

ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: HEARING OTHERS' VOICES: AN EXPLORATION OF
THE MUSICAL EXPERIENCES OF IMMIGRANT
STUDENTS WHO SING IN HIGH SCHOOL CHOIR

Regina Carlow, Doctor of Philosophy, 2004

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The purpose of this study was to explore the musical experiences of immigrant students in an American high school choral classroom. This study revealed some of the central issues and tensions that immigrant students face as they are acculturated into secondary school music programs. The study explored the experiences of five immigrant female high school students who had emigrated from the following countries: Ecuador, El Salvador, Ghana, and Kazakhstan. The primary participants in the collective case study attended a suburban high school in the Mid-Atlantic region and had been living in the U.S. for three years or less. All participants were enrolled the same entry-level non-auditioned choral class.

A survey was given to all choral students at the school which provided demographic information about the overall school choral program. Data collection methods included: semi-structured, in-depth interviews, student and teacher surveys, observations, focus groups, and dialogue journal writing collected over a ten-month period. Participants were encouraged to write journal entries in their native language. Lind's study of classroom environment and Gay's theory of culturally responsive teaching provided two important frameworks for analysis and interpretation of data. Data

were coded through the NVivo software system for processing qualitative research. The data were analyzed and interpreted to create four narrative case studies.

Findings suggested that the acculturation process for immigrant teenagers entails multiple dimensions with distinct outcomes depending on students' personal histories and educational backgrounds. Data revealed teacher dependence on contextual language in the choral classroom language as a vehicle for transfer of musical knowledge and that English language learners (ELL) are sometimes placed at a disadvantage in the choral classroom because of this reliance.

Findings implied that some curricular norms in secondary choral classes such as vocal warm-ups, musical notation, sight reading requirements and choral festivals can be viewed as culturally incongruent with immigrants students' previous musical experiences. Data suggested that immigrant students in choral classes viewed the minimum requirements for participation in a school group, opportunities for public performance, and daily use of English in a non-threatening atmosphere as benefits of their overall high school education.

HEARING OTHERS' VOICES: AN EXPLORATION OF THE MUSICAL
EXPERIENCES OF IMMIGRANT STUDENTS WHO SING IN HIGH SCHOOL

CHOIR

by

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of my parents Marie Petro Carlow and Frank Zampaglione Carlow.

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I sincerely thank the teacher and student participants of this study for granting me permission to interpret their stories. I appreciate their willingness to stretch themselves and remain open, as they became subjects of this inquiry. I learned so much from our conversations and interviews and hope that they are as inspired by reading these stories as I have been in writing them.

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I am at the beginnings of finding my voice as an educational researcher and I attribute my desire to continue down this road to Marie McCarthy, my advisor, mentor and friend. One only has to receive one edited paper from Dr. McCarthy to know that she is a teacher who will accept nothing but the best from her students. I have come to understand that “onward” really means, “Get going and rewrite this.” I thank her for her

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

There have always been young persons in our classrooms that most teachers did not, could not, see or hear. (Greene, 1995, p. 155)

My interest in the musical experiences of immigrant students in high school chorus stems from more than 20 years as a choral music teacher. I lived and worked near a major metropolitan city in the Mid-Atlantic States and for more than 15 years, and my music classes included many students who had emigrated from Asian, Latin American, and African countries. My elementary chorus classes were popular and reflected the demographic makeup of the school's student body, which was comprised of mostly immigrant and first-generation American students. The children enjoyed singing and learning songs with English words, as well as songs in Spanish, Zulu, Vietnamese, and the other musical traditions that they were offered. Choral concerts at the school were community events featuring parent "sing-alongs," together with musicians from the community who taught the audience songs, dances, and games from several different cultures. As a result, I became interested in finding "culture bearers" to teach my students and me more about music from other places. In addition, I attended many workshops and clinics that focused on authentic ways of presenting world music to children.

After six years at that elementary school, I transferred to a high school where immigrant students represented over 30 percent of the total student population. Initially, there were few immigrant students in the chorus, and I was advised by the guidance

counselor that these students usually enrolled for one semester only to fulfill their state-mandated fine arts requirement. Although the students were from many of the same countries as my previous students, I noted that those who had emigrated as adolescents had more difficulties, on average, than their counterparts who had emigrated at a younger age. Many students struggled with speaking and writing English. This lack of English-language proficiency seemed to pose impediments to their educational and social experiences in high school.

As required, the school provided classes to teach English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). In my school district, in addition to being classified as ESOL students, the students themselves were commonly referred to as “ESOL.” The ESOL program not only served immigrant students, but also first- and second-generation American students who were not yet proficient in speaking or writing English. While this study centers on the phenomenon of immigrant students, it is important to note that many first- and second-generation American students are placed in ESOL programs due to the complex issues associated with linguistic diversity. My own parents were first-generation Italian Americans, and in many ways, my contact with these students provided an opportunity for me to understand some of the challenges and stereotypes that my parents faced when they were in school.

In my first weeks as high school choral director, I familiarized myself with the choral library. It housed hundreds of scores, mainly Renaissance *a cappella* pieces and sacred masterworks for chorus and orchestra. I noted that the scores were consistent with the approved repertoire requirements for the county choral festival. The festival list contained standard choral pieces that represented the choral canon, including a variety of

styles and time periods, but at the time, did not include many pieces from non-Western cultures. As my appetite for world music had been whetted during my exploration of folk music arranged for elementary choir, I poured through choral catalogues to try to find music that represented some of the students' countries of origin, including Sierra Leone, Ethiopia, Laos, El Salvador, and Eritrea, but found no pieces written or transcribed for mixed choir from these countries.

I began to wonder whether printed musical notation was a part of my students' music education in their home countries. If not, how did they learn music? I also wondered why immigrant students chose choir out of all the other fine arts electives. How did immigrant students relate to the learning environment in my classroom? How did the students perceive their day-to-day encounters with the standard repertoire and traditions of high school chorus? Why did only a few immigrant students take part in the spring musical or the chorus tour?

These questions led me to have conversations with my students to learn about singing in their native countries and how they came to join the school chorus. I asked why more of their friends from their country had not elected to enroll in chorus. Were the reasons cultural, social, socioeconomic, or a combination? In talking with my students, I began to learn about their singing experiences in their home countries. I heard stories of intergenerational singing, of musical apprenticeship, and of singing in church in both ensemble and solo situations. These stories were filled with images of longing, homesickness, pride, and strong psychological ties to the musical experiences of their home countries. One such conversation about "music in my country" brought a young,

outwardly macho young man to tears as he recalled singing with the older men in his town of birth in El Salvador.

Based on these initial questions, my first formal investigation into the musical experiences of immigrant students involved Latina girls in middle-school chorus at an urban school in my neighborhood. I examined how the girls perceived their participation in chorus, whether they were currently involved with music that represented their home countries, and whether their past experiences were culturally continuous or distinctly different from their current participation in an American school chorus. They told me that they loved singing in the choir, but did not understand how students could be so disrespectful to the teacher. Singing in school with a group of same-age peers who spoke English was a new experience for these girls, and they told me how they looked forward to going to chorus so that they could practice speaking English.

Purpose of the Study

Pipher (2002) suggested that educators who explore the diverse and multiple realities of their students' lives are better able to understand the social and educational histories and tensions that students bring to school. This understanding can lead educators to shift and shape the content of their courses around the needs of students to facilitate greater learning. Examination of personal accounts of students' past and present musical experiences allows choral music educators to have a unique opportunity to know their students. To help the diverse students we know articulate their stories is not only to help them pursue the meaning of their lives, but also to move them to learn to reach out for the proficiencies and capacities needed to succeed in school while still retaining a sense of their own identity (Greene, 1995).

The purpose of this study, then, was to explore how immigrant students are acculturated through the experience of American high school choral classrooms. To illuminate this broad issue, I examined immigrant students' perceptions of past musical experiences in light of how these ethnic and social musical perceptions related to their present musical experiences of school.

Historical Background

“There have always been young persons in our classrooms [whom] most teachers did not, could not, see or hear” (Greene, 1995, p. 155). Many students in the margins have come to be known as lazy, slow, unmotivated, unable to comprehend, and lacking self-control. These perceptions have created an educational climate that fosters significant inequities and a lack of democratic opportunities for many young people (Banks, 2001; Boutte, 2001; Greene, 1995; Nieto, 1999; Sleeter, 1999).

American classrooms are experiencing the largest influx of immigrant students since the turn of the 20th century (Banks, 1999). An increasingly diverse school population has had an enormous impact on school districts in both inner cities and suburban areas. For the past 10 years, immigrant students' performance on standardized tests and statewide assessment measures has underscored significant gaps in achievement based on students' language and cultural literacy (Hirsch, 2002). Research studies in recent years increasingly have found traditional educational practices ineffective for certain immigrant groups. Alternative strategies known to be more effective with culturally and linguistically different students have been identified and used for in-service teacher training (Trueba & Bartolome, 2001).

Teacher education programs in higher education have risen to this challenge by offering courses in multicultural education as one way of deepening understanding about the diverse student populations that education majors can expect to face as they begin their teaching careers. These emergent trends in policy and curriculum are broadly referred to as multicultural education and developed from two very different ideologies for immigrants during the 20th century: *assimilationism* and *cultural pluralism*.

Assimilation of Immigrants

American public schools at the turn of the twentieth century were heavily influenced by standardized practices and expectations that came into favor during the industrialization and urbanization that occurred throughout the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Immigrant students of this era were expected to assimilate and become thoroughly American. The Americanization movement in education set out to break up immigrant groups and encourage their adoption of American customs. “English was the language to be learned, and American behaviors were expected” (Volk, 1998, p. 24).

During this time, American society faced an unprecedented number of immigrants entering both the industrialized labor force and the schools. The concept of the *melting pot* was first presented in Israel Zangwill’s (1909) play of the same name. This romantic metaphor envisioned a confluence of cultures producing a new America that would emerge as a stronger unified force.

Public schools were looked upon as an avenue to support this goal. In the case of immigrant students, the concept of education was broadly regarded as a means to civilize the uncivilized (Seeger, 2002, p. 110). Success in American schools was often equated

with estrangement from a native language and/or honored customs, thus setting up friction between the home and school (Seller & Weis, 1997).

Most public schools were run by English-speaking, native-born, middle-class, white Protestant men, men who felt duty-bound to inculcate in all students the behavior and values of their own communities. Students who looked, spoke and behaved like the “schoolmen” continued to experience congruence between home and school. However, many students experienced conflict rather than congruence. (Seller & Weis, p. 4)

These conflicts created a double standard in the educational system at the turn of the 20th century. Although American education had incorporated some of the advances of industrial methodology, European philosophies and ideas about education continued to influence what and how subjects were taught. A result of this was the exclusion of the immigrants’ own culture in the curriculum and the prohibition of the children’s use of their native languages (Olneck, 1995). This set up another conflict, between what Nieto (1992) called high culture and low culture. In the section below, I will explain how this concept surfaced in school music during the 20th century.

Music Education During a Time of Assimilation

Similarly, American school music programs at the turn of the last century were highly influenced by the concert music of the Euro-Germanic classical music tradition. Folk music and music representing what Volk (1998) called the musical heterogeneity of the vast population of immigrants were not considered. Music held a place in the school curriculum because European art music tradition was considered the cornerstone of

acquiring good taste and was believed to play an essential role in the moral, physical, and intellectual growth of students.

Music teachers utilized a rather parochial body of music literature and attempted to “teach up” to a “cultured” level, meaning that of the upper economic class.

That was considered to be the best music, and it was natural for teachers in the first half of [the 20th] century to aspire to it. The simple truth is that that was not the music of the people, although countless people of a variety of cultural heritages have learned to love Western art music. (Mark, 1978, p. 10)

In keeping with this belief, German melodies, considered the highest-quality music, were used to teach the elements of music in music textbooks. Music textbook publishers often omitted the German text and added invented lyrics, which were thought to be uplifting and to teach morals (Volk, 1998). This practice was consistent in most music classrooms through the turn of the last century and the arrival of great numbers of immigrants. The folk melodies then began to play an important role in the Americanization of immigrant students. The melodies of foreign hymns and anthems were used with American texts to help immigrant students learn English and, in a sense, were the springboard for the multicultural music education movement that we know today.

While the amalgamation of culturally diverse peoples was the main thrust in public education at the time, educational philosopher John Dewey began to explore the alienation experienced by the children of immigrants in schools. This shift in thinking aimed to recognize the contributions of diverse groups to American history and society and emphasized an appreciation of cultural differences.

Cultural Pluralism

Since the 1920s, *cultural pluralists* have stressed the coexistence of multiple cultures within the broader society and have rejected the *assimilationist* arguments made by prominent educational leaders and stressed the concept of “unity through diversity.” This phrase is attributed to educator and philosopher Horace Kallen, who used the metaphor of the symphony orchestra and its many instruments playing individually, but creating harmony when played together (Volk, 1998). Kallen’s concept of cultural pluralism affirmed that each ethnic and cultural group in the United States had a unique contribution to make to the variety and richness of American culture. Kallen reasoned that this provided a rationale for those Jews who wished to preserve their Jewish cultural identity in the American melting pot. As the 20th century progressed and the second generation of immigrants began to construct American-based identities, the concept of “unity through diversity” began to appear in different forms in the educational policy of the time (Olneck, 1995).

The popularity of this metaphor set the stage for the philosophical belief that public education should prepare students for truly democratic living. Thus, the school should attempt not only to develop competence in managing resources and overcoming obstacles, but also more specifically to develop sociability, aesthetic taste, sound intellectual methods, and sensitivity to the rights and claims of others (Johnson, 1969).

Volk (1998) noted:

In creating lessons for world friendship, educators began to employ the ideas of correlated lesson units long modeled at the laboratory schools, especially in history and geography lessons. These lessons often included the folklore and

music of the individual countries studied. While fostering world-mindedness and understanding between nations, teachers found they could also develop understanding among the various cultures in their own classrooms. (p. 38)

The work of Kallen and other 19th- and 20th-century pluralists, such as social worker Jane Addams and philosopher John Dewey, paved the way for a multicultural philosophy of education. Their passionate writings, speeches, and teachings shaped a new direction for the public school.

Folk Songs and Dances in the Music Curriculum

As general education currents began to shift in the 1920s toward broadening the scope of the school curriculum to include the study of cultures of people of other countries, so did the music curriculum. This was done through the use of folk songs and dances. The folk music taught between the 1920s and 1950s began to stress cultural representation with a strong emphasis on diversity and curricular correlation (Volk, 1998). Campbell (1996) noted that the “songs of many lands” phenomenon was conveyed through textbooks, concert programs, and music education conference proceedings of the 1920s and 1930s.

Although most of the attention on cultural diversity in music education during these two decades focused on the folk songs of Europe, a new interest in unifying the Americas during World War II sparked awareness of the music and culture of Central and South America. Federally subsidized programs, such as the Service Bureau of Intercultural Education (1924–1941), began to highlight the contributions of various cultures to the United States. Similar programs that espoused the culturally pluralist approach continued to provide cultural and educational opportunities throughout the

1940s that focused on the value of promoting understanding and tolerance between those from the dominant culture in the United States and those from less assimilated cultural groups and communities within its borders (Volk, 1998).

After 1950: Increasing Complexity

After World War II, the educational landscape continued to change. In addition to the educational currents described above, strong social and economic forces also shaped the country. The decline of well-paid industrial jobs and the rise of the new information economy gave new importance to education, making a high school diploma essential for an individual worker's economic survival (Seller & Weis, 1997). A more vocal and varied immigrant population began to demand attention as they joined the mix of racial, sexual, and religious minority groupings. Educators faced significant challenges as they set out to teach students who were not only different, but also increasingly aware of their political power. This new pluralism, led by the African-American civil rights movement, legitimized minority rights and paved the way for women, people with disabilities, and gay rights advocates to push strongly for their rights and entitlements (Banks, 2001).

Beginning with *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), the seminal school desegregation decision, the federal government became increasingly committed to the educational needs of disadvantaged communities. The *Immigration Act of 1965* was passed, resulting in large-scale new immigration into the United States, particularly from Mexico, Latin America, and Asia (Olneck, 1995). Of particular significance to immigrant students (and to this study) is *Lau v. Nichols* (1974), which required schools to provide equal educational opportunity for children who spoke languages other than English (Olneck, 1995; Volk, 1998). The above laws and policies were but a few that were passed

in the second half of the 20th century. They reflect the federal government's ongoing commitment to mediate the relationship between diverse communities and public schools during the upheavals of the 1950s and 1960s.

Music Education Addresses Multiculturalism

Music education found itself caught up in the wave of change that swept American education in the late 1950s. In 1957, the Ford Foundation began to explore the relationship between the arts and American society by soliciting ideas from leaders in the arts. This led to a number of important symposia and programs, including the Young Composers Project (1959) and the Contemporary Music Project (1963), both of which attempted to give cohesion and relevance to the diverse needs and interests of society at large and its culture (Mark, 1978).

In the summer of 1967, a symposium sponsored by the Music Educators National Conference (MENC) met at the summer home of the Boston Symphony Orchestra in Tanglewood, Massachusetts. The purpose of the Tanglewood Symposium (1967) was to discuss and define the role of music education in contemporary American society at a time when society faced rapid social, economic, and cultural change (Campbell, 1995; Mark, 1978; Volk, 1998).

While immigrant students were not mentioned in the resulting Tanglewood Declaration, it was noted that music education should contribute its skills, proficiencies, and insights toward assisting in the solution of urgent social problems, including those found in America's inner cities and other areas with culturally deprived individuals (Choate, 1968).

Since then, the MENC has paid tribute to music in world and American minority cultures through many publications and sessions at professional conferences (Campbell, 1995). Thus setting the stage for an internationalization of the music curriculum in the 1960s and the translation of the music of the world into suitable forms for performance by young students (Campbell, 2002). As a result, multicultural repertoire is increasingly being published for and performed by school music groups at all grade levels (Goetze, 2000a). Despite the shift toward a more multicultural perspective in music education, more needs to be known about the ways in which culturally diverse students learn.

Rationale for the Study

The changing demographics in our communities bring schools face to face with cultural and linguistic diversity. Educational theorists in the 21st century have set forth two basic beliefs about learning: 1) there is more than one way to come to know something, and 2) every student matters (Corchran-Smith, 2001). In the choral music classroom, to make certain that all our students are served, we must begin to recognize the prior knowledge and experiences of every student. It is my hope that such acknowledgment will result in revising curricular goals and retooling teaching techniques in the high school choral classroom.

The goal of this study was to examine individual immigrant adolescents' students' perceptions of their previous and present experiences in music learning situations, therefore, student accounts and personal narratives were used as a basis for the narrative descriptions that I crafted. These stories served as a way for the participants in this study to reveal their own lives and voices. In essence, this study examined the role of individual singers who were students in the same choral classroom who came from very different

contexts. One could argue that all students in a given class come together from very different contexts, but as Boutte (2002) noted, “Culture is too important to be overlooked or disregarded” (p. 5). This study provided a way to examine and emphasize cultural differences to facilitate understanding the needs of individuals from various cultural groups. This study also explored the journey that immigrant adolescents face in becoming, as one student put it, “fully Americanized,” and it examined the role that participation in high school choir played in this process.

I sought to explore students’ perceptions of traditional discourse norms associated with high school choral programs; in particular, the emphasis on music notational literacy, and how students negotiated this new way of learning with an oral teaching style that was used in their previous experiences of chorus. I based many of my conversations on the rehearsal strategies that I saw their choral director using and initiated discussions about students’ preferences concerning repertoire and performance practices.

Much has been said about the relevance of school music with regard to adolescents. Music plays a significant role in the lives of teenagers, but school music and school performing groups often represent only the majority, white, middle class population (Durrant, 2001; Hudak, 1999; Lind, 1999; Turton & Durrant, 2002). Findings have suggested that minorities feel even less affiliated and less comfortable with the repertoire traditionally used in performing ensemble classes, and minorities are often underrepresented in these ensembles (Campbell, 2002; Lind, 1999; Watts, Doane, & Fekete, 1994).

Multiculturalism assumes that the values of all students are sought and accepted and that the design and delivery of knowledge and skills are sensitive to their

experiences, interest, and needs. But there are minorities close to home, having many generations of heritage in the U.S. who do not see the content or method of school music as relevant to them. The urban music initiatives that spun out of the civil rights movement were short-lived, and the profession has given little attention to pre-service and in-service training of teachers working within cities, barrios, and reservations. The challenge of making music education a multicultural endeavor is to seek ways to match program offerings to student needs, to understand differentiated learning modalities, to develop social transaction skills, and to gain as teachers the cultural competence to communicate music—any music to young people of various cultural background. (Campbell, 2002, p. 31)

The fundamental issue that I addressed in this study was the phenomenon of immigrant students' experiences in high school choir and what roles, if any, these experiences play in the process of learning about and adapting to American culture. In other words, I was interested in what role chorus class played in the acculturation of immigrant students.

In this study, *acculturation* is defined as the process of learning about and adapting to a new culture. This adaptation may require adjustments in all or some aspects of daily living, including language, work habits, school practices, and social life. This concept is decidedly different from the idea of assimilation mentioned above in this chapter. Assimilation involves being absorbed into the new culture. Acculturation, on the other hand, is the process of learning the practices and customs of a new culture. The

focus of this study centers on immigrant students' processes of learning the practices and customs in a high school choral classroom.

Research Questions

Increased attention has been paid to the plight of immigrant students and first-generation Americans in our schools, yet music education has been slow to accept the need to acknowledge the presence of these "others." Instead, the multicultural movement in music education has focused mainly on the musical styles and performance practices of diverse cultures rather than the culture of the students themselves. While a growing number of music educators advocate and pursue culture bearers to inform their classes and communities, there are few explorations of the culturally diverse students in today's music classrooms (Campbell, 2002; Seeger, 2002; Volk, 1998, 2002). This study was centered on the experiences of immigrant students in high school chorus. The research questions were based on a perceived tension between the sociocultural institution of traditional American high school choral program and immigrant learners' previous and current experiences with singing.

Primary Research Question

What are the musical experiences of immigrant students who sing in high school choir?

Subsidiary Research Questions

1. What are the previous and present musical experiences of immigrant students who sing in high school choir?

2. How do immigrant students perceive the repertoire, rehearsals, performance requirements, and practices of high school choir?
3. To what extent and in what ways do immigrant students feel that they belong to, contribute to, and benefit from the high school choir?

Research Design and Scope

The selection of the research design was driven by the nature of the central research question. Given that the principal focus of the study examines the musical experiences of immigrant students who sing in high school choir, I chose ethnographic case-study design, which will be explained in further detail in chapter 3. Because this study was highly dependent on students' abilities to reflect and describe their previous experiences, the primary participants whom I interviewed were all recent immigrants who had been living in the U.S. for three years or less. Four of the five main participants were enrolled in the English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program that was mandatory for all students at the research site who were not fluent in English.

It is important to note that the study focused on immigrant students. Although the above research questions could be applied to other (nonimmigrant) students, my investigation was based on immigrant students and their experiences. There are many interesting stories of immigrant students who are not enrolled in choir, but this study is limited to those who were enrolled in one high school choral classroom setting when the field research was conducted. To get a clear picture of the issue of immigrant students, I selected primary participants who had attended school in the United States for no longer than three years.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have presented my research orientation, the purpose of the study, the background of the study, the research problem, the research design, and the basic assumptions of the study. I examined the issue of immigrant students in music classes throughout the 20th century and highlighted several arguments that support this study. I presented the main rationale of this study: current research in multicultural music education has usually focused on the music of diverse cultures, pedagogies, and teachers rather than the learners themselves. Thus, case-study research that focuses on the experiences of immigrant students fills a void in research in music education.

Chapter 2 includes the theoretical framework and the review of related literature based on an interweaving of feminist and critical theories through the perspective of the individual student case, the context of the classroom, and discourse norms in choral music education. Chapter 3 offers a detailed description of the research design and methodology of the proposed study. Chapter 4 provides an in- depth description of the teacher and the research setting. Chapter 5 is separated into individual narratives that illuminate the uniqueness of each participant's experiences in chorus class. After analyzing and interpreting each case separately, I provide a cross-case analysis that stresses broad themes in Chapter 6. Chapter 7 focuses on the implications of this study in the broader context of music education.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents the theoretical framework for the study and the review of related literature. The theoretical framework that I have chosen has been informed and guided by the main research question, “What are the musical experiences of immigrant students who sing in high school choir?” To examine this question, I have chosen to concentrate on three areas: individual students’ narrative accounts of their musical experiences, the naturalistic setting of the classroom, and traditional discourse norms in choral classrooms.

All qualitative research is interpretive and is situated within multiple constructed realities (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998), so I have employed a multilayered theoretical framework for this study. First, this study was grounded in multicultural research methodology, which recognizes, as well as raises the awareness of, the importance of culture in the educational process (Phillion, 2002). Additionally, combining critical, constructivist, and feminist theory paradigms permitted me to base my research on theories that legitimated negotiated meanings, as well as social criticism (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999).

To begin to understand individual immigrant students’ experiences in choir, I first drew upon socio-cultural and sociopolitical perspectives that assume that learning emerges from and builds upon experience (Nieto, 1999). Nieto suggested that the learning that takes place in the context of the classroom is social, cultural, and political. This insight was key to the interweaving of constructivist and feminist theory into the

theoretical framework of this study and led me to explore theoretical models, as well as previous research, that centered on multicultural narrative inquiry.

Almost immediately, I began to build a case for employing narrative research with immigrant high school students. If students' experiences, behaviors, and learning styles are indeed starting points in their individual processes of learning, then some students are placed at a serious disadvantage when teachers assume that they have not had the kinds of experiences that prepare them to function in school. Through my review of literature and related research, I became convinced that to equalize the power relationships in classrooms, I needed to employ the process of narrative inquiry, the study of people's stories that involves creating, collecting, and analyzing written texts into my research design (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999).

Narrative Inquiry

Studies about previous and current school experiences inform educators about ways to use students' cultural tools to facilitate student learning. Phillion (2002) suggested that classrooms that support personal stories play an important role in reducing stereotypes. To create an environment in which all students' personal histories are affirmed and acknowledged, educators must begin to accept students as who they are and create educational environments in which all viewpoints are valued equally (Boutte, 2001; Greene, 1995; Nieto, 1992). To capture the complexity of each individual case, I created individual narratives to highlight each participant's musical experiences with the goal of sharing a highly readable story that integrates and summarizes key information around the focus of the case study.

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) defined narrative inquiry as:

a way of understanding experience; a collaboration between participant and researcher over time, in a place or series of places and in social interactions with milieus. An inquirer enters this matrix in the midst and progresses in this same spirit, concluding the inquiry still in the midst of living and telling, reliving and retelling, the stories of the experiences that make up people's lives, both individual and social. Simply stated, . . . narrative inquiry is stories lived and told. (p. 20)

Relevant to this study is Phillion's (2002) notion of narrative multiculturalism. Phillion defined a narrative approach to multiculturalism as one that acknowledges the continuity and history of experience of the participants and researchers, looks at the contexts in which people live and work, and seeks to understand people in a rapidly changing world. This study acknowledges and validates the previous musical experiences of immigrant students and examines their present participation in choir in light of the extent of their previous experiences.

Educators frequently do not explore the diverse experiences and multiple realities that their students bring with them to school. Instead, many teachers espouse a strong *assimilationist* perspective with respect to what immigrant students need to know to participate adequately in school (Merchant, 2002). The amount of catching up that an immigrant student must do is often overwhelming to both the student and the teacher. How, then, do we learn about the unique learning needs of immigrant students, which often conflict with current school policies, teaching styles, and assessment requirements?

I believe that we can bridge this gap by encouraging the telling and writing of personal narrative accounts of immigrant students. Britzman (1991) suggested that

attentiveness to the language and personal voices of the participants allows us entry into their practical world. Throughout history, stories have been used to trace the evolution of individuals in society. “The purpose of such stories was not to glorify the person; rather, the tradition has been to make social and political statements or to provide spiritual and emancipatory inspiration to others” (Boutte, 2002, p. 2).

Maxine Greene’s philosophical writings provide an ideal lens for exploring the personal experiences of immigrant students. Her writings not only reflect a continual quest to engage all students as equal participants in an educational community, but also affirm the importance of a student’s naming his/her world.

To help the diverse students we know articulate their stories is not only to help them pursue the meanings of their lives—to find out how things are happening to them and to keep posing questions about the why, [but also] to move them to learn the new things [that] Freire spoke of, to reach out for the proficiencies and capacities, the craft required to be fully participant in this society, and to do so without losing the consciousness of who they are. (Greene, 1995, p. 165)

The theoretical framework of this study has drawn upon the significance of personal narrative accounts to understand and learn more deeply about students’ musical experiences. Throughout the data collection and through the telling of these stories, all the participants in the study had an opportunity to think about the ways in which music has played a role in establishing their own identity. Stokes (1994) noted:

The musical event, from collective dances to the act of putting a cassette or CD into a machine, evokes and organizes collective memories and present experiences of place with an intensity, power, and simplicity unmatched by any other social activity. The

“places” constructed through music involve notions of difference and social boundary. (p. 3)

To further discuss the role of music in identity formation, I explored two themes that support my selection of narrative inquiry as a lens for this study: experience as a way of knowing and voice in relation to critical theory.

Experience as a Way of Knowing

Bruner (1986) defined two legitimate reasoned ways of knowing: the logical or scientific and the intuitive or storied reasoning (Boutte, 2001). He argued that both ways of knowing are legitimate and that the key difference is that the scientific mode of thought starts from the top down, whereas the story works from the bottom up. We learn from our past. “Yet there is always a gap between what we are living through in our present and what survives from our past” (Greene, 1995, p. 21). Colwell (2001) thought that Greene implied that experience only becomes conscious when meanings enter it from prior experiences. If these past experiences are viewed with a reflective attitude, then they become meaningful, and learning may take place.

John Dewey’s philosophical writings on experience are the foundation for much of Clandinin and Connelly’s (2000) work on narrative inquiry.

For Dewey, experience is both personal and social. Both the personal and the social are always present. People are individuals and need to be understood as such, but they cannot be understood only as individuals. They are always in relation, always in a social context. The term *experience* helps us think through such matters as an individual child’s learning while also understanding that

learning takes place with other children, with a teacher, in a classroom, and so on.
(Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 2)

Many recent studies have examined the school experiences of immigrant students on the basis of critical theory and voice. In the following section, I will outline the relationship between critical theory and voice and the studies that support this theory.

Voice and Critical Theory

The voices of students from disempowered and dominated communities usually are not heard in the debates surrounding school failures and successes (Nieto, 1992). If language is one of the principal ways in which people define and express themselves (Gallard, 1993), then immigrant students face enormous hurdles in the classroom. Boutte (2002) noted:

Silencing these voices, as has been done traditionally, results in sentencing their lived meanings and their representations of their lives, conditions, and struggles to exile at the margins; at the same time, these voices are measured against criteria and demands of the people of the dominant culture. (p. 6)

In this study, *voice* is defined as the articulation and sharing of one's experiences, opinions, and preferences. To have a voice means to have the right or power to take part in the control or management of something else. O'Toole (1994) examined the power relations within choral pedagogy and found that these relations produced docile bodies (Foucault, 1979) that submitted to a dominant power. She concluded that traditional choral discourse patterns found in youth choral groups support and reinforce this notion of dominance and submission.

The issue of whose voice actually gets heard in classrooms strikes at the heart of critical pedagogy, which seeks to emancipate the people who are oppressed, not just from the oppressor, but [also] from their own perceptions of oppressed self (Freire, 2002). Thus the “going to the source” nature of this particular study serves not only to acknowledge immigrant students as “experts of their own lives” (Delpit, 1995), but also to allow them to locate themselves in their own histories (McLaren, 1999).

This study was situated in a choral classroom. Therefore, it is important to distinguish the multiple meanings of the term *voice*. In a musical context, the term *voice* usually refers to the singing voice. Where necessary, I have made the distinction between the use of *voice* in critical theory and the musical term *voice* by referring to one as *voice* and the other as *singing voice*. This study regards the phenomenon of voice in a critical theory context as central to transforming personal accounts or histories to new ways of knowing. Several recent studies have contended that student voice can become an organizing force to negotiate and construct multiple interpretations of school life within the reality of institutionalized ways of being in school. Roberts and Locke (2001) analyzed student narratives from three immigrant teenagers. Their findings indicated that the school experiences of the three participants mirrored those of many immigrant children who have not yet been assimilated into the dominant culture of the United States.

The framework of investigation in Roberts’ and Locke’s (2001) study was based on the notion from critical theory that school life for refugee and immigrant students can be examined from a critical and political perspective. Roberts and Locke concluded that students who are not grounded in the mainstream culture struggle to get along in school

settings that are institutionalized according to the moral, social, and cultural dimensions of the mainstream culture. I believe that participating in a school choir is one way that some immigrant students may connect to and thus be acculturated into the mainstream culture.

Hickey (1998) highlighted the different values of various immigrant groups. She examined recent Asian and Hispanic immigrant students' experiences of schooling and society. She found that some Asian nationalities are influenced by value systems that emphasize family relationships and personal discipline and that place a high value on educational achievement. In these cultures, shame is frequently used to control behavior. The study found that Hispanic students are influenced by values that emphasize personal relationships, respect for elders, responsibility, and the potential of education to enhance the family as a whole. The study indicated that these two populations were influenced by very different value systems and that these results should be stressed in teacher-education courses.

Lee (2002) studied *Hmong* high school students' interpretation of what it meant to be *Hmong* in the United States. Participants were second-generation and new immigrant *Hmong* students at a public high school in Wisconsin. Whiteness, Lee found, was implicitly equated at school with being a real American. *Hmong* students believed that they were cast as "other," while whiteness was said to be normal and invisible.

A review of these studies has suggested that an exploration of immigrant students' previous and present musical experiences in the context of the choral classroom is highly appropriate. In the next section, I will discuss research findings centered on immigrant students' experiences in the naturalistic setting of the classroom. I will begin by exploring

two broad themes. First, I will examine the tensions between the stated ideals of democracy and the reality of diversity in the classroom. Then I will explore the role of language in the classroom.

Immigrant Students in the Classroom

In examining the sociopolitical context of school, Nieto (1992) cited a study by Pantoja and Blourock (1975) that categorized immigrant groups as *preferred* or *unpreferred*. Nieto suggested that it is not immigrant students' differences that make them marginal, but rather the value that has been placed on those differences by the dominant society. Immigrants have also been categorized as *voluntary* or *involuntary* (Seller & Weis, 1997). Pipher (2002) made a distinction between *refugee* and *illegal alien*, noting that one is given support and exile in the United States, while the other is reduced to living in the shadows. Whatever the terminology, it is clear that some immigrants are welcome and valued in our classrooms, whereas others are not, and this distinction is not based solely on linguistic diversity. In the next section, I will discuss issues pertaining to immigrant students in the context of the choral classroom highlighting the tensions between the ideals of democracy and the realities of diversity in American public schools.

