relates to their participation in school music at the high school level. I am hoping that you would allow the 10th, 11th, and 12th grade students at your school to participate in this research study. I included the following information for your review:

- The approval letter from the [REDACTED] Review Board
- The text to an email that would be sent to all 10th, 11th, and 12th graders and their parents regarding their opportunity to participate in this research study
- A flyer that would give 10th, 11th, and 12th graders information about their opportunity to participate in this study *(this would be included in that email)*
- A video announcement that would give 10th, 11th, and 12th graders information about their opportunity to participate in this study *(this would be included in that email)*
 - [Click here to see Jimmy Owens' Dissertation Video Announcement](#)



[Jimmy Owens Dissertation Video Announcement](#)

and share it all with friends, family, and the world on YouTube.
youtu.be

- A copy of the assent form, parent permission form, and consent form for 10th, 11th, and 12th graders who would like to participate in this study *(this would be included in that email)*

If you would like to provide your 10th, 11th, and 12th grade students with an opportunity to participate in this research study, please complete and return the Site Permission Letter (attached). Let me know of any questions or concerns that you may have regarding this study. I truly appreciate you for taking the time to consider this research opportunity.

Sincerely,

Jimmy Owens, M.M.
Doctoral Candidate, Curriculum and Instruction
Georgia State University

Appendix D

Hello Everyone,

My name is Jimmy Owens [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]. I am also a doctoral candidate at Georgia State University and I am currently working on my dissertation research study. This research study focuses on student participation in school music at the high school level. This is where I need your help. I am looking for 10th, 11th, and 12th grade students who are interested in participating in this research study. All you would need to do is complete a brief online survey which will be administered through Survey Monkey. After the completion of the survey, I will select 6 students for more in-depth interviews. All interviews will take place online via Zoom. As an incentive, each of the 6 selected participants will receive a \$50 Visa eGift Card upon completion of their role in this research study. If you are interested in participating, please complete the attached assent form and ask your parent or guardian to complete the attached parent permission form. If you are 18, please complete the attached consent form. Email the form(s) to me at [REDACTED] I will respond to your email with a link to the online survey.

Thank you in advance for your help!

Appendix E

Student Participation (and non-participation) in School Music



Dissertation Research Study

- ☐ Student Participation (*and non-participation*) in School Music
- ☐ 10th, 11th, and 12th grade students
- ☐ Online Survey
- ☐ 3 Interviews (6 participants will receive a \$50 Visa eGift Card)
- ☐ For students who are less than 18 years old - Return signed Assent Form and Parent Permission Form to [REDACTED].
- ☐ For students who are 18 years old - Return signed Consent Form to [REDACTED].
- ☐ Email questions/concerns to [REDACTED].

Appendix F

Georgia State University

Student Assent Form

Title: INFLUENCES ON ACADEMICALLY SUCCESSFUL BLACK STUDENTS' PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL MUSIC

Principal Investigator: Patrick Freer, EdD

Student Principal Investigator: Jimmy Owens

Introduction and Key Information

You are invited to take part in a research study. It is up to you and your parent to decide if you would like to take part in the study.

The purpose of this study is to examine the experiences of Black or African American students who have had success in school and to understand how those experiences might have influenced their decision to take part in or not take part in school music at the high school level.

Your role in the study will last about four hours and ten minutes over the span of five weeks or ten minutes over the span of one day. You will complete an online survey [i.e. ten minutes over the span of one day]. Upon completion of the online survey, six participants will be selected to take part in this study [i.e. four hours and ten minutes over the span of five weeks]).

You will be asked to complete an online survey. If you are selected as one of the six participants, you will be asked to take part in virtual interviews and a virtual meeting. In addition, your parent will be asked to allow researchers to collect your standardized test scores.

If you take part in this research study, you will not be exposed to any more risks than you would experience in a typical day.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to examine the experiences of Black or African American students who have had success in school. You are invited to take part in this research study because you may have had success in school and may identify as Black or African American. All 10th, 11th, and 12th grade students are invited to complete the online survey (about 20,000 students); however, a total of six people will be selected to take part in the virtual interview portion of this study.

Procedures

If you decide to take part, you will complete an online survey. The online survey should last for about ten minutes. If you are selected as one of the six participants, you will take part in three virtual interview sessions. Each session will last between forty-five minutes and one hour. Also, if you are selected as one of the six participants, you will take part in a virtual meeting. The meeting will last between forty-five minutes and one hour.

The survey will include questions related to your demographics (e.g. race, age, grade, etc.) and school music experiences. The interviews will focus on your experiences that might have influenced your decision to take part in or not take part in school music. The meeting will take place to ensure that the information that I have received is accurate.

The survey will be completed on Survey Monkey. The interviews and meeting will take place on Zoom. The interviews and meeting will be audio recorded.

Suggested Timeline of Procedures:

All 10th, 11th, and 12th grade students in the school district are invited:

- ☐ Week of 11/2/2020 – Survey

Only six selected participants:

- ☐ Week of 11/9/2020 – 1st Interview
- ☐ Week of 11/16/2020 – 2nd Interview
- ☐ Week of 11/30/2020 – 3rd Interview
- ☐ Week of 1/4/2021 – Meeting

* The purpose of this study is to examine the experiences of Black or African American students who have had success in school. Success in this research study will be determined by standardized test scores. In order to determine your success in school, the researchers will need to access your most recent standardized test scores (i.e. End of Course/Grade Assessment).

**You will interact with the student principal investigator.

Future Research

Researchers will remove information that may identify you and may use your data for future research. If we do this, we will not ask for any additional permission from you.

Risks

In this study, you will not have any more risks than you would in a normal day of life. No injury is expected from this study, but if you believe you have been harmed, contact the research team as soon as possible. Georgia State University and the research team have not set aside funds to pay for any injury.

Benefits

This study is not designed to benefit you personally. Overall, we hope to gain information that will help to fulfill the purpose of this research study.

Alternatives

The alternative to taking part in this study is to not take part in the study.

Compensation

I will provide each of the six selected participants with a \$50 Visa eGift Card upon the completion of their role in this study. The payments will not be prorated if you decide to withdraw from this study. You will not be provided any payment if you do not complete your role in this study. The Visa eGift Card will be sent to the email that you provided in the online survey immediately after the virtual meeting.

Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal

You do not have to take part in this study. If you decide to be in the study and then decide to withdraw from study participation, you have the right to drop out at any time. You will not incur any penalty if you do not take part. You may refuse to take part in the study or stop at any time. The student principal investigator may be your teacher. No preference will be given to you if you take part. The decision to take part, or not take part, will not impact your grade or standing in class.

Confidentiality

We will keep your records private to the extent allowed by law. The following people and entities will have access to the information you provide:

- ☐ Patrick Freer
- ☐ Jimmy Owens
- ☐ GSU Institutional Review Board
- ☐ Office for Human Research Protection (OHRP)

We will use randomly generated numbers rather than your name on study records. Any code sheet that links your name with any data will be destroyed after the study has concluded. The information you provide will be stored on a password-protected MacBook Pro. The audio recordings will be stored on a password-protected MacBook Pro and deleted after the last meeting. While data sent over the internet may not be secure, the researcher will pay for a subscription of Survey Monkey and Zoom to increase the security of the information that will be shared. The researchers will not collect any IP addresses. When we present or publish the results of this study, we will not use your name or other information that may identify you.

Contact Information

Contact Jimmy Owens at [REDACTED] / Patrick Freer [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]:

- ☐ If you have questions about the study or your part in it
- ☐ If you have questions, concerns, or complaints about the study

The IRB at Georgia State University reviews all research that involves human participants. You can contact the IRB if you would like to speak to someone who is not involved directly with the study. You

can contact the IRB for questions, concerns, problems, information, input, or questions about your rights as a research participant. Contact the IRB at [REDACTED].

Consent

We will give you a copy of this assent form to keep.

If you assent to take part in this research study, please sign below. Your signature means that you are providing assent to take part in the research study.

Printed Name of Student

Signature of Student

Date

Principal Investigator or Researcher Obtaining Consent

Date

Appendix G

Georgia State University

Parent Permission Form

Title: INFLUENCES ON ACADEMICALLY SUCCESSFUL BLACK STUDENTS' PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL MUSIC

Principal Investigator: Patrick Freer, EdD

Student Principal Investigator: Jimmy Owens

Introduction and Key Information

Your child is invited to take part in a research study. It is up to you and your child to decide if your child would like to take part in the study.

The purpose of this study is to examine the experiences of Black or African American students who have had success in school and to understand how those experiences might have influenced their decision to take part in or not take part in school music at the high school level.

Your child's role in the study will last about four hours and ten minutes over the span of five weeks or ten minutes over the span of one day. Your child will complete an online survey [ten minutes over the span of one day]. Upon completion of the online survey, six participants will be selected to take part in this study [four hours and ten minutes over the span of five weeks]).

Your child will be asked to complete an online survey. If your child is selected as one of the six participants, your child will be asked to take part in virtual interviews and a virtual meeting. In addition, you are being asked to allow researchers to collect your child's standardized test scores.

If your child takes part in this research study, your child will not be exposed to any more risks than your child would experience in a typical day.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to examine the experiences of Black or African American students who have had success in school and to understand how those experiences might have influenced their decision to take part in or not take part in school music at the high school level. Your child is invited to take part in this research study because your child may have had success in school and may identify as Black or African American. All 10th, 11th, and 12th grade students are invited to complete the online survey (about 20,000 students); however, a total of six people will be selected to take part in the virtual interview portion of this study.

Procedures

If you and your child decide to take part, your child will take part in an online survey. The online survey should last for about ten minutes. If your child is selected as one of the six participants, your child will take part in three virtual interview sessions. Each session will last between forty-five minutes and one

hour. Also, if your child is selected as one of the six participants, your child will take part in a virtual meeting. The meeting will last between forty-five minutes and one hour.

The survey will include questions related to your child's demographics (e.g. race, age, grade, etc.) and school music experiences. The interviews will focus on your child's experiences that might have influenced your child's decision to take part in or not take part in school music. The meeting will take place to ensure that the information that I have received is accurate.

The survey will be completed by your child on Survey Monkey. The interviews and meeting will take place on Zoom. The interviews and meeting will be audio recorded.

Suggested Timeline of Procedures:

All 10th, 11th, and 12th grade students in the school district are invited:

- ☐ Week of 11/2/2020 – Survey

Only six selected participants:

- ☐ Week of 11/9/2020 – 1st Interview
- ☐ Week of 11/16/2020 – 2nd Interview
- ☐ Week of 11/30/2020 – 3rd Interview
- ☐ Week of 1/4/2021 – Meeting

* The purpose of this study is to examine the experiences of Black or African American students who have had success in school. Success in this research study will be determined by standardized test scores. In order to determine your child's success in school, the researchers will need to access your child's most recent standardized test scores (End of Course/Grade Assessment). You are being asked to allow researchers to collect your child's standardized test scores for this purpose.

**You and your child will interact with the student principal investigator.

Future Research

Researchers will remove information that may identify your child and may use your child's data for future research. If we do this, we will not ask for any additional permission from you.

Risks

In this study, your child will not have any more risks than your child would in a normal day of life. No injury is expected from this study, but if you believe your child has been harmed, contact the research team as soon as possible. Georgia State University and the research team have not set aside funds to pay for any injury.

Benefits

This study is not designed to benefit your child personally. Overall, we hope to gain information that will help to fulfill the purpose of this research study.

Alternatives

The alternative to taking part in this study is to not take part in the study.

Compensation

I will provide each of the six selected participants with a \$50 Visa eGift Card upon the completion of their role in this study. The payments will not be prorated if your child decides to withdraw from this study. Your child will not be provided any payment if they do not complete their role in this study. The Visa eGift Card will be sent to the email that your child provided in the online survey immediately after the virtual meeting.

Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal

Your child does not have to take part in this study. If your child decides to be in the study and then decides to withdraw from study participation, your child has the right to drop out at any time. Your child will not incur any penalty if they do not take part. Your child may refuse to take part in the study or stop at any time. The student principal investigator may be your child's teacher. No preference will be given to those who take part. The decision to take part, or not take part, will not impact your child's grade or standing in class.

Confidentiality

We will keep your child's records private to the extent allowed by law. The following people and entities will have access to the information you provide:

- ☐ Patrick Freer
- ☐ Jimmy Owens
- ☐ GSU Institutional Review Board
- ☐ Office for Human Research Protection (OHRP)

We will use randomly generated numbers rather than your child's name on study records. Any code sheet that links your child's name with any data will be destroyed after the study has concluded. The information your child provides will be stored on a password-protected MacBook Pro. The audio recordings will be stored on a password-protected MacBook Pro and deleted after the last meeting. While data sent over the internet may not be secure, the researcher will pay for a subscription of Survey Monkey and Zoom to increase the security of the information that will be shared. The researchers will not collect any IP addresses. When we present or publish the results of this study, we will not use your child's name or other information that may identify your child.

Contact Information

Contact Jimmy Owens [REDACTED] / Patrick Freer at [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

- ☐ If you have questions about the study or your child's part in it
- ☐ If you have questions, concerns, or complaints about the study

The IRB at Georgia State University reviews all research that involves human participants. You can contact the IRB if you would like to speak to someone who is not involved directly with the study. You can contact the IRB for questions, concerns, problems, information, input, or questions about your child's rights as a research participant. Contact the IRB at [REDACTED].

Consent

We will give you a copy of this parent permission form to keep (please provide email below).

If you provide permission for your child to take part in this research study and for the research investigators (Jimmy Owens and Patrick Freer) to access your child's most recent standardized test scores, please sign below. Your signature means that you are giving your child permission to take part in the study.

Printed Name of Child

Printed Name of Parent/Guardian

Email of Parent/Guardian

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Date

Principal Investigator or Researcher Obtaining Consent

Date

Appendix H

Georgia State University

Consent Form

Title: INFLUENCES ON ACADEMICALLY SUCCESSFUL BLACK STUDENTS' PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL MUSIC

Principal Investigator: Patrick Freer, EdD

Student Principal Investigator: Jimmy Owens

Introduction and Key Information

You are invited to take part in a research study. It is up to you to decide if you would like to take part in the study.

The purpose of this study is to examine the experiences of Black or African American students who have had success in school and to understand how those experiences might have influenced their decision to take part in or not take part in school music at the high school level.

Your role in the study will last about four hours and ten minutes over the span of five weeks or ten minutes over the span of one day. You will complete an online survey [ten minutes over the span of one day]. Upon completion of the online survey, six participants will be selected to take part in this study [four hours and ten minutes over the span of five weeks]).

You will be asked to complete an online survey. If you are selected as one of the six participants, you will be asked to take part in virtual interviews and a virtual meeting. In addition, you are being asked to allow researchers to collect your standardized test scores.

If you take part in this research study, you will not be exposed to any more risks than you would experience in a typical day.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to examine the experiences of Black or African American students who have had success in school. You are invited to take part in this research study because you may have had success in school and may identify as Black or African American. All 10th, 11th, and 12th grade students are invited to complete the online survey (about 20,000 students); however, a total of six people will be selected to take part in the virtual interview portion of this study.

Procedures

If you decide to take part, you will complete an online survey. The online survey should last for about ten minutes. If you are selected as one of the six participants, you will take part in three virtual interview sessions. Each session will last between forty-five minutes and one hour. Also, if you are selected as one of the six participants, you will take part in a virtual meeting. The meeting will last between forty-five minutes and one hour.

The survey will include questions related to your demographics (e.g. race, age, grade, etc.) and school music experiences. The interviews will focus on your experiences that might have influenced your decision to take part in or not take part in school music. The meeting will take place to ensure that the information that I have received is accurate.

The survey will be completed on Survey Monkey. The interviews and meeting will take place on Zoom. The interviews and meeting will be audio recorded.

Suggested Timeline of Procedures:

All 10th, 11th, and 12th grade students in the school district are invited:

- ☐ Week of 11/2/2020 – Survey

Only six selected participants:

- ☐ Week of 11/9/2020 – 1st Interview
- ☐ Week of 11/16/2020 – 2nd Interview
- ☐ Week of 11/30/2020 – 3rd Interview
- ☐ Week of 1/4/2021 – Meeting

* The purpose of this study is to examine the experiences of Black or African American students who have had success in school. Success in this research study will be determined by standardized test scores. In order to determine your success in school, the researchers will need to access your most recent standardized test scores (End of Course/Grade Assessment). You are being asked to allow researchers to collect your standardized test scores for this purpose.

**You will interact with the student principal investigator.

Future Research

Researchers will remove information that may identify you and may use your data for future research. If we do this, we will not ask for any additional permission from you.

Risks

In this study, you will not have any more risks than you would in a normal day of life. No injury is expected from this study, but if you believe you have been harmed, contact the research team as soon as possible. Georgia State University and the research team have not set aside funds to pay for any injury.

Benefits

This study is not designed to benefit you personally. Overall, we hope to gain information that will help to fulfill the purpose of this research study.

Alternatives

The alternative to taking part in this study is to not take part in the study.

Compensation

I will provide each of the six selected participants with a \$50 Visa eGift Card upon the completion of their role in this study. The payments will not be prorated if you decide to withdraw from this study. You will not be provided any payment if you do not complete your role in this study. The Visa eGift Card will be sent to the email that you provided in the online survey immediately after the virtual meeting.

Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal

You do not have to take part in this study. If you decide to be in the study and then decide to withdraw from study participation, you have the right to drop out at any time. You will not incur any penalty if you do not take part. You may refuse to take part in the study or stop at any time. The student principal investigator may be your teacher. No preference will be given to you if you take part. The decision to take part, or not take part, will not impact your grade or standing in class.

Confidentiality

We will keep your records private to the extent allowed by law. The following people and entities will have access to the information you provide:

- ☐ Patrick Freer
- ☐ Jimmy Owens
- ☐ GSU Institutional Review Board
- ☐ Office for Human Research Protection (OHRP)

We will use randomly generated numbers rather than your name on study records. Any code sheet that links your name with any data will be destroyed after the study has concluded. The information you provide will be stored on a password-protected MacBook Pro. The audio recordings will be stored on a password-protected MacBook Pro and deleted after the last meeting. While data sent over the internet may not be secure, the researcher will pay for a subscription of Survey Monkey and Zoom to increase the security of the information that will be shared. The researchers will not collect any IP addresses. When we present or publish the results of this study, we will not use your name or other information that may identify you.

Contact Information

Contact Jimmy Owens [REDACTED] / Patrick Freer at [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]:

- ☐ If you have questions about the study or your part in it
- ☐ If you have questions, concerns, or complaints about the study

The IRB at Georgia State University reviews all research that involves human participants. You can contact the IRB if you would like to speak to someone who is not involved directly with the study. You can contact the IRB for questions, concerns, problems, information, input, or questions about your rights as a research participant. Contact the IRB at [REDACTED].

Consent

We will give you a copy of this consent form to keep.

If you consent to take part in this research study and for the research investigators (Jimmy Owens and Patrick Freer) to access your most recent standardized test scores, please sign below. Your signature means that you are providing consent to take part in the research study.

Printed Name of Student

Signature of Student

Date

Principal Investigator or Researcher Obtaining Consent

Date

Appendix I

Hello (name of participant),

I hope you are well! Thank you for agreeing to participate in this dissertation research study. I am excited to inform you that you have been selected as one of the 6 participants that will take part in the online interviews and virtual meeting. The online interviews and virtual meeting will take place on Zoom. The first interview will take place during the week of November 9, 2020. The second interview will take place during the week of November 16, 2020. The third interview will take place during the week of November 30, 2020. The virtual meeting will take place during the week of January 4, 2021. We need to schedule a time to meet for one hour during each of these weeks. Here are the times that I am available during each week:

Monday	4:00 PM, 5: 00 PM, 6:00 PM, 7:00 PM
Tuesday	4:00 PM, 5: 00 PM, 6:00 PM, 7:00 PM
Wednesday	4:00 PM, 5: 00 PM, 6:00 PM, 7:00 PM
Thursday	4:00 PM, 5: 00 PM, 6:00 PM, 7:00 PM
Friday	4:00 PM, 5: 00 PM, 6:00 PM, 7:00 PM
Saturday	12:00 PM, 1:00 PM, 2:00 PM, 3:00 PM, 4:00 PM, 5: 00 PM, 6:00 PM, 7:00 PM
Sunday	12:00 PM, 1:00 PM, 2:00 PM, 3:00 PM, 4:00 PM, 5: 00 PM, 6:00 PM, 7:00 PM

Please list the days, dates, and times that you are available to meet for one hour during each week (Note: We cannot meet during the school day).

Week of November 9, 2020

Day(s)	Date(s)	Time(s)
<i>Example: Tuesday</i>	<i>Example: November 10, 2020</i>	<i>Example: 5:00 PM or 6:00 PM</i>

Week of November 16, 2020

Day(s)	Date(s)	Time(s)

Week of November 30, 2020

Day(s)	Date(s)	Time(s)

Week of January 4, 2021

Day(s)	Date(s)	Time(s)

Thanks again for your help. I look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

Jimmy Owens

Appendix J

Interview Protocols

Instructions: Prior to each interview, inform the subject not to reveal anyone else's identity. "Who" questions must be responded with responses such as "middle school band instructor" as opposed to name.

Interview 1

- ☐ Describe your initial music experiences.
 - Where did this occur?
 - Who was involved?
 - What was your role?
 - When did this occur?
- ☐ How did those initial experiences impact later experiences?
 - Did you continue to seek similar experiences or different experiences?
- ☐ When did you first start singing/ playing an instrument publicly?
 - Describe that experience. Were you nervous? Did it feel natural?
- ☐ How did you come to choosing the instrument?
 - Was the instrument suggested for you? By who? Why?
 - Did you seek to learn the instrument? Why?
- ☐ Who do you look up to musically? Or, who is the most influential person in your life as it relates to music?
 - What qualities attract you to this person?
 - Have you met this person? What was the context?
- ☐ Describe your most memorable musical experience.
 - When did this occur? Who was involved? What was your role? Where did this occur?
 - What aspect of this experience was the most meaningful for you?
- ☐ Does anyone in your family sing/play an instrument?
 - Do you have a special musical bond with this person?
 - Describe an experience that illuminates this bond.
 - What is the most meaningful aspect of this musical relationship?
- ☐ What aspect of your musical activities is the most enjoyable? Why? Least enjoyable? Why?

☐ Interview 2

- ☐ Describe your first musical experience in school?
 - Where did this occur?
 - Who was involved?
 - What was your role?
 - When did this occur?
- ☐ Were you automatically drawn to participate in school music?
 - What aspect of the school music program was most attractive to you?
- ☐ Were there any external circumstances that impacted your participation in school music?
 - What were those circumstances? Why do you feel that these circumstances affected your participation?

- ☐ Has your participation in school music afforded you any extra-musical opportunities?
 - Describe these opportunities. Do you look forward to these opportunities? Why?
- ☐ Which music ensemble did you participate with in middle school?
 - How did you come to participate in this ensemble?
 - Do you feel that you were a part of a quality music program?
 - What characteristics contributed to the quality or lack of quality of the music ensemble?
 - Do you feel that your participation in this music ensemble contributed to your growth as a musician? A person? A student?
- ☐ Were a lot of your friends in the music ensemble with you?
 - How did your friends' involvement impact your participation?
- ☐ What do you know about the music program at your current school?
 - How is it different/similar to your middle school program?
- ☐ What aspect of your school music participation is the most enjoyable? Why? Least enjoyable? Why?

Interview 3

- ☐ How much time do you usually spend on academic coursework outside of school?
 - Does the time spent on academic coursework impact the time that you spend with your musical obligation? If so, to what extent?
- ☐ Are you involved with other extra-curricular activities?
 - How does your involvement with those activities impact your participation with school music?
- ☐ Have you ever felt as if you were getting behind on your academic coursework due to your participation in school music?
 - If so, how did you mitigate that concern? Who was influential in helping you mitigate that concern (i.e, teacher, parent, friend, self, etc.)?
- ☐ What do you feel is most important for you to accomplishment at school? Why?
- ☐ Do you feel your current music participation status can benefit you later in your life? How so? Or, is music participation just something fun or convenient to do?
- ☐ Who is the single biggest influence in your life?
 - What do you feel is their ultimate hope for you? What does that hope include/exclude?
- ☐ How much time do you spend practicing? Do you feel confident in your ability to perform music well? What is preventing you from practicing more/less?
- ☐ What is your greatest strength in school? Do you tend to focus more or less on this area?