



2023 Symposium on Music Teacher Education Presentations

Session 2 – Friday, 11:50AM

GC 2660

A Narrative Study of First Generation College Students and Belonging in Music Education

Sara Jones & Julie Bannerman

First-generation college students (FGCS), defined as those whose parents never completed a bachelor's degree, face unique challenges while pursuing undergraduate degrees. First-generation students are more likely to work in addition to pursuing their studies, less likely to engage in social experiences, and less likely to interact with faculty. Music education degrees often feature heavy credit hour requirements, high contact hours associated with low credit courses, uncredited requirements such as clinical hours for certification, and additional costs associated with music performance and attaining teacher licensure. There are few extant studies focused on the experiences of FGCS in music education. The purpose of this narrative inquiry was to explore the lived experiences of music educators in the United States who were first generation college students in order to understand the challenges they faced preparing to be music teachers and how they attained a sense of belonging in their programs. We used Strayhorn's (2019) College Students' Sense of Belonging as a conceptual framework for understanding varied dimensions of belonging. Participants were four first generation college students who had earned music education degrees in the past 10 years who were currently teaching music. Across three interviews the researchers gathered life histories focusing on pre-collegiate, collegiate, and early career experiences as they related to music education, music teacher preparation, and entering careers teaching music. We worked collaboratively with participants to write and rewrite narrative accounts of their journeys towards music teaching. The participants' stories revealed the complexities first generation college students experience, from identifying and gaining acceptance into music programs to managing degree and scholarship requirements. Communication, finding community, and contact with mentors throughout the college experience were key for developing a sense of belonging. Support from family, friends, and music teachers was crucial in helping these students pursue their career ambitions in music. However, music teacher educators were rarely identified by participants as mentors or part of their support systems. Participants exhibited a strong sense of perseverance and dedication to their education and career goals. Implications for music teacher education programs from this research include making early and frequent contacts with prospective and current students, implementing effective advising structures, and providing opportunities for relationship building between students, faculty, and staff. Music Teacher Educators can invite preservice teachers to self-identify as FGCS in order to provide additional support as needed to help them successfully navigate music education programs.

GC 2560

Colonized Curriculum: "When Does My Story Get Told?"

Sarah Minette & Roque Diaz

In the fall of 2020, there were more than two million Hispanic students enrolled at 451 Hispanic-serving institutions (HSIs) in the U.S (Excelencia in Education, 2020). HSIs represent 18% of colleges and universities (both two-year and four-year) but enroll 66% of all Latino undergraduates in higher education (Excelencia in Education, 2020). HSIs are a part of a federally funded system that grants this status if at least 25% of the undergraduate student body identifies as Hispanic/Latino/a and have a large proportion of students who identify a low-income (Garcia, 2019). The purpose of this research was to explore how a music department at an HSI serves the needs of its racially minoritized student population. Research questions guiding this inquiry were: in what ways do students make meaning of the intersections between their racial, ethnic, cultural, and student identities in a music department at an HSI; and, what barriers or success have these students experienced in their music studies in relation to their identities.

Garcia (2019) critiqued HSIs in their ability to "serve" Hispanic students as institutional and federal mission statements are lacking. Garcia (2019) suggested that HSIs, both individually and collectively, develop meaningful policy changes to better support racially minoritized students which includes changes to curricula; hiring faculty, staff, and administrators who are committed to the needs of the students; adopting different entry points to HSIs; reinforce and preserve multi-lingualism; and having more support systems set in place for students, especially those who are first-generation students. These suggestions resonate with the current dialogue of equity and access in music education. However, there is a void in music education research that explores the ways in which racially minoritized students, specifically Hispanic Latino/a/x perceive their experiences at HSIs. In recent years, focus on decolonizing educational practices in music classrooms has permeated both educational and research discourse (Adams, 2022; Bradley, 2012; Goodwin, 2010; Hess, 2015) Despite the urgency in these conversations the participants

in this study have experienced (re)colonization through their studies in music education.(source) Four students at an HSI were interviewed (two times each for approximately an hour) and then all participated in a focus group interview (Yin, 2011). Cross-case analysis (Fraser, 2004) was completed by both researchers and five themes permeated that we address in this study: mental marginalization and ego withdrawal, imposter syndrome, high school experiences versus college expectations, curriculum as [re]colonizing and devaluing of culture, and community-centered values. Through this research, it is our hope that considerations curricula will be further explored in not only HSIs, but other racially minoritized institutions as well as PWIs.

GC 2675

Walking on Eggshells: Music Educator Perceptions of Agency in Times of Surveillance

Kelly Bylica, Diana Hawley, & Sophie Lewis

Legislation in the United States has increasingly led to limitations placed on what and how educators are able to teach in the classroom. In 2021, over 24 bills were passed limiting the content that can be taught in U.S. public schools, particularly as it relates to race, gender, and sexuality (PEN America, 2022). These bills also encourage parents and guardians to report teachers who are teaching what they deem to be inappropriate content (Kim, 2022; Sargent, 2022). These measures, often deemed Divisive Concept Laws, can lead to a host of challenges for music educators, impacting student/teacher relationships, repertoire selection, pedagogical practices, student and teacher safety and mental health, and a host of other concerns (Salvador et al., 2023). Furthermore, constriction of content can frame the music educator as a deliverer of curriculum wherein the educator serves solely as a vessel for students to receive content (Cooke & Spruce, 2016).

In this presentation, we share the findings from an exploratory case study (Stake, 1995) that considered how music educators saw themselves as agentic curricular authors within their unique context. Data included semi-structured interviews (Rubin & Rubin, 2012) with eight music educators who teach in states that have or are considering divisive concept legislation. Open and focused coding (Saldaña, 2021) were used to analyze the data. In particular, we sought to understand how, if at all, these legislative changes impacted music teacher agency.

Agency, in this context, is understood ecologically as an emergent phenomenon that is shaped by environmental conditions (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998; Priestley et al., 2015). Emirbayer and Mische (1998) defined agency as a “temporally embedded process of social engagement” informed by the past, present, and possible future (p. 963). Expanding upon this definition, Priestley and colleagues (2015) conceptualized teacher agency as “something that is achieved by individuals, through the interplay of personal capacities and the resources, affordances and constraints of the environment by means of which individuals act” (p. 19). Because individuals are continually affected by the environments in which they work, agency can be understood “ecologically” by considering the way “cultures, structures and relationships” interact to affect educator decisions (Priestly et al., 2015, p. 3). Agency is what enables teachers to leverage their personal assets and aptitudes, whereas ecological agency considers the unique circumstances and environments that affect teachers’ ability to create change.

In this presentation, we focus on implications that may impact music teacher educators as they seek to prepare preservice teachers in the midst of current divisive concept legislation. In particular, we highlight the emphasis placed on the importance of finding and working alongside supportive administrators, as findings indicated that administrators played a key role in both thwarting and supporting teacher agency. We also point to findings that recommend supporting preservice teachers in policy awareness and an understanding of rights, building on extant research in the field (e.g., Bylica & Schmidt, 2021). Finally, we consider the importance of helping preservice educators build supportive networks in the midst of laws that threaten both livelihood and personal safety.

GC 2760

Essence of Joy: Empathy and Connection in an Afrocentric Collegiate Choral Ensemble at a Predominately White Institution

Austin Norrid

Music education scholars have suggested that students may gain empathy for others by learning music from cultures other than their own (Bennet, 2022; Campbell, 1991, 2018; Hess, 2019; Pascale, 2011). Thus, music teacher educators may consider how or whether cross-cultural music learning can create such empathetic connections. This is especially poignant as we prepare preservice music teachers to create a culture of belonging in their future classrooms.

Thus far, scholars have examined music’s capacity to foster empathy through philosophical inquiry (Winter, 2013), practical applications (Laird, 2015; Pascale, 2011) and through qualitative study of music educators and activist musicians (Hess, 2019). Researchers have also addressed how to prepare music educators to be empathetic to their students (Zhang, 2017) and whether empathetic musical experiences can influence students’ views of social justice (de Quadros & Abrahams, 2022). However, little research explores how or whether students may experience empathy through cross-cultural music learning.

Essence of Joy is a choral ensemble dedicated to performing music from the sacred and secular African American traditions at Penn State University, a large public predominately White institution (PWI). Of interest, the majority of students enrolled in Essence of Joy at the time of this study were White. For Black students, Afrocentric choirs at PWIs can offer a sense of pride and belonging and afford Black students the opportunity to create and participate in safe communities with other students who look like them and share similar backgrounds and experiences (Strayhorn, 2011; Pinto, 2022). A lack of research literature exists examining if these benefits exist for Black students when Afrocentric ensembles are majority White. Furthermore, little research

explores how ethnocentric ensembles may promote empathetic development for students who are and are not members of the ensemble's celebrated ethnic or racial group.

The goal of this phenomenological study (Moustakas, 1994) was to discover what empathetic meanings Black and non-Black participants create from their experiences singing in *Essence of Joy*. Research questions were:

1. In what ways do Black and non-Black participants in *Essence of Joy* have similar or different experiences?
2. Do participants experience increased empathy for and understanding of Black culture by participating in *Essence of Joy*, and if so in what ways?
3. What, if any, aspects of *Essence of Joy* aid or hinder the development of empathy and understanding?

Participants were four undergraduate students and the ensemble conductor. Undergraduate participants had between two and eight semesters of experience in the ensemble. Two participants were White, and three participants, including the conductor, were Black. Data included semi-structured interviews and over 100 hours of participant-observation. Preliminary synthesis has identified the following themes: connection with others, connection to self, mental health support, and cultural preservation and transmission. Based on the findings, in this session I will discuss implications for how music teacher educators can prepare preservice music educators to build empathetic communities of belonging in their future classrooms through the repertoire they select and teach.

GC 3680

Community College Students as Preservice Music Educators: A Follow-up Study

Diana Dansereau & Michael Sundblad

Community colleges enroll a demographically diverse population of students, which includes those who are employed full-time or enrolled part-time, are not financial dependents, and are first-generation students (Munsch et al., 2014). Eight percent of community college students are non-US citizens, 15% are single parents, 4% are veterans, and 20% have disabilities (American Association of Community Colleges, 2023). Over 36% of dependent community college students' families earn less than \$20,000 a year (Foley et al., 2020). Further, 51% of all Hispanic undergraduates and 40% of all Black undergraduates in the US attend community colleges (Community College Research Center [CCRC], n.d.). Such demographic diversity is lacking among preservice music educators who attend universities (Elpus, 2015). Given this, Koner & Eros (2022) have labeled community college students who aspire to become music educators as a "valuable population" and argued the importance of supporting these students "as we continue to aim to recruit a diverse community of music educators" (p. 11).

Unfortunately, however, data show that 42% of first-time, full-time community college students do not complete their certificate or associate's degree, nor transfer to another institution (National Center for Education Statistics, 2022). Further, those who do successfully transfer to a university are statistically less likely to finish their bachelor's degree than those who began their studies at a 4-year institution (Handel, 2013). This potentially places prospective music educators who begin at community colleges at risk for not fulfilling their career goals, and may contribute to the documented decline in numbers of graduates from music teacher preparation programs (Hash, 2021). The purpose of this study is to follow up on community college students who indicated their aspirations to become music educators as part of a research study presented at SMTE in 2021. Our research questions are:

1. To what degree have participants persisted in their paths to become music educators, including completing an associates degree and/or transferring into music teacher education programs at 4-year institutions?
2. According to participants, what influences were barriers or facilitators with respect to pursuing careers in music education?

This in-progress study is a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design. Our data collection and analysis is guided by Patton & McMahon's (2006) Systems Theory Framework of career development, in which the authors posit that an individual's system (e.g., their gender, age, interests, skills), their larger social system, and the environmental-societal system influence career development. The individual's interactions with these systems are recursive, the influences change over time, and chance events often play important roles in career trajectory.

We will invite those participants who expressed interest in receiving follow-up communications in 2021 (N=52) to complete a questionnaire designed to identify whether they are still pursuing a career in music education, how and where they are pursuing that career, and what influences and systems played a role in their career paths. In addition, we will conduct follow-up interviews with the four participants we interviewed in 2021 to gain an understanding of their experiences since beginning their music teacher education at community colleges.

GC 4020

Better Together: Group Field Experience as a Tool for Identity Development in First Year Music Education Majors

Natalie Steele Royston, Sarah Van Dusen, & Christina Svec

Pre-service field experiences can provide authentic education experiences beyond the college classroom (Abrahams, 2009; Paul et al., 2001). However, field experiences can also be a source of anxiety as students are faced with the responsibilities of their future profession (Campbell & Thompson, 2007, Ramanaidu, et al., 2014). Approaching field experiences in groups rather than individually has been correlated to reduced anxiety and increased confidence and group cohesion (Ballantyne & Baker, 2013). In an effort to improve student confidence and encourage a meaningful first field experience, the authors have changed the early

field experiences at their university to a guided group format. Grounded in the guided learning and sociocultural theoretical frameworks of Vygotsky (1962) and Bandura's social learning theory (1977, 1986), the purpose of this study is to compare the experiences and perceptions of students in the required initial field experience completed during their first year of study as a music education major and prior to admission to the teacher education program. Research questions guiding this study include (a) What are the similarities and differences in observation notes between the groups? (b) What are the similarities and differences in the interviews with the students from each group? and (c) What further changes are needed to enhance the experience?

Participants were first year music education majors (N=45) at a large midwestern public university. The two groups examined participated in the course in either spring semester 2022 or 2023. Students in 2022 (n=20) were sent out to observe in K-12 schools individually with lists of schools, teachers, availability schedules, and an observation form to complete. Each student determined when and where to go and was responsible for all logistics. Students in 2023 (n=25) were assigned to observe as a group using guided notes based on Schwab's commonplaces (Barrett, 2007) and then complete written reflections. This group also was provided with itineraries, transportation, and was accompanied by a music education faculty member who guided conversation and questions. Data collected included student interviews and written assignments consisting of prompt responses and personal reflections. Data collection will be complete by May 2023. Preliminary findings show the individual field experience students focused mainly on the comparison of rehearsal techniques and classroom management in their observations, while the group students focused on the comparison of content and objectives. They also questioned teacher roles across classroom levels and how they balanced work, family life, and artistry.

This work aligns with the SMTE Music Teacher Identity Development ASPA's goal to "seek a deeper understanding of the complexities of the interactions of multiple identities. Focusing on the self as a teacher, we seek to empower our students and encourage their growth as professional music educators" (SMTE, n.d.). Also aligning with the theme of the Symposium, Elevating a Culture of Belonging, this field experience model was designed to help build a greater sense of teacher identity, and a feeling of belonging to the music education community including the students, the K-12 music educators, and the university music teacher educators.

GC 4700

Online Social Comparison and Imposter Phenomenon in Undergraduate Music Education Students

Thomas Rinn

As social creatures, we each engage in comparison with others in our daily lives in both personal and professional contexts. Whether we intend to or not, we compare our traits, accomplishments, and feelings to others around us. Festinger (1954) was one of the first to document concerns about social comparison. More recently, with the proliferation of social media, his theory has garnered more attention. The constant stream of personal accolades, vacation photos, and various other "humblebrags" (Sezer et al., 2018) confront the individual with a constant source of social comparison leading people to conclude that others are "happier and living better lives" than them (Chou & Edge, 2012). Engagement in online social comparison may result in negative psychological consequences such as depressive symptoms (Brandenberg et al., 2019; Faranda & Roberts, 2019; Steers et al., 2014), and increased malicious envy (Latif et al., 2021; Lim & Yang, 2015). Within the field of education, scholars found that social comparison was a better predictor of academic achievement than actual ability (Davis, 1966).

Psychologists Clance and Imes first observed what they labeled imposter phenomenon (IP) in a group of high-achieving women (Clance & Imes, 1978). Despite earned degrees, recognition, high achievement on standardized tests, and praise from colleagues and respected authorities, these women did not experience an internal feeling of success. Scholars have discovered high levels IP among music education faculty (Ramey, 2022; Sims & Cassidy, 2019) graduate students (Sims & Cassidy, 2020), student teachers (Sorenson, 2022), and undergraduate students (N^opoles et al., in press). Additionally, researchers have linked social comparison to increased impostor feelings in graduate students (Fraenza, 2016), faculty members (Hutchins & Rainbolt, 2017), and elementary school children (Chayer & Bouffard, 2010). Guillaume et al. (2019) discovered that collegiate faculty members questioned their own productivity as a result of seeing colleagues make social media posts about their work.

The purpose of this study was to examine how undergraduate music education students engage in online social comparison using Facebook and to investigate relationships between demographic variables, online social comparison, and IP. To explore online social comparison and IP within music education, I employed an explanatory sequential mixed methods model (Creswell, 2022). Phase 1 included the development and distribution of measurements of Facebook intensity, online social comparison, and impostor phenomenon. Undergraduate music education students from a large research university completed the Facebook Intensity Scale (Ellison et al., 2007), the modified Social Comparison Frequency Scale (Burke et al., 2020), and the Clance Impostor Scale (Clance, 1985).

In ongoing data analysis, I will investigate to what extent demographic variables of gender, year in school, music education focus area, race, first-generation student status, online social comparison, and intensity of Facebook use, predict IP in undergraduate music education students. Following the quantitative analysis, I will engage a focus group to further explore the perception of IP and online comparison.