Democracy and Diversity

American public education has been charged with the job of homogenizing and balancing the many cultures and religions in our communities. The very nature of this intermingling offers the potential to create a new and broader environment (Dewey,

1916). However, throughout the history of American education, schooling has mostly proven itself at odds with Dewey's vision.

From its beginnings, the function of school was to disseminate the values of the officially defined culture. Clearly, there were striking ethnic, racial, and class differences between schools and their communities, and this clash produced many stresses (Seller & Weis, 1997). These differences surfaced as overall cultural differences, as well as a disjunction between popular and official culture. Education had to narrow the distance between the classroom and the outside world (Handlin, 1954).

Student learning is influenced by many things, including personality, learning style, socioeconomic status, birth order, and culture. Despite the current advance toward school reform, democracy continues to struggle against the wide array of top-down policy initiatives that claim to be the cure for the ailing U.S. educational system (Heckman, Confer, & Peacock, 1995).

Similarly, some groups of immigrant students are easily accommodated and even sought after in schools. Zhou (1997) noted that the 1990 U.S. Census listed immigrant Chinese born in Taiwan as having the highest rate of high school graduation of all ethnic groups. Zhou also noted that Chinese immigrants were cited in the same report as having a graduation rate four times higher than that of American-born students. Zhou's study attributed this greater school achievement to the higher economic status of the Chinese-American community due to the success of an economy that has experienced tremendous growth. Zhou wrote:

The Chinese work ethic and the capacity for delayed gratification in parents is explicitly or implicitly passed on to children, who are expected by their parents to

appreciate the value of schooling as a means to move out of the close-knit Chinese community and thus quickly move ahead in mainstream American society. (p. 185)

In the next section, I will explore the issues of language, power, and social justice and their relationship to linguistic practices in the classroom.

Linguistic Prestige in the Classroom

Linguistic diversity in communities and schools is widely accepted and embraced, and it is also widely assumed that ethnic, racial, linguistic, cultural, and other differences should play no part in our understanding or treatment of people (Nieto, 1999). However, this is often not the case in schools. An illustration of this assertion is the blocking of immigrant students from certain classes or tracking them in vocational programs due to linguistic status. In the high school in which I taught, many of the immigrant students were unable to fit the advanced music classes into their schedules simply because these classes were offered after lunch and many of these students selected half-day schedules so that they could work outside school in the afternoons. The classes that did meet in the mornings were either vocational-track classes or self-contained ESOL classes. This type of scheduling policy in effect excluded students based on linguistic status.

This form of segregation ostensibly enables students to receive academic content while learning a second language, yet it also makes immigrant students increasingly aware of their marginalization. In a study by Davidson (1997), a student noted her feelings of futility in challenging her school's efforts to place her in courses characterized by low expectations. "I guess the only area in which I have control is my understanding of the subjects, but not in the manner of choosing them" (p. 32).

Language is usually the primary vehicle for identifying, manipulating, and changing power relations among people, so power is often exerted through verbal channels (Corson, 2001). Because of immigrant students' lack of linguistic capital (Corson), many immigrant students face discrimination in their classrooms in their new countries. The majority of educators in U.S. schools were taught in classrooms where styles of teaching reflected the notion of a single norm of thought, and these educators were encouraged to believe in a universal norm (Banks, 2001; Hooks, 1993; Sleeter, 1999).

This universal norm is a broad example of a discourse. *Discourse* is defined by O'Toole (1994) as a historically, socially, institutionally specific structure of statements and terms. Each discourse, then, promotes meanings that are particular to a specific group, culture, and historical period. In the classroom, discourse refers to how teachers and students use language to make meaning and share ideas. Our capacity to produce contradictory meanings highlights an important problem in education with regard to the language used in classrooms. Britzman (1991) referred to Foucault's *regimes of discourse*, which she defined as the authoritatively sanctioned and conventionally taken-for-granted ways of understanding, speaking, and acting. Britzman noted that certain accounts matter, while others do not (p. 17). I agree with Popkewitz (1999) that these pedagogical discourses are a way of including and excluding students. In the next section, I will discuss findings that center on teachers' attitudes, tolerance, and expectations of immigrant students in their classrooms.

Teacher Attitudes, Tolerance, and Expectations Concerning Immigrant Students

Recent findings in educational research have revealed that teacher attitudes, tolerance, and expectations greatly affect the classroom performance of linguistically diverse students. Young (1996) surveyed 30 elementary and middle-school teachers to sample their attitudes, philosophies, and levels of comfort with diverse students and the concept of multicultural education. Young reported that a majority of respondents felt unsure of how to deal with students from cultures different from their own.

Standley (2000) created a course to increase prospective music educators' tolerance of students identified as culturally diverse. In this study, the Pluralism and Diversity Attitude Assessment (PDAA) was used to assess teachers' attitudes about diverse learners in the music classroom. Standley compared the scores of two groups of pre-service music educators' results. One group had taken the diversity course, while the other had not. Her findings indicated increased comfort ratings on most issues from having taken the course. Youngs and Youngs (2001) studied predictors and the rationale for an attitude bias of mainstream content area teachers. Some predictors include previous ESOL training, contact with diverse cultures, previous study of a second language, prior contact with ESOL students, demographic characteristics, and personality.

Youngs and Youngs recommended teacher training in a foreign language, as well as in the area of accommodating the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students, to promote more positive encounters between immigrant students and their teachers. These studies supported the rationale for the present study's exploration of immigrant students' experiences in choir to increase communication and tolerance

between linguistically diverse students and teachers. In the next section, I will review research on English Language Learners in the high school classroom.

Linguistic Minorities in the High school Classroom

Norrid-Lacey & Spencer (2000) sought to identify the educational experiences of Latino immigrants as related to their graduation rate. Participants were 70 Latino high school students who were deemed to have limited proficiency in English. Results revealed a graduation rate of 27% for the participants. Students were asked to rate factors that were believed to contribute to the high dropout rate among Latino immigrant teenagers: tensions between ethnic groups, a hostile learning environment, a weak English language-learning program, and a national immigration policy that undercut the motivation of the students to apply themselves academically in school.

Pappamihel's (2002) study addressed issues of English language anxiety in two settings: ESOL classes and mainstream classrooms. Participants were 178 middle-school Mexican immigrant students who attended school in the United States. They were given the English Language Anxiety Scale. Results of this study showed several related but different types of English language anxiety that surfaced more often in the mainstream classroom. This suggests that some immigrant students may feel uncomfortable in content or mainstream classes. It further supports the need for a study that examines immigrant students' perceptions and feelings of belonging in the classroom.

Pryor (2001) examined the experiences of new immigrants and refugee students in school. Pryor focused on the role that family history, well-being, and parental involvement played in the acculturation of immigrant students. The results indicated that parental involvement of immigrant students is an important factor in establishing a

positive school experience. The study found that there are many reasons for a lack of involvement, including unfamiliarity with the English language, transportation issues, and work hours that do not coincide with normal school parental involvement.

Directly related to this study, Lind (1999) investigated the classroom environment in choral music programs with both low Hispanic enrollment and proportionate Hispanic enrollment. Ten schools were selected to participate in Lind's study; they were chosen on the basis of Hispanic enrollment, size of school, size of community, and willingness to participate in the study. Lind gathered demographic information on the racial and ethnic composition of the student body and compared these results with choral music populations at each school. Findings suggested that Hispanic students do not share a sense of affiliation with the choir ensemble to the same extent that their white classmates do and that cultural differences may influence Hispanic student participation in choral groups. Lind's recommendations point to the need for an in-depth qualitative study that examines the previous and present musical experiences of immigrant students.

The studies in this section examined primarily the classroom experiences of immigrant students in mainstream classes. Several focused on specific immigrant groups. Attention was aimed at learning about specific issues, such as graduation rates, parental involvement, language anxiety, enrollment, and student schedules. The above studies regarding immigrant students and classroom environment have had some impact upon the understanding of the experiences of immigrant students in school. They addressed teacher expectations and attitudes about social class, ethnicity, and language diversity.

However, no studies have intentionally addressed the relationship between immigrant students' previous and present musical experiences and what role, if any, that

relationship played in the acculturation process. It is my belief that music teachers will benefit from hearing and reading firsthand accounts of immigrant students' previous and present musical experiences. Furthermore, I assert that the understanding gained through this process will increase teachers' understanding of immigrant students and ultimately assist in better teaching and learning in the choral classroom.

Traditional Discourse Norms Associated with High School Chorus

There is no universally accepted, ideologically neutral body of musical knowledge that all students should study in school. Nor can a teacher be an expert in all areas (Campbell, 1996). Nonetheless, the curriculum in many schools is at odds with the needs of immigrant learners. One of the aims of this study was to increase music teachers' awareness of the needs of immigrant students in school.

To accomplish this, curricular changes in choral music education may be necessary. The range of school-sponsored knowledge frequently de-emphasizes and silences the voices of those outside the dominant culture, particularly people of color and women (Beane & Apple, 1995). However, changing curricula so that they may account for gender differences, racial diversity, and cultural equity requires a fundamental rewriting of and a fundamental re-conceptualization of the curriculum.

Curriculum in Choral Music Education

What makes up the curriculum in choral music education? Is it the repertoire that students listen to and perform? Is it the National Standards for Music Education? Is curriculum in music education mandated state by state? An understanding of the basic

theoretical underpinnings of curriculum in music education is necessary to examine the phenomenon of immigrant students who sing in high school choir.

Contention exists about how curriculum should be defined (Carr & Kemmis, 1986). The term *curriculum* is used to refer to content, a syllabus, or a required collection of courses. Sometimes teachers write curricula based on their own values (Regelski, 1997). Curriculum can also refer to an organized set of formal educational and/or training intentions. Curriculum is considered as the organized environment for learning in a classroom and school, including expressed elements, such as goals, objectives, and lesson plans, as well as hidden elements, such as unintended messages and the recreation of the values of the dominant culture (Nieto, 1992).

Educators in ancient, medieval, and early modern times defined curriculum as “the information to be taught.” Once the *what* was established, educators began to seek the best way to organize this content. Still later, the question of *how* was refined to include the learner as an important variable in the learning process (Elliott, 1995). In 1949, Ralph Tyler’s classical curriculum text *Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction* appeared and soon became a major influence on curriculum theory in teacher education. Tyler’s work consisted of a four-step linear process that included: (a) stating the objectives, (b) selecting the learning activity, (c) organizing learning activities in relation to the stated objectives, and (d) developing means of evaluation in relation to the objectives (Carr & Kemmis, 1986; Elliott, 1995).

With a few modifications, this framework is still prevalent in most current curricula in both general and music education. In 1994, *Goals 2000* was passed to improve learning and teaching for all students by providing a national framework for

education reform. Since the passage of *Goals 2000*, music education has been considered a core or a basic subject and has adopted many principles of curriculum development that guide basic subjects (Reimer, 1989).

To examine the choral curriculum in relation to the issue of immigrant students, I find it useful to discuss two concepts: (1) Repertoire as Curriculum and (2) The National Standards for Arts Education as Curriculum.

The Repertoire as Curriculum

Music educators have long been embroiled in the discussion of our musical canon or “what music we should all know.” McCarthy (1996) noted:

In recent decades, the use of the word *canon* has been shunned [due to its] connoting a monolithic, Euro-centered view of an educated person. . . . The erosion of the concept of canon (as synonymous with the European canon) in the face of politically correct movements in recent decades had the effect of leveling hierarchies, dismantling educational structures that represented monocultural values, and opening up the school curriculum to multiple perspectives and culturally diverse content. (p. 74)

The concept of using choral masterworks of Western European composers has been a part of high school choral activities since the beginning of that institution (Collins, 1993; Keene, 1988; Kirk, 1992). The roots of this practice are found in the tradition of the singing school, which gradually developed into singing societies. The performance of oratorios using mass choirs and school orchestras was an important tradition in the late 19th century that continued well into the 20th century.

The a cappella choir tradition became popular in high schools in the late 1920s. It focused on creating the perfect choral instrument (the singing voice) performing high-quality music. Keene (1982) asserted that this movement elevated choral music to the higher artistic plane than was held by instrumental music at the time. This was also a time in which music programs grew rapidly, as did the demand for more music teachers. School administrators met this need by hiring professional performing musicians from pit orchestras who found themselves unemployed as the talking-picture industry began to take shape. This concept of conductor-as-teacher helped the high school music classroom to become an arena for rehearsals, with emphasis on performance practices and the repertoire of the Western classical concert tradition. Research has suggested that this continues to be the standard in many high school choral rehearsals today (Collins, 1993; Graves, 2000; Lind 1999).

In a study by Forbes (2001), choral directors reported that they selected a wide range of choral repertoire based on many styles and cultures, but actual concert programs revealed a different pattern. Results suggested that the repertoire-selection practices used by directors are structured. Although directors consider a wide variety of criteria to be influential in the selection process, findings have suggested that demographic characteristics, such as teaching experience, program size, and the socioeconomic composition of the school, may also influence repertoire-selection practices.

Reames (2001) investigated and described the literature performed with a population of beginning high school choirs. Reames surveyed 263 high school choral directors and obtained an 80% response rate. Results indicated that high school choral directors programmed 20th-century music most frequently and most successfully. The

researcher noted that directors selected repertoire for their advanced and beginning choirs similarly and frequently consulted published lists of festivals performed statewide.

Reynolds (2000) advocated using state festival repertoire lists as an excellent organizational and planning tool for young music teachers. He suggested that the repertoire that teachers select becomes, in large part, the curriculum that teachers and students follow toward a sound music education. Although I could not find additional studies that addressed the issue of festival lists and choral repertoire, my conversations with other choral music educators throughout my years as a teacher confirmed that the repertoire on these lists is often used as a basis for selecting the content of the choral class.

The National Standards for Arts Education

The National Standards of Arts Education came about as a result of the education reform efforts that were generated in the 1980s. With the passage of the *Goals 2000: Educate America Act* (1994), the arts were established for the first time in U.S. history as a core set of challenging subjects in which all students needed to demonstrate competence. The National Standards for Arts Education set out to define what a good education in the arts should provide. It also presented areas of content, expectations for student experience, and levels of student achievement. In a broad sense, it is a curricular framework for arts education.

Pertinent to this study, the National Standards stress that an education in the arts is the right of all children and should present musical understanding in relation to history and culture. The National Standards promote the cultural diversity of the United States as

a vast resource for arts education that should be used to help students understand themselves and others (National Standards for Arts Education, 1994).

The music criteria described in the high school portion of the complete document presumed that students have achieved the standards specified for grades 5–8, and they also assumed that the students will deal with increasingly complex forms of music. Each content area was described and given an achievement standard. State assessment programs have evolved from the National Standards and continue to evolve as a way of adapting to different states' particular needs and issues.

Apfelstadt (2000) regarded the National Standards of Arts Education (referred to subsequently as the National Standards) as the curricular framework for choral music education. She noted that the selection of repertoire is the single most important task that music educators face before entering the classroom. She suggested that a choral director not only teaches curricular content, but also conveys his or her philosophy of music education through the selection of repertoire. She presented three principles for addressing the curricular goals of the National Standards through the choral repertoire.

She recommended that teachers should: (1) select music that is of good quality, (2) select music that is teachable, and (3) select music that is appropriate to the context of the classroom or community. Apfelstadt's work directly connected the curricular framework of the National Standards to current trends in choral music education. Her work in this area highlighted the importance of teaching broad repertoire of choral music from diverse cultures and suggested the need for curricular reform.

Moving Toward Curricular Reform

James Banks (2001), a long-standing proponent of multicultural education, proposed curricular reform through four approaches: (a) the contributions approach, (b) the ethnic additive approach, (c) the transformation approach, and (d) the decision-making and social action approach. In the *Contributions Approach*, ethnic content is limited primarily to special days, weeks, and months that are related to ethnic events and celebrations. The *Transformation Approach* is concerned with the infusion of various perspectives, frames of reference, and content from various groups that will extend students' understandings of the nature of U.S. society. *The Decision Making and Social Action* approach includes the *Transformation Approach*, but also requires students to make decisions and to take actions related to the concept, issue, or problem, as they have studied in the unit.

The MayDay Group

To examine music education in the light of curriculum reform, it is important to note the work of the MayDay Group. The name *MayDay* was selected not only due the date of the first meeting (May 1, 1993), but also due to the term's meaning as an international distress symbol. The MayDay Group maintains three programs: an extensive communications network, weekend colloquiums, and the publication of theoretical papers to move its agenda forward into the mainstream of music education.

The founding members felt strongly that the profession of music education is in distress (Gates, 1998). This group first met in May of 1993 to discuss ways to apply critical theory and critical thinking to the purposes and practices of music education. The

MayDay Group has adopted seven guiding ideals, which it considers fixed orientations for directing the professional efforts of music education:

1. Musical action that is fully mindful of musical results is the necessary condition of music making and, therefore, of an effective music education.
2. The social and cultural contexts of musical actions are integral to musical meaning and cannot be ignored or minimized in music education.
3. As human musical actions create, sustain, and reshape musical cultures, music educators can and should formally channel this cultural process, influencing the directions in which it develops and the individual collective human values that it serves.
4. The contributions made by schools, colleges, and other musical institutions are important to musical culture, but these need to be systematically examined and evaluated as to the directions and extent of their influences.
5. To be effective, music educators must establish and maintain contact with ideas and people from other disciplines.
6. The research and theoretical bases for music education must simultaneously be refined and radically broadened in both their theoretical interest and their practical relevance.
7. An extensive and intensive consideration of curriculum for music education is needed as a foundation to greater professional unity and must be guided by a sound philosophical process.

Gates (1998) noted that there are many curricular issues that address that need that should be examined critically, with attention to the content, as well as the sequence

of that content, before a program can be built to implement a new relevant curriculum. The MayDay Group stressed the value of music in the education of all people. The group has taken important steps through published research and online forums to promote the awareness of multifaceted realities of students that teachers face as they enter the classrooms of the 21st century.

Elliot's (1995) Typology of Music Curricula

David Elliot (1995) approached curriculum reform by presenting a six-part typology of music curricula that he contended might be useful in categorizing and highlighting multicultural ideologies that music curricula can embody and convey:

1. The *assimilationist* curriculum is characterized by an exclusive concern with the central practices of the Western European classical tradition.
2. The *amalgamationist* curriculum includes a limited range of micro culture practices based on their frequency in the core repertoire of the Western classical tradition or their potential for incorporation into this tradition.
3. To advocates of an *open society* view of multiculturalism, allegiance to the traditional music of one's cultural heritage is viewed as an obstacle to social unity and the development of loyalty to the secular corporate society. The curricular manifestation of this ideology is the "with-it" music curriculum that places a high value on "musical relevance."
4. The term *insular multiculturalism* applies to curricula that select musical practices exclusively on the basis of students' cultural affiliations.

5. In the *modified multicultural curriculum*, musical practices are selected for study on the basis of local or regional boundaries of culture, ethnicity, religion, function, or race.
6. The *dynamic multicultural curriculum* overlaps our concept of the music curriculum as a reflective practicum. The music curriculum-as-practicum includes a concern for developing critical perspectives on a range of music cultures.

Elliott proposed that the dynamic multicultural curriculum is a powerful way of achieving a larger educational goal: preparing children to work effectively and tolerantly with others to solve shared community problems. I believe that this framework resonates with and responds appropriately to my main research question and speaks to the significance of this study in the context of music education curricular reform. As teachers and students learn to develop ways to gain insight into the meanings and uses of various kinds of music, they also develop understanding about perspectives other than their own.

The purpose of the central research question in this study has been to understand immigrant students' perceptions of their musical experiences. I believe that highlighting the musical experiences of immigrant students is a feasible way to advance a central goal of humanistic education: self-understanding through understanding others (Elliott, 1995). This study's central focus on the experiences of immigrant students who sing in high school choir offers a clearer understanding of the role that the choral classroom plays in the acculturation of immigrant students.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have presented the rationale for a multilayered theoretical framework and literature review grounded in multicultural research methodology. First, I

identified three broad issues that I used to construct the framework for this study: narrative inquiry, the role of language in the classroom, and traditional discourse norms of high school choir. Then I examined the concept of narrative inquiry in relation to Phillion's use of the term narrative multiculturalism. I examined the way in which the term encompassed the population that I explored and provided the research frame that I employed. Next, I justified my selection of narrative inquiry by developing two themes that supported this research frame: experience as a way of knowing and the use of voice in critical theory.

The next section of the theoretical framework examined research that centered on immigrant students in the context of the naturalistic setting of the classroom. I explored the areas of teacher tolerance, attitude, and expectations, as well as studies that focused on high school students in content area classes. Finally, I examined various viewpoints that centered on the curricular framework of music education in which I explored current thought in the areas of choral repertoire, the role of the national standards, and several approaches to reform in music education curriculum. In the next chapter, I will discuss in detail the methodology of the study, as well as provide an introduction to the research setting in the study.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents an outline of the research methodology and an introduction to the research setting of this study. The central focus of the study was the experiences of five immigrant students enrolled in the same high school chorus class. To examine this phenomenon, I conducted an in-depth exploration of the students' perceptions of their musical experiences in chorus.

In the choral classroom, the defining activity is singing repertoire and warm-ups under the direction of a conductor (O'Toole, 1994). This form of discourse is considered the work of a chorus. Toole suggested that singing in high school choir is also associated with "meanings locally contested within discursive fields" (Foucault, 1979). A *field* is considered a paradigm (a standard way of looking at something). A *discursive field* is a paradigm defined or created around the discourse patterns associated with the phenomenon.

In the culture of high school chorus, these discursive fields are commonly accepted practices associated with the context of the choral classroom. These practices include: manipulating one's voice in a certain range, singing songs in several languages, navigating a choral score, blending one's voice within a section, singing in concerts, and sight-reading an unfamiliar piece of music. The above traditions are considered to be "established forms of meaning [that] normalize" a broad range of customary practices associated with the choral classroom (Popkewitz, 1999).

With my participants, I was interested in learning about how they were able to make sense of these particular practices and navigate in the context of the choral

classroom. I was interested in how each participant perceived her own experience in high school choir.

My intention was to immerse myself in the contextual knowledge of the particular community, the particular school, the particular class, and the particular students (Carr & Kemmis, 1986). I situated my initial questions in relation to each student's previous musical experiences in her home country. I chose the setting of a non-auditioned choral classroom in a suburban American high school with a significant population of immigrant students as my field site. To capture the perspectives of these students accurately, I initiated and maintained a dialogue and interplay of written and spoken reflections with the participants (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998) over an eight-month period.

The central question for the proposed study was: "What are the experiences of immigrant students who sing in high school choir?"

My secondary questions were:

1. What are the past and present musical experiences of immigrant students who sing in high school choir?
2. How do immigrant students perceive the repertoire, rehearsals, performance requirements, and traditions of high school choir?
3. To what extent and in what ways do immigrant students feel that they belong to, contribute to, and benefit from their high school chorus?

Multiple factors are involved in exploring the phenomenon of immigrant students in high school chorus. They include: a desire to situate the study in a naturalistic setting, the examination of descriptive data gathered from a series of interviews, the importance placed on the process of coming to know each participant, reliance on inductive analysis

built over a long period of time, and my own status as a participant observer. Therefore, I chose to use a qualitative research methodology that employed an ethnographic case-study design (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Creswell, 2002; Denzin & Lincoln, 1998; LeCompte & Schensul, 1999).

Ethnographic Case Studies

Ethnographic case studies explore the culture of the group or participants under examination (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999). Throughout the 10 months of this study, I examined not only the musical experiences unique to each participant, but also the traditions and customs of the field-site chorus class, as well as the music department, the participants' families, and the school. In effect, I explored the group's shared patterns of behavior, beliefs, and language unique to choral music through the lens of each participant's individual experience over an extended period of time (Creswell, 2002). I observed ethical standards, including accounting for multiple perspectives and preserving anonymity. I structured my study around two key ethnographic methods: fieldwork in a naturalistic setting and participant observation.

Ethical Standards

One of the important aspects of ethnography is the commitment to obtain the members' perspectives of the social reality of the observed setting (Altheide & Johnson, 1998). In addition to the multiple voices and perspectives of the participants, I was also bound to share my voice. My previous years as a high school choral director heightened my awareness of important ethical issues involved with working with immigrant students in choir and this, in fact, influenced the design of this research project.

My own social, personal, and political beliefs concerning the education of immigrant students influenced my observations and interviews conducted at the research site. Consequently, my research ethics were merged with my own beliefs (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). I was aware that, at times, my research perspective and philosophy of teaching music conflicted with those of the selected teacher. To account for this, I kept a personal journal that allowed me to record my thoughts freely, but I kept that personal journal separate from the interview and observational data collection. Those thoughts and impressions, however, are intertwined in the interpretation section at the end of each narrative.

To address the significant consideration of anonymity for the students, the teacher, the school, and the school district, I immediately adopted the use of pseudonyms, which I used in all transcriptions and raw data. I gave all participants the option of selecting their pseudonyms. Four of the five primary student participants chose their pseudonyms. I selected names for all the teacher participants, one primary student participant, and all the secondary participants, as well as names for the school, the school district, and the community in this study.

I wanted to make sure that the student participants did not feel exploited by sharing their stories with me. At times in our discussions, I sensed that the primary participants were reluctant to speak explicitly about their home lives and the circumstances of their immigration to the U.S. While this information would have added to the richness of the data that I collected, I did not push students to share information about their home lives or their families' reasons for coming to the U.S. I gave all participants an overview of what the questions were going to be in advance of the

interviews. This information was included in the permission slip (see appendix A) given to all participants prior to the data collection. At the end of each interview with each participant, I told her what I would be focusing on during the next interview.

Conducting Research in the Choral Classroom

Because I sought to explore immigrant students' experiences in high school choir, I chose to locate my study in the place or context where the phenomenon naturally occurs: the choral classroom. A major assumption of this study was that the musical experiences of the primary participants were significantly influenced by the setting in which they occurred (Creswell, 2002). Essential to my gaining a full picture of the musical experiences of the primary participants in the study was my ability to observe them in the context of the choral classroom.

Because of my familiarity with the setting of a high school choral classroom, I attempted to frame my inquiry around a series of conversations and reflections that generated insights into the nature of the participants' perceptions of their experiences of chorus. Field research involves working with people in the settings in which they normally interact. Therefore, researchers must attend closely to the relationships that they establish (Lareau & Schultz, 1996). From my first invitation to observe classes to the last interview with Ms. Walker, the choral teacher at Marshall High School, and all the work with the participants in between, I was sensitive to the ethical issues that can surface in the research setting.

Participant Observation

My role in the study was that of a participant observer. Lareau and Schultz (1998) noted, "Researchers using participant observation should build rapport, gain the trust of

people in the study, provide detailed and accurate field notes, interpret the results in a theoretically informed manner, and write it up in a vivid and engaging style” (p. 3).

Because of my years of experience as a high school choral director, I was able to build rapport and gain the trust of the students and teachers whom I encountered as I took field notes and collected data from interviews at the research site. Conversely, I realized that because I was known in the school district, anonymity might be jeopardized. In spite of this, I found that the teacher in the study was eager to have me present in her classes and willingly opened her rehearsals and concerts to me.

During the 10-month data collection process, I performed a variety of functions within the choral classes at the field site. Students and other teachers at the school saw me as a chaperone, a sectional coach, a clinician, a substitute choral director, a performance critic, and, at times, a mentor to the choral teacher. Because I was given an opportunity to play this variety of roles inside the classroom, occasionally, I was able to perceive reality from the viewpoint of someone inside the case rather than external to it (Yin, 1994). This perspective allowed me to gauge what I observed as an informed insider and to make decisions about my day-to-day interactions in the field.

Initially, I proposed that the interviews and observations would take place over an eight-week period. Once I got into the field, however, I immediately began to sense that a rapid collection of data would not suit my research purposes. I found that my original plan did not account for forming relationships in the field. As I began to conduct interviews and observations, it became clear that I had to slow my efforts and widen my gaze (Wolcott, 1997).

Wolcott noted that ethnographic researchers look for mutually understood expectations and explanations that enable them to provide cultural interpretations about what is occurring and what meanings they may reasonably presume are being attributed to those present. To do this and account for my own biases, which were developed over many years of teaching chorus, I spent many hours observing the daily work of the chorus classes at the selected research site.

Often, the teacher would stop the rehearsal, turn to me, and request a critique of a passage just sung or ask for advice in solving a musical problem. This gave all students in the class an opportunity to view me as an active participant in their classes. Frequently, the participants would privately ask me questions that they were afraid to ask aloud in the class or give me a message to take to their teacher.

At times, I struggled with balancing the desire to help the teacher and other students with my need to have time to interview the primary participants in the study. The teacher introduced me to all her students as a researcher and teacher from a local university, so I felt that I needed to make sure that all the students and teachers whom I encountered at the research site were gaining more from my presence than they were risking through their participation in the study (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). As I became more intertwined in the setting as a sectional coach to the chorus and as a mentor to the choral teacher, as well as to the participants in this study, I began to feel my role shift increasingly from that of an interested onlooker to that of an active participant.

In addition to my own participant observer status in the fieldwork for this study and the necessity of situating the study in the naturalistic setting of the choral classroom, I was also interested in each participant's *social construction of reality* (LeCompte &

Schensul, 1999). I sought to learn about the meaning that each participant attached to her notion of chorus. In the next section, I will describe the phenomenological approach that I used as I created the narratives for each participant.

Phenomenological Approach

The central research question in the study focused on interpreting individual participants' meaning of events and interactions in the context of a particular classroom. I began this study with the premise that reality is socially constructed (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 1998; LeCompte & Schensul, 1999; Van Manen, 1990). I set out to explore each participant's socially constructed reality in the context of the choral classroom to learn about the ways that she made sense of her individual world. I centered the interpretation of the data on the premise that what people know and believe to be true about the world is constructed or developed as people interact with one another over time in specific settings (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999).

This approach of seeking to understand the central actions by which humans engage with the world is referred to as *phenomenology* (Moran, 2000). Van Manen (1990) wrote, "Phenomenology is the systematic attempt to uncover and describe . . . the internal structures of lived experiences" (p. 10). In this study, these individual structures were based on each participant's view of the reality as she herself saw it. Also referred to as "stocks of knowledge," these structures produce a familiar world, one with which members are already acquainted. The familiar world that I explored was the creation of constructs and categories that were social in origin, in that the images, ideas, and values of the primary participants were views through the lens of each student's unique experience (Holstein & Gubrium, 1998).

Successful data collection relied on setting up an environment in which the voices and stories of immigrant students could be heard. As the study was intended to promote the understanding of events and intentions of each participant, at times, students' meanings conflicted with the teacher's construction of reality, as well as with my own. As noted above, my personal journal was a place in which I created metanarratives that helped me to localize the claims that were made and put them in a particular context (Altheide & Johnston, 1998).

Phenomenological objectivity requires that the researcher must be oriented to the "object of inquiry" (Van Manen, 1990). In the case of this study, I was bound to orient myself differently for listening to and retelling each participant's story. Therefore, in any conflict, I had to remain faithful to the object of inquiry. In a sense, I had to become the "guardian and defender" of the true nature of my object of inquiry, which was the musical experiences of immigrant students who sing in high school choir (Van Manen, 1990). In those cases, I included longer sections of participant quotations and excerpts of interviews in the narratives that I constructed.

Narrative Approach

Narrative inquiry is the process of gathering information for the purpose of research through storytelling (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). The aim of narrative inquiry is to understand, through their stories, how people think and act in the situated contexts in which they live. Narratives are frameworks through which people view, understand, and make sense of their experience. Clandinin & Connelly (2000) suggested that humans are storytelling organisms who, individually and collectively, lead storied lives. Narrative researchers describe such lives, collect and tell stories of them, and write narratives of the

experience. In this study, I used data from field notes, interviews, journals, and orally transmitted stories to weave a text that recreated the lived world of the participants whom I studied.

Validity

The concept of validity is highly contested in qualitative research (Wolcott, 1990). As I was interested in learning about and maintaining the participants' social reality in a field setting, I found it essential to situate the narratives in the voice of each participant. In my efforts to elicit research findings that brought to the surface the reality of the phenomenon of immigrant students who sing in choir, I employed the use of multiple sources of data and relied on *construct validity*. LeCompte & Schensul (1999) defined *construct validity* as the match between the meaning intended by the researcher and the meaning assumed by the respondent. As noted above, my own familiarity with the setting allowed me to frame my questioning around traditionally accepted practices of choral classrooms.

I interviewed the primary student participants. When possible, I also interviewed their English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) teachers. At times, I also followed up with questions to the choral teacher when I wanted to hear her version of events. Yin (1994) noted that with *data triangulation*, the potential problem of construct validity could be addressed because the multiple sources of evidence essentially provide multiple measures of the same phenomenon. I found this to be true, but I also had in this case multiple participants who through their differing experiences all provided different data about the same classroom. Although the primary participants were linguistically different from each other, there were also several commonalities in their perception of their

experiences in high school choir. I present many of these similarities and differences in detail in chapter 6.

Member Checks

As part of my effort to ensure validity, I used member checks. As noted above, the English language facility of participants was varied. Most student participants found it tedious to comply with my requests for them to read the interview transcripts, as well as the completed narratives that I created from them. I found that the students responded more positively when I read the narratives to them. I found that I could get prompt feedback about what needed to be changed from each of them by reading the narratives to each participant than by asking them to read the narratives themselves and make the changes. Additionally, I held an end-point meeting with all the primary participants after all the data were collected. In that meeting, I outlined the broad commonalities and differences in their experiences that I intended to use for the cross-case interpretation presented in chapter 6.

I attempted to record data as quickly as possible after interviews and field observations to reduce the chance of my being influenced by a reaction or occurrence at the research site. I also took notes frequently during interviews. I later used these notes to incorporate a meta-analysis into the written transcription of the recorded interview. I made every effort to include primary data in my narrative accounts whenever possible. I believe that doing so allows the reader to read the words of the participants exactly as they spoke them, thus giving the reader an opportunity to “see for themselves” (Wolcott, 1990).

Finally, I sought feedback from colleagues who had been both teachers and researchers of immigrant students by submitting drafts of narratives to get their impressions of my interpretations of the data. I also invited several colleagues to read my drafts. Although these colleagues were in many ways critical of my interpretations, their comments and questions helped me to focus on writing for my intended audience: choral teachers and content-area teachers who work with ESOL students.

Collective Case Study

Because I set out to explore the *why*, *how*, and *what* of the musical experiences of immigrant students in high school chorus classes, I decided that the case-study approach was the logical ethnographic method to explore such questions. Cases operate within a particular context, thereby providing the researcher with the opportunity to observe people in their own territory and to interact with them on their own terms (Bogden & Biklen, 1998). Because I was interested in learning how previous musical experiences affected immigrant students' current perceptions of their experiences in high school choir, I was aware that it was essential for the participants to remember their previous musical experiences while they were participating in their chorus class. Because of this, I chose to limit the selection of participants in this study to immigrants who had been living in this country for three years or less.

As the five participants were recent immigrants who were in varying stages of gaining English language proficiency and who were linguistically diverse from one another, I had to view each case as a complex entity operating within a number of contexts (Stake, 1998). The varied contexts for each participant included: background

information, previous experiences in chorus, linguistic status, and the individual voice of each participant. To respect the complexity and uniqueness of each participant, frequently I had to shift my use of language and line of questioning to account for the situational nature of the participants' varied past and present experiences of music.

A *case study* is an in-depth exploration of a bounded system based on extensive data collection. A system may refer to an activity, an event, a process, or an individual that is separated out or "bounded" for research in time, place, or some physical boundaries (Creswell, 2002). While the traditional mode of qualitative analysis has been the single case study, studies are becoming more common that focus on sets of individuals, sometimes within several settings (Huberman & Miles, 1998). Stake (1998) noted:

In what we may call an *instrumental case study*, a particular case is examined to provide insight into an issue or refinement of theory. The case is of secondary interest; it plays a supportive role, facilitating our understanding of something else. . . . We might call this a *collective case study* It is not the study of a collective, but an instrumental study extended to several cases. Individual cases in the collection may or may not be known in advance to manifest the common characteristic. They may be similar or dissimilar, redundancy and variety each having a voice. They are chosen because it is believed that understanding them will lead to better understanding, perhaps better theorizing, about a still larger collection of cases. (pp. 88–89)

Creswell (2002) noted that a multiple instrumental case or collective case study could provide insight into an issue or theme. The phenomena that I set out to explore

were the experiences of immigrant students in a high school chorus class. I wanted to look at this broad issue, as well as to view the theme through each participant's unique experience, so I chose a multiple instrumental case study as the research design best suited to answering my research questions. This allowed me to focus on creating, interpreting, and analyzing the narrative accounts for each participant.

The Research Questions

The primary research question that guided this study was: *What are the musical experiences of immigrant students who sing in high school choir?* The focus of my main research question was the nature of each participant's experience in a high school chorus class. I was interested in their perceptions of day-to-day life in their choral classroom, as well as their musical lives outside school. To explore this question fully, my interview questions and journal exercises were based on criteria of immigrant status and membership in a chorus class. Throughout the 10 months of data collection, I referred back to the main question to center my interview questions and conversations with participants. In addition, I created three subsidiary questions that highlighted different aspects of the phenomenon of each individual's experiences in the high school chorus class:

1. *What are the past and present musical experiences of immigrant students who sing in high school choir?*

I was interested in learning about each participant's previous musical experiences in her home country. Some of the interview sessions were structured around specific descriptions of the types of musical experience that each participant had known previously. I was curious to learn whether the student had sung as a soloist, in a church

choir, in a school choir, or in an instrumental ensemble. I wanted to know whether the student had taken a music-appreciation class. I was also interested in how these experiences were directed, led, or taught. I asked students what kinds of music they listened to with their friends in their native countries. I also asked students to tell me about their earliest memory of music.

Moreover, I was interested in whether immigrant students' previous musical experiences connected culturally to their current experience in high school choir. Did commonalities exist between immigrant students' previous and present musical experiences? Were the attitudes, customs, and beliefs associated with immigrant students' previous musical experiences similar to or different from their present ones and to what degree? What were the particulars? Were the immigrant students' previous musical experiences so powerful that they were unable to connect with or relate to the traditions of their present musical experience? What role did a positive previous musical experience in another culture play in the process of participating in this musical experience? What role did previous negative experiences play?

The second set of interviews dealt with students' perceptions of their current experiences in choir. I asked them to tell me about their current experiences in their choral class. I was interested in the circumstances of their enrollment in the class, their impressions of their teacher, and what benefits they believed that they derived from membership in the school choir.

2. How do immigrant students perceive the repertoire, rehearsals, performance requirements, and other traditional practices of high school choir?

I was interested in exploring the immigrant students' impressions of the stock knowledge associated with a traditional choral program in the U.S. (Collins, 1993). I explored each participant's impression of the traditional practices of high school chorus and how the participants negotiated and renegotiated the meanings of these traditions as they encountered them as members of their chorus class. I set out to discover which, if any, of these traditions resonated with them and why. Which were unfamiliar? Additionally, I wanted to understand how their comfort level with these practices decreased or increased during their time in the chorus class.

3. To what extent and in what ways do immigrant students feel that they belong to, contribute to, and benefit from the high school choir?

Through this question, I hoped to examine the relationship between the immigrant student and the high school choir. There are many ways of thinking and relating oneself to situations. I was interested in how immigrant students saw themselves in the broad context of the choral classroom. I wanted to learn about their feelings of affiliation with the school chorus and how they viewed their individual contributions, as well as the benefits that they believed they derived from singing in chorus.

This line of questioning underscored my interest in learning whether immigrant students saw themselves as having something in common with the other students in the classroom or with the teacher. My own experience is that singing in choir is a group activity, but I sought to understand the perceptions that immigrant students held regarding the process of working with others to bring about the resultant work (choral singing) of high school choir.

I structured my inquiry around these open-ended questions and continually refocused and reorganized the questions so that they centered on the particular setting and on the participants whose lives I was exploring (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). I will now describe the research context of this study.

Introduction to the Research Setting

Strauss and Corbin (1998) defined methods of research as a set of procedures and techniques for gathering data. In the following section, I will describe the selection of the case-study site, the selection of participants, and the teacher. These elements and procedures will be examined in more detail in chapter 4. I will also describe the data-collection methods and the modifications that I made to suit each participant. I will also describe my role in the study. As part of an agreement with the Internal Review Board (IRB) at my university, as well as the selected school district's department of research, I changed the names of all of the schools, communities, teachers, and students to pseudonyms.

Selection of Case-Study Site

The high school that I selected as the case-study site was chosen based on the demographics of the student population, the number of immigrant students enrolled in the total choral program, the number of immigrant students in one contained choral class, and the willingness of the teacher to participate in the study. The George C. Marshall High School [hereinafter referred to as Marshall High School] sits in the northwestern tip of Holton County, a populous district that is located near a major metropolitan area in one of the Mid-Atlantic states.

Marshall High School is a public secondary school for grades 9–12 located in a densely populated urban fringe area (U.S. Census Bureau). The school enrollment is just over 1,600 students. There are 106 teachers, 78% of whom have post-graduate degrees. Approximately 45% of students qualify for Free and Reduced Meal Service (FARMS). The school has a mobility rate of 20%, based on entrances and withdrawals per school year. The academic curriculum offers over 185 courses in a variety of subject disciplines. Marshall High School has a student population that is racially, ethnically and socioeconomically diverse, with students from more than 50 countries who speak more than 35 languages. The racial/ethnic break down is as follows:

Table 3.1

Racial/Ethnic Breakdown, Marshall High School

White	43%
African/African-American	29%
Hispanic	17%
Asian Pacific	12%
Native American	0.3%

It should be noted that the category listed above as African-American includes African-born as well as African-American students. While the school is largely white, the highly diverse student body and high enrollment of immigrant students in the choral program allowed for rich data collection that shed light on my research questions.

Immigrant Students at Marshall High School

At the time of the study, approximately 8 percent of the student population at Marshall High was enrolled in the English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program. The school Web site noted that its ESOL program offered intensive English language classes at five levels:

- ESOL, Level 1, low beginning,
- ESOL, Level 2, high beginning,
- ESOL, Level 3, low intermediate,
- ESOL, Level 4, high intermediate, and
- ESOL, Level 5, advanced.

In addition to daily intensive English language instruction, ESOL students were required to take social studies, math, science, basic reading, and content area (mainstream) classes as electives.

In a conversation with Arthur Bleeker, the head of the ESOL department, I learned about the major goals of the Marshall High School ESOL program. He told me:

Our goal is to teach students enough English to function successfully in the regular classroom, provide intensive basic skills to those who have little or no previous schooling, counsel those who are adjusting to a new school and community, and, whenever possible, minimize linguistic and cultural barriers to help parents become supportive participants in their child's education. (personal communication, November 3, 2003)

All students in this program were considered English Language Learners (ELL). It should be noted, however, that the students in this program were referred to as "ESOL

students” by teachers and by students at the school. Therefore, in all cases but one, the ELL students in this study are referred to as “ESOL students,” which classifies them not only as English Language Learners, but also as members of the school’s ESOL program.

The ESOL department had six full-time teachers who were responsible for organizing and teaching courses at various ESOL content levels. The department also hired two full-time instructional assistants whose duties included working in content area classes with ESOL students who were struggling in the mainstream environment. Most students in this program were recent immigrants who came from a variety of cultural, linguistic, socioeconomic, and academic backgrounds, but a number of immigrant students at Marshall High School arrived in the United States as teenagers who already spoke English. These students were not in Marshall High School’s ESOL program.

There were two after-school activities sponsored by the ESOL department: The International Club and *The International Reader*. The International Club focused primarily on ambassadorship and helping all students at Marshall High to increase their awareness and appreciation of different cultures. One of the International Club’s main activities each year was to produce a show that featured student performers who sang, danced, and read poetry from their home countries. The International Show was the highlight activity for many ESOL students at Marshall High. These ESOL students enjoyed seeing their peers onstage.

The International Reader was a quarterly student newspaper written and published by and for the ESOL students at Marshall High School. The paper often featured articles on important issues that affected ESOL students, such as how an after-school job might affect students’ grade-point averages or what peer-mentoring programs

were available to help students who were struggling with homework. The newspaper also listed the birthdays of ESOL students, as well as movie reviews, tips for coping with academic work in mainstream classes, and the names of ESOL students who made the honor roll.

Chorus was one of the elective mainstream classes in which ESOL students at Marshall High School were frequently enrolled. I asked one ESOL teacher, Nancy Peters, whether the ESOL teachers recommended chorus. She said, “We have nothing to do with it. We’re not the ones [who recommend electives]; the counselors do [that]” (personal communication, December 8, 2003). I asked the director of guidance, Dr. Harriet Dean, why so many students were placed in the choral program. She told me, “It is a great place to learn the language” (personal communication, March 10, 2004). She also noted that there were many non-ESOL, bilingual students in chorus classes. She felt that these students played an important role in peer mentoring for the recent immigrant students. These students were second- and third-generation Americans who spoke primarily English at school, although they often spoke their native language at home. In my observations and interviews in the chorus class, the participants in my study often referred to these students as “people who were born here, but speak my language.” These students often acted as cultural brokers for the newly arrived students.

Gaining Access to the Choral Program

At the time of the study, the choral program at Marshall High School served approximately 95 students from grades 9–12 and was comprised of three chorus classes, which met daily during the school day. These groups were referred to as: *chamber choir*, *treble choir*, and *chorus*. Two of the three chorus classes were select ensembles that

required students to pass an audition to enter the class. The two select ensembles were: the chamber choir, a 20-voice mixed choir, and the treble choir, an all-women's choir of approximately 20 soprano and alto singers. Both select ensembles listed the ability to sight-read a piece of music as the main prerequisite for admission.

The ensemble referred to as chorus was a group of singers who did not have to audition. These singers had a broad range of previous musical experiences. The class met during fourth period every day during the 2003–2004 school year. All chorus classes at Marshall High School were elective courses. Students earned a half credit toward graduation for each semester in choir. All classes met daily for 50 minutes. As per a state mandate, all high school students were required to have earned one fine-arts credit to be eligible for graduation.

Because of this, the fourth-period chorus class (heretofore named the chorus class) had a high mobility rate. Many students enrolled for one semester of chorus as a way to fulfill their fine-arts obligation. They were members of the chorus for one semester, did the assignments, attended rehearsals, and participated fully in class. After one semester in the class, they either moved on to another fine-arts elective course or took another class that met during the same time.

Many of the students who found their way into the chorus class were immigrant students in the ESOL program at Marshall High School. There were also immigrant students in the chorus class who because of their English fluency were not required to go into the ESOL program. When I initially contacted Amanda Walker, the choral teacher at Marshall High School, about the possibility of using her classroom as a field site, she told me that more than 20% of her non-auditioned chorus students were in the ESOL

program. She told me that she did not have any ESOL students in her two advanced choirs, but many ESOL students were enrolled in her guitar and piano classes.

My first contact with Ms. Walker was in April of 2003 via an e-mail that explained my proposed study. She immediately responded to my e-mail and expressed interest in my research. Shortly after the initial contact, I visited her classes and attended one of her choral concerts. She had been a teacher at Marshall High School for five years when she agreed to host my study in her choral classroom. She told me that she was interested in finding ways to communicate with the many ESOL students in her classroom.

During June 2003, I applied to the Holton County Department of Research in Schools. The application process set out specific guidelines for research in Holton County schools. In late September, my application was approved, and I began collecting data in the non-auditioned chorus class as my primary field site.

Selection of Participants

As required by Holton County Schools, I informed all the students in the chorus class about the focus of my proposed research. The school district also encouraged me to refer to the participants in the study as ESOL students. I was asked to substitute the acronym ESOL for the use of the word *immigrant* on each participant's permission slip. In a voicemail message, Ms. Georgia Simpson, an administrative assistant in the Department of Research in Schools, explained:

The review committee is uncomfortable with your use of the word *immigrant* in your permission slip. They feel [that] it might discourage participation in the study and stigmatize this particular population. They would prefer that you

represent yourself as interested in ESOL students [because] that is how they are referred to in Holton County. (personal communication, July 18, 2003)

I made the changes in the permission slip and discussed with Ms. Simpson how I might invite the ESOL students in the chorus class to be a part of the study. Ms. Simpson and I decided that it would be best if Ms. Walker introduced me to her class as a researcher from the local university who was also a music teacher. Ms. Simpson and I also decided that it would be best if Ms. Walker also said that I would be working as a sectional coach to help students in smaller groups.

Ms. Walker agreed to do this. After several classroom observations, Ms. Walker met privately with each ESOL student in her chorus class and briefed each one on my study. She told them that if they were interested in participating in the study, they could meet with me. Ms. Walker met with her ESOL students, and they expressed interest in participating in the study. I met with each student individually, explained the research design, and sent students home with permission slips. Given the high number of students at Marshall High School who identified themselves as Hispanic (more than 16 percent), I had prepared permission slips in Spanish, as well as in English.

I was aware that limiting the invitation to ESOL students might constrict the scope of the investigation to those students who were considered linguistic minorities, but I also wanted to make sure that the selected participants would be in a position to remember details of making music in their home country. Because of this, I decided to focus on immigrant students who had been living in the U.S. for three years or less and were between the ages of 14 and 18. The easiest way to focus on this population was to limit my focus to students who were in the ESOL program.

The Primary Participants

Ms. Walker initially introduced me to four female ESOL students who were in varying levels of the ESOL program at Marshall High School. They were: Juliana Argueta Campos, age 15, from El Salvador; Irina Choi, age 16, from Kazakhstan; Alicia Yanéz Fiallo, age 18, from Ecuador; and Jennifer Offerata, age 17, from Ghana. Additionally, I also interviewed Esther Amodako, age 17, who was also from Ghana. Esther was not an ESOL student, but she had recently emigrated from West Africa and agreed to be in the study. In the following section, I will briefly introduce the primary participants. Each case is expanded in narrative form, followed by analysis, in chapter 5.

Juliana Argueta Campos was a 15-year-old girl who had come from El Salvador to the United States in the fall of 2003. She had sung in a church choir in her home country of El Salvador. She spoke no English when she arrived and was placed in ESOL, Level 1. Juliana was very interested in writing and working with me using a computer journal system. I tried to help her set up an e-mail account so that she could communicate with me via e-mail, but she told me that she was worried about taking up too much of her homework time. At first, we communicated through very short journal writing exercises in English. As her English progressed, we were able to have longer conversations about her previous and present musical experiences.

Irina Choi was a 16-year-old from Kazakhstan, and she was in ESOL, Level 3. She had sung in choir throughout her childhood and had a strong identity as a solo performer. She was active in the International Club and had performed in the

International Show in both 2003 and would perform in 2004. Irina also participated in a lunch club sight-reading class that was structured for peer mentoring in preparation for chorus rhythm tests.

Liz Yanéz Fiallo was from Ecuador. She was 17 years old and in ESOL, Level 4. She was a senior at the time of the study. She was only enrolled in the chorus class for one semester, as during the second half of the school year, she worked as an assistant in the health room. As Liz had taken a music course with Ms. Walker during both semesters of the year preceding the study, she was able to offer insight into the process that immigrant students go through as they adapt to instruction in a language different from their own native language. Liz's English was the most advanced of the three Spanish speakers in the study. I watched as she looked after her two friends in the class. She would often translate for them.

Jennifer Offerata was 17 years old and had emigrated with her parents from Ghana when she was 15. She was enrolled in ESOL, Level 4, and had elected chorus for a second term when I met her. After my first interview with Jennifer, she introduced me to Esther Amodako, an 18-year-old from Ghana who had come to the U.S. speaking English fluently. Because of her friendship with Jennifer, Esther agreed to participate in the study, thus providing me with the viewpoint of an immigrant student fluent in English. Both girls were about the same age and had emigrated from Ghana at the same time, so I was able to learn about their similar, as well as different, experiences in the chorus class. They provided me with many insights on rehearsal techniques and music teaching styles in African Protestant churches in Ghana.

Other ESOL Students in the Chorus Class

There was one male ESOL student, Juan Ferrufino, in the chorus class, but irregular attendance in the class prohibited his participation in the study. I worked with him several times in bass sectionals, and one of the participants in the study wanted me to talk with Juan, hoping that I might be able to convince him that he needed to come to class more regularly. I spoke with several teachers about Juan, and I observed him interacting with Juliana during several class observations, but I did not interview him for this study.

Originally, Ms. Walker had introduced me to Anita Sandoval, age 14, who was from Ecuador. Anita told me that she was interested in participating in the study, and she was the first of all the participants to return a signed permission slip. After several interviews, however, I discovered that she was classified by Holton County as a “foreign student” and was only staying at Marshall High School for one year, after which she would return with her family to Ecuador. She therefore was not an immigrant student, but had been placed in an ESOL, Level 1, class. I found her to be a willing participant, but soon learned that her acculturation process was quite different from that of students who had to adjust permanently to life in the U.S. Anita saw her time in the U.S. (her year at Marshall High School) as temporary.

Although she had never sung in chorus before, Anita had played guitar and had taken music-appreciation courses at the private academy that she had attended in Ecuador. She stayed in chorus for only one semester because she told me that she wanted as many different experiences as she could get before going back to Ecuador. She did not

fit the description of a recent immigrant student, so I did not write a narrative case for her, but wove that data throughout the cross-case interpretation in chapter 6.

In the next section, I will describe the sources of data collected in this study.

Sources of Data

My data collection centered on five primary participants, all of whom were students in the same chorus class. As one of the most important sources of case-study information is the interview (Yin, 1994), I conducted a series of in-depth interviews with the primary student participants through the course of eight months in the school year 2003–2004. Two of the five primary student participants also elected to participate in interactive journal writing. I conducted interviews with various teachers and administrators in the school. I hosted a group discussion with four nonimmigrant students who were members of the same class. Additionally, I conducted more than 20 hours of classroom and rehearsal observations.

I also developed a survey for all the students in the choral program at the particular research site (see appendix E). To gain a view of immigrant students in other choral programs, I created and distributed an open-ended e-mail survey to 32 choral teachers in Holton County (see appendix B).

Classroom Observations

The classroom discourse of choir usually involves the students singing under a teacher's direction. I observed the chorus class initially to get a view of overall class participation, the teacher's style, and the musical abilities of the students. Because all the participants of this study sang in the soprano section at times, I was able to situate myself

either directly across the room from the participants or in front, facing them. I took notes by hand, making notes of participation, body language, and eye contact with the teacher during the rehearsal.

As I took on the role of participant observer and was occasionally occupied rehearsing the bass section, at times, I had a few minutes at the start and at the end of rehearsal to observe the primary participants in the choral class. On these days, I would write notes of my observations in the music office immediately after the rehearsal. To get a sense of the total choral program at Marshall High School, I also observed the other two choral classes several times. Observations in the 2003–2004 school year were conducted for two weeks in September, one week in October, one week in December, and two days in May (see appendix D)

The dialogue of the teacher, as well as nonverbal communication, such as gestures, smiles, and shrugs between students, were recorded in field notes. I also noted the posture and participation of the primary participants of the study during rehearsal. Occasionally, I used a laptop computer to type notes and later retyped them in the form of a reflective journal.

I also observed three concerts, one choral festival performance, the International Show, and two dress rehearsals of major concerts, totaling 18 hours of performance observations (see appendix D). Again, I took notes by hand and later typed them. Additionally, I observed two 50-minute ESOL classes at Marshall High School. The ESOL room was small, and I was sitting in close proximity to the students in the room, so I chose not to take notes during the observations, but wrote my thoughts later.

Interviews

I met with four of the primary student participants individually four times over two semesters and one participant three times in one semester for a series of guided conversations. These conversations were usually scheduled in advance and were arranged around partially structured, open-ended questions that allowed the participant many options for responding (Bogdan & Biklen, 1996; Stake, 1998; Wolcott, 1990; Yin, 1994). Because of the varied nature of the English language proficiency of each participant, I had to plan for different styles of questioning. Some of the students who were fluent in English were better able to communicate orally in an open-ended conversation than those students who had arrived in the U.S. more recently.

Most of these interviews lasted between 25 and 35 minutes and centered on questions that were based on the research questions of this study. I decided that I would design my overall interview structure in a layered pattern, interviewing each participant one after the other. The interviews were structured around four broad topics: background information, perception of present musical experience, descriptions of previous musical experiences, and reactions to traditions of music education (see appendix F).

I conducted four rounds of student interviews in October, November, January, and March. I had originally planned to conduct the interviews from October through January, but sensed that my presence in December was causing disruptions in the preparations for the winter concert. Because of this, I decided to cancel interviews for second half of December and limit my data collection in December to classroom and concert observations. Therefore, I extended the interview process through March 2004.

Guided Conversations

Some participants needed more prodding than others did, while some were quite comfortable talking at length about their experiences, despite their limited English skills. For the most part, I did not read my questions during the interviews. In fact, I did not have a list of questions to ask students in each level of questioning. Instead, I based my questions on the overall themes to be covered, taking into account responses given in previous interviews. I taped and later transcribed all interviews. I gave student participants a copy of their transcriptions and asked for corrections. In the case of Juliana, who had limited proficiency in English, all her interviews were transcribed in English and then translated into Spanish for her to review.

My first interview in the data collection process was with Anita Sandoval, the foreign student from Ecuador. She told me that her father wanted her to participate in the interviews to help her learn English. As I knew that she had only been in the U.S. for eight weeks prior to the start of the study, I did not structure the conversations as open-ended interviews in my initial meetings with Anita, but rather gave her an opportunity to give one-word answers.

As I did not yet know of her status as a foreign student, I proceeded to interview her again twice. In subsequent interviews, Anita came prepared with a Spanish-English dictionary, and I watched as she progressed in learning conversational English through the semester. She was planning to return to Ecuador after one year and stayed in the class for only one semester, so I did not include her in the narrative presentations of cases in chapter 5.

Juliana Campos was also a beginning ESOL student. She and I communicated through a number of Internet translation programs. In one interview, I asked Mr. Anthony Ebele, a church director who had lived in El Salvador for a number of years before immigrating to the U.S., to translate our interview. I briefed Mr. Ebele before the interview and spoke to him privately afterwards. During that particular interview, Mr. Ebele sat between Juliana and me as he translated my questions into Spanish and Juliana's answers into English.

In my first interview with Jennifer Offerato from Ghana, she mentioned that I should talk to Esther Amodako, who was also from Ghana. I met with Esther, who was an immigrant student in the class, but had not gone through the ESOL program because of her fluency in English upon her arrival in the U.S. I met with each girl separately three times, and then I met twice with both of them together.

Other Interviews

As noted in chapter 1, the research questions and the focus of this study could be applied to all students who sing high school choir. Because I wanted to get a sense of how U.S.-born students might respond to my research focus, I held a group discussion with four U.S.-born students who were also enrolled in the chorus class. As all the primary participants in the study were female, I asked Ms. Walker to select four females for this discussion who were not immigrants. Jeanine, Brianna, Ruth, and Allie were selected by Ms. Walker and represented a range of previous experiences in choir.

Three of the four girls had sung in school choir since they had been in elementary school. They had moved on to sing in chorus during middle school and then to high school chorus. Jeanine, Brianna, and Ruth had all attended schools in Holton County

since kindergarten. Allie had moved within the last two years from Colorado and had not taken chorus in middle school, but had sung in elementary chorus. These data are discussed in the cross-analysis (chapter 6) part of this dissertation.

In addition to my conversations with student participants, I conducted a number of interviews with faculty members at Marshall High School. I interviewed Amanda Walker twice in the course of the data-collection process and had many informal conversations with her that I later recorded in my daily field notes. I also conducted interviews with Ms. Bates, the band director; Mr. Caceres and Ms. Peters, both ESOL teachers; Mr. Stephanis and Mr. Freas, social studies teachers; and Dr. De Greco, the director of guidance at the school.

Journal Entries

Originally, I had planned that all primary student participants would take part in a series of journal-writing exercises. When I posed the question to the participants, only three were willing to consider journal writing as an option. I found that the three Spanish-speaking girls, Liz, Juliana, and Anita, were willing to communicate via journal with me, and all three chose to write in Spanish. I constructed a six-part journal exercise that was structured around my four themes, as described above (see appendix C).

Despite the English-only policy in the ESOL program at Marshall High School, I wrote all questions for the three girls in Spanish and encouraged the students to respond in Spanish. I based this part of the data collection on research in the area of dialogue journals and interactive writing in bilingual education (Corson, 2001; Walqui, 2002a). I sought to understand the students' perceptions of their past and present musical

experiences. I thought that their accounts would be richer when relayed in their native language.

Although Liz was an advanced ESOL student (Level 4), she told me that she enjoyed writing in Spanish. She also helped me with translations and the sentence structure of my questions. Anita and Juliana were beginning ESOL students, and this opportunity to write in their native languages was an important means for them to share background information. Esther, Irina, and Jennifer preferred speaking directly to me in English. Jennifer told me that if she had to write, she did not want to participate in the study.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

All data were stored in two separate Windows-based computer systems. All raw data, field notes, transcripts from interviews, and site observations were first entered into rich-text Microsoft Word files. I created files for each participant, as well as categories that included field observations, concerts, rehearsals, and general site data. Once I had files created using a word-processing program, I was able to copy and import the files to the NVIVO system. NVIVO is a software tool for exploring and interpreting text data in qualitative research and helped me to label and organize my data as soon as I began to transcribe it.

Data Analysis

After transcribing the data, I color-coded broad themes and began the process of open coding. I was able to go through the first round of coding of all documents using the software. After I imported the documents from Word to NVIVO, I was able to begin the

process of conceptualizing text in the context of the location or setting of each interview (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In the first round, I had labeled key parts of my data using subjective titles, such as “Language Issue” or “Rapid Speech of Teacher.” In NVIVO, I was able to use the system of NODES to help me organize these initial concepts. To make these conceptual labels, I was in effect beginning my interpretation process, as well as beginning to classify and define behavior and text (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Interpretation

Later, I took these initial labels and “opened up the text” (Huberman & Miles, 1998) by writing memos for individual sets of data based on my own reflections on the prescribed labels. This also helped me to shape the direction of the narratives that I would eventually write. My next step was to create categories that were common among the concepts throughout all the individual cases. LeCompte and Schensul (1999) defined *narrative inquiry* as the study of people’s stories that involved creating, collecting, and analyzing written texts. I created narrative text in this study from a series of interviews, journal writings, videotapes, and field notes. Following each narrative, a more in-depth analysis expanded on emergent themes unique to each case.

Because the original intent of the study was to facilitate a process by which immigrant student voices could be heard in the choral classroom, my next step in the data-analysis process involved taking actual quotations or spoken text from each participant and making them into the title of each category. Then I created narrative text for each case built around the categories.

Cross-Case Interpretation

As mentioned above, the traditional mode of qualitative analysis has been the single case study, but collective cases can also be used. Such units present an opportunity to extend validity. For example, looking at multiple actors in multiple settings enhances the ability to make generalizations; the key processes, constructs, and explanations in play can be tested in several different configurations. And each configuration can be considered a replication of the process or question under study (Huberman & Miles, 1998).

Yin (1994) described a replication strategy in which a conceptual framework oversees the first study, then successive cases are examined to see whether the new pattern matches the one found earlier. The *grounded-theory approach* (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) works from a similar principal, but builds up the framework inductively, then tests and refines the framework with recourse to multiple comparison groups. While I chose to conduct interviews in rounds by going through each topic with each participant, I found that it became obvious from the start that each case was unique, so I wrote each narrative separately. In this study, I used a grounded-theory approach in writing the narratives, continually returning not only to my research questions, but also to my interwoven theoretical framework as I analyzed and interpreted the cases.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I presented the rationale for my selection of an ethnographic research design by outlining two significant characteristics of ethnographic research design: naturalistic setting and participant research. First, I framed my rationale for using a phenomenological approach. Then I discussed validity in terms of how I revealed what

I represented to the participants about the study. I also provided an outline of the research methodology that I used to examine my research questions and a detailed description of the research setting based on my research questions.

Next, I reviewed the rationale for using the two main ethnographic methods that I used in my data collection. The overall methods of data collection were described, as well as the process and rationale for the selection of the case-study site and the primary participants. I discussed the sources of data and described how I organized my data management, analysis, and interpretation. I ended the chapter by discussing standards of quality and ethical standards. In the next chapter, I will describe the context of the study in a narrative form.

CHAPTER 4: A DESCRIPTION OF THE CONTEXT OF THE STUDY: THE SCHOOL, THE PROGRAM, AND THE TEACHER

I had heard about the unusually high enrollment of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) students in the choral program at the George C. Marshall High School from Robert, one of my colleagues. He was taking a graduate course with Amanda Walker, a young high school choral director who had many ESOL students in her classes. He had spoken to her about my study, and the young woman mentioned that she was interested in learning to work with English Language Learners (ELL) in her classroom. While I was pleased with Ms. Walker's enthusiasm for my research, I had reservations about using Marshall High School as the field site for the study, based on my own insider knowledge from having lived within 30 miles of the community for nearly 20 years.

The George C. Marshall High School: A School in Transition

My impression of the school population of the George C. Marshall High School was that it was a mostly white suburban school with very little ethnic or racial diversity. However, after my conversation with Robert, I spoke to a number of other colleagues, and they affirmed what my friend had told me: the surrounding community of Clairmont had changed dramatically in recent years. I spoke to Mike Stefanis, a veteran social studies teacher and track coach at Marshall High School. He told me that he had been teaching at the school for the past 30 years. During this time, it had changed from a sparsely populated, majority white, rural farming community to a densely occupied, racially and ethnically diverse one. He said:

I've been here since the beginning, since 1974. All we were [*sic*] was just farmland. The childcare center across the street . . . was a barn. It was a farming community. We used to have kids who'd hunt in the morning, [then] come to school with their guns in the gun racks. If they had a deer, it would be in the pick-up truck. . . . And so it was World War II suburbia closer in [to the city] that became an urban area. And then we became urban too. When I say an urban school, I mean one with high mobility and the [resulting] loss of community. (personal communication, December 9, 2003).

Mark Freas, another social studies teacher and coach, noted: "Sure, the population's changed. Back then, my biggest problem was to get kids away from the goats because they were feeding them, and the kids wouldn't come to track practice" (personal communication, December 9, 2003). He told me how Holton County's progressive Moderately Priced Dwelling law in the early 1970s changed the demographics of the formerly rural area:

Beginning in the early 1970s, a shortage of affordable housing for low- and moderate-income households was common in the County. Plus there was a large increase in young families looking for housing; this situation was complicated by a lot of other things. In the early 1970s, housing advocacy groups began discussing the County's dwindling supply of affordable housing. They recommended that builders supply a percentage of all units in new residential developments at prices that would be affordable to low- and moderate-income households. So, in essence, the builders and developers pushed and pushed for high volume so they wouldn't lose money, and they won, so all the farmland turned into a mass of housing units. and our school

population changed dramatically in 30 years. (personal communication, December 9, 2003)

Both teachers acknowledged that the transformation had been gradual, but steady. Given their daily interactions at the school for more than 30 years, they did not really notice the population change as this change took place. Mike Stefanis explained:

I didn't see a lot of this change because I'm so close to it. I don't see the building as old. I don't see the transition. I can tell you that that there was a moment when I was sitting with another coach, and we looked on the track. It kind of registered with both of us. And we looked at it [the track field], and we looked at each other. It was like the first time we realized that the majority of the kids on our team were African-American, not white. I'm only recently recognizing that we have a great number of Hispanic kids, but my being too close to it, well; it seems a more gradual realization. (personal communication, December 9, 2003)

To form my own impression of the school and the community, I contacted Amanda Walker by e-mail and told her about my proposed study, as well as the recommendation by my colleague that Marshall High School might be an excellent field site. I also told her about my background as a former high school choral director and told her that I would be willing to help with sectionals and vocal coaching, should the need arise. Ms. Walker immediately replied to my e-mail, saying, "Yes, I have many ESOL students in my seventh-period class. Please come by any time. I would love your input and any suggestions you could give me on working with them" (personal communication, March 20, 2003). Encouraged by her open invitation, I immediately arranged a time for a visit to her classroom. I first visited the campus in late April 2003 and was surprised by the broad

array of cultures and languages that I encountered inside the hallways of the George C. Marshall High School and in her seventh-period choral class.

The George C. Marshall High School: My First Impressions

The school sat on a corner lot across the street from a child-development center, between two major roadways, and was situated within a half-mile from an interstate highway. The building was a sprawling one-story structure typical of 1970s architecture. Its windows were encased in dark-brown metal frames and surrounded by a dark brick exterior.

The school was known in the district for its outstanding sports teams, especially football. In fact, on my drive to the school, the stadium was noticeable from the roadway well before the school came into view. I knew about the school's many state championship wins, and the head football coach was a local legend. I could hear the bell ringing from the outside as I walked to the school's entrance. When I entered the building, the hallways were filled with chattering teenagers, many of whom were wearing the blue and gold team jerseys from various sports. I immediately noticed that the majority of the students I saw appeared to be nonwhite. The demographic mix of students seemed to be consistent with the racial and ethnic statistics of the school's student body mentioned in chapter 3. The school was arranged in a courtyard style, with the main office and security desk visible from the front entrance. I signed in at the security desk and was given a visitor's badge and directions to the choral room.

When I arrived in the choral room, I found about 30 students sitting with guitars; some were playing quietly, while others seemed to be in the midst of informal conversations. I noted that in keeping with Mr. Stefanis's comments and my own initial

impressions when I entered the building, most of the students in the room did not appear to be white. In my initial scan of the room, I did not see anyone who might be Ms. Walker, so I asked one of the students for help. A tall, dark-skinned boy very politely said, “Ma’am, she is in her office.” I went in to the office and found Amanda Walker sitting at her computer.

Ms. Walker was a slender white woman and wore her mid-length blonde hair in a ponytail. She was wearing pastel plaid Capri slacks and a lime-green tee shirt and flat sparkling white shoes. She appeared to be in her late 20s or early 30s. We began our conversation by chatting about my study, and she reiterated what she had said in her e-mail: that she had many ESOL students in her classes and was frustrated by the difficulties that she had encountered in communicating with them. From her initial, quick response to my first e-mail, as well as the frustrations that she expressed during our first face-to-face conversation regarding working with her ESOL students, I sensed that she hoped that my presence in her classroom might help her to learn to communicate with her non-English-speaking students. I also sensed that she placed a high priority on connecting with her students and that she was worried that she was shortchanging her ESOL students. In one of our first conversations about her teaching, it became clear to me that Ms. Walker thrived on an easygoing rapport with her students. She told me:

It’s hard to decipher whether or not I am relating to them because of their culture or because of their language. [With] a lot of the ESOL kids, I feel like I have no relationship with them because I can’t communicate with them. They’re not the ones popping in at lunch to say “hi” or sticking around after class to tell me about important events going on in their life. They basically are secluded, and they sit in a

classroom, barely trying to make it through. (personal communication, September 9, 2003)

I watched as she stood at the door of her classroom and greeted each student as he or she entered the room before class. When the bell rang, she reminded the students about her attendance policy: “If you’re not in your seat when I call your name, you are late.” The students seemed to take this seriously; all sat down and waited for her to call their names.

I counted 47 students in the room, mostly female. It appeared that Ms. Walker, a white teacher, was standing before a class with a racial and ethnic composition that was largely nonwhite. I counted 11 boys in the room, all of whom were seated in the center of the two front rows of the classroom. The nearly 40 girls sat in four rows either beside or behind the boys.

I also noticed three singers scattered among the class who by their appearance and posture seemed to be special-education students. Later, I asked Ms. Walker about these three students, and she confirmed my hunch that they were special-education students. She told me that Bobby, one of these students, had gone with the chorus last year to festival and sang “his heart out in the front row.” She noted that in their comments, the festival adjudicators had criticized the boy’s loud singing. She told me that she was frustrated by their apparent insensitivity to this student’s special needs.

When she finished taking roll, she said, “Happy first day back from spring break. Okay, we have two minutes for anyone who wants to share about their break.” Two boys shared, and by the giggling and smiles from a number of the girls in the room, I sensed that the boys in the class enjoyed their minority status in the classroom. Before the

rehearsal began, Ms. Walker introduced me as a visitor from the local university who would be coming to class often and would probably be helping out with rehearsals.

Then she reminded students of their end-of-year responsibilities, the spring concert on May 23, the mandatory dress rehearsal on May 22, senior graduation, and their final music-video project. After her opening announcements, she began the vocal warm-up. Immediately, I got the impression that most of the students were aware of my presence and that they enjoyed singing for someone they perceived to be an informed observer. From the students' posture and eye contact with their teacher, it also appeared that these students respected their teacher and regarded the vocal warm-ups as essential to singing well. The warm-up included a rhythm echo canon, several tongue twisters, and *solfege* drills. Most of the class appeared to be highly engaged during the 10-minute warm-up.

Prior to the start of class, Ms. Walker had written the agenda for the class on the board. From my seat in a row behind the soprano section, I noted that the repertoire included two popular pieces, "I Am But A Small Voice" and "New York, New York," as well as a spiritual, "Ain'-a That Good News?" I noticed that Ms. Walker spent a good part of the class rehearsing with the tenors and basses who needed more work vocally and that the girls, who sang their parts well with less effort, demanded less attention from their teacher. After about 20 minutes, Ms. Walker asked me to take the alto section to a practice room and work with them on "Ain'-a That Good News?" Previously, she had told me that she had 12 ESOL students in her alto section, and I sensed that she was offering me an informal introduction to her students.

An Alto Sectional

I took the 19 girls into a practice room and prepared to rehearse the spiritual. I scanned the mostly nonwhite faces and wondered how many of the students could be classified as recent immigrants. In the field notes from my first observation, I noted that the broad range of nonwhite students probably included first- and second-generation students, as well as African-American students. The vast array of faces and cultures that I had observed in the choral class suggested that the infusion of many immigrant cultures over the past few decades had outgrown the categories that the U.S. Census Bureau and many school systems continued to use for identification. Rumbaut and Portes (2001) noted:

In the process, in familiar as well as surprising ways, the immigrants and their children are themselves being transformed into the newest Americans. Over time and generations, their intermarriages and other intermingling may produce complex new ethnic formations and identities, even as the process of becoming American has come to include the adoption or rejection of such officially constructed pan-ethnic labels such as “Hispanic” and “Asian/Pacific Islander,” which lump together scores of nationalities into one-size-fits-all minority group categories—much as the oldest minorities, “Indians” and “Negroes,” were first defined as a single entity. (p.1)

Because of this, I wrote myself a note that if I wanted to study the experiences of recent immigrant students, I would have to be very specific in my selection of participants.

In my initial contact with Ms. Walker’s students, however, I was mainly concerned with the task at hand: communicating clearly to a group of girls who might or might not be able to understand my language of instruction. I was aware too that

structural arrangements and discourse norms often affect students from different cultural backgrounds very differently (Corson, 2001). I assumed from observing Ms. Walker's vocal warm-up session that many of her students were probably more at home in the traditional setting of choral class, but I was not sure.

I explained that I was going to play through the entire piece on the piano once, and then I would challenge them to find where I was in the music. The girls were respectfully silent as I played through the piece, but I sensed that some of the students were lost as I played. Next, I turned the sheet music so that it was facing them, pointed to where I was going to start, and told them that I would stop several times, and they should tell me on which page I had stopped. This was easy for them. Nonetheless, a few singers looked down at the floor and would not fix their eyes on me while several girls shouted out the answers. After a few minutes, I challenged them to tell me the precise rehearsal marker where I had stopped. Again, this was not difficult for some, yet a small group of girls who clustered near the back of the rehearsal room would not meet my gaze.

While I sensed that as a whole, the group seemed to enjoy this warm-up, I also sensed that a number of the singers were lost. Hoping to get more students engaged in the activity, I repeated the process, but sang the words instead of playing the part. This accommodation seemed to bring more students into the rehearsal, and soon, a few more girls started to call out answers. At that point, I knew that I had done all that I could in the short amount of time to help the whole group get ready to sing the part.

I coached the girls through the part and complimented them on their unified sound. They seemed to appreciate the attention, and they quickly learned the ending of the song. We rehearsed it twice more, then the group and I returned to the classroom. Ms.

Walker was working with the boys as the altos quietly moved back into their seats. The teacher looked at me, and the altos as a section asked whether they could do their part without help. Three girls in the front row boastfully exclaimed, “Oh, yeah!” One girl in the second row turned to me and gave me a thumbs-up signal. The whole group sang its part easily and well.

I watched as the group sang the whole song, impressed by the musical solidarity that this diverse class displayed in singing the spiritual. I saw that the students’ youthful faces revealed that the students were engaged in the act of singing and focused on Ms. Walker. It seemed that despite her difficulty communicating with her ESOL students individually, she had no trouble incorporating them into a cohesive musical entity. I found myself wondering how the immigrant students in the room perceived their experiences in the group. Immediately, I recognized that this question aligned with the broad line of inquiry that framed my study. I believed that if I had an opportunity to talk to the students in this class, I would learn about the phenomenon of immigrant students’ experiences in high school choir.

At the end of the class, I thanked Ms. Walker for giving me access to her classroom and her students. I told her that I was interested in situating my study in her classroom. She indicated that she would support my study and then told me about her upcoming choral concert and invited me to come and see all three of her groups perform.

“Proud to be an American”: A Song for All to Sing

The concert was already underway when I entered the spacious auditorium at Marshall High School. The audience appeared to be comprised mostly of parents and was spread out through the cavernous room, taking up about a third of the 1,200 seats. Despite

the diverse student population, the audience appeared to be mostly white. The crowd seemed professionally dressed and I surmised that the socioeconomic range of the parents sitting near me was middle to upper-middle class. From my seat, I could see many camcorders, digital cameras, and cellular phones.

The George Marshall Chamber Choir was onstage performing a choral arrangement of “O’ Shenandoah.” The group consisted of twelve girls and nine boys. I immediately noticed that the women in the choir appeared to be mainly white, while there seemed to be several students of color in the tenor and bass [men’s] sections. By their appearance, their polished sound and repertoire, this group appeared to be remarkably different from the seventh-period chorus class that I had visited two weeks before.

The chamber choir was considered the most elite choral group of the three choruses at Marshall High School, and for the past two years, it had consistently earned *superior* ratings in district and state choral festivals. Between songs, its teacher acknowledged the choir’s successes from the stage and candidly explained the rigorous audition process that students had to go through if they wanted to sing with the chamber choir. She said, “This is a hard class to get into. You have to pass a sight-reading audition, and it is highly competitive.”

The young singers on the stage had earned their reputation well; they were obviously a musically sophisticated and well-rehearsed group, with exquisite blend, purity of tone, balance among voices, and superb articulation. As they sang, the group seemed singularly focused on the cues and gestures of their young and energetic conductor. Ms. Walker wore a long black dress with a sleeveless top. Her long blonde hair was piled on top of her head in a fashionable “updo” style.

After the chamber choir finished its set of five songs, the women of the choir left the stage, and the men stayed to welcome another group of young men as they formed an arch across the stage. Once again, I noticed that the boys on the stage seemed to reflect the multicultural school population, similar to what I had observed in the seventh-period chorus class. The 16 boys appeared to be an even mix of white, African, Hispanic, Asian, and African-American students, in keeping with what I learned were the statistics of the student population at Marshall High School. Later, I learned that most of these boys were either American-born or “generation 1.5” (Rumbaut & Portes, 2001), meaning that they had emigrated from their countries when they were under the age of five. Consequently, none of the boys on the stage were considered recent immigrants. Therefore, they were ineligible to participate in this study.

As the boys organized themselves into voice parts, Ms. Walker went to the microphone and announced, “We would like to dedicate our performance of this piece to the men and women in the Armed Forces. If you are current or retired military, please stand and be recognized.” I watched as about 10 percent of the audience rose to warm applause. They stood as the young men sang:

If tomorrow all the things were gone I'd worked for all my life, and I had to start all over with just my children and my wife, I'd thank my lucky stars to be living here today. . . . I'm proud to be an American, where at least I know I'm free.

Given that this particular observation took place during the spring of 2003 and that American forces were fighting at that time in both Iraq and Afghanistan, it was a touching moment in the concert. The young men on the stage sang with apparent pride and emotion, and the audience cheered loudly.

As the men's chorus left the stage, Ms. Walker walked to the right of the stage and stood before a large group of students who were sitting in the audience waiting to sing. She stood silently and seemed to be waiting to establish eye contact. All at once, she raised her two arms, and the entire group stood silently. She hummed a pitch from the stage, and the group began to sing "Alleluia" as the singers walked single file to the stage. As the students took the stage, "Alleluia" became a canon and was repeated in four parts many times, until all the students were on the risers in traditional concert formation. I counted 93 students in green choir robes. After seeing a number of familiar faces from the stage, I quickly realized that this group was a combination of the three choral groups at the school and that together they formed the concert choir. Later, I learned that a combined choral performance was the traditional end to all choral concerts at Marshall High School.

Later, I also learned that in addition to the chamber choir described above, the large choir also included about 20 girls from the treble choir and a select ensemble, as well as the nearly 50 students in the chorus class, which was the only nonauditioned chorus at Marshall High School. Ms. Walker also told me that this huge combined chorus had gathered for only two joint rehearsals before the final performance. The group sang with amazing precision for such a large group and performed "New York, New York," "I Am But a Small Voice," and "Ain'-a That Good News?" with great energy and enthusiasm. Again, the group seemed highly focused on its conductor.

For the most part, the large combined choir that faced the audience appeared to represent the racial and ethnic combination of the school, which was approximately 43% white, 29% African-American, 17% Hispanic, and 12% Asian. These statistics, as noted

above, did not seem to be represented in the ethnic and racial make-up of the audience. After meeting Ms. Walker's seventh-period chorus class, I surmised that many ESOL students were in the choral program, but noticed that there did not seem to be many nonwhite parents in the audience. From my own experience as a high school choral director, I knew that many of my ESOL students often had difficulty getting to evening concerts because of work schedules and transportation problems. I also knew that their parents almost never came to concerts or evening events due to their own work and family obligations.

At the end of the concert, Amanda Walker made a special acknowledgment to her own parents, who were sitting near me. She asked them to stand and thanked them for driving from their home in Petersburg, Pennsylvania, an industrial town about 150 miles from Clairmont, to attend the concert. I remembered that Amanda's father, John, had stood during "Proud to be an American." After the concert, I spoke to John and Georgia Walker and congratulated them on the success of the program conducted by their daughter Amanda.

Amanda Walker: An Unusual Journey to Choral Music

Amanda Jean Walker had been teaching music for seven years when I met her in the spring of 2003. She had been a choral director for five of those years, and before that, for two years, she had been a high school band director. At the time of data collection, Ms. Walker was enrolled as a graduate student in the local state university and was pursuing a Master of Education degree with an emphasis in human development. I was curious as to why she chose an advanced degree in human development over one in music education, and she told me, "Really, I think I'll use what I learn in human

development a lot more in the classroom day-to-day than what I'd learn from another music degree" (personal communication, March 25, 2003).

Ms. Walker told me that she had attended public schools through grade 12 in Petersburg, Pennsylvania, and enrolled at Randall University, a state university in Pennsylvania, where she majored in music education. I was surprised to learn that her primary instrument was trumpet, and she had originally intended to pursue a career in instrumental music education. I was also surprised when I learned that she had never sung in choir in college and had never taken voice lessons. According to Ms. Walker, her hook into a strong choir culture came from one of her cooperating teachers during her student-teaching assignment. She described her student-teaching experience with Mr. David Woodruff as "inspiring and awesome" and told me that after her time in his classroom, she knew that she wanted to be a high school choral director. She told me that she attended a job fair at Randall University and interviewed for a secondary choral position at Twin Ridge High School in a small county in a Mid-Atlantic state about four-and-a-half hours from her home in Petersburg.

Ms. Walker was offered the position and began her teaching career at Twin Ridge High School in Adams County. It was a much smaller and less populated school district than Holton County, with far fewer immigrants and far fewer non-English speaking residents. She stayed at Twin Ridge for three years and worked as a choral director. Her choirs earned distinction in both county and state festivals.

Ms. Walker told me that despite her three successful years as a high school choral director, she felt obligated to take a job teaching instrumental music. I asked her why, and she answered, "I felt like I should at least make an effort to teach high school band to see

[whether] I liked it” (personal communication, January 23, 2004). She found an opening for an instrumental music teacher at Marshall High School in Clairmont, which is located at the northwestern tip of Holton County, a much larger and more populous county than Adams County, about 90 miles from Adams County. She took the job and moved to a community near Marshall High School and began her fourth year of teaching as the school’s band director. She recalled her two years as the band director at Marshall High School:

I hated it. I just didn’t like being a band director. It wasn’t nearly as much fun. I find as a choral director, I can reach so many more kids. . . . So, after two years of being the band director at Marshall High School, when the choral position in the school became available, I went for it. I got it, and the first year, it was rough, but after a while, I loved it. (personal communication, January 23, 2004)

Ms. Walker’s parents affirmed and supported their daughter’s decision to become the choral director at Marshall High School: “She loves it. She never stops” (personal communication, May 22, 2003). From what I could see in my early observations at the field site, the students at Marshall High School benefited from this talented, high-energy music teacher.

The Music Program at Marshall High School

The music department at Marshall High School offered classes in orchestra, chorus, band, guitar, and piano. In addition to Ms. Walker, there was one other teacher, Ms. Cynthia Bates, the instrumental teacher who replaced Ms. Walker when she was appointed as choral director. Both teachers were highly respected by the parents and staff at Marshall High School. One parent told me that Ms. Walker had inspired her daughter

to pursue music education as a possible career option. Another told me that Ms. Walker was her son's hero. After the fall concert, I spoke to the principal of Marshall High School, Ms. Lana Daniels, who was in her first year as principal at the school during the course of this study. She said, "I am absolutely amazed at what these two *very young* women can produce with our students" (personal communication, October 23, 2003). I could tell by Ms. Daniels' emphasis on the words "very young" that she was pleased with the outcome of the concert and impressed by the display of the two teachers' work.

All music classes at Marshall High School met during the school day for 50 minutes a day, five days a week. In addition to teaching in their specialty areas of choral and instrumental music, both women taught an additional guitar and piano class, bringing their course load to five "preps" or different classes per school day. Upon successful completion of each course, students earned a half credit toward their state-mandated graduation requirements. All students in Holton County's public schools were required to have one fine-arts credit to graduate. Both teachers said that they had many *repeaters* (students who entered the choral and instrumental programs and stayed for a number of years). They agreed that these students, many of whom studied instrumental or vocal lessons privately, were the core of their advanced classes, jazz band, and chamber choir.

The Instrumental Program

At the time of the study, Ms. Bates was in her second year of teaching. The band room was adjacent to the choral room. The two classrooms were connected by a series of three small offices with computers. Both rooms were built around wide-seated risers that were arranged amphitheater style, with the teacher podium and piano in the front section. Most of the walls in the band room were covered with student work and posters created

by students, with titles such as: “My Personal Goals in Jazz Band” or “20 Things I learned in Music Class.” I asked Ms. Bates about these posters, which she called “reflection charts,” and she told me that her students enjoyed making them and taking a break from playing every day. She showed me one project that a student designed as a series of cubes with short narratives that recalled what she had learned in her music class during the past semester.

The instrumental music classes offered at Marshall High School included string orchestra, symphonic band, and jazz band. I asked Ms Bates whether she had ESOL students in any of her classes. She told me:

Not in symphonic band. Wait, there is one drummer in my symphonic band, [but I] am not sure about his background. My piano class, though, is another story. I have one student who speaks nothing [no English]. He brings a little translator to class, and I type into it. He can play, but he speaks nothing. He’s Asian, I don’t know. From Korea? There’s another kid in the class who is Asian, and they kind of speak to each other sometimes. He came into my band class, and I was trying to figure out what he could play, but he had no idea of what I was talking about. So he got out of the band class, which was kind of unfortunate because I am sure [that] he would have been a good player because he could read music already.
(personal communication, November 12, 2003)

I asked Ms. Bates to rate the issue of working with immigrant students in her band and orchestra classes. She told me that because of the numbers in her program, she considered it a low priority. She noted that Ms. Walker had a very different situation in her chorus class. Ms. Bates told me:

The guidance counselors think, “Oh, singing in English, what better way to have an ESOL kid learn English than to have him singing in English every day?” I think I remember Sandy [a guidance counselor] saying to me: “We stick them [ESOL students] in chorus because, you know, it helps them learn their English.” (personal communication, November 12, 2003)

I observed Ms. Bates rehearsing with her symphonic band class and noted that most of her students were engaged throughout the 50-minute class. I watched as Ms. Bates tuned the brass section and noted that she discouraged talking during the tuning process. Ms. Bates was efficient and professional in her rehearsal with this 40-piece group. She used many musical terms and phrases. She seemed to use musical language deliberately in a sentence and then encouraged the students to dialogue with her and the rest of the class about her rehearsal techniques. I watched as she varied her tempo, leading the students to follow her visual cues. I noted that Ms. Bates relied on an interactive dialogue between herself and her students throughout the rehearsal. While I understood that this style of teaching kept the students involved in the lesson, I wondered about how students who did not have a Western musical background might fare in such an environment. Ms. Bates told me about a newly arrived immigrant student who played in her string orchestra last year:

Last year, I had my first violinist who didn't speak any English in orchestra. He was probably ESOL, but he was totally westernized in his music education. He read music and lived in New York for a while and studied music with a Korean teacher in New York, and he went back to Korea and then moved here and came to school at Marshall. (personal communication, November 12, 2003)

Her comments highlighted an important distinction in the success of immigrant students and content area classes. Some students come with more musical cultural capital than others do. The young violin student had been trained musically in the Western classical tradition, and therefore Ms. Bates reasoned that the music that he was playing was, as she put it, an “international language.” While this concept dates back to a social idea created after World War I, and the emphasis in education on “international relations” (Volk, 1998), the phrase and idea have not changed in response to the advent of the multicultural educational movement. Campbell and Anderson (1989) noted:

The research of many distinguished ethnomusicologists and historical musicologists has shown that the world contains a number of highly sophisticated musical traditions that are based on different, but equally logical, traditions. Many of us who have studied a variety of these musical traditions have begun to realize that the often-used concept of “music, the international language” has little validity in the present world. (p. 3)

However, even though theorists have challenged this concept, it is still widely held by educators. I soon learned that many of the ESOL students who were enrolled in Ms. Walker’s chorus class had a difficult journey in their immersion into the “international language” of choral music at Marshall High School. Their counselors, who, as Ms. Bates noted, believed that singing in English would accelerate their learning of spoken and written English, placed many ESOL students in the course without sufficient knowledge of the difficulties that they might encounter there.

Observations of Choral Classes

I began my formal observations of Ms. Walker's chorus classes in the fall of 2003. Most of the observations took place in the chorus class in which all the primary participants of this study were enrolled at the beginning of the fall term of 2003. In this section, I will briefly describe the contexts of the chorus class for which students were not required to audition, as well as the two select choirs, treble choir and chamber choir.

The Chorus Class

During my first official observation of the chorus class, Ms. Walker introduced me as soon as she finished calling roll. She said, "I have someone very important to introduce you to. Miss Carlow is a doctoral student at the University of Maryland. She is writing her dissertation about us, so she'll be a visible presence around here." Then she turned to me and asked aloud, "Can I tell them what you're doing, or do you want to?" This took me completely by surprise, and I struggled with my answer. I told her students that I was a music teacher and that I was interested in learning about ESOL students in chorus. Then Ms. Walker said, "Yes, ESOL students, stand up and identify yourselves to Miss Carlow. I'm sure she'll want to talk to you at some point."

I knew that Ms. Walker's announcement was intended to facilitate my feeling welcome in the class, yet I immediately sensed that there was a stigma attached to being an ESOL student. I watched as three girls in the back row looked at each and slowly stood up, seeming to be unsure of where to look. Then I noticed that the other students in the room turned in their seats to look at the three girls. I imagined that the students were feeling quite exposed in their "otherness" (Greene, 1995; Nieto, 2001).

It was an awkward moment, and I worried that this introduction would discourage students from volunteering to participate in the study. Sensing this tension, Ms. Walker quickly said, “Everyone else stand up. Let’s begin the warm-up.” I could see the relief on the girls’ faces as their classmates stood and began singing. As I had not yet selected participants for the study, I concentrated on Ms. Walker’s teaching and the way she interacted with her students.

I found the ethnic and racial composition of the class to be similar to the chorus class that I had observed the preceding spring, but noted many new faces in the group. Despite the fact that the class was comprised of students different from those whom I had observed the previous year, it seemed that the students in this nonauditioned class were similarly engaged and focused when singing as a group.

Ms. Walker’s Perceptions of her Immigrant Students

I asked Ms. Walker to tell me a little about the experience that she thought her ESOL students were having in her chorus class. She told me:

I feel like a lot of the time, they are overwhelmed, especially being in a class with, you know, 50 other students. I see they’re looking around, and they’re not understanding a thing I say. But I also think that chorus would be one of the less stressful placements for them. You know, like, if they’re thrown into a class like social studies, where they have to do a lot of writing, and they’re required to write in English. That can be very stressful. I mean, in my class, they basically have to follow along and be able to, ah, I think it is easier to read music or English than it is to write it or speak it. So, they’re basically just looking at and reading the words off the page. I mean, I could read anything in Spanish that you throw in front of

me because I took the class. Well, I can pronounce anything, but ask me what it means, or ask me to write out something for you, then I couldn't do it. Plus, the class is just so big, and I've got to keep control, and it is very impersonal for me and, I'm sure, [for] them as well. (personal communication, November 14, 2003)

As noted, the class was large, and Ms. Walker's justifications for keeping a tighter rein on the students seemed reasonable to me. One day, however, I noted a shift from her usual tightly controlled classroom demeanor with the fourth-period chorus. I observed the class on "Spirit Day" at Marshall High School. Many students were dressed in the school colors of red, white, and black. Several students were wearing field jackets and polo shirts with the names and logos of sports teams and school clubs. Several students had dyed their hair red and white to match the school colors. I watched as Ms. Walker spoke to the class about the upcoming homecoming parade. She invited the students in the fourth period to bring their lunch to the chorus room and work on the chorus banner for the parade.

She spoke with an unusual casualness in her voice and asked students to volunteer to bring art supplies. She said, "It will be fun; we can have lunch together and have a good time." I watched as 12 students raised their hands and offered to come to help design the banner. However, I noted that no ESOL students raised their hands to participate. Later, I asked Ms. Walker whether her ESOL students were able to participate in after-school activities. She said, "Across the board; at Marshall? Not that I know of; I would probably say they probably don't understand the announcements." Then I asked her about ESOL students' involvement in the fundraising activities that she

had recently announced to her chorus class. She said, “Almost impossible; unless you have an interpreter. Not one ESOL student turned in the fundraising.”

The Chamber Choir

One my first day of observation in the chamber choir, I watched and listened as Ms. Walker read an e-mail to her second-period chamber choir: “Okay, I have another date for you. Here it is. Hey, people are asking for us all over. It is December seventh, a Sunday.” She read the e-mail from a community organization that invited the group to sing at a tree-lighting ceremony. Then she told the singers that if they knew of retirement homes or senior centers that would like to invite groups to perform, she would make the contacts necessary for the chamber choir to make the trip there. She smiled as she said, “We could do a long tour, get a bus, and take the day off together.”

I immediately noticed a casual rapport between Ms. Walker and the chamber choir. I watched as she worked with this talented group of young singers. She sat in the front of the room, behind the piano, playing softly and sometimes challenging the students to sing their parts a cappella. Her manner was easygoing, but I also sensed that she expected this group to work in a musical partnership with her and with each other.

I noticed that the music that she selected for the choir was quite difficult and represented a broad range of styles and time periods. At one point in the rehearsal, she prepared the students to sight-read and sing a piece of music. I watched as she instructed them to sing a scale and then outlined the triad in the song. She gave them a minute to look over the piece of music. She warned, “Altos, watch that jump from *ti* to *re*. Basses, look at your jumps. Good luck. Here we go.” It was clear that the group was accustomed to doing high-level work and considered their time in the class with Ms. Walker well

spent. She told me that many of the students in the chamber choir were in honors classes, active in student government, and on various athletic teams. I asked her about her relationship with the chamber choir. She said:

I find a different rapport with my kids from [the chamber choir] because it is so much smaller. And I talk to them, and we goof around, and we do after-school things. Like my rapport with chamber choir kids is so amazing because we do so much out-of-school stuff. And even with the trebles, since they're all girls, we talk much more. (personal communication, November 14, 2003)

The Treble Choir

The third-period treble choir was a highly energetic group of 19 girls. Ms. Walker had told me that there were no ESOL students in this class. Yet, from what I could tell, the group appeared to be an even mix of white students and students of color who truly enjoyed spending time together. Immediately after the first bell rang I observed them trickling into the choral room; two girls had their arms around each others' waists and a group of three were giggling as they sat down. Another trio entered quietly, smiled and waved silently to each other as they found their seats and prepared to sing. There was a loud burst of laughter as a group of four young girls sat huddled over a notebook. On this particular day, several girls were talking about the homecoming dance that they had just attended, and one very lively girl told the teacher that she had just consumed a soda with extra caffeine and warned her that she would be much sillier than usual.

I watched as Ms. Walker smiled at the girls as they gathered to sing. Her tone and posture with this group changed and seemed to suggest that she was viewed by the girls as an older sister or young and "with it" aunt.. After the late bell rang, Amanda leaned

against the piano before start of the class and addressed the girls. She said, "I'm going to New York this weekend. I'm going to be hippin'. I went on a shopping spree and spent 300 bucks. I bought jeans, boots, shirts. Now I'm broke." I watched as she took her place behind the piano and began the warm-up. Despite her casual speech and body language, she clearly took the role of the advanced musician in the group and challenged the girls to push themselves to excel in their singing.

For the most part, the girls seemed relaxed and pleased to be in the class.. After the warm-up, one girl called out and told a personal story to the class about an e-mail that she had gotten from her ex-boyfriend. I watched as Ms. Walker looked straight ahead and pretended to be slightly annoyed with the group. Yet, it was clear that she was listening. After the girl had finished her story, Ms. Walker said, "Sight-reading test tomorrow, ladies, welcome back to reality." There were many groans, and one girl mumbled, "Jesus Christ." I heard another girl say, "Don't use the Lord's name in vain."

I watched as the teacher gently encouraged the girls to prepare for their sight-reading test. "This is hard, but I know you can do this." She acknowledged the girls' improvement as they worked through the sight-reading examples. She said, "Ladies, you're looking real good today." One girl said, "I'm not. I'm so lost, and I'm afraid that people will laugh at me." Ms. Walker said, "Look around you, these are your friends, has anyone ever laughed at you?" One girl said, "Just because someone doesn't say something doesn't mean they're not thinking it." I watched as Ms. Walker rolled her eyes and said, "All right, let's get to work."

Ms. Walker's Beliefs about Culturally Diverse Repertoire

I wondered about how Ms. Walker felt about teaching at such a culturally and ethnically diverse school. She said that it was not an issue for her because of her first teaching job at Twin Ridge. She described her first teaching experience in terms of student diversity:

Well, in terms of diversity and the make-up of the school, Twin Ridge was very similar to what is here [at Marshall High School]. Actually, it was more African-American rather than ESOL or Hispanic or all the different cultures [that] you see up here. But I've never had a problem here at Marshall, you know, being white. Just because I think that in my subject area, I try to hit a lot of different areas of culture. For example, we're doing gospel and spirituals, and I love culturally diverse music. (personal communication, January 23, 2004)

Throughout the 10 months of data collection, I observed that Ms. Walker's various choirs rehearsed and performed a variety of non-Western music, including folk songs, spirituals, gospel songs, and several Native American chants. I asked her to say more about her beliefs of programming culturally diverse music.

I really do try to be as diverse as possible when choosing the music and in talking about the culture of that music. So I think I have a pretty heavy basis [emphasis] on [cultural diversity]. I mean, like it would be boring if I just chose white American folk music. But like the gospel music and the spirituals, and, you know, we're doing a Japanese piece; *Hotaru Koi* is Japanese. I just think that chorus would be really boring if you didn't incorporate all that. So I think that [the] subject matter has a lot to do with it as well. If you're teaching U.S. history, there

might be, you know, just different strategies to learn different cultures. (personal communication, January 23, 2004)

I asked Ms. Walker how she learned the music of cultures different from her own. She told me that she listened to recordings, went to choral reading sessions and conferences, and occasionally asked her bilingual students for help. She told me that several of her chamber choir students were especially skilled in their pronunciation of Latin.

Feeling Pressure to Excel

In my many observations of Ms. Walker's teaching, I noticed a drive and force of personality that seemed to push her and her students to learn as much and do as much as possible in every rehearsal. The subject of the annual choral festival came up in many of our conversations. She noted that the chamber choir received superior ratings every year and had gone on to do well in the state festival throughout her three years as choral director at Marshall High School. She felt extremely pressured to continue to perform at such a superior level and worried constantly about the possibility of not measuring up to the high standard that she had set.

To add to her worries, this year, her goal was to earn superior ratings for both the treble chorus and the concert chorus in the upcoming (2004) festival season. Ms. Walker told me that she felt strongly about including the concert chorus, which was composed mostly of fourth-period students, even though she had been urged by other directors to take only her advanced choirs to the festival. She was determined to give all her students, especially her students in the fourth-period chorus class, a high-level music education. In light of this statement, I asked her what her goals were for ESOL students. She told me

that her goal for these students was the same as for all of her choral students. She wanted all her students:

to develop general sight-reading abilities. To be able to look at a whole note and know how many beats it gets. Not necessarily knowing *solfege*, but being able to look at the structure of a phrase and know whether the notes are going up or down. If it's four-four time, you know that that note is only going to get one beat. Or to have a general idea about music and enjoying it; being exposed to many different kinds of music that they would not have otherwise been exposed to. (personal communication, November 14, 2003)

Ms. Walker was certain that if her students learned more about music in her class, their lives would be richer, and they would be able to participate in more musical activities throughout their lives. She viewed the nonauditioned fourth-period chorus class as an avenue to share her love of and knowledge about music with a broad range of students.

Discussion

In many ways, Ms. Walker's beliefs that her ESOL students should achieve at the same level as her other students in the fourth-period class suggested that she had adopted a color-blind philosophy for dealing with her students (Neuwirth, 2003). Mike Stefanis, the track coach at Marshall High School, had made a similar statement. He told me, "I don't see color, and I refuse to identify my students by their race. I don't even check the race box about myself or my family" (personal communication, December 9, 2003).

While this philosophy is based on the notion of helping all persons achieve equal treatment by being indifferent to racial, ethnic, and other such differences and conducting

business as if these differences did not exist, it can lead to misrepresentations of reality that are likely to encourage discrimination against minority group members (Neuwirth, 2003). It was clear to me through my conversations with Ms. Walker that she knew that her immigrant students were having a difficult time in her class, yet this knowledge conflicted with her own beliefs about not treating students differently because of race or ethnicity.

Because of the size of the fourth-period class and her own monolingual status, Ms. Walker perceived a disconnection between herself and her immigrant students that she was unable to bridge. I sensed that she appreciated my taking time to get to know her students, but suspected that she thought that it was impossible for her to do so in the context of teaching such a large class. Consequently, she did not know the musical backgrounds of her recent immigrant students. She had no idea which students had ever sung in chorus, played an instrument, or taken a music course before. While she was deeply frustrated by her inability to communicate more with her immigrant students, she was unable to find a way to alleviate that frustration.

Performing Diverse Music

Ms. Walker's explanation of her repertoire selection seemed to focus on her own appreciation for diverse music, with the added benefit of learning about other cultures through the study of selected music. She selected music because she found it challenging and wanted to share it with her students. Because of her concern about performing well in the festival, the preponderance of repertoire that she taught was taken from the state and county festival list. Her love for spirituals and gospel music, as well as the regular

occurrence of these pieces in her concert program, suggested an approach similar to what Elliott (1995) called the *amalgamationist* curriculum. Elliott noted:

The *amalgamationist* curriculum includes a limited range of monoculture practices, based on their frequency in the core repertoire of the Western classical tradition of their potential for incorporation into this tradition. . . . Similarly selected non-Western [types of music] are viewed in terms of their utility: as sources of new elements and ideas for incorporation into contemporary concert music, jazz, and pop music. (p. 291)

Ms. Walker told me that she also chose music that other successful choral directors had selected. She wanted her program at Marshall High School to be viewed as one of the strong choral traditions in Holton County and placed a high priority on performing a standard choral repertoire. Her repertoire selection, while somewhat diverse, reflected tried-and-true pieces that were approved by county and state music organizations.

Throughout my many observations of Ms. Walker, it was clear that she loved performing diverse types of music and worked hard at reproducing the pieces as accurately as possible. In many instances, she had heard another choir perform the selection in a way that was exciting to her and then she did her best to recreate it with her students. It appeared that the musical challenge and the goal of performance excellence were the central reasons for the selection of the repertoire.

However, failing to situate the piece of music in a social, cultural, or political realm could deprive students of an opportunity to understand the music in relation to the larger aspects of the culture from which it came. This primary focus on “tackling the music”

further suggests a color-blind philosophy of teaching music, in which the teacher neglects to acknowledge adequately and honor the stories and customs associated with the piece of music (Page, 2001).

A High Musical Standard

During rehearsals, it appeared that Ms. Walker expected her students, regardless of their level of musicianship, to work toward learning to read music. She referred to passages in the music in musical terms, and in rehearsal, she demanded that her students do the same. She told me many times that she knew that the students would have to demonstrate their sight-reading abilities in festival. After their evaluations last year, she knew that she had not stressed mastering sight-reading enough. She told me:

I evaluated myself at the end of last year and the end of the first semester of last year, and I was like, what did my kids learn this semester? Pretty much nothing. I feel that the kids should be able to get through first-semester choir class and be able to know what a whole note is. And I'm kicking myself because I wasn't stressing that enough. I was like, it's a music course. You know? And I know there are like different levels of ability, but a kid should not be able to get through a semester of chorus and not be able to tell you how many beats a half note gets.

This sense of urgency to excel in the choral festival came across in nearly all the teaching and rehearsal sessions that I observed. From my own years of high school teaching, I had also experienced this same pressure and noted that my students often picked up on the stress that I had felt. I spoke to a number of Ms. Walker's students about how they felt about performing in the district festival. They too were, as one young

woman described it, “festivally motivated” and wanted to represent their school in the best possible way.

I found that the immigrant students whom I interviewed felt similarly. They perceived the choral festival as a competition and wanted to win for their school. Regardless of their ability to understand much of the language being used in the class, during the week of the festival, they were unified in wanting to embody the characteristics of a superior American high school chorus.

Summary

In this chapter, I presented a detailed description of the research setting of the study. I began by describing the changing demographics of the community that surrounds Marshall High School as the area shifted from a mostly white farming population to a more ethnically and racially diverse community. Next, I illustrated my initial impressions of the music program, including descriptions of the instrumental program. I also explored the three choral classes.

I presented a description of Amanda Walker, the choral director. All descriptions were written in a narrative form to provide opportunities for readers to form their own impressions of the setting. Following these descriptions, I highlighted my interpretation of some of my initial observations.

In the next chapter, I will present narrative cases of each primary immigrant student participant in the study. To show the great variability in the experiences of each girl, I have chosen to introduce the participants on the basis of their time living in the U.S., starting with the most recent arrival. As I have done in the narrative presented in this chapter, I will present an interpretation of each narrative.

CHAPTER 5: STUDENT NARRATIVES

In this chapter, I present the student narratives that I created from the data collected in this study. Because each participant entered the study with different linguistic backgrounds, educational experiences, musical knowledge, and music performance expectations, as well as differing levels of proficiency with the English language, each narrative is unique. Despite these dissimilarities, I structured each narrative to adhere to the following framework: introduction, biographical sketch, previous musical experiences, present musical experiences, and thematic discussion.

In the introduction section for each narrative, I describe my initial impressions of each participant, often recounting our first meeting. Then I discuss background information, including, when appropriate, linguistic status, reason for immigration, and significant family relationships. Additionally, I explore each participant's previous musical experiences, as well as her perceptions of her experience in chorus at Marshall High School. Finally, at the end of each narrative, I discuss the central themes that emerged from each participant's story and present my own interpretation of each case. I have chosen to order these narratives from the most recent immigrant student to the least recent, hoping to illuminate not only the broad range of issues that immigrant students face as they enter content-area classrooms, but also the distinct stages to the acculturation process for teenagers in high school, which will be explored more fully in chapter 6.

The first two narratives highlight the experience of two young women, Juliana and Irina, who were still in the early stages of the acculturation process and therefore were more apt to share personal information. Both girls grew to depend on our interviews as a means to express themselves in the class and seemed to enjoy missing class for more

one-on-one attention. Of the other girls, Liz was in the chorus class for one semester only, and I was unable to do follow-up interviews with her. While her background information is not as developed as the others', her linguistic competence was at a much higher level, so she was able to provide more in-depth details about her perceptions of her present and previous musical experiences. Esther and Jennifer preferred to be interviewed together. The format of their narrative varies slightly from the other three cases, but illustrates similarities and differences in the acculturation process between two girls who emigrated from the same country at the same age.

Juliana Arqueta Campos: Building *Confianza*

Juliana was the first to speak to me directly at my initial meeting with all four participants in the chorus class. She was a petite young woman with shoulder-length brown hair parted in the middle. She wore a colorful scarf as a headband that accented natural auburn highlights in her hair. I was amazed at her poise and apparent self-assurance when she asked me in English, "Do you speak Spanish?" When I said, "No," I immediately noted the disappointed look on her face. I quickly added that if she were willing, I would like to communicate with her through an Internet translation program, so she could write and read in Spanish. Juliana's reaction was instantly positive. She said to me in English, "Yes, I want to write on computer in my language." She told me that she wanted to start right away. I led her into the music office, and we sat down at a computer that I had already set to the Free Translation Program Web site (<http://www.freetranslation.com>). I wrote to her:

Juliana, I am Miss Carlow, and I am a music teacher. I am interested in learning about how ESOL students at Marshall High School feel about singing in the choir.

Will you help me learn what is helpful for ESOL students so that I can be a better music teacher? (field notes, October 3, 2003)

I typed the text in English and clicked the button for translation. In less than 10 seconds, my message was translated into Spanish. She typed, “*Sí, ayudaré*” [Yes, I will help]. Next she wrote, “*me gusta la clase de coro*” [I enjoy chorus class]. Then she spoke to me in English, saying that she did not understand very much of what the teacher was saying.

Early in the data collection, I discovered that my developing Spanish seemed on par with Juliana’s English literacy skills and that we had a more or less an even playing field in our written communication pattern. While she seemed to enjoy taking a break from class to write and talk with me, at times, I sensed that Juliana had an urgent need to write in her own language.

Our eight journal sessions provided Juliana an outlet for expressing herself in Spanish that she was unable to find throughout the school day, and they fostered a kind of dialogue journal relationship between us as we focused on instant interactive communication. Dialogue journals have been used for many years with English language learner (ELL) students, who bring to the classroom a different linguistic and cultural background. Because Juliana had only been living in the U.S. for 12 weeks, I thought that she would have greater success in writing in her own language. Writing ability in a student’s native language provides second-language learners with both linguistic and nonlinguistic resources that they can use as they approach writing in a second language. In addition, second-language learners can apply the knowledge about writing gained in first-language settings to second-language settings (Hudelson, 1994).

Before our scheduled interview sessions, I would write out three or four questions in English as a guide for our discussion. When Juliana arrived for her interview, I would have the translation program set up in the music office with a general question written in Spanish on the screen. She would read the question and then respond in Spanish. Then I would translate what she had written to English and ask another question, based on her response. It was through these initial written dialogues that I began to piece together a portrait of Juliana Argueta Campos.

Biographical Sketch

Juliana was born on July 27, 1987, in a city hospital in San Vicente, El Salvador. Her city of birth, San Vicente, is one of the largest cities in the central part of the country. The city was badly damaged by Hurricane Mitch in 1998, as well as by a powerful earthquake in the spring of 2001. Juliana's family and friends were safe during the earthquake; however, she told me that many parts of the countryside near her home were devastated, and it took a very long time for daily life in her town to get back to normal.

In the summer of 2003, when Juliana was 15 years old, she started out on the journey to the United States with her mother and 14-year-old brother, Josué. Her mother, Liliana, came to the U.S. to find employment and a better life for her children. Juliana told me that her trip to the U.S. was the first time she had traveled by airplane. She remembered that she felt very tired after the long flight and a five-hour delay in her travel schedule. Upon her arrival in the United States, Juliana and her family moved into a house with her older sister, Ingrid, 22, and Ingrid's husband, Jorge, 29, who had emigrated from El Salvador in the late 1990s. Juliana's two other sisters, Sandra, 20, and Brenda, 18, stayed in El Salvador with their husbands.

Juliana spoke no English when she arrived in the U.S. She remembered hearing a Spanish-language radio program in her brother-in-law's car on the way home from the airport. Juliana told me that she was relieved to hear music from her country. She enjoyed listening to Spanish-language radio stations in the U.S. because hearing music sung in her native language helped her to feel connected to the friends and family members whom she had left behind in El Salvador.

Linguistic Minority Status

Before she was permitted to enroll at Marshall High School, Juliana and her brother had to report to the Holton County Central Testing Office to take an English proficiency examination to assess their ability to understand, speak, read, and write in English. Due to her family's confusion about having to take the test at a location other than Marshall High School, Juliana and Josué were a week late in starting school. Juliana's test lasted two hours. The next day, the results of her test were sent to Marshall High School, where Juliana was placed in ESOL, Level 1. Josué was placed in ESOL, Level 1, at Spring Mill Middle School nearby.

As Juliana had tested into ESOL, Level 1, she was assigned to three ESOL classes each day. These classes focused on engaging students in listening, speaking, reading, and writing English. According to Harriet Dean, the director of guidance at Marshall High School, the overall goal of the ESOL program was to help students to become familiar with the culture and structure of an American high school. The ESOL program was "committed to building on students' prior knowledge to prepare them to enter academic content classes." Dean believed that placing beginning ESOL students in chorus class

was an excellent way to help them “learn the language and get them into the mainstream of other students who are not ESOL” (personal communication, January 22, 2004).

All ESOL, Level 1, students were required to take two periods of English, which left room in Juliana’s schedule for an ESOL math class and one elective class. According to Juliana, she did not initially choose chorus as her elective, but was encouraged by her guidance counselor to try something new. In that first meeting, her counselor, Ms. Edwards, asked Juliana whether she liked to sing. Juliana recalled that she was not sure what her counselor was talking about.

Then Juliana remembered hearing her counselor say the word *chorus*, and it sounded like *coro*, the Spanish word for *choir*. Juliana had sung with friends in her church youth choir in San Vicente, so she smiled and nodded when her counselor told Juliana that she would love the fourth-period chorus class. In our first interview, she told me that she did enjoy chorus, but was nervous around Ms. Walker. I asked Juliana about her favorite teacher at Marshall High School. She spoke to me in English and said, “Talk to Mr. Caceres; he will tell you about me” (personal communication, October 6, 2003).

Observing Juliana’s ESOL, Level 1, Class

On Juliana’s recommendation, I made an appointment with Mr. Manuel Caceres, a friendly and sociable man in his mid-fifties. Manuel Caceres was born in Puerto Rico. Although he had taught in the Holton County ESOL program for many years, the 2003–2004 school year was his first at Marshall High School. Mr. Caceres seemed enthusiastic about the idea of research centered on the experiences of ESOL students in mainstreamed classes and was eager to talk to me.

In his words, the ESOL Department at Marshall High School was viewed by the general student body and the administration as “an appendage; a small segregated entity in a large common space.” He believed that the ESOL students were invisible to the rest of the student population. Caceres noted that his students were often confused by the double standards that they saw being played out at Marshall High. He told me:

My American students are used to living by the rules, and the school emphasizes inflexible rules. However, ESOL students become very confused when they see American students not standing for the Pledge of Allegiance. Then the ESOL students do not want to get up, and they argue with me that the American students do not get up. (personal communication, December 19, 2003)

My visit to Mr. Caceres’s classroom revealed a teacher with easygoing and friendly rapport with his students. Including Juliana, there were nine students in the classroom. I watched as Mr. Caceres addressed the class in English. He began to tell jokes in English and teased about how much he loved *merengue* music and that it was better than *salsa*. Juliana shook her head at him, and he smiled at her. He acknowledged that he was trying to initiate a dialogue with his students. “Yes. We are having a dialogue. Dialogue is back and forth talking.”

I watched as all nine students listened to him. I could see a young man, who appeared to be Asian, sitting nearby as he entered words into a pocket translator. Then a young boy stood up and began to speak to Mr. Caceres in Spanish. Mr. Caceres interrupted him and said, “English only.” The boy sat down, obviously frustrated, but continued to try to speak in Spanish. Again, Mr. Caceres said, “English only, my friend.”

The boy stopped speaking, but began gesturing at the young man near me who was typing into a pocket translator. Finally, the student spoke. “Translator is lost [missing].” I watched as Mr. Caceres shook his head and then told the boy how to locate the school’s lost and found station. The room was silent as he sympathized with the young student and said: “My friend, that is a 75-dollar lesson you learned today.”

Mr. Caceres, sensing tension in the room, turned to the entire class. The students had started talking and whispering. The teacher abruptly changed the subject of the lesson. “In America, this is the time of year when we sing lots of holiday songs; they are called something that sounds like a woman’s name. They are called Christmas *carols*” He began humming “Silent Night.” I was surprised to observe an immediate mood shift from anxiety to what seemed to be a collective sense of relief. He began to hum “*Feliz Navidad,*” and I watched as the students started singing along with him. Two Spanish-speaking boys in the front row pushed their seats together and put their arms around each other and joined in loudly. One boy sang very low and was not in any key at all; the other boy sang and spoke the words in a higher pitch, but both boys sang freely. When the song was over, a girl who I later learned was from Haiti, called out, “again, *en Deutsch.*” Then Mr. Caceres started humming “The 12 Days of Christmas,” and the class became even more animated. Students reached into their desks and pulled out a song sheet with the words to the traditional carol and began to sing.

Throughout the song, Juliana occasionally looked at me, and I sensed that she was worried that I might have a negative comment about the quality of the singing. Instead, I noticed that Juliana was singing out in a way that I had not seen her do in her chorus class. I watched as Mr. Caceres guided the group through the song. He was a naturally

musical person, and he seemed to pass his love of singing on to his students. After a time, the group wanted to rush through the many verses in the song, but he stopped the students and demonstrated how to slow down on the phrase “five golden rings.”

Juliana followed along with the rest of the group. She seemed especially proud during the last five minutes of the period when Mr. Caceres showed the entire class a videotaped performance of the recent choral concert that featured Juliana and Anita, another choral student in the beginning ESOL class, singing Christmas carols with the Marshall High School Chorus. The class applauded at video close-ups of the two girls. I watched as Juliana smiled and put her head down during the applause.

Previous Musical Experiences

My first spoken interview with Juliana took place in early October 2003. She had been living in the U.S. for just 12 weeks. I had observed the participants for three weeks prior and was anxious to hear about their perceptions of chorus at Marshall High School. However, I first wanted to learn more about the musical backgrounds of the individual singers. It was in this interview that I learned that Juliana had sung in her church choir in her family church in San Vicente. She also told me that her singing in chorus at Marshall High School was her first experience in a school chorus.

Juliana began singing at the age of 10 at the *Adventista del Septimo Dia* in San Vicente. She sang in the children’s choir at the church from the ages of 10 to 13. When she moved into the eighth grade, she began to sing with the youth choir, which was comprised of teenagers and young adults up to the age of 20. According to Juliana, her youth choir sang mostly simple call and response songs in unison. The audiences that she sang for were other youth choirs from villages near San Vicente, as well as occasional

church services. After the concerts would end, singers from many different villages would enjoy a meal and a joint worship service together.

I focused the first part of one of our journal sessions around Juliana's perception of how music was taught in El Salvador. At first, she seemed confused by my line of questioning and began to describe how the music was performed. She said in English, "Most of the songs were back and forth. It was—like—a solo and then a group." But then, she gestured that she wanted to write more. She wrote in Spanish, "*veces, cantamos la otra manera también. El coro entero junto que canta con diversas voces*" [and sometimes, we sang the other way too; the whole choir together singing with different voices] (personal communication, October 10, 2003). To clarify my question, I asked how she learned songs in her choir in San Vicente. At first she answered in English: "What they do is test your voices. Then they begin to choose which part you sing."

Then she wrote:

La canción fue escrita a veces. . . . No era realmente notas de la música. Era justo las palabras. Escuchamos las canciones en una grabación. Escuchamos cantar del coro. Ése es cómo aprendimos [Sometimes the song was written down. . . .

Then it was not really music notes. It was just the words. . . . Most of the time, we listened to the songs on a recording with another group's singing]. (personal communication, October 10, 2003)

Later, Juliana wrote that she remembered listening to a song many times until each section felt comfortable enough for her to sing that part correctly. She thought that it was much simpler than the way Ms. Walker taught in the chorus class because all the teacher had to do was "*empuje el botón en el cassette y entonces la música jugada*" [push

the button on the cassette and the music played] (personal communication, Journal, October 22, 2003).

Music classes were offered after services every Sunday afternoon at her church. I asked Juliana whether her choir in San Vicente ever practiced sight-reading, and she told me, “Yes, we did the *do-re-mi*, and there were practices on Sundays that I never paid attention to. . . . I was never serious. I didn’t really learn the *do-re-mi*” (personal communication, November 14, 2003). I asked her whether she had ever practiced rhythms in her music classes in church, and she shook her head to indicate *no*.

In subsequent interviews with Juliana, I learned that music class was not offered in the public schools of San Vicente, but was taught in private music academies. Music lessons were expensive, and Juliana told me that she did not think that she was advanced enough to take music classes in an academy. One day, Juliana wrote to me about her choir director at her church in San Vicente. Choir practice was led by a layperson at her church, Señor Edward Guerro. Juliana described her music director as a strict teacher, but someone she loved and respected very much:

“Mi director en el Salvador era un Señor Eddy, el era muy estricto, pero tenia una forma especial de enseñar” [My teacher in El Salvador was called Señor Eddy, and he was very strict, but he had a special way of instructing us]. (personal communication, Journal, November 12, 2003)

In English, Juliana told me that she knew that Señor Eddy liked her because even though he was strict, “he had a way of showing his love” (personal communication, Journal, November 12, 2003).

Juliana told me that her church choir sang for worship services almost every week. She remarked on several different occasions that she loved singing in the youth choir in San Vicente because they were given invitations to sing at other churches, and they traveled by bus to other villages to sing for religious festivals that included other youth choirs. It seemed that Juliana's participation in the youth choir was a major part of her social life in San Vicente. The choir sang at services regularly, and they rehearsed many songs during rehearsals. This was quite different from the repertoire she worked on at Marshall High School. She noted, "We sing less here than in my country. Here we practice about two or three songs. In my country, we would sing up to 10 songs" (personal communication, December 5, 2003).

When I asked her to compare singing in the churches in San Vicente and the choral concert at Marshall High School, she laughed and said:

The biggest church that I had ever been in was—like—one half as large as where we had the concert [at Marshall High School]. In my country, I was not afraid to sing a solo because I knew everybody. Here I would be nervous. (personal communication, December 5, 2003)

Juliana remembered that no formal attendance was ever taken, and there were equal numbers of boys and girls in the class. From Juliana's description, her previous experiences in chorus were different in almost every way from what she would find in her chorus class at Marshall High School.

Perceptions of Chorus at Marshall High School

As I observed during my initial visits to the choral classroom at Marshall High School, Juliana was inconsistent in her daily participation. She continually fidgeted and

barely moved her mouth. During rehearsals, when instructed by the teacher, she stood up with the rest of the group. When she sang, I noticed that she barely moved her lips. She rarely made eye contact with Ms. Walker and usually sang with her eyes cast downward. At times, it appeared that she was not singing at all.

Juliana appeared to enjoy warm-ups, but was only minimally successful in the individual rhythm sight-reading tests. In almost every rehearsal, Ms. Walker made reference to the fact that the chorus would be participating in the district choral festival. Ms. Walker told me that she was committed to teaching her students to sight-read music because she felt that they would do better at festival and that more students would be eligible for participation in the All-State Chorus and the advanced choral groups at Marshall High School. Ms. Walker started each class with a rhythm reading exercise and reminded students daily that they would be taking individual rhythm tests.

The Rhythm Test: Juliana's Experience

One of my early observations of the participants coincided with a rhythm test day. I watched Ms. Walker write out five rhythm examples on the chalkboard in front of the room. She reminded the students that they should count out the beats for each measure as they clapped their pattern, but she did not review the patterns with her students. She called each student's name in the class, assigned each student a number corresponding to one of the rhythm patterns, and pointed to each pattern, along with each name, but did not review the rhythms.

Juliana was the second student called. I watched as she stood looking down at the floor instead of at the chalkboard. She started the pattern with no apparent sense of what was going on, and her clapping died out after a few beats. The teacher allowed her to start

over, but this did not seem to help. I watched as Juliana stopped in the middle of the exercise, shrugged her shoulders, looked over at me, and sat down, clearly embarrassed by her lackluster performance.

Juliana and I met later that day. I had written on the computer screen, “*¿Qué es la cosa más dura acerca de la clase del coro?*” [What is the hardest thing about chorus class?].

She wrote, “*No me gusta los examenens de aplauso que hastio. No me gusta cuando algunas vesez mis companeros interumpen la clase*” [I do not like the clapping exams. They are boring. I do not like it when the students interrupt the class many times] (personal communication, October 10, 2003).

We spent time that day going over the rhythm examples that I had seen Ms. Walker review with the students, but I sensed that Juliana was distracted from our session. Throughout this particular interview, she said three times that she loved to sing, but that she did not understand why she had to learn to clap rhythms. While many of the students in the fourth-period chorus seemed to feel the same way, I sensed that Juliana’s confusion about learning to read music was linked to her inability to understand a good portion of Ms. Walker’s spoken interactions throughout the class period.

Juliana’s Frustration

I began to sense that although Juliana enjoyed singing every day in school, she was having a difficult time feeling connected to her classmates. In our second meeting, she mentioned that while both Ms. Walker and I were permitted to teach in English, and all the students around her who spoke English were able to have instruction in their native language, it did not seem fair that she had to struggle so much. She told me in

English, “I do not understand why I learn in English, and there are kids who don’t like to, you know, learn also in Spanish” (personal communication, November 10, 2003).

One day, Juliana came into the music office before I had posted her interview question on the computer. Without saying a word to me, she sat down and wrote, “*Mome gusta que mis companeros se quejen de la cansion en espanole*” [I do not like it when my classmates complain of singing in Spanish] (personal communication, Journal, November 12, 2003).

Her statement confused me, as I had conducted 14 classroom observations in the preceding eight weeks and had not heard the chorus sing in Spanish. I typed “*Digame mas acerca de esol*” [Tell me more about that]. Juliana shook her head and said, “Forget it” in English. I sensed that she was becoming frustrated with our journal efforts. I was also coming to realize that there were many things going on in her class when I was not observing that she could not tell me about because of her limited English skills. She was also having a difficult time writing more complex ideas in Spanish, because at school, she was writing only in English.

I began to realize that if I wanted to learn more about her, I needed to find a way to hear Juliana’s voice in spoken words as well as a journal format and limited snippets of English. I called on a friend and neighbor, Mr. Alfred Ebele, a recent emigrant from Central America, to act as interpreter for several interview sessions with Juliana. Mr. Ebele, although born in Nigeria, had recently lived in El Salvador and spoke Spanish fluently. He and his wife had been ministers of liturgical music in a small church during their time in El Salvador.

Hearing Juliana's Voice

During the morning of the first interview, I sat with Mr. Ebele and Juliana in the music office. I was preparing to introduce them to one another, but someone briefly called me out of the room. When I came back into the office, the two of them were in deep conversation, and I was overjoyed to see Juliana speaking rapidly in Spanish to Alfred. I had not seen the talkative side of her before. She was smiling, speaking loudly, and appeared to be talking nonstop. This opportunity for her to speak to an adult in Spanish during the school day apparently was a gift to Juliana that she relished. She told me later that she loved talking to Alfred. At the end of this first meeting with him, she hugged him and asked him to come back again to her chorus class.

My first question for Juliana through Alfred involved her comment regarding her classmates' complaining about singing in Spanish. I asked her what she meant by that particular journal entry. Before Alfred had translated my question, Juliana immediately began to speak rapidly to Alfred in Spanish, and I noted that it seemed that she could understand my question posed in English, but could not answer in English. I listened as Alfred responded as if he were Juliana:

We were singing the "*Noche de Mundo*," "Silent Night," the Christmas song.

Okay, the class was practicing in Spanish. Then most of the students got angry and said, "No." They told the teacher that they were not going to learn it in Spanish because it was difficult for them to learn it. Then the teacher supported them, and I got angry. . . . The point is that we were going to sing that song in Spanish. And now the teacher has said that we weren't going to sing it in Spanish anymore. It was going to be sung in English. I wasn't really angry, but I felt bad

about the way the teacher supported the other kids. . . . I feel bad that other students cannot learn a song in my language. (personal communication, November 21, 2003)

Next, I asked Juliana why she thought that the teacher had given in to the other students' demands. I sat as Juliana and Alfred conferred. He replied,

Because for her, the teacher, it was also difficult. She, the teacher couldn't sing it the way it was in Spanish. She discovered that it was difficult for her to learn it in Spanish, so she decided to say, "Just forget about it." (personal communication, November 21, 2003)

Next, I asked whether Juliana would have felt comfortable helping Ms. Walker teach the Spanish words to the class. Below is an excerpt from that conversation:

Alfred: If she [the teacher] had said, "Can somebody help me with the Spanish," would you have helped her?

Juliana: No.

Alfred: No? [What about] in private?

Juliana: Maybe if I [were] asked privately for assistance, I would have given her help, but if it was in public, I would have said, "No." . . . The teacher sometimes makes me nervous. (personal communication, November 21, 2003)

At this point in our conversation, Mr. Ebele stopped translating, turned to Juliana, and began to speak to her in Spanish. I watched as Juliana listened to him, shook her head, and said, "No." Then he explained to me:

I have told her that you are not grading her teacher and that you are only trying to figure out what it feels like to learn music in a different language and how it is

easy or difficult for her, but she stopped because she feels she is going against the teacher. (personal communication, November 21, 2003)

I sensed that Juliana was feeling uncomfortable about sharing this story, so I did not want to push her to say more. Instead, I changed the focus of the conversation to what she thought about the concert that I had recently attended. Immediately, I noticed that Juliana seemed relieved and eager to tell me how much she loved singing in the concerts at Marshall High School. Since Mr. Ebele's visit occurred two days after the winter concert, I urged Juliana to tell me her reactions to the recent concert.

"The Concert was Beautiful"

She told me in English, "I liked the girls in the green dresses [the Treble Chorus]. Their singing was strong." We talked more about what it felt like to sing in front of so many people, and she told me that it made her very happy. She then taught me the phrase "*el concierto era hermoso*" [The concert was beautiful] (personal communication, November 21, 2003). A week later, Juliana wrote the following entry in her journal:

Me gusta los ejercicion vocals que aemos al comensar la clase. Me gusta cuando cantamos eningles. Me gusta aprender las notas del "to-re-mi." Me gusta la clase de coro. Aquí es una experiencia buena de aprender las notas musicales. Sí, es difícil, y es una experiencia nueva, pero yo lo quiero. "Deseo ser en chorus el año próximo. ¿Cantamos maravillosamente?" [I like the vocal exercises, which we sing at the beginning of class. I like to sing in English. I like to learn the *do-re-mi* I like chorus class. Here it is a good experience to learn the musical notes. Yes, it is difficult, and it is a new experience, but I do like it. I want to take chorus next

year because we sing beautifully]. (personal communication, Journal, December 5, 2003)

Then she told me in English: “I felt that it was beautiful. It was like being in a theater, a big theater with many people singing and listening to us while we sang. I felt good.” (personal communication, December 5, 2003).

Based on her positive experience in several performances during the semester, Juliana’s perspective seemed to be shifting from one of disintegration to the beginnings of self-sufficiency in her new choral culture (Atkinson, Morten, & Sue, 1993). This apparent change of Juliana’s attitude about her chorus class highlighted the shift that immigrant students sometimes make as they begin to become more and more familiar with the day-to-day expectations of their classes in their new schools. In the next section, I will discuss how Juliana’s feelings of her own musical capabilities, combined with the norms, values, and beliefs about choral music conveyed by Ms. Walker in class, affected Juliana’s success in chorus class.

Thematic Discussion

Juliana entered secondary school in the United States, speaking no English, in September of 2003. Six of her seven classes were structured for language minority students to learn basic skills at a rudimentary level, but her elective choral class was geared toward a highly regimented choral culture. For Ms. Walker and her students at Marshall High School, receiving superior ratings in festival indicated a high level of success. While most of the students in the class seemed to understand these goals, Juliana’s inability to comprehend much of the language used on a daily basis in the

choral setting was compounded by her unfamiliarity with a myriad of context clues that are specific to American high school chorus.

“English Only” Policies

The policy of “English only” to which the school system and the ESOL Department adhered effectively silenced Juliana’s voice publicly. Even her ally, Mr. Caceres, did not allow her to speak Spanish, her native language, in class. He also told me that even though he knew that he should not, he found himself comparing Juliana to Anita, a foreign student, from Ecuador, who entered his ESOL, Level 1, class at the same time as Juliana. “She [Anita] is the cream of the crop and in many ways challenges Juliana. If Anita answers a question, then Juliana will answer a question, but she [Juliana] has very little motivation on her own” (personal communication, December 19, 2003). Anita and Juliana were in the chorus class together, and Mr. Caceres thought that this was an important connection for both of them.

Later, I learned that Anita was coded by the district’s ESOL Department as a foreign student, meaning that she had maintained official residency in another country and came to school in the United States with a visa to visit or study. I spoke with Anita several times and learned that her father was a diplomat from Ecuador who was working for one year at the World Bank on a special project sponsored by the finance ministry of Ecuador.

Anita’s parents were bilingual, and they supported Anita’s learning English for the year in which she was enrolled at Marshall High School. Unfortunately, Juliana had very little support for learning English at home. She told me that at home, she spoke only Spanish. She told me that she and her family watched the Spanish-language stations on

television. While it made sense to Mr. Caceres that there would be a difference in the two girls' processes of learning English, he continued to be frustrated with the lack of motivation that Juliana showed for wanting to use English when compared with Anita's eagerness. The "English only" rule was a stimulating part of Anita's schoolwork. For Juliana, it seemed to be a frustrating and isolating experience.

Cultural Discourses of High School Chorus

Juliana was not only having trouble speaking and understanding the language that her teachers used, but also falling behind because of the vastly different cultural discourse norms that she encountered in her new American school. This phenomenon came to light in her chorus class vis-à-vis her unfamiliarity with the vast number of context-specific assumptions that are the norm in a high school chorus class. During the first few months of school, she was confused by the music literacy thrust that permeates a large percentage of high school choral programs in the U.S. At the beginning of this study, it simply made no sense to her that she would not be considered a singer if she could not read rhythmic or melodic notation. Ms. Walker's choice of isolated rhythmic patterns for tests was completely removed from Juliana's previous experiences in making music. The emphasis on individual rhythm tests stressed in the choral curriculum made no sense to Juliana because she failed to see the relevance of rhythmic sight-reading. She had not yet adopted the strong value system in the choral culture that supports striving for superior ratings in choral festivals.

Juliana was also frequently confused by the polyphonic nature of some of the repertoire, and she often did not know when she was supposed to sing. In her choir in El Salvador, she had sung call-and-response songs and a few three-part hymns. Given that

her previous experience in choir in El Salvador had been based on regular participation in a worship service, she had a difficult time understanding why Ms. Walker spent so much time rehearsing individual parts.

Gay (2003) noted that sociocultural context, sociocultural nuances, discourse logic, discourse dynamics, delivery styles, social functions, role expectations, and nonverbal features are as important as vocabulary and other linguistic structures of communications. Juliana viewed the practice of rehearsing a few pieces to perfection and infrequent performances as opposed to singing a vast number of pieces and performing regularly as an indication that the chorus at Marshall High School was not as good as her chorus in El Salvador.

Juliana's understanding of choral festivals was based on years of attending the *San Salvador Festivale*, which she remembered as being celebrated in early August of every year in honor of the city's patron saint, "*El Salvador del Mundo*" [Savior of the World]. Juliana remembers singing with her choir at church services, as well as attending a parade with floats, a fair, a circus, and a huge fireworks display. Her participation as a member of the Marshall High School Combined Concert Choir in her Holton County Choral Festival was very different.

She and her choir walked onto a stage in front of a sparse audience, which included adjudicators with clipboards and papers in front of them. She watched as her teacher nervously looked out at the judges, waiting for their signal to proceed with the performance. Juliana told me that she thought that if the choir did not "win" at what she perceived was a competitive festival, Ms. Walker would lose her job. While other students thought of this as a challenge and enjoyed working hard to try to earn superior

ratings in the choral festival, I sensed that this environment was highly stressful for Juliana.

What Juliana saw as the teacher being “angry with the class” was interpreted by others who had been in chorus before as stress that is typical for choral teachers before a choral festival. Brianna, a veteran choral student, recalled her middle-school teacher’s reactions prior to festival:

Yeah, Miss Harper [a middle-school teacher] was very intense. If you didn’t take things seriously, she’d get very upset. Like—I remember right before festival, she was very, very stressed because people weren’t being serious, and we weren’t gonna do well because people weren’t being very serious. She was just really intense. Well, so is Miss Walker. But she has to be. (personal communication, January 7, 2004)

One primary participant in the study from Ghana noted that she was proud to work hard so that Marshall High School could be the “top choir” in the festival. Juliana told me that she was very nervous and could not wait to get off the stage. When the choir did not earn superior ratings in the festival, Juliana said that she felt ashamed and worried that the other students talked too much during class.

Lind (1999) noted that Hispanic students tend to perform better in learning environments that focus on cooperation rather than competition. Although Juliana was pleased with her performance in the concert and enjoyed the recognition from her ESOL classmates who watched the video in her class, she felt that the group had not lived up to the standards that Ms. Walker had set for the chorus.

A Desire for “Cariño”

After I had observed Juliana in her ESOL class, I spoke with Mr. Caceres at length after the class. He noted that of all his students, Juliana seemed the most resistant to speaking and writing in English. Because Mr. Caceres’s personality was warm and his interaction patterns were often built on informal conversations, I noticed that his students tended to speak out spontaneously. He seemed to show a great deal of empathy for his students. Monzó and Rueda (2001) noted that the use of *cariño*, an observable demonstration of affection commonly found in the Latino community, is expressed behaviorally through touch, proximity, and softened facial expressions.

I could see this very clearly in Mr. Caceres’s spoken interactions with his students. Despite his insistence on “English only,” his students saw him as their advocate and friend. Monzó and Rueda (2001) contended that relationships are built within larger social contexts, which include teacher/student interactions bound by the social organizations of schools and classrooms. Juliana was able to establish a trusting relationship with Mr. Caceres, and thus, she performed well in his class. Ms. Walker’s tone of voice and body language signaled anger to Juliana, whereas Brianna, a veteran choral student in the chorus class, told me that she knew that Ms. Walker “had to act tough, or the class would walk all over her and never be ready for the next concert” (personal communication, January 7, 2004).

Juliana’s description of her music director in El Salvador, Señor Eddy, was situated in her belief that he was able to show his love through his strictness. While it appeared that many of Ms. Walker’s students felt the same way, Juliana’s journals and

interviews, as well as my notes from field observations, revealed a more fragile connection with her choral teacher.

Summary: Building “Confianza”

Because this study depended on my being able to communicate with Juliana over an extended period of time, I found that I had to work through our linguistic incompatibilities; I was a beginning Spanish speaker, and Juliana was a beginning English speaker. Consequently, our relationship started out as one that relied heavily on Internet translation programs. Having used a number of different translation Web sites in communicating with parents and non-English speaking students in the past, I was aware of the limitations of such programs. I knew that while this method was a good source for opening communication with students, if I wanted to have precise translations, I would have to hire a human translator. This online format, however, suited Juliana’s need for immediate communication in her own language and was an important foundation for our forming a relationship.

My initial impressions of Juliana were formed based on her written entries in an electronic journal. Often, her words were written in Spanglish, a hybrid language of Spanish and English. Many times, the translation programs would not accept her writing in Spanish, and I would have to tease through her text using a Spanish-English dictionary and a pocket translator to get a sense of Juliana’s concerns. Then I would write a response in English, translate it to Spanish, and have it up on the computer screen, waiting for her at the start of our next interview.

This process was cumbersome, but I sensed that Juliana appreciated the efforts that I made to come to know her better. Monzó and Rueda (2001) noted that teachers who

emphasized a concern for students' emotional and social welfare played a significant role in helping Latino students to navigate learning in a new language. They called this process "building *confianza*." I saw this play out clearly in Juliana's ESOL class with Mr. Caceres. Despite his rule of "English only" in the classroom, his consistent presence in her day, as well as the fact that the two of them shared a common first language, allowed Juliana to open up to him in a way that was very different from the relationship she had with other teachers.

Sensing this, I would often begin our interviews with a written question, such as "*¿Cómo usted se siente hoy?*" or "*¿Qué hizo usted este fin de semana?*" [How are you feeling today? or What did you do this weekend?] I hoped that she would elaborate on her life inside and outside school in her own language. One day, I asked her to tell me about some of her favorite singers from her country. She spent considerable time listing her various favorite performers, and then we went to several Web sites and read about them. She showed me Spanish-language Web sites. On several occasions, she acted as my cultural broker.

Cultural brokers help ease people into each other's traditions. From our conversations, I learned from Juliana, an insider, about a style of music that appealed to a significant population of Latino youth. This gave Juliana a chance to take on the role of expert and, in a sense, for her to gain power over me. Foucault (1979) wrote that "information is power." In the classroom, cultural brokers give newcomers information that directly translates into power (Pipher, 2001).

In a sense, our initial conversations via journaling began to support Freire's tenets of literacy, which suggested that individual learners must be respected as significant

group members with rich contributions to make. This implies that teachers consider these experiences and beliefs as not only valid, but also as a point of departure from the traditional “banking” concept of education. As Freire (2002) put it, “The teacher is no longer merely the-one-who-teaches, but one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn, while being taught, also teach. They all become jointly responsible for a process in which all grow” (p. 80).

The policy of “English only” in Juliana’s ESOL classes was functioning as a form of “public silencing” (Davidson, 1997), pushing her further and further behind in school. Yet our informal journal sessions offered Juliana a chance to be an expert about the role of choral music in her life, and they gave her an opportunity to engage in meaningful communication in her own language.

In effect, through our communication, I became Juliana’s cultural broker into the traditions and customs of an American high school chorus. As Juliana began to feel more confident speaking and writing in English, our conversations began to reveal a singer who was proud to be a part of the school chorus and a young student who was growing more confident in her ability to contribute to the group effort of singing in a chorus.

Irina Choi: Seeking a Connection

On the day that I met the student participants for this study, I waited in one of the practice rooms for the students to come and meet me. I saw a young woman who appeared to be Asian walk toward me into the room. She was slight, had shoulder-length reddish-brown hair with bangs, wore red-tinted horn-rimmed glasses, and was very well-dressed. She was wearing high black boots, fitted jeans, and a very stylish pink sweater.

She walked in, looked directly at me, and asked me in English whether I was Miss Carlow.

I was immediately intrigued by her accent. I tried to place it while nodding *yes*. I asked her name and suggested that she sit down. She told me that she was Irina Choi. I then asked her where she had been born. I was astonished to learn that she was from Russia. She seemed amused at my surprise and told me that her first language was Russian. Because of her appearance, I had made an assumption about this student's linguistic and cultural background based on my perception of her race. I was soon to learn that Irina's geographic origins played a major role in the way she made sense of her social and school life in the United States.

Biographical Sketch

Irina Choi was born on May 6, 1987, in St. Petersburg, Russia. Her last name, Choi, is a common Korean name, while her first name, Irina, is a popular Russian name. She attended private school from first grade through fifth grade in St. Petersburg. Then, when she was 11 years old, she moved to Kazakhstan to live with her mother, Petra. Her mother and father separated in 1998. Shortly thereafter, Irina and her mother relocated to Kazakhstan, leaving her father and brother in St. Petersburg. Irina spent three years living with her mother in Shymkent, in the south central region of Kazakhstan, attending grades six, seven, and eight, during which time she sang in the school chorus and had many friends. Nonetheless, this move came at a highly stressful time for Irina. She explained:

When we moved to Kazakhstan, and my mother's sister [went] to America because she wanted to get rid of somebody, her mother-in-law or something, and she ran away from her to the United States. And after two years, her mother-in-

law, she came here. So my aunt was so upset. She was all alone, and my mom, she was sad for her sister, who was her best friend. And my aunt wanted her to come. And my mom, she had a business in Kazakhstan, a restaurant. And my aunt, she was, she asked my mom if she could come to America. (personal communication, October 22, 2003)

When Irina's mother was called to the United States to care for Irina's aunt, the 14-year-old Irina was sent back to St. Petersburg to live with her father and Pitor, her older brother. While she was there, she spent two months in high school in St. Petersburg, attending the Vladimir Lenin Public School, where she also sang in the school chorus. Irina told me that while she loved being back in St. Petersburg, she missed her mother and was convinced that she too should be allowed to move to the United States. She was 15 years old when she came to the United States to meet her mother in November of 2002. She told me:

My mom was—like—well, she couldn't say, "No," and [she] told me I could come. But they did a guest visa, and she wanted to go back home to Russia again, but after—like—only two months, she said that here there was a better life for me. Then I came here.

A Blended Identity

Juliana's first language is Russian, and while she lived in Kazakhstan for three years before coming to the United States in 2002, her time at Marshall High School was her first experience as a language minority learner. Both her parents were born in Russia, but Irina's paternal grandparents were born in Japan and Korea. Her maternal grandparents were born in St. Petersburg. Her father, Sam, who is half-Japanese and half-

Russian, speaks both Korean and Russian and considers himself bicultural. Her mother, Petra, has a limited grasp of Korean and speaks only Russian and a little English. Irina self-identifies as the best English speaker in her family and often acts as translator for her mother.

Irina thinks of herself as Russian and not Korean. While she was fervent in her identification as a Russian, she seemed to accept the fact that her American teachers for the most part had no idea that she was Russian. For example, Ms. Walker did not know that Irina was Russian and only learned of it when I told her.

Irina's self-identification as a Russian was nurtured by her strong ties with her mother, Petra, and her aunt Zoye, who frequently socialized with Russian speakers who lived nearby their home in the U.S. These gatherings were a cultural lifeline for Irina and her mother. And despite their interest in maintaining dual languages and cultures, Irina described birthday parties and celebrations with her mother's friends that were decidedly Russian.

Two times a month we just go and sing. . . . There is one lady, she speaks Russian, but she is Armenian. She is here with her family. But in Armenia, she was a popular singer over there. . . . We sing "Kalinka." . . . It is—like—a really popular song, because it is from their country and from old times. My great-great-grandmother would sing this song. Because every time when we are at a party and it is the end, and people are very drunk, they sing this song. It is a great song. We sing it at almost every party—like—at the end. I think it is a song for drunk[en] people. (personal communication, October 22, 2003)

The celebrations, the food, the singing, and the conversations all in Russian were an important connection for Irina and her family. This group of friends was a significant part of the fabric of their social lives in the United States; in a sense, it represented their multinational lives in Russia and Kazakhstan. In one of our conversations about the upcoming Christmas holidays, Irina told me that she and her family had begun celebrating Hanukah, as well as Christmas. She was proud of the fact that while they had a Christmas tree, they also learned to celebrate Hanukah with their Jewish friends. The words *shabat* and *shamaz* rolled easily off her tongue. Irina told me that this year, she and her mother had both a menorah and a Christmas tree at their home. She remarked that since her father was one-fourth Jewish, it made her feel closer to him.

Irina's status as a child of divorce appeared to motivate her to adopt the traditions of Hanukah to feel a connection to her father. Irina's fervent identification as a Russian masks her apparent blended identity as a Korean-Russian. Irina's "cultural ascription" Trueba & Bartolome (2001), how others viewed her cultural identity, appeared to be in conflict with her own Russian cultural identity.

Irina's Impressions of the United States

For as long as she could remember, Irina had wanted to come to the United States. She told me that she thought of the United States as a paradise, a country of endless opportunities. Irina saw these images of the U.S. on American television, on stations such as MTV, and on television shows such as *Access Hollywood*, both of which aired in Kazakhstan. Early in our conversations, I began to sense that Irina was deeply disappointed with her school and her social life in the United States. And in her words, "I always wanted to come here. Because for me—like—the United States was—like —

something that I could never reach. It was like another world. But then I got here, and I was—like—er—okay” (personal communication, October 10, 2003).

Throughout our conversations, I realized clearly that American music videos and MTV were a major source of information about American culture for Irina. Her favorite singer was Brittany Spears, and Irina enjoyed watching the young singer dance and sing. Irina noted: “I liked Brittany Spears, and I never understand [*sic*] a syllable of what she was saying.” The entertainer sang in English, but the interviews were translated into Russian. However, once Irina arrived in the U.S. and began to watch American television, a different picture of the American music culture began to emerge in her mind.

Like—now, when I, when I watch TV and when I look at MTV and when I see—like—the singers talking about life, whatever, and they all—like—show off, I don’t really hear songs in English that I really like. Like—Mariah Carey? I don’t really like her. I mean, I just miss my country so much. So that’s why I always listen to Russian popular music now. Like—all the singers in Russia, they are all nice, and here they’re not. Again, I was born in Russia, and I like everything Russian. Like—when I get home, I listen to Russian music, and when I drive with my mom, I always listen to Russian music. (Personal communication, October 10, 2003)

A Dual Tension

In our interviews, Irina made many references to her father and brother, whom she left behind in St. Petersburg. Several times, she spoke of them in the present tense, and often I had to ask whether her brother and father were living with her presently. In our conversations, Irina hinted at a dual tension, of being pulled between longing for

home and wanting to become a part of the American culture. She often spoke of reuniting with Pitor, her brother who still lived in Russia, and perhaps helping him succeed in starting a business in the United States. She felt that she needed to take business courses to get prepared for her future and was certain that this year would be her last in the music department. “I have complications. I want to work at real estate. I’m 16 right now, but then I will be 17, and I want help my brother, to—like—help him for experience” (personal communication, October 11, 2003).

But two weeks later, when I asked her about how she might prepare for a career in real estate, she told me that she had changed her mind. She wanted to work for an insurance company, Prime America, so that she and her brother could start a business together. She told me that she had seen a commercial on television for Prime America, and it seemed that this would a good way to make enough money to bring her brother to the United States.

Despite the regular parties and social events with her Russian friends and family living nearby, Irina and Petra were having a difficult time maintaining bilingualism in their home lives. This struggle is common for immigrants, and it results in succeeding generations making almost a complete shift to the language of the dominant culture (Villanueva, 1997). Irina told me that she and her mother usually tried to speak Russian at home, but at some point in the conversation, Irina would often start to speak to her mother in English “because I have forgotten Russian” (personal communication, November 12, 2003).

Linguistic Minority Status

When Irina was living in Kazakhstan, she learned to speak *Kazakh* which is the official language of the country. Irina did not think that *Kazakh* was much different from Russian and noted that she was able to speak Russian in her school. While the transition from school in Russia to school in Kazakhstan was relatively easy, when she arrived at Marshall High School, she did not speak any English and was immediately overwhelmed by her inability to communicate with teachers and classmates.

There was one bright spot, however. On Irina's first day at Marshall High School, her ESOL teacher introduced Irina to Daniel, a male student, who had emigrated from Uzbekistan with his family two years earlier. He spoke Russian and acted as her personal guide for her first day of classes. As with all ESOL, Level 1, students, she spent three periods a day in ESOL classes and was mainstreamed for the other four periods each day.

When I met Irina in her chorus class, I learned that she had recently advanced to ESOL, Level 3, which meant that she had been classified as an intermediate English language learner. Despite her limited English, our conversations in the chorus office were quite intelligible, and I sensed that she enjoyed being singled out for the study. While her responses were often short, Irina was able to sustain an extended conversation. Only rarely did she need a question rephrased or repeated.

While I was pleased with her level of involvement in our interviews, she appeared to be very frustrated at her inability to speak English fluently. In our conversations, I frequently sensed that she wanted to say more than she was saying, but that she did not have the words. One day, she told me, "it's messed up 'cause I think in English, but I can't express myself" (personal communication, November 12, 2003). She felt

comfortable reading in English, but writing and speaking in English still caused her great difficulty.

Irina was also having trouble with the language and traditions associated with the socio-cultural aspects of her high school chorus class at Marshall High School. She said:

The teacher talks so fast that I cannot understand. I can't always hear what the teacher is saying. Once I figure it out, then she has gone on to something else.

Maybe it's because I'm not from here. I mean, for the American people, they—like—understand it. (November 12, 2003)

During one of my observations of the chorus class, I watched as the teacher explained the upcoming citrus fruit sale to the class. Ms. Walker's 10-minute description of the products that they would be selling was delivered with much enthusiasm and resembled a pep talk. A number of the students in the class seemed excited about the fundraising pamphlets and the prospect of making money for the chorus. However, I also watched as many of the ESOL students in the class began to talk to each other, pass notes, and squirm in their seats.

Throughout the citrus-fruit-sales presentation, Irina folded her arms and looked down at the ground. At one point, she slumped down in her seat, sighed, crossed her arms, and shook her head. A week later, I asked her about her apparent negative body language during the discussion of fundraising, and she told me that she had no idea what the teacher had been talking about. Her apparent disconnection with some of the traditions of chorus at Marshall High School was vastly different from her previous experiences with group singing in both Russian and Kazakhstan.

Previous Musical Experiences

Irina told me that she sang in school choruses in both Russia and Kazakhstan. She told me about her chorus in Russia:

Chorus class in Russia was really different. It was really strong. And we performed a lot. Choir was better there. We did a lot of songs. It was fun times with friends. I loved to sing, and I was in chorus every year at school since first grade. (personal communication, October 9, 2003)

The appeal of singing in a school chorus in Kazakhstan for Irina connected what she called “fun, low-pressure time, and friends.” She told me why she loved singing in chorus in Kazakhstan. She said:

I liked it because we were singing songs—um—like—the teacher asked us, “What do we want to sing?” And we said [that] we wanted to sing “That song.” Ah, actually, we had to sing a few Russian national songs, and winter songs, and the New Year. But we also got to sing songs [that] we liked. Um—she *asked* us. And then she would find the words for us. Then she would play the piano, and we would sing for her. (personal communication, October 9, 2003)

Chorus in her school in Smykent, Kazakhstan, was held after school in the music room. The teacher, Yelena Barinova, was an easygoing woman in her mid-fifties who played piano and Russian folk instruments. Irina described her as “very Russian, but very nice.” Irina believed that Ms. Barinova was dedicated to helping her singers select and sing music that interested them. They sang mostly popular music, and they would tell their teacher the titles of the songs that they wanted to sing, and she would get them the sheet music. She would play the music for them on the piano, and then they would sing

together in unison. Irina and her fellow chorus members considered Mrs. Barinova to be their friend. They believed that they could tell their chorus teacher anything. Irina noted that while her teacher was very relaxed about attendance at concerts and classes, the students always came to the concerts and performed well.

Well, my music teacher, she was always nice to us. Like—because here we have to come to the concert. It’s—like—part of your grade. But in Russia [Kazakhstan], it wasn’t. The teacher would ask us, “Do you want to come and sing?” And it was—like—our choice. And she was always—like, “If you don’t want to come, don’t . . . , but if you could, I would really appreciate it because I count on you guys.” And ’cause she was—like—always nice to us, and every time, every concert, everyone would come to sing. (personal communication, November 12, 2003)

Irina continually made references to feeling “forced” to attend rehearsals and concerts at Marshall High School. She admitted that the only reason that she went to them was so she could earn an *A* in chorus. This was starkly different from her feelings about attending concerts in Kazakhstan. Our conversations revealed important social and emotional connections with friends and a beloved teacher. In her mind, this obvious disparity between her two school choral experiences cast a negative light on her experience at Marshall High School.

Perceptions of Chorus at Marshall High School

From my very first observation, I noticed that Irina did not seem to participate in class. Unlike the three Spanish-speaking girls who sat together and translated for each other and the two Ghanaian girls who often paired in warm-ups, Irina sat alone. She did

not take notes when the teacher spoke, did not seem to follow the music, and, as was the case with Juliana (profiled above), Irina did not seem to be singing in rehearsal. In our first meeting, I asked Irina about her apparent minimal participation. She told me, “I like singing. I don’t like this class” (personal communication, October 9, 2003).

Irina’s Impressions of Her Chorus Class

Throughout the interviews in October and November, Irina seemed to be consistently disappointed in her selection of chorus. I asked her how she came to be in the choir, and she said that she had always wanted to take chorus. She knew that chorus at Marshall High School was offered during the school day. She told Kristina, one of her Armenian friends from another high school nearby, that she was planning to take choir in the fall of 2003. Kristina had taken chorus in middle school and strongly advised Irina against taking chorus at Marshall High School. Irina told me:

Because my friends who I know speak Russian and I asked them [about taking chorus]. I was so excited about taking chorus. I was—like, “I want to take chorus next year,” and they were—like, “No! Don’t do that, Irina” ’cause then all of them were—like, “the class is in regular school day, and they sing—like—really bad songs.” Anyway, they don’t like the songs. Me? I wanted to take it. And my friends were—like, “No don’t.” I said, “Yes, I will,” so I did. I don’t like the songs and the clapping and all. (personal communication, November 9, 2003)

According to Irina, her relationship with Ms. Walker started off badly. When Irina walked in the fourth-period chorus class on the first day of school, the first teacher that she met was Ms. Bates, the instrumental teacher who was also her homeroom teacher. Irina remembered that Ms. Bates smiled at her and said, “Oh, I’m so glad you’re in this

class” (personal communication, December 9, 2003). Irina smiled back, and then Ms. Walker came in the room and began to address the students. Then Ms. Bates disappeared, and Irina learned that Ms. Walker was to be her chorus teacher. Irina told me that she was very disappointed because she thought that Ms. Bates was very cute and seemed to like children. Irina thought that despite her smile, “Ms. Walker looked strict” (personal communication, December 9, 2003).

Ms. Walker often commented that she sensed that Irina was unhappy, but did not know what she could do to make the class more enjoyable for her. Ms. Walker told me that she knew that Irina was a “smart girl” because she figured out how to pass the sight-reading tests and earn an *A* in the class. But Ms. Walker did not understand why Irina appeared to be so isolated and aloof. Ms. Walker was proud of Irina’s improvement and made a point of telling me about how impressed she was with the girl’s achievement.

Nevertheless, Irina was unable to let her teacher know that she did not feel connected to the group. During one interview session in January, Irina told me that Ms. Walker made her nervous, and Irina did not think that she mattered to her teacher. Irina perceived that she did not matter to the group. She knew that if she did not attend concerts, it would affect her grade, but it would not matter to the chorus or to Ms. Walker in any other way. Irina said:

You know, I feel [*sic*] really sad yesterday. I told Miss Walker, you know, we had to take pictures yesterday, and I had to make an appointment to speak with my counselor, and I came to Miss Walker, and I was—like, “Miss Walker, I have an appointment at 10:25,” and she was—like, “Okay,” and then she just left. I mean,

she didn't finish [the conversation] because she was all worried about pictures. I was—like, “Okay.” (personal communication, January, 12, 2004)

From Irina's perspective, Ms. Walker's apparent disregard for Irina's scheduling conflict with the chorus picture highlighted an important disconnection between student and teacher. At the beginning of the semester, Irina was firm in her conviction that she would not take the chorus class the following year, and she had tried to drop the class early on in the semester. “I tried to drop this class, but my counselor told me [that] I needed to stay in the whole year for the credit” (personal communication, November, 12, 2003). Although Irina was aware of what she needed to do in the class to get an “A,” she also perceived her own voice as not important to the group. She felt that it did not really matter whether she sang. “When I'm in the chorus, I know that I'm—like—I don't have to sing. I don't even have to open my mouth and sing. 'Cause there are a lot of people and they can sing for me” (personal communication, January 12, 2004).

One day, I asked Irina what she thought her teachers at Marshall High School would say about her. She responded “Here? Nothing.” I asked her to explain her answer and learned that she was referring to Ms. Walker. Irina added, “because she doesn't know me” (personal communication, January 12, 2004). Irina perceived what Gay (2000) called an absence of caring interaction between herself and Ms. Walker.

Irina often was frustrated by what she perceived as a lack of personal importance in or effect on the class. She felt that she had no say whatsoever in the repertoire, the performance schedule, the rehearsals, and other matters. She believed that the teacher's needs and agenda were more important than what the students needed or wanted. Irina

was aware of Ms. Walker's emphasis on sight-reading, but at first, Irina did not perceive this as an important skill that had to be mastered.

Irina told me that at first, her mother did not understand why Irina did not like chorus, but after her mother attended the fall concert, she knew why her daughter was unhappy. In our second interview, Irina told me that her Russian friends and family found the choral concerts "boring" because they found the atmosphere very different from that of International Night. She told me, "Well, my friends, my *close* friends, do not like this kind of music." She elaborated, "But my mom, she usually cry [*sic*] at concerts, she thought this was really boring. . . . I don't know why." Irina told me that she almost did not invite her mother to the concert because Irina was worried that her mother would be bored with the way the choir sang in concerts. I asked Irina to explain, and she said, "It's just boring, that's all. Plus, my mother doesn't understand very much English, and she don't [*sic*] know what we're singing about" (personal communication, November 12, 2003).

After the concert, Petra asked her daughter why she did not sing a solo in her chorus. She reminded her daughter that she had always been a soloist in Russia. Irina told me that it was difficult for her to explain to her mother why she could, in her words, "never" sing a solo in chorus at Marshall High School. Irina did not know how to tell her mother that she could not sing a solo in her chorus primarily because she perceived that Ms. Walker did not like her. She believed that Ms. Walker only gave solos to students whom she liked. The excerpt from one of our interviews highlights Irina's feelings of alienation from Ms. Walker.

Regina: I was wondering how you feel about not singing a solo in chorus.

Irina: Yes—like—my family, they were—like, “Why didn’t you sing by yourself a song?” I was—like, “Um, ’cause I can’t.” And they said, “Yes, you can, you sang at International Night.” And I was—like, “I don’t know.”

Regina: Well, why can’t you sing a solo in chorus?

Irina: I don’t know. I just can’t.

Regina: Why do you think you can’t?

Irina: ’Cause I can’t. I don’t want to. I’m okay to stand with the chorus and sing with everyone. . . . Well, in Russia, I always sang solos.

Regina: Why aren’t you singing solos here? If Ms. Walker said, “Irina, here is a solo, will you sing it?” What would you do?

Irina: She would never do that. I don’t know. . . . I would not sing.

(personal communication, January 12, 2004)

The above excerpt highlights Irina’s feelings of being “invisible” (Davidson, 1997) in her chorus class at Marshall High School. Throughout the 10 months of data collection, she struggled in her communication with her new chorus teacher, whom she viewed as “uncaring and not interested” in what Irina brought to the class. Her feelings of isolation were further compounded by her inability to understand the rationale behind the emphasis on sight-reading in Ms. Walker’s choral classes.

Sight-Reading: A Challenge for Everyone

In one of my first visits to the chorus class, I observed the individual rhythm examinations. All students in the 45-member class had to stand up alone and clap a four measure rhythm that was written on the board. From my observation point in the back of

the room, I could see that these tests seemed to fill most of the students in the class with anxiety. The usually talkative class was silent as Ms. Walker explained the ground rules. Students were given a number. I watched as she called students, one at a time, to stand and clap the pattern. When Irina stood to clap her rhythm, I noticed that she looked directly at the teacher for a second, as if looking for support, then looked at the board and began to clap. She started strong, but after the first few beats, her clapping became very uneven, and it became clear that she had no idea what she was doing. She shook her head, rolled her eyes, and sat down without finishing all four measures.

Irina and I talked about this test shortly afterwards. She said, “I have no idea whatsoever why we have to do clapping” (personal communication, October 6, 2003). However, as the semester progressed, I saw that Irina had connected the importance of learning to pass the tests to what she had to do to earn an *A* in the class. One day, while I was visiting Ms. Walker during her lunch period, I was surprised to see Irina sitting in the third row of the peer tutoring sight-reading session held during lunch time. The tutoring session was part of a research project conducted by Ms. Walker for a graduate course that she was taking. The project was based on peer mentoring and compared individual scores of pre- and post-sight-reading examinations. I asked Irina what prompted her to attend the sessions:

Regina: I notice you are in Ms. Walker’s sight-reading class at lunchtime.

Irina: Um-hmm.

Regina: How did you get into that?

Irina: Because I am so bad at it.

Regina: So did she [Ms. Walker] ask who would like to do it, and you just decided you were going to give up your lunch?

Irina: Yes. Because I don't want my grade to be bad. Because she [Ms. Walker] said it was for extra credit. I want to know it—the notes, because in chorus class, I have to know it.

Regina: That's interesting! So tell me what that's like. How often do you go?

Irina: Before a test in class, I go, and a girl helps me.

Regina: Who helps you?

Irina: I don't know her name. But she's good, and she helps me a lot.

Regina: So she's helping you—?

Irina: [*interrupts*] I understand her more than I understand the teacher.

Regina: Um-hmm. Why do you think that is?

Irina: She talks fast, and I can't get anything. (personal communication, November 12, 2003)

Despite Irina's disappointment with the chorus class, she was motivated by a strong desire to earn an *A* in that class. Throughout her school life, she had always earned an *A* in music class and believed that she would “look bad to her friends” if she did not earn an *A* in that class. Therefore, she gave up her lunch period to attend the tutoring session. She told me that although she was slowly coming to understand what she needed to do to pass the sight-reading tests, the experience of having rhythm and *solfege* tests was totally different from her previous experiences of chorus in both Kazakhstan and Russia.

Irina constantly compared her American choral class to her chorus in Kazakhstan in all of our conversations, but it soon became clear to me that she was also heavily invested in her identity as a pop solo singer. She frequently brought up the subject of her 2003 solo performance at Marshall High School's annual International Night show. She told me that even though she had only been in the U.S. for four months, she was encouraged by her ESOL teachers to audition for a solo at the International Night show.

Hearing Irina's Voice: Irina's Identity as a Soloist

International Night is an annual event at Marshall High School that features students in the school's International Club. Most of the student performers are from the ESOL classes at the school, but the club is open to all members of Marshall High School. According to Nancy Peters, Irina's ESOL teacher, as well as the sponsor of the International Club, not very many native-born American students belong to the International Club, and none of them ever performs in the show. Ms. Peters explained:

Something that was brought up at a [Club] meeting this year was, "How come we don't get more [native-born] Americans involved?" I said, "That's an idea. That's something for next year." We introduce them to the classroom, and we try to bring them into our Club, and here we've had a couple, but nobody has really lasted. It's always been open to everybody, but the [native-born] Americans don't see that, and it's scary for them. You know, like the fear of the unknown.

(personal communication, December 5, 2003)

Despite the fear of the unknown, in May of 2003, 15-year-old Irina, who had been living in the U.S. for only four months, felt encouraged, supported, and respected enough by her ESOL teachers and classmates to audition for the International Night show,

despite her limited English skills. Ms. Fountine, Irina's ESOL teacher in her first year at Marshall High School, asked her whether she could sing. Irina told her that she could, and then her teacher invited her to share a song in her native language.

Irina told me that she sang a popular song from Russia that had an instrumental track, and she performed it in front of a large audience. She described a huge auditorium filled with hundreds of people. She told me that the sound system did not work well for her solo and that she was disappointed in her performance, but her friends and family were very proud of her. They brought her flowers and praised her singing. She said:

At International Night, it was really exciting. Well—like—the people from all the countries, and the rehearsal was so much fun because the songs were so cool.

Like—Spanish. . . . Everyone was so nice to each other. They liked hearing each other's music. . . . I felt myself shaking, and they were just supportive of me.

(personal communication, January 12, 2004)

Throughout our conversations during the data-collection process, Irina spoke of her plans for the upcoming International Night. She had narrowed her selection of repertoire to three love songs. At the beginning of the year, she had gone to some International Club meetings, but soon became disenchanted with the way the meetings were being run by the new International Club sponsor. Irina went to the meetings expecting that she would feel the same sense of camaraderie in the Club as she did at the performances, but was disappointed by what she called the busywork that the sponsor gave them. After attending two club meetings, she decided that she would only go back to the International Club meetings when they were getting ready for the show for International Night.

In May of 2004, I attended the Marshall High School International Night show. I watched as the audience slowly filled up around me. I saw Irina's name on the program and noted that the title of her selection was listed as "Russian Song." The curtain opened, and Irina walked onstage with a stride that suggested that she was very comfortable in front of a live audience. She wore a confident smile and picked up the wireless microphone effortlessly. The audience cheered and yelled her name. She was dressed in a long, formal, coral gown. Her brown hair was piled up on her head. She wore open-toed black high heels. Her bangs were curled slightly, and she wore earrings that glittered from the stage.

As soon as the music started, four people in front of me stood up, and, holding each other around the waist, they began to sway and sing along with her. Later, I learned that these people were her mother, Petra, her Aunt Zoye, and two friends from Armenia. Irina confidently swayed and sang along with the vocal and instrumental track and seemed to enjoy the words that she was singing. It was difficult to make out Irina's voice from the recording, but she appeared to enjoy being center stage. Several weeks prior to her performance Irina was interviewed for the ESOL *International Reader*. She noted:

The Russian title is "*Peusiy Raz*," and it means "The First Time," and in my country, it is sung by Alsou, a famous singer. All I want from the audience is for them to cheer for me and really enjoy the show. I want everyone to know when I am singing, that I am excited and proud to be Russian. When I close my eyes and sing, I always remember my country. (Interview, March 10, 2004)

Through her solo performance, Irina was able to transcend her own perceived social and cultural limitations at Marshall High School. In her mind, the act of singing a

popular song in her native language provided a means for her to express her Russian identity and still allow her to visibly participate in a school-sponsored activity in her American high school. In the next section, I will discuss some of the emergent themes that center on Irina's perceptions of her experiences at Marshall High School.

Thematic Discussion

Throughout the data collection for this study, Irina continued to reiterate her rejection of the choir culture at Marshall High School. In our conversations, she was often preoccupied with her dissatisfaction with the repertoire, the teacher, and the class work. She outwardly displayed her feelings in her body language, her class participation, and in her interactions with Ms. Walker. In this discussion that follows, I will explore her rejection of the choral culture at Marshall High School. Additionally, I will also discuss her memories of an idealized previous singing experience in Kazakhstan and explore her intense need for recognition as a soloist.

Rejecting the Choral Culture at Marshall High School

Irina's rejection of the choral culture at Marshall High School was different from Juliana's. Because Irina had participated in chorus in school throughout her previous experiences in school in Russia and Kazakhstan, she was familiar with what was expected of a singer in the context of school chorus. When she entered the chorus class at the beginning of the 2003 fall semester, she was familiar with a number of conventional discourses associated with the context of the choral classroom. She spoke of warm-ups, of choral festivals, and of singing folk music and classical music in her chorus in Kazakhstan.

Irina's rejection of the choral culture at Marshall High School was not based on a significant mismatch between her previous cultural knowledge of chorus and her current one, but on feelings of disconnectedness from her teacher. Irina, in a sense, was caught in the *resistance and immersion stage* of her acculturation process (Atkinson, Morten, & Sue, 1993), in which she was unable to move beyond her need to depreciate the broader notion of how chorus was taught at Marshall High School. Her criticism rested directly on Ms. Walker's repertoire selection, teaching style, and personality.

Irina spoke at length about her dislike for the repertoire that Ms. Walker selected for the chorus. I talked with Irina about the songs that she performed in Kazakhstan, and she reluctantly admitted that she did not always like the songs that she had sung in her previous choruses, but insisted that at Marshall High School, the repertoire was "really bad." When I asked for specifics of what she found objectionable, she reiterated that in Kazakhstan, her chorus director allowed the chorus itself to choose the music. She went on to describe the process by which her director facilitated the music selection process:

Regina: So what kind of music did you sing in Kazakhstan?

Irina: Songs we liked.

Regina: I guess I'm not sure how your teacher knew what you liked.

Irina: Um. She *asked* us. And then she would find the words for us.

(personal communication, January 12, 2004).

Irina emphasized the word *asked*, and I was surprised by how emphatic and emotional she was when she spoke. Her eyes filled with tears. It seemed to me that because of her perception of being invisible to Ms. Walker, Irina believed that her needs

were insignificant to Ms. Walker. Consequently, Irina evidently felt that she had no voice in the selection of repertoire or any other matter in the chorus.

Irina came to the U.S. in the early spring of 2003 speaking no English, so she was probably unaware of the auditions for the Treble Chorus and the Chamber Choir that took place at the school in February of each year. Despite the warnings of her Armenian friend who had told her about the “bad songs” and how much all her friends did not like singing in the chorus at Marshall High School, Irina chose chorus as her elective for the upcoming fall semester. Irina’s rejection of the choral culture was not solely due to her disappointment with Ms. Walker’s repertoire selection. I also sensed that Irina was aware that she was in the chorus class that did not require an audition and that because of her previous experiences in chorus, she thought that she should be in a more advanced class. O’Toole (1994) noted:

Within choral music, then, there is a similar ranking of knowledge and skills that sorts people into power-laden categories. . . . This sorting is made possible by the existence of institutionally valued skills, such as sight-reading, ear training, and analysis abilities. . . . Consequently, these “legitimate” skills and knowledge are then valued and promoted over other types of skills and knowledge, such as social skills or the love of singing. (p. 22)

Irina first heard about the other choruses when Ms. Walker mentioned the other groups in passing to the class. Irina told me that she heard the performances of the advanced choruses during the fall concert. The interviews for this study began after the fall concert in 2003, and Irina voiced her feelings of disillusionment during our interviews. She told me that from the way her teacher spoke to the students in the chorus

class, Irina could tell that Ms. Walker did not have a high regard for her chorus class.

Irina told me that she thought that Ms. Walker “dissed” her chorus class when she would not allow its students to sing alone in concerts, but merged the group into a massed concert choir.

Irina’s outward behavior supported a theory of minority identity development (Atkinson, Morten, & Sue, 1993) that has suggested that persons who recognize themselves as being somehow different from the dominant culture are initially likely to lean toward conformity to the status quo; thus, Irina’s initial eagerness to join chorus against the advice of her friends. Atkinson et al. (1993) further suggested that minority adolescents then begin to be upset by their emerging awareness of the incongruity in society. In Irina’s case, once she started to attend the class, it became clear to her that her own musical identity did not mesh with Marshall High School’s choral culture.

Memories of an Idealized Past

Irina’s recollections of her chorus classes in Kazakhstan suggested an extracurricular club rather than a structured class, but in Irina’s mind, her previous experience in her country was, in fact, in a chorus class. She told me numerous times that her chorus class in Kazakhstan had been far more enjoyable for her than her chorus class at Marshall High School was. I spoke with several colleagues who had traveled or studied in Kazakhstan, however, and they told me of very rigid educational protocols. They also told me that the music classes they witnessed were highly structured and focused on the performance and study of Western classical music. Merchant (2002) noted the complexity associated with the ethnic identity formation of immigrant adolescents, whose construction of identity is shaped, not only by their experiences in the host country, but

also by prior experiences in their native country, where their ethnicity situates them differently from the way in which their host country situates them.

Irina's time in Kazakhstan coincided with the early years of her parents' separation, so her friendships connected with this after-school chorus activity were even more significant to Irina. At the age of 13, she was beginning to acquire the skill of achieving mature relationships with peers and developing emotional independence from her parents (Tarrant, North, & Hargreaves, 2002). Although Irina begrudgingly admitted that she sang some Russian classical music and a few folk songs in chorus in Russia, she spent a great deal of time talking about singing popular music in her chorus class in Kazakhstan.

In our first two interviews, Irina consistently referred to her previous chorus class as her chorus in Russia. Only in the third interview did she clarify that she had sung in Kazakhstan for two years before returning to Russia for a short time. She did not speak of disorientation or alienation in Kazakhstan. She only remembered chorus as a time with close friends and a supportive teacher that allowed the girls to sing popular music. Her elevation of Ms. Barinova, her teacher in Kazakhstan, as compared with her suspicion of Ms. Walker, highlighted Irina's feelings of isolation in the chorus class at Marshall High School.

Irina's perception of her own cultural identity as a Russian seemed to have a considerable impact on her acculturation to school and social life at Marshall High School. Irina's perception of Ms. Walker's lack of awareness of Irina's cultural identity intensified her feelings of rejection. Elliott (1995) wrote, "People tend to identify

themselves with particular Music(s), and . . . a people's Music is, very often, something they are" (p. 212).

Irina clearly saw *herself* in Russian popular music After I witnessed Irina's performance at the show on International Night, I began to understand that Irina was heavily invested in a solo performer's identity. She saw herself as a Russian singer, and her intense connection to singing Russian popular music in her previous chorus and her desire to be a soloist were apparently incompatible with what I had observed in the context of chorus at Marshall High School.

Negotiating a Soloist Identity in a Choral Setting

Irina's cherished identity as a solo performer illustrated an important clash that Irina had with the choral culture that Ms. Walker tirelessly promoted in her teaching. Irina noted that she "always sang solos in Russia" and that her family regarded her as an accomplished soloist. Irina was also aware of the emotional effect that her singing in Russian had on her mother. I sensed that Irina felt deeply connected to her own family in the peak emotional aftermath of her two International Night performances.

In a way, Irina was reconstructing her own ethnic and musical identity through her solo performance of Russian music in an American school (Stokes, 1994), which she was unable to do in the choral class or in a choral concert setting. The support of key others, such as her Armenian peers, her mother, and her aunt, were all external motivators for Irina to safely establish this new identity, in which she could be both Russian and American. Stokes further suggested that people often use music to locate themselves.

In Irina's case, reflection on her performance was a way that she was able to relocate herself as Russian. In her interview in the school paper, Irina noted that when she

sang her solo, she primarily desired to convey how proud she was of her Russian identity. In her role as a soloist, she was able to transcend the cultural disconnections that she felt as a singer in a chorus.

Frith's 1996 study noted that popular singers deal with three roles on the stage: the *character* of the person singing the song; their role as *star*, with all the accompanying etiquette; and the more stable personal traits and characteristics normally associated with their personality (Frith, as cited in Davidson, 2002). From the audience, I could see Irina's portrayal of the song that she was performing. Although neither a translation for the title nor the text of the song was listed in the program, it was clear that Irina was acting out a fond remembrance. Later I learned that "*Peusiy Raz*" described a young woman's first love.

I watched as Irina took the stage with alluring self-assuredness and confidence. I became mesmerized by her "star" self, which I had not previously seen. She seemed to love being onstage. Her personality came through as she winked at the audience and waved during the instrumental interludes in the song. Irina seemed to take on her role as soloist as a way to transform her social and cultural space from one in which she did not feel connected to one that transcended the limitations of her choral experience.

Summary: Seeking a Connection

After Irina told me the story of feeling rejected by Ms. Walker on the day of chorus pictures, Irina and I talked more about how she resolved this conflict. She told me that she did in fact change her schedule so that she could appear in the chorus picture. She told me that she thought that it was very important to follow through with her commitment to the group. I sensed that Irina wanted to be a part of the chorus picture and

to claim the identity of being a chorus member. Nonetheless, she had not yet made social ties with other students in the choir or with the teacher. From our conversation, it appeared that she had convinced herself that she changed her appointment with her counselor to appear in the group photograph because she had made a commitment to the group, but her actions revealed a need to make a public statement that she was a member of the school chorus.

Irina's insistence that she "would take chorus" despite the dire warnings of her friends also signaled a desire to belong to a group, yet once she got there, she found that she was unable to bridge the gap of her conflict between her own view about chorus and the dominant choral culture. Ayres (2001) noted that bridge building requires someone to "lay the first plank" and that schools are often structured around the notion that students should "lay the first, the second, and virtually every plank after that" (p. 75). My observations of the fourth-period chorus class were that it was a large class led by a teacher who felt inundated by the vast array of cultures and musical backgrounds of her students and who lacked confidence in her ability to communicate with many of them.

Ms. Walker told me many times that she had no sense of "connection" with her ESOL students and worried about Irina's inability to mesh with the chorus. Ayers (2001) further suggested that teachers must act as the architect for the bridge and that to do that, they must know their students to know where to put the first plank. Traditionally, these kinds of connections are discouraged and not the norm in the traditional discourses in a choral context because of historical ties to the creation of "docile bodies" (O'Toole, 1994) through common beliefs and practices in choral music classrooms.

O'Toole (1994) further suggested that the choral teacher must apply disciplinary coercion through regimented rehearsal techniques to produce "docile bodies" of choral excellence. In doing this, the teacher is often unable to get to know each choir member's specific history, desires, or needs. Instead, the choral teacher functions within a rigid institutional knowledge because it is more efficient to deal with rigidly defined bodies than with messy ones (p. 24).

Irina's reaction to these techniques was her passivity in class and outward coolness toward Ms. Walker. Irina remembered being very excited about going to chorus on her first day. When she walked into the choral classroom, the first person she saw was Ms. Bates, the band director, who was also Irina's homeroom teacher. Irina told me that she had a positive encounter with her homeroom teacher earlier in the day and was pleased with Ms. Bates's effusive greeting when Irina walked into the choral room. She told me that she was disappointed when she learned that Ms. Bates would not be her chorus teacher.

Irina had a similar experience with her first ESOL teacher, Ms. Fountaine, and Ms. Peters, her new teacher. She remembered having had a nurturing relationship with Ms. Fountaine, who encouraged her to sing at the International Night in her first year at Marshall High School. Conversely, Irina was suspicious of Ms. Peters' desire to create a highly structured school club that taught American values at the start of Irina's second year at the school. Irina was uncomfortable with both Ms. Walker and Ms. Peters and showed her discomfort by isolating herself from class discussions and limiting her participation.

The data collection for this study relied on one-on-one interaction and directly explored ways to seek connection with immigrant students in music classes, so I was able to give Irina individualized attention as I questioned her about her previous musical experiences. My interview questions focused on her opinion about her present singing experiences and encouraged her to tell me about her solo performance in the show on International Night. In essence, through her willingness to speak about herself and her musical world as she perceived it, Irina shared her voice.

Alicia Yanéz Fiallo: “Becoming More to the Country”

In one of my first full class observations of the fourth-period chorus, I noticed an attractive, dark, young woman who sat in the back row of the soprano section: Alicia Yanéz Fiallo, whose chestnut-brown hair was pulled into a neat bun. Alicia, who liked to be called by her nickname, “Liz,” was 17 years old and had emigrated from Ecuador two-and-a-half years prior to my meeting her. Liz was wearing a bright pink polo shirt and smiled at me as I sat down across the room. From my very first observation, I noticed that this young woman seemed to focus intently on what Ms. Walker was saying and often took notes while her teacher talked to the class. Liz was usually the only person in the chorus who took notes, and at first, I thought that she might be doing work for another class, but Liz assured me that she tried to take notes so that she would not be lost when Ms. Walker spoke to the class:

Ah. You don't have to take a lot of notes because she [Ms. Walker] explains it good [*sic*], and because you don't have to write a lot, you can just listen. But it is hard to miss a class because when you miss one day, and that day Miss Walker give notes, you are in bad luck. So I write as much as I can. . . . Like—Juan

[another ESOL student in the class], he doesn't understand anything because he did not come many days. And he doesn't understand anything Miss Walker talks about. I try to tell him, but I don't want to get in trouble for talking in class. So, I just pay attention to what she does and write as much as I can understand.

(personal communication, November 14, 2003)

On the day when I met the primary participants in this study for the first time, I asked Liz what she liked best about being in the choir at Marshall High School. She answered, "It is because I feel I became more to the country of the America." I asked her to explain, and she said:

Ah. You are in a group; and you can present in front of everybody. It is—like—you can go be a cheerleader or something like that, but you have to know more English and buy a uniform for that. In this one, you don't. You also can be with other people and work together to present something like our concert. (personal communication, October 13, 2003)

Her response and her ability to articulate the benefits of chorus suggested a confidence with spoken English that exceeded that of the other two girls [Juliana and Irina] with whom I had already spoken. I told her about my study, and she readily agreed to participate. I told her that parental permission was required, and I asked her whether she would prefer a consent form in Spanish or English. She told me that even though she could read and write in English and Spanish, her father was learning English, but could only read in Spanish.

I gave her a permission slip in Spanish and asked her whether she would mind checking over the translation that I had provided. She read through the form, circled a

few mistakes, and made suggestions for a better translation. She smiled at me and said, “Very good, Miss, there are [a] few small mistakes. I will help you” (personal communication, October 3, 2003). She also offered to act as a translator for Juliana, the other Spanish-speaking student in the study. I thanked her for her offer and made an appointment with her for an interview the following week.

On my ride home from that first meeting with potential participants, I noted that Liz’s perception of the benefits of belonging to the school chorus seemed to align with the goals that her ESOL teacher, Ms. Peters, had for all of her ESOL students. Ms. Peters said:

My whole idea is for them [immigrant students] to make more American friends through extracurricular activities through the international students’ going out and the Americans’ coming in to our circle. Then, that way, they can feel more involved, more allegiance to the school. (personal communication, December 5, 2003)

From our first meeting, it became obvious to me that Liz had experienced many benefits in her short time in the chorus class. Liz’s comments seemed to suggest that she viewed her membership in chorus class as a channel to acceptance in the larger school community.

Biographical Sketch

Liz came to the United States from Ecuador in the summer of 2001, when she was 15-and-a-half years old. She spoke no English. She came with her father, Victor, and her 14-year-old sister, Sandra. Liz was born on August 11, 1984, in Quito, Ecuador. Both Liz and her younger sister, Sandra, were born at home in their two-story house near the edge

of the city. Liz's mother died when Liz was seven years old, and both girls were quite close to their Aunt Tatiana, who lived in an apartment nearby. Liz remembers that her aunt had an old upright piano in her dining room. The family gathered after meals and sang together.

Liz was especially close to her father, Victor. She told me that it was her job to take care of him after her mother died. Liz had done all the cooking and cleaning at home for as long as she could remember. However, she recalled her life in Ecuador as a happy one, and she felt loved and supported by her aunt and her father.

Before coming to the U.S., Liz and her sister attended Cotopaxi Academy, a private school in the heart of Quito. This academy was better equipped than the public schools in Quito. Nevertheless, it was still limited in resources in comparison with those of Marshall High School. Cotopaxi had several computers, and Liz remembers using them once or twice while in seventh grade. She was given a password to use the computers, yet she never explored the Internet until she came to Marshall High School.

I asked Liz whether she would like to communicate with me through e-mail, as well as through interviews, but she declined. She said that her computer at home did not have Internet access. She told me that she would prefer to have conversations with me during the chorus class and again offered to help me as a translator for Juliana and Anita, the foreign student from Ecuador who was also in the chorus class.

Almost immediately, I began to observe Liz in the role of mentor and guide for those two girls. When I sat in the back of the room to observe the full class, I could easily see Liz as she alternately took notes while Ms. Walker spoke and tended to their questions. Once I heard Liz whisper to Juliana, “¿Entiende?” [Do you understand?],

perhaps sensing the other girl's confusion. In their eyes, Liz, during her 27 months in the U.S., had overcome her "disability of difference" (Nieto, 1999), and she was acting as their cultural broker.

I asked Liz more about her note-taking in class and learned that she took notes in all her classes and brought her notes home so that she could discuss the events of her school day with her father and her sister. Note-taking was stressed at Cotopaxi, her previous school, but her younger sister had not attended Cotopaxi before coming to the U.S. Therefore, Liz believed that it was her responsibility to make sure that her sister did well in school. Liz thought that if she brought notes home every day and discussed what was going on in school, this would help her sister learn how to be a good student. Liz also enjoyed sharing what she was learning with her father, who was taking an ESOL class at night at Marshall High School.

Both Liz and her sister Sandra began classes at Marshall High School in September of 2001. Liz's descriptions of her first year of courses seemed similar to what I had learned from Juliana and Irina. In her first year, Liz was enrolled in ESOL, Level 1, and she was assigned to three ESOL language classes, one ESOL math class, a U.S. history, a science class, and one elective class. In her first meeting with her guidance counselor, Liz told him that her father loved music and that she wanted to learn to play the guitar to please him.

The Role of Music in Liz's Family

Because of her desire to please her father, Liz signed up for a guitar class taught by Ms. Walker in the fall of 2001. Liz told me that she immediately became overwhelmed by her inability to understand what was going on in the music class. She

spoke to her ESOL teacher, who helped Liz to make another appointment with her guidance counselor. She was permitted to change her schedule to transfer into a drawing class that met at the same time. While she thought that the class was somewhat easier, she also noted, “Sometimes it didn’t go well.” In her art class, she was often confused about the daily assignments, and sometimes the other students in the class were rude to the teacher and to each other. Liz coped with this by taking some of her projects home. She knew that her father, who also loved to paint, would help her.

In many of our conversations, Liz spoke enthusiastically about playing the guitar and how much her father loved music.

My daddy was so—ah—he hoped so much that we would learn something to play. He really wanted us to learn how to like music. When I was in the eighth grade, he bought a guitar for me and a small piano [electric keyboard] for my sister. But we never play [*sic*] until we come [*sic*] here. Now my sister is taking guitar class this semester, and next semester she will take piano class. We sometimes, we practice together. (personal communication, November 11, 2003)

Liz frequently mentioned that the ability to perform music was considered an important skill in her home. She made numerous references to her father’s love for music and his desire for both of his daughters to play and sing at home. Liz told me that she and her family often listened to the music of the young salsa singer Jerry Rivera. Liz and her sister loved listening to him sing “*Amor de Novela*” and “*Ahora Que Estoy Sulo*.” The first time she could remember hearing music was in first grade at school.

When Liz was a child in Ecuador, her Aunt Tatiana owned a piano, and the family would gather after meals, before bedtime, and sing what Liz called *hymnos*, the national

songs of Ecuador, and many Andean folk songs. Liz told me that in Ecuador, most students do not grow up singing in choirs, but only sing at family events, with friends, and with recorded music.

Linguistic Minority Status

I met Liz during her senior year as she was starting her third full year of school in an American high school. Her English was proficient, and she was able to converse freely with me. She was enrolled in ESOL, Level 4, and was planning on taking ESOL, Level 5, instead of moving on to a senior English class. She did not want to take the regular English class because she knew that she would not understand the assignments.

She had heard that the course required a term paper and a significant amount of reading. She told me that she would take ESOL, Level 5, next semester because she did not want to write and read so many “stories.” I knew that chorus was the second class she had taken with Ms. Walker. I was curious to find out more about her guitar class, which she had first signed up for in her first year at Marshall High School, but from which she had withdrawn due to her difficulty understanding and speaking English.

After two days in the guitar class, Liz told her father that she was having a difficult time understanding Ms. Walker, and he advised her to speak to her ESOL teacher about the problem. Liz spoke to her ESOL teacher, who arranged a meeting with her guidance counselor. . She was afraid that her counselor would not understand her difficulty with the class and was advised by her father to bring a teacher with her to the meeting. So, Liz brought her Mr. Omana, her ESOL teacher to the meeting with her guidance counselor. Perhaps because of his presence, Liz was immediately transferred to a painting class. This was not the case for Irina, who went to see her counselor alone and

complained about not being able to follow instructions in her chorus class. When she requested a transfer to another fine arts elective, Irina was told that she was required to stay in the class for the remainder of the school year.

Once in her art class, Liz recalled that the work was not difficult because there was far less oral instruction in the class, but that she was the only ESOL student in the class, and, sometimes, the other students made her feel uncomfortable. Because Liz was still interested in learning to play guitar, she signed up for guitar class as her elective the following year. I asked Liz to tell me about what she remembered about the first few days in Ms. Walker's guitar class. Liz told me:

That was kind of confusing. Because Miss Walker sometimes speaks kind of fast, usually in guitar class. Here [chorus is] not so much confusing because there are three of us [Spanish-speaking students] in the ESOL classes. But in the guitar class, it was just me. . . . So, [Ms. Walker] usually spoke so fast that I wanted to get out of the class, but I passed with her through the whole year with an A.

(personal communication, December 5, 2003)

Corson (1999) noted that almost all second-language learners have difficulty with most of the curriculum offered in high schools. It is a challenge just to begin using the signs of academic language against the backdrop of their complex and precise rules of use in content-area classes. Because of her high motivation to please her father by playing the guitar, Liz was able to increase her learning efficiency, as well as her academic performance in her guitar class. She felt strongly that her success in guitar class greatly improved her chances of getting a good grade in chorus.

Previous Experiences of Music Class

Liz's last experience in a school music class in Ecuador was in the sixth grade, the last year of primary school. Her elementary school did not have a school chorus and Chorus at Cotopaxi Academy, her secondary school, did not meet during the school day, but during the noon hour. Liz informed me that she did not choose to join it because she enjoyed having lunch with her friends. She noted that the chorus was "very small" compared with the chorus at Marshall High School and included both instrumentalists and singers in the same group. She said, "Like—20 play instruments, and the other 20 sing. It was very easy and not at all organized, like this chorus" (personal communication, November 11, 2003).

I asked Liz to tell me a little about her earliest memories of music class at school in Ecuador. She remembered Maestro Ramino, her music teacher in her elementary school:

He always played the guitar and make [*sic*] us sing. They were songs for the children, and they make [*sic*] us play with the songs. Like—ah—sometimes, usually we go [went] outside, and we play [*sic*] singing and dancing games. He [would] sing the songs and we [would] sing them back to him Monday through Thursday. On Friday, we would go outside. We would play and sing, and since we knew the songs, we could add a clapping part to make a dance. It was fun. It was different than [from] here because it was more like play. But I also think it was fun because we were children. Here is more like serious music. It is for the concerts here, and there it was for play. (personal communication, November 11, 2003)

She remembered music class as a fun break from her classes. Her music teacher would sing a short phrase of a song, and then the class would echo the song. She said that her music class time emphasized learning songs and dances from Ecuador. Her teacher always played the guitar when he sang, and one of her fondest memories was that every Friday, all the children of her school would go outside to play singing and clapping games, with Maestro Ramino standing in the middle of the circle. Liz told me that she and her classmates also learned to read music in primary school, but it was always on the chalkboard. She explained:

She [Ms. Walker] teach [*sic*] with paper, [but] he [Maestro Ramino] didn't. . . .
Yeah, it's—like—when we were in second, first grade, they teach [*sic*] us how many beats has each measure, and then when we were in fourth, fifth grade, we knew that already, and then we [would] sing correctly. He used to sing the notes of the song for us too. He was really good. (personal communication, November 11, 2003)

Liz told me that her music teacher in Ecuador also taught her about the “tempos” and the “*do re mi*'s,” but that she did not think it was very important until she came to school at Marshall High School. She said, “But I didn't pay too much attention because I didn't think I was going to play guitar or something. But now that we know music, we play at home. It makes my daddy very happy” (personal communication, November 11, 2003).

I asked Liz why she thought that music was so important to her father. She said that she did not know, but that the music in Ecuador was something that he missed very much, and she thought that it might help him remember their country. She said, “It was

very important for him to bring the guitar from Ecuador, and he loves seeing me play that guitar” (personal communication, December 5, 2003). Her father’s love for music and guitar, in particular, provided a strong motivation for Liz to succeed in music classes at Marshall High School.

Perceptions of Chorus at Marshall High School

Although Liz seemed to be succeeding in chorus and participating at a higher level than the other ESOL students in the class, I soon learned that this was her first organized singing experience and that she had come to the fourth-period chorus class through a scheduling conflict and was planning on staying in chorus for only one semester. She planned to work in the health room during third period in the upcoming semester.

How Liz Came to be in the Chorus

In my first interview with Liz, I learned that at the time of the study, Liz had three fine-arts credits (two beyond the state requirements) and that her counselor, Mr. Tinsley, had placed her into the fourth-period chorus class. Liz, who plans on a nursing career, had originally signed up for a fourth-period child-development class, but dropped the class because, according to her, the students were disrespectful to the teacher. She told me that she had felt quite uncomfortable in that classroom. Mr. Tinsley would only allow her to drop the child-development class if she would take another class that met at the same time. Her choices were chorus class and Spanish, Level 4. She said, “I don’t need a Spanish class. I have to take ESOL again because I have all my credits, but I don’t have any other classes to take.”

Liz knew that Ms. Walker taught the fourth-period chorus class. Given that Liz had had a positive experience in the guitar class the previous year, she decided that she would select chorus. Liz had heard the chorus perform at the winter and spring concerts the previous year. She knew a boy who had taken chorus in his freshmen year and he told her there was no homework. Because she knew that the focus of the class was daily singing, she assumed the course would not be difficult. She said, “I think it is easy for me because I don’t have to do homework, and the time goes really fast.” I asked Liz to describe a typical chorus class at Marshall High School. She told me:

First, we get ready to sing. I am not sure how you say [what you call] the exercises to prepare the voice . . . when you sing before you start to sing [warm-ups] . . . , and then we sight-read some. Then we just sing. And that’s it. I like this class because one group sings their part, another group sings their part, and then we put them all together. It is really pretty. It is easy for me because you don’t have to do homework. The time goes really fast. (personal communication, December 5, 2002)

Liz Succeeds in the First Rhythm Exam

I observed Liz taking her first rhythm exam before I had been introduced to the participants for this study. Therefore, I was unaware that she was an ESOL student. The test was written on the board, and all students were given a number, as well as a short rhythm exercise that they were required to clap. I watched as Ms. Walker, the teacher, explained the rubric that she was using for this particular exam. Then she assigned numbers to each student in the class. She called numbers, and students stood up and were required to count the beats and clap the assigned rhythm when their number was called.

The classroom seemed tense as she gave final instructions. Ms. Walker called for student number one to stand for the test, and I found myself feeling nervous for this young woman.

Liz stood up immediately, Ms. Walker pointed to the pattern, and I watched as Liz, seemingly confident, counted the beats aloud and clapped the pattern perfectly. Later, I learned that Ms. Walker had purposely selected Liz to go first because she knew that Liz would do well, and Ms. Walker wanted the ESOL students to see that it was possible for them to do the test well. Later, Liz and I talked about the rhythm tests, and I complimented her on how easy they had seemed to be for her. She said:

Because it is the same—like—in the guitar class, because, ah, this class is more easy for me because I have the pattern. I know about it because I have taken the guitar class at this school, and I know how many times she claps and what the teacher wants. But the stress is hard in the tests, because everybody is looking at you. But when I take the quiz at lunch when nobody is here, it is more easy [easier]. (personal communication, October 13, 2003)

I was not sure whether Liz's confidence in "knowing the pattern" referred to her understanding of the pattern of course expectations in a class with Ms. Walker or whether she was speaking about the specific rhythm patterns that were on the test. I sensed that it was a little of both, in that Liz, having been in a class with Ms. Walker before, was accustomed to being tested individually, as she had previously encountered those particular rhythm patterns. She seemed to be prepared to demonstrate her understanding of what she had learned. Although she found the rhythm tests stressful, her previous

experiences with Ms. Walker helped Liz to understand the skill areas that she was being tested on as relevant for success in the class.

Ms. Walker had spent considerable time building sight-reading assessments into her curriculum for the 2002–2003 school year, and she was sure that once the students got to the district choral festival, they would see the relevance of learning how to sight-read. It was clear that even though Liz was a newcomer to chorus, she understood that she was required to demonstrate a basic ability to read a new piece of music on sight and that she believed that this aspect of the curriculum for the fourth-period chorus made sense for her current and long-term welfare (McPartland & Braddock, 1992).

Liz Recommends Chorus

I asked Liz whether she would recommend taking chorus at Marshall High School to another girl from Ecuador. She replied:

Maybe I would tell her that instead of doing it the way I did it, art, and then guitar, I think [that] maybe, [it would be better to take] this class first. Because in art, not many people come from ESOL, and sometimes it doesn't go well, and the students, they became mean sometimes, and this class is more easier [*sic*] than the art class because the [art] teacher is sometimes mean and because he speaks sometimes too fast. It [chorus] is easier because they don't use too many notes. Chorus is easy because you are able to understand what the teacher says because she explains it good [*sic*], and you don't have to write a lot; you can just listen. (personal communication, December 5, 2003)

This comment did not quite make sense in light of the other girls' apparent struggles in the class. When I pointed out that perhaps chorus was easy for her because

she had been in the country for slightly more than two years, she answered, “Yes, I know [that] it was hard to be here and not speak any English. I just think that this class is more relaxing and that there are others to help if you can’t understand the teacher” (personal communication, December 5, 2003).

Many times Liz mentioned that she enjoyed the lack of homework and the minimal note-taking requirements. One day, she told me that she was glad that she was in chorus. “Because when you do applications for the college, I think they say [ask] what extracurricular activities you were in. So, my counselor says it is good to have some activities to put down” (personal communication, November 11, 2003).

The fine-arts credit requirement was responsible for bringing many immigrant students into introductory music, drama, and visual arts courses. Given that Liz had already completed her required year in guitar class, she saw her semester in chorus as an extracurricular activity that enhanced her college applications.

Liz Participates in Fundraising

As one of my research questions focused on immigrant students’ perceptions of traditions associated with high school choir, I was interested in learning about Liz’s perceptions of the fall fundraising campaign. I was present when Ms. Walker introduced the concept of the fall citrus fruit sale to chorus class. At first, it seemed to me that the entire class was enthusiastic, but soon, I noticed that the ESOL students seemed lost in the teacher-led discussion. I assumed that perhaps they were uncomfortable because they were unfamiliar with the tradition of selling items to raise money for a school group. During Ms. Walker’s presentation of the fundraising project, Liz, as usual, sat and took

notes, while the other ESOL students began to shift in their seats, started taking out work for other classes, or began to whisper to each other.

I asked Liz about the notes that she had been taking and whether she knew what the teacher was talking about. She told me that it made more sense to her this year, but last year, she had been really lost when Ms. Walker presented the idea of fundraising to her guitar class.

Ah. The fruit. Last year I was really confused because I sell [sold fruit] to eight people. Then I have to go back to the auditorium to pick up the boxes; very, very big. Ah. And then, I was confused because one teacher said that he didn't want any more [of] the fruit, so I have to put the box in my locker. I tried to put the box in my locker, but it doesn't [didn't] fit. So I put [it] in the ESOL office. The ESOL teacher says [said] to put it there, so I put it there. Then the other ESOL teachers say [said], "Why [did] you put it there?" So I have to carry it to my house. And the next day, Miss Walker says [said that] the teacher that [who] doesn't [didn't] want it [yesterday], she says [said], "Why [did] nobody give her the fruit she ordered?" So I have to go to my house and get the box. So I call [called] my daddy, and he come [came] with the box. (personal communication, December 5, 2003)

I asked Liz whether she understood why the chorus was participating in the fundraiser. She said, "To help Ms. Walker." Liz believed that if she did not sell fruit, Ms. Walker would be upset. But Liz had already decided that this year, she was going to sell fruit to only one person, and she had also the advised other ESOL students to just sell one item, so Ms. Walker would not be disappointed. But Liz said, "I don't want her [Ms.

Walker] to be mad at me, but I am not going to sell to eight people again” (personal communication, December 5, 2003).

Later, I asked Ms. Walker about ESOL students’ participation in the fundraisers. She was disappointed that none of the ESOL students in the fourth-period choir had sold a single item. She said that she knew that they probably did not understand her presentation in the class. She told me:

But I couldn’t get, I, [sighs] unless I bring them in and say, “Nancy, you speak Spanish; interpret everything that I just said” because I go into a 10-minute spiel on it. So unless I have a kid right there saying everything in that person’s ear that I’m saying, how is that possible? (personal communication, January 23, 2004)

In one of our last interviews, I asked Liz whether she thought the chorus class had helped her to improve her English-language skills:

Regina: Do you think this class helps you learn English?

Liz: Yeah, because they teach us how to pronounce some words.

Regina: How is that different from any other class?

Liz: Um, that she make us pronounce correctly. We have to all pronounce words together. Like—“Shut De Do.” We say the words over and over, like a group sound.

Regina: Do you think the other students from ESOL feel the same way?

Liz: Yeah. Usually, they sound nice, and they do a good job. But sometimes, Juliana and the other girl, Anita, they don’t sing. They just try to say the words the teacher is saying, but they don’t understand. (personal communication, December 5, 2003)

Hearing Liz's Voice:

How She Views Performing in an American High School

When Liz was in guitar class, her whole class performed in the spring concert in May of 2003, along with the three other choral groups at Marshall High School. I attended that concert while I was gathering initial data for this study. I noted that the guitar class was a group of 29 students. There seemed to be far more boys than girls in the class. The students filed on the stage with their guitars in one hand and music books in another. Several other students came out onstage to help the guitar players to set up the music stands. As a group, they played "Joy to the World," by Three Dog Night. Then they played two other songs and then filed off the stage. I asked Liz about that concert, and she told me that her father and sister came to the concert. She remembered her father telling her that he was very proud of her accomplishments as a guitar student. Liz's father was proud that she had learned enough in class to perform with a group. He was also impressed by the display of the total school music program that he had observed at the concert.

She mentioned several times that she was very proud of the A that she earned in guitar class and that the concerts were exciting for her. I asked her how her father reacted to hearing her sing in the recent choral concert. Her face brightened as she remembered her father meeting her after hearing her sing in her first choral concert the year after the guitar recital. She told me:

Liz: He really loved it. Yeah. But he had classes that night, so he didn't go to classes, but he came here.

Regina: What class was he taking?

Liz: It's—like—he is taking ESOL classes. He is learning English.

Regina: Where is he taking the classes?

Liz: Here at the school. But he has classes at 7:00, but he didn't went [*sic*].

He came for the concert instead. (personal communication, November 11, 2003)

Liz told me that her whole family always came to concerts, but that she was worried that it might be confusing for them.

Ah, they really like[d] [the concert], but, ah, I was scared that they don't [didn't] understand at times. They—um—didn't understand, but they thought [that] the songs were pretty. Yeah, because *Erev Shel Shoshanim* was so beautiful.

Sometimes, I think the English was difficult enough [too difficult] to understand.

When they [the performers] talk or sing fast, they [Liz's family] can't follow the words. They liked the concert though. [It was] very different from my country.

(personal communication, November 11, 2003)

I asked Liz to say more about how the concerts at Marshall High School were different from the school concerts in Ecuador, and she immediately made reference to the annual International Night show at Marshall High School.

Feeling Affinity with the Performers at the International Night Concert

While group singing was not as organized in schools in Ecuador, the schools there presented many lively concerts by student and teacher performers. She described concerts in Ecuador as being similar to the annual International Night show that was sponsored by the ESOL Department at Marshall High School. The yearly event was open to all students in the school. It featured solo and group acts from many of the countries represented at Marshall High School. Liz described the International Night show:

Yes, it is really fun. I think they have to do more of those nights. Because I think there are 200 ESOL students in the school, and there is just one night. Because in the [choral] concert [at Marshall High School], not too many people—Latin people or ESOL people—come, but when International Night comes, everybody comes because people know that [the] person [performing] is so nervous [to be] singing in front of the audience, and everybody claps, and it is so fun. . . . In the [choral] concert, it is—like—quiet, and they only clap when the song is over. But when it is International Night, everybody claps through[out] the song because the people know those songs from their country. It is like concerts in my country.
(personal communication, December 5, 2003)

I asked Liz whether she loved the International Night because it was mostly Latin music. She told me:

It was [there were] only three Spanish songs. It was salsa, well, just two songs of salsa and one popular music. And there was Chinese, no, Korean people singing songs. We didn't know what they [were] saying, but we were so happy that they were singing. I think it was because they were acting. I think [that] the song I loved the most was [sung by] a Korean boy. He was acting out as a boyfriend and singing about his girlfriend, and he started to cry, and we were all very sympathetic to him. (personal communication, December 5, 2003)

I asked Liz how that particular scenario was different from when her family was watching the Marshall Chorus singing in a language they did not understand. She answered, "I think it is because, at International Night, people aren't afraid to make noise

[or] to get involved in the singing. The teacher gets mad when there is noise during the singing in choral concerts” (personal communication, December 5, 2003).

Although Liz was not a performer in the show on International Night, her elaborate description of the yearly event suggested that she was deeply touched by the performances of her peers. She compared the event with concerts in her home country and noted that concerts at Marshall High School seemed to be less spontaneous.

Thematic Discussion

As noted above, Liz acted as the unofficial peer translator for the two other Spanish-speaking girls in the class, Juliana and Anita. Freeman and Freeman (1989) cited the benefits of social interaction as a means to support language learning. They suggested that when students work in groups, they actually use more language, take greater risks, and help each other more. Small group discussion flies in the face of the traditional discourse norms of a choral rehearsal, which often discourage small-group communication, as in a typical rehearsal, the focus is on the director’s interpretation and agenda.

Despite Liz’s short time in the United States, by comparison to the entry-level ESOL students in the chorus, she was well on her way to succeeding in the class as she cushioned the blows for her Spanish-speaking peers as they encountered their first mainstreamed class. Ms. Walker had not structured Liz’s role as translator for her Spanish-speaking classmates, but instead, Liz had taken on that role on her own. In doing so, she was able to maximize her own learning opportunities as she helped her peers make sense of the language and content of the chorus class.

Strong Familial Support

Liz's continual references to her father throughout our three interviews made it clear that her father supported and encouraged her participation in the music program at Marshall High School. Her frequent mention of "Daddy," along with her desire to learn to play guitar to please him, suggested that his own love of music, combined with his aspiration to give his daughters opportunities that he had missed in his own childhood, were powerful family motivations.

Liz's memories of the family's singing together before bedtime and the significance of her father's bringing the guitar from Ecuador to the U.S. suggested that there was a strong "musical group identity" that served to bind her family together (Borthwick, & Davidson, 2002). Borthwick and Davidson also referred to a "parent-child coalition," in which a strong musical link, referred to as "musician identification," occurs between one parent and a child. They cited an even greater emotional pull when the child learns the same instrument as the parent.

I observed Liz waiting for her father in the auditorium lobby before the fall concert. She was worried that he would not be able to make it on time. She was relieved when she saw him, gave him a hug, and rushed to the choral room for the group warm-up. Liz believed that her father wanted her to love music as much as he did. When she spoke of how she demonstrated her love of music, she spoke of playing her guitar for her father at home. Her experiences of making music at Marshall High School did not seem to be viewed by Liz as a way to be connected to other students at school so much as it was more of an avenue toward further musical bonding with her father.

Liz's Feelings of Cultural Continuity

Having attended the 2004 International Night show, I noted the contrast between Liz's interpretation of the show and my own impressions of the evening. My personal field notes reveal my own bias toward a well-mannered audience, consistent with audience etiquette suitable for Western classical music. I noted:

I arrived at 6:55 p.m. for a 7:00 p.m. show, and I was shocked to see only about 12 people sitting in the audience. By 7:10, the audience had grown to about 40, and by 7:30, when the lights finally went out in the auditorium, there were nearly 200 people in the audience. The audience began chanting and clapping, "Let's go. Let's go." . . . I was shocked to hear the audience call out the names of the performers, and some members of the audience even stood up during the solos, swaying and singing along. There was even a back-and-forth discussion between the mistress of ceremonies and students in the third row. Most of the singing seemed to be pop songs. The young performers sang along, Karaoke-style, with recordings, often not singing, but mainly concentrating on dancing. . . . One young girl from Ghana was quite suggestive in her movements, which prompted hollers and cheers from the audience. The audience yelled, "Shake it, Girlie. . . . Sing, Girlie." (field notes, March 20, 2004)

Liz's experience in the same context was very different from mine. Whereas I felt resentful at having to sit and wait for more than 30 minutes past the curtain time for the show to start, Liz enjoyed having that extra time to be with her friends. The numerous young performers who sang along with the recordings in a Karaoke-style disappointed me. I was surprised at what I thought was an American "pop" music influence present in

almost all the acts. Liz thought that singing along with the recording made it sound more professional. She especially loved the Korean male rock band that played “Knockin’ on Heaven’s Door.” She saw many of her friends at the International Night show, and she told me that it was fun to be in a place and hear popular music that was from so many different countries, yet it felt almost like being back in Ecuador.

Summary: “Becoming More to the Country” on Liz’s Own Terms

In many ways, Liz’s circumstances of coming to chorus underscored an important point in the phenomenon of immigrant students enrolled in chorus. She was the only one of the five participants who had no previous choral experiences, and she stayed only one semester in the chorus class. She enjoyed the class, earned a *B*, and participated fully in the coursework, but she did not appear to form any deep emotional connections to singing in a chorus. She noted several times that being in the chorus allowed her an opportunity to represent Marshall High School and thus become “more to the country.” However, it was unclear to what extent and in what ways Liz believed that she was strengthening her ties with the United States through her enrollment in the fourth-period chorus class.

She, like all the other participants, enjoyed performing in choral concerts at Marshall High School. However, she took the chorus class for only one semester and then moved on. She commented several times that her counselor told her that membership in chorus would enhance her college applications, but she did not seem to feel connected to the total choral program at Marshall High School. Singing in a formal chorus was a new experience, one that she enjoyed to some extent, but chose to abandon after just one semester.

Conversely, in light of her comments about making music to honor her father's wishes, a different picture of Liz emerges. She was caught up in memories of making music in Ecuador and was reminded of how much her father loved music. She pursued playing the guitar to please him. Her music making at home revolved around playing guitar and singing with her family. Her connections to the choral program at Marshall did not continue beyond the one semester, yet she continued to find ways to make music in her life that were connected to significant events in her childhood. She found a similar connection at the Marshall High School International Night show.

Saldahna (2002) noted that globalization is about the formation of spaces in which things and bodies from different places intermingle. In this case, the multicultural students of Marshall High School, in their many forms, including immigrant, second-generation, and bicultural, came together for the International Night show, a night of music that not only provided an opportunity to share their individual cultures, but also provided a safe space where they could freely explore performing music from the Western popular music culture.

Although this aspect of musical fulfillment did not seem to be present for Liz in her chorus class, the musical and cultural intermingling of the International Night show provided her with an opportunity to participate in a communal activity (Stokes, 1994) as an audience member. This opportunity was a powerful social alignment for the international population at Marshall High School and was perhaps one of the few opportunities for the wider community of immigrants, first-generation Americans, and second-generation Americans to participate communally. Through her membership in the school chorus for one semester, Liz found that she could continue to pursue her love of

music and establish herself as a member of a school organization, while relying on her own music making at home and on her role as audience member at the International Night show to sustain her previous experiences of music.

Jennifer Offerata and Esther Amodako: Embodying Kinship

When I walked into the chorus class on one late September day, I expected to observe Ms. Walker's teaching and was surprised to learn that she was ill and that a substitute teacher had taken the class. The substitute, a Caucasian male in his mid-fifties, was clearly having a difficult time with the large class. One of the more outgoing boys in the tenor section recognized me and called out to me, "Good, you're here!" The class laughed, and the substitute asked me whether I could help control the group. I said, "Yes." Then I looked around the room to begin the warm-up. My gaze stopped on Jennifer, a young Black girl who was sitting in the front row of the class.

Jennifer wore tan slacks and a maroon shirt. Her round face was framed by black, shoulder-length straightened hair. She was sitting quietly with her hands in her lap, while the girl next to her appeared to be doing work for another class. All around the room, I observed that students were sitting informally, either chatting with friends or doing homework, rather than sitting in their usual mixed-choir formation. I noticed that several boys were tossing a baseball cap back and forth across a row of chairs.

I made my first attempt to get the noisy class's attention, and Jennifer looked up for a second. I caught her eye, and she nodded her head affirmatively when I quietly asked for her help in getting the class started. "Can you tell me what songs Ms. Walker would be rehearsing today if she were here?" Jennifer quickly left the room. Within a few minutes, she had returned with a folder of music. Without speaking, she showed me the

pieces of music on which the class was working. I asked her name, and she whispered “Jennifer.” I thanked her, stepped in front of the choir, and began the rehearsal.

Jennifer sat next to Esther, another Black girl. Esther was dressed neatly in a tan skirt and a dark print top. Esther had shorter, wavy hair and wore thin black wire-rimmed glasses. I had noticed Esther previously because of her erect posture and the unwavering attention that she gave Ms. Walker in rehearsal. As Jennifer interacted with me, I could see Esther looking down at the floor. When Jennifer sat down, Esther playfully nudged her, and Jennifer rolled her eyes back at her friend. It appeared that they were very good friends and that Esther was teasing Jennifer for helping me. However, once the rehearsals started, both girls seemed very engaged in the rehearsal and showed their impatience with the students who were disappointed at not having free class time.

My next interaction with Jennifer came the following week, when I had a rehearsal with the 12 boys in the chorus class. I had been working with the boys in a practice room for about 20 minutes when Jennifer came in and said, “Miss Walker says [that] it is time [for you] to come back.” Normally quite shy, Jennifer seemed proud to be sent with the message and smiled at one of the two Black boys in the room.

A month later, when Ms. Walker invited the ESOL students to have a conversation with me after class, Jennifer came to meet me in the practice room. She seemed pleased when I greeted her by name. It was the first time I noticed that she spoke in short sentences that seemed to get softer and almost unintelligible before she finished speaking. She resisted looking into my eyes when I spoke to her. Immediately, I worried that she might not be comfortable with the interview process. She told me that she was

willing to participate in the study, but would not write in a journal because she “hated writing.”

Her parents spoke English, and therefore, she did not need me to translate the permission slip into her native language. In our initial meeting, she also told me there was another girl from Ghana in the chorus, named Esther, and that I should try to talk to her. Esther had sung in a church choir in Ghana, Jennifer told me, and she added that I would probably enjoy speaking with Esther as well. I noticed that Jennifer seemed more nervous in our first interview than she had been at our initial meeting. I sensed that she would be more comfortable speaking to me with her friend in the room. I told Jennifer that I would like to meet Esther right away.

Immediately following our interview session, Jennifer formally introduced me to Esther, the girl who sat next to Jennifer in the chorus class. Esther was slightly taller and thinner than Jennifer and greeted me with a confident smile. That day, Esther was dressed in a navy skirt that fell below her knees and was wearing a three-quarter-length printed blouse with blue and white flowers.

Esther told me that she was not an ESOL student because when she had come to the United States, she already spoke English. Compared with the other participants in the study, both girls were somewhat apprehensive when I approached them about my study. They seemed uncomfortable about the prospect of talking about their experiences in Ghana, so I thought that they might not be willing to take part in the study. I was surprised when they both brought back signed permission slips and agreed to participate in the study.

I originally intended to present two individual cases, but as the interviews got underway, I sensed that these two girls were more comfortable speaking to me together rather than alone. I asked them whether they would prefer to do the remaining interviews as a pair, and then I would present their case together. They both expressed relief and immediately consented to doing the paired interviews. This format allowed me to learn a great deal about their perceptions of the similarities and differences in their previous and present musical experiences. Additionally, as they were both connected to a strong social network of African girls, I was able to observe how they conversed with one another as peers and learned more about the significance of linguistically similar peers in both academic and social settings in high school.

It soon became apparent that Esther had taken on the role of peer mentor to Jennifer in the chorus class and that she had agreed to participate in this study as a favor to Jennifer. Initially, Jennifer had trouble answering my questions and participating in the interviews and would rely on Esther. Jennifer would begin a sentence and then stop sometimes in mid-sentence and say, "Esther can explain it better." Or, "I can't really say why, but Esther knows what I mean." Then Esther would join the conversation and add details. Then both girls often continued the conversation together. After a time, Jennifer felt comfortable enough to interrupt Esther when she was speaking and add her comments and opinions to Esther's answers.

Nonetheless, they both seemed reluctant to share information that was more personal. I can only speculate about their apparent discomfort with such personal disclosure. One possible answer is that I learned that both girls were deeply religious and viewed their participation in the chorus as a means to express their spirituality. Their

singing experiences in Ghana had been centered on singing in a worship service, so my inquiries about their previous singing experiences could have appeared to “trivialize” their religious beliefs (Flofu, 2000). My role as researcher, combined with my “whiteness” and the power relations involved in researching nonwhite participants (Delpit, 1997), could also possibly account for the initial disconnect between the girls and me.

Regardless of their reluctance to share information about their reasons for emigration or family relationships, I found that the girls were more willing to open up as partners about their previous experiences of schooling and music making, as well as their perceptions of their experiences in the chorus at Marshall High School. This, in turn, varied the format of the presentation, interpretation, and discussion of this case. However, as each case is “bounded” (Cresswell, 2002) in terms of time, place, or some physical boundaries, this particular narrative illuminated the similar and disparate experiences of two immigrant girls from the same country who sang in the same high school chorus.

Biographical Sketches

Jennifer Offerata and Esther Amodako, sopranos in the chorus class at Marshall High School, immigrated to the United States in 2002 from the central region of Accra, Ghana. They did not know each other in Ghana, but became friends in the chorus class at Marshall High School. While the official language in Ghana is English, many indigenous languages are used and taught, with English being the center of many secondary language curricula (Bodomo, 1993). In Ghana, both girls took English-language classes at school, but used their native language, *Akan*, almost exclusively in school, at home, and in social situations. Upon their arrival in the United States, they continued to speak their native

language and individual dialects in all contexts, with one exception. English was the language of instruction for all their classes at Marshall High School.

In March of 2002, Esther came to the United States with her mother, her father, and her younger sister. She was 15 years old. Initially, she and her family moved to a small beach town in central Virginia, where an African Presbyterian Church welcomed them. The church had sponsored many Ghanaian families and felt that it was the church's mission to help bring the church and African immigrants closer to God. In most cases, the families' stay in the small town was temporary, as the newly arrived immigrants soon sought to contact relatives and friends who lived in communities closer to a larger metropolitan area.

Esther attended her new school in Virginia for only two months, but continued her English language studies in summer school. Since Esther was bilingual, she was not enrolled in ESOL classes in her school in Virginia. She told me, "There were not many African kids in the school. I was nervous because I understood English the way I learned it in Ghana, but it was completely different in Virginia" (personal communication, November 19, 2003). Esther frequently mentioned her confusion regarding the dissimilarities between the way English was spoken in the U.S. and how it was spoken in Ghana. She told me that she took English language classes after fourth grade, but that once she came to the U.S., she was confused by what she heard from native English speakers in this country. However, Esther felt "freer" at Marshall High School, and she noted that having an open lunch period and opportunities to belong to after-school clubs had not been offered at her school in Virginia.

Jennifer came to the U.S. with her parents and sister in November of 2002, and they moved directly to the community of Clairmont, where her family had some distant relatives who had arrived in the U.S. several years prior. When she arrived at her language placement exam and heard the test proctor's instructions, she knew immediately that the English classes she had taken at her school in Ghana would not help her in the United States. She recounted, "My public school did not teach English. Well, they did teach it, but not well" (personal communication, November 19, 2003). Jennifer was placed in ESOL, Level 1, and remembered being very nervous for the first few days at Marshall High School. She found communicating to be very difficult. She remarked that most of her ESOL classmates spoke Spanish, which in a sense made Jennifer feel like a member of a double linguistic minority, a minority within a minority.

Linguistic Minority Status

Although both Jennifer and Esther spoke *Akan*, one of the government-sanctioned languages of Ghana, Jennifer's first language was based on the *Twi* dialect, which she used at home and with friends, whereas Esther's first language was based on the *Akwakapim* dialect. Both girls told me, however, that they had trouble understanding each other when speaking in their own dialects. In fact, they both felt that they could do better at school if they could discuss their assignments in their own language and then transfer the skills and concepts into their own language. They both spoke to me exclusively in English during interviews and in our conversations after the chorus class.

Esther had come to the United States reading and speaking English well, and she had placed out of ESOL classes when she was tested upon her arrival at the central testing office in Holton County. Both girls spoke English in their classes, but conversed

in their own Ghanaian languages with African friends and family. Jennifer said that she was afraid to speak English to anyone when she came to Marshall High School, but that she had begun learning English in her school, Holy Cross of the Savior School, a private junior secondary school (JSS) in the central region of Accra. Jennifer said:

People [the teachers] would speak in English and not know what they were talking about. If your parents wanted you to learn English, they had to send you to a private school. You were considered to be educated in Ghana if you knew how to speak English, and so that left out many people in the public schools. The public schools also did not have materials like the computer or the books.

(personal communication, November 19, 2003)

Esther added:

Oh, I started learning English when I first used to go to public school, but they [the teachers] didn't really teach us English. Sometimes, the teacher would bring [speak with] a different accent [dialect] from us [ours], and nobody would understand it, so there were times when none of us paid attention. So I started private school when I was in Class 3. I was eight. It was better there to learn English. You were considered educated in Ghana if you spoke English. (personal communication, November 19, 2003)

Although Esther was fluently bilingual and maintained a 3.5 GPA while taking honors classes at Marshall High School, she still found it difficult to take all her classes in English. She also told me that she spoke mostly *Twi* with her friends and *Akwapim* at home. She explained:

When I came to this country, I thought [that] I knew English [thoroughly]. [However,] it was still very hard for us [my family] because we weren't used to this system of speaking English. . . . In some ways, it was really hard. Like—when you are reading something, and you don't understand what you have read. Like—in this class [chorus], the teacher makes a chart that tells us when we come for the tests; and then I would read it, but I wouldn't understand it. And then sometimes, she [Ms. Walker] will be speaking, and I just don't get it. (personal communication, December 12, 2003)

Despite these difficulties with comprehending American English, both Jennifer and Esther said that within six months, they felt comfortable at the George Marshall High School. They attributed this comfort to the fact that there were so many African students in the school. Although these African students were not all from Ghana, other African girls embraced both girls socially within the first few days of their arrival.

In our first interview, Jennifer told me that even though she was afraid to speak to her classmates on her first day at Marshall High School, she began to feel comfortable very quickly. She told me that she was approached by a group of African girls, who invited her to sit with them at lunch. An excerpt from our interview highlighted Jennifer's awareness of other African students at Marshall High School:

Regina: Did you know anybody from your country when you came to Marshall?

Jennifer: No. It's—like—I knew there were some kids. You know what I mean?

Regina: Sort of, you knew about them, but you didn't know them personally?

Jennifer: Yeah. They're from my country. I could tell. . . . On my first day here, I went to the cafeteria alone, and a girl came up to me and said, "We have many

African students here.” The next thing [that made me feel more comfortable was that] I went to a technology class, and I met some more African students, and then I came to chorus, and then I met Esther and Nancy, two other girls from Ghana. (personal communication, November 19, 2003)

Esther told me there were very few African students in her school in Virginia. Consequently, when she arrived at Marshall High School, she instantly felt relieved to find herself surrounded by other African students. She said:

Like—after a week or so, I started meeting them. Like—a girl, Nancy, I met in this class [chorus]. When Miss Walker mentioned my name in the class [calling roll]—like—you can tell by a person’s name if she or he is from Ghana. So she [Nancy] came to me after the chorus class and said, “Oh, I’m also from Ghana,” and I was—like, “Okay, I’m from Accra.” Accra people they speak *Akan* [Esther’s language], and she [Nancy] said to me, “Do you speak *Twi*?” It is basically the same as *Akan*. Jennifer speaks *Twi*, and I also speak *Fanti* [and] *Akwapim*, so you could call anyone of them *Akan*. (personal communication, December 12, 2003)

In addition to having daily opportunities to speak their home languages socially in school, both girls felt supported through the presence of the African Girls’ Club, one of the many clubs at Marshall High School. I participated in several e-mail exchanges with Ms. Louandra Diamante, the faculty sponsor of the Club, who was pleased to share information about the group. Diamante told me:

The focus of the African Girls’ Club is to improve academic performance, encourage participation in school activities, and foster post-secondary

achievement of African-American and African-born students at Marshall High School. The program consists of workshops, outings, service programs, and individualized mentoring. (personal communication, January 22, 2004)

Ms. Diamente also informed me that the Club was based on the principles of *Sankofa*, an *Akan* term that means “we must go back and reclaim our past so that we can move forward; so we understand why and how we came to be who we are today.”

Jennifer was a member of the Club throughout the period of data collection for this study, and she told me that the presence of the Club at Marshall High School was significant to her. She told me that she had many friends to help with homework and to study with for tests. Ms. Diamante told me that the strong social network of African female students that Esther and Jennifer encountered during their first few days at Marshall High School was probably a group of the many African-born students who regularly attended meetings of the African Girls’ Club.

Previous Musical Experiences

Jennifer told me about her previous experiences of singing in a choir at the Accra Ridge Evangelical Presbyterian Church near her home in Ghana. She sang with the youth choir at her church, where, at age 15, she was one of the younger students. The youth choir, comprised of young people aged 15 to 18, had regular meeting times and occasionally sang in worship services. Esther’s youth choir was sponsored by her school, which was connected to her church, the Central Accra Christian Church. Both girls’ previous musical experiences were centered on worship services. Therefore, they understandably saw this experience as one that was very different from their chorus at Marshall High School.

Singing in a Worship Service

Jennifer's youth choir was comprised of 19 girls and 11 boys. When I asked her why she thought that there were fewer boys than girls in the group, she answered, "In Ghana, girls go to church more than boys, and the guys that do go don't like singing" (personal communication, November 19, 2003). The group sang in worship services at least once a month and sometimes as often as every other week.

Esther recalled that participation in the youth choir was an integral part of the youth church service. Her school, Accra Christian Academy, was connected to her church, and the youth choir was made up mainly of her schoolmates. The group only sang at church services, never in concerts or nonreligious functions at school. Sister Afia Assare, an older woman in the church who loved to sing, came to choir practices and taught the choir songs for the church services. Esther believed that the main function of the choir was to teach youth about living a Christian life. She loved singing words to psalms and felt close to God when she sang with her youth choir.

Esther noted that as many students attended Bible study regularly, there was no need for sheet music because all they had to learn was the melody. When someone did not know the words, Sister Assare wrote the words on the chalkboard in the room. Esther went on to explain:

We didn't have a class for chorus. Like—we had worship every Friday. We would go to the church, and someone would preach to us. We'd do some worship, and sometimes we'd go on Wednesdays. We would get to preach, then the adults would preach, and then we have to end with a song. The teacher would learn a song from somewhere, and she would hear it on the tape or from school or

wherever she gets it. Then she would write it on the board, and we would learn from it. (personal communication, December 12, 2003)

Esther told me that there were times when the singers in the choir would lead the singing. She recalled how a singer might share a song with the choir. “Somebody would know a song, and they would sing it, and we would learn it from the person. We would keep singing it until we learned it. It was easy” (personal communication, November 11, 2003).

Perception of Reading Musical Notation

Jennifer described her youth choir director at Accra Ridge Presbyterian Church, Mr. Baldwin, as a very nice, but very strict, man. He was a young pianist and choir director, and he conducted rehearsals in the sanctuary of the church. Jennifer told me that the music sheets in her youth choir were very simple, with the notes for only one part. She told me:

He [Mr. Baldwin] would give us the paper with the words and the music. Like—if you are going to sing the first part, you get the paper with the first part, and they make you sing it. The music is written down, but not the way it is written down here. It only has one part and no extra notes. We learned to sing it by singing it over and over. Sometimes, he would play the notes on the piano. (personal communication, December 12, 2003)

She struggled with finding the words to say exactly what was different. Finally, she said, “Ask Esther. She can tell you more.”

Esther added:

My teacher didn't include the notes, just write [wrote] the words. Just like that, she write [wrote] the words across the board. And also, somebody would know a song, and they would sing it, and we would learn from the person. Like—keep on singing until they learned it. It was in our local language, so it was not as hard as learning songs here. Plus it was scripture. And it's not a long song, just five sentences, so it is [was] easy to memorize it. (personal communication, 12, 2003)

In Esther's church choir, songs were learned by rote, using no musical notation, only, as she put it, "words written across the board." Jennifer's choir used notation, but she was used to seeing only one part at a time. Jennifer told me that the songs, as she put it, were "much more straightforward" than the music that she was learning at Marshall High School. She told me that the music sheets were not printed in the same way in Ghana; the music was never more than one page in length. Jennifer was frequently confused in chorus class at Marshall High School when she was required to turn pages and go back to certain places in the music.

Both girls noted that their previous music instruction in Ghana did not include traditional rhythmic notation. Additionally, they commented on their impressions of Ms. Walker's emphasis on vocal technique and accurate note reading. Esther said, "The choir director I had in Ghana tried to teach us about music. She was very nice, but she didn't really know what she was doing, and it was not *do re mi*" (personal communication, November 29, 2003).

Jennifer recalled, “We never worked on making our voices sound the same. If we all said the same words together, that was enough” (personal communication, November 29, 2003).

Adzenyah, Mariaire, and Tucker (1984) noted that Africans structure their music to maximize participation possibilities for all levels of expertise. They stress that in West Africa, singing call-and-response and multipart songs is an experience that is centered around human relationships, which happen to be expressed musically, rather than on accurate and repetitive renderings of musical manuscripts.

Jennifer thought that the main difference between her chorus class at Marshall High School and her youth choir in Ghana was the vocal warm-ups that Ms. Walker taught to her students. Jennifer noted that every class period started the same way at Marshall High School, with the bell ringing, the teacher’s taking roll, and the teacher’s conducting the warm-up. She said that she never did vocal warm-ups in her choir in Ghana, but rather, her teacher just started “going over the song.” Although they had not done vocal warm-ups in the choirs in Ghana, both girls seemed to enjoy the opportunity to extend the ranges of their singing voices and showed great enthusiasm when singing the warm-ups in the fourth-period choir class.

Campbell (1991) noted, “In African vocal practices, the voices are not trained in the Western sense. Singers use no warm-up exercises or scales to prepare them for public performance” (p. 164). Esther believed that singing warm-ups helped to make her voice stronger, and she believed that she had learned how to use her voice more consistently. She told me that when she was in Ghana, she sang frequently, but did not think of herself

as a singer. After her time in the Marshall High School Chorus, she believed that she would be able to sing in a college choir if she had time in her schedule.

Jennifer thought that the most unusual aspect of choir at Marshall High School was Ms. Walker's insistence that class and after-school rehearsals start exactly on time. From my eight months of observations, I noted that each choir class began the same way. The bell rang, and Ms. Walker would greet the class. Within one minute, she would start either the vocal warm-up or the sight-reading drill. Because of my years as a choral director, I observed this and commented several times in my field notes that Ms. Walker was an efficient and consistent teacher. Jennifer mentioned that this routine was quite stressful for the first few days of chorus. She told me about the structure of rehearsals in Ghana:

We would sing on Saturday. We don't start until—like—4:30 or something, and we go [sang] for about four hours. The reason is because [*sic*] they don't come—like—at a regular time. Some come at 4:00, some at 5:00 or 6:00 or something like that. So we don't start at the same time each week. People also come late. Because the members have other things to do, like go to work or take a bath or give the family dinner. So the teacher goes through the music, and we start, but not seriously. We wait for people to come. (personal communication, December 12, 2003)

I asked Jennifer to explain this more, and she stopped for a minute and said, "It's just different in Ghana. Those kids had other things to do at home. Here, it is for a grade. It is what we have to do." Jennifer nodded affirmatively and added, "Yes, we sang to praise God, and it did not matter how we sounded. Here, we are working toward

perfecting our sound so we all sound the same. One [the way we did it in Ghana] is easier, but not necessarily better” (personal communication, March 10, 2003). The girls’ previous experiences were not only centered in a different functional context, music in a worship service instead of an academic environment, but also in a completely different cultural context, in which the various unique qualities of voices were encouraged to retain their individuality. Jennifer noted that she enjoyed hearing her own voice as she put it “sing out” in the church choir in Ghana, but did not want anyone to hear her voice when she sang in the chorus at Marshall High. She said, “In Ghana, when I sang praises, my voice was strong – not high, but it had a different sound that was my own. Here we are told to sing like everyone else. The choir sounds better here, but I don’t sound as good.” (personal communication, December 12, 2003)

Perceptions of Chorus at Marshall High School

Both girls told me that singing in choir at Marshall High School was different from singing in church in their home country. Their recollections suggested a very different context for learning music than what I observed in the chorus at Marshall High School. I asked Jennifer how she came to be in the chorus. She told me that Ms. Edwards, her guidance counselor, had assigned her to chorus class when she came to Marshall High School. Jennifer did not recall telling her counselor that she loved to sing, but was pleased when she discovered that she had been enrolled in the choir. Jennifer imagined that the class would be fun. Because of her previous singing experiences in Ghana, Jennifer anticipated that chorus would be a low-pressure environment.

Jennifer found the chorus class at Marshall High School very easy for the most part. It was unlike her other courses, which required concentration and regular note

taking, as well as homework. She enjoyed coming together and singing with a large group of students on a daily basis. She said, “I feel like I am closer to them than my other classmates, even if we do not speak the same languages” (personal communication, November 19, 2003). I asked Jennifer to elaborate on her statement and she spoke of her feelings of affiliation with her choral classmates. For Jennifer, choral singing necessitated building relationships with others in the group. She said, “You feel like you must work together in a special way when you sing as one.” She did not feel this same kinship with students in her other classes and since she enjoyed this daily musical interaction with her classmates and was not required to do homework, she enrolled in chorus for a second year.

Esther added chorus to her schedule in her junior year at Marshall High School for two semesters when she learned that she needed one fine-arts credit to graduate. Her reasons for selecting chorus the first and second year were far more practical and revealed a young woman who was interested in not only experiencing something different in her choice of electives, but also a student who saw chorus class as an enjoyable way to boost her grade point average. Esther said:

When we came here, I was supposed to have an arts [fine-arts] class. The counselor recommended that we should elect—like—computer or something. I had already started computer in my country, and I wanted to do something different. I was—like—okay, in Sunday school, I always liked to sing, and so then, I [decided that I] would be in chorus. (personal communication, December 12, 2003)

She discovered in the first week of school that the course did not require homework and since she figured out right from the start that it would require very little academic work in class, Esther knew that it offered what she called “a free A.” She believed that she was not a strong singer, but this did not matter because, as she put it, “No one can hear my voice anyway.” I asked her why she took chorus a second year, and she said,

For this class, this year, I didn’t have to take it. I just wanted to take it because I didn’t have any—there was really no [other] option for me. And I said to myself, “Okay, I’ll just come here to sing.” There is nothing really hard about that. Plus, I knew I would get an A. (personal communication, November 19, 2003)

Jennifer told me that at first, she had relied on Esther to help her as she became accustomed to being in chorus class. Jennifer remembered finding the class enjoyable from the start last year and found the performances and choral festival both positive and rewarding. She knew that the class was not difficult and had earned an A both semesters last year and looked forward to another year of singing with the choir.

The Sight-Reading Tests

In her first interview with me, Jennifer told me that she was having a great year in her classes and that she anticipated that she would make the honor roll. However, she was worried that her grade on the sight-reading tests might prevent her from earning an A this semester in choir and could prevent her from earning all A’s and B’s. She was sure that she would fail the upcoming rhythm exam. I asked her to tell me what was difficult about the tests.

Jennifer said, “The clapping is very hard. I do not understand why we have to do it at all.” She was referring to the rhythm tests, which required each student to stand and individually clap a rhythm pattern and be evaluated for a grade. Jennifer had mentioned that during the previous year, the class had been much easier, and there had been no real “clapping” tests.

In a conversation with Ms. Walker, I learned that this teacher was well aware that these exams were difficult for the students. She had deliberately changed the course assessments to include sight-reading this year. Given the number of students in the chorus class who were not doing well on the first few tests, she offered several accommodations for her students. First, she organized a peer-tutoring lunch club in her classroom. Ms. Walker told me that she had collected data from the participants in her tutoring session and that peer mentoring did seem to help improve the scores on the sight-reading tests:

Sure, it helps; one-on-one instruction, breaking apart, having them come in for lunch, breaking everything apart, and having peers demonstrate. . . . And, yeah, I have kids, English [-speaking] kids, who are not doing well with the sight-reading. It’s math related, and if they’re not grasping that, they’re just not fully developed in that area yet. (personal communication, January 23, 2004)

I noticed one day during lunchtime that Jennifer and Esther were sitting in the choral room talking quietly to each other. Esther recalled:

I went once [to the tutoring session] with Jennifer one time when she was having problems, and I went there with her. I was helping her too, and then Miss Walker said to me if I was going to help her, then I could help another guy too, one of the basses in our choir. (personal communication, November 19, 2003)

By the middle of the second semester of the school year, Ms. Walker had changed the format of the test to a taped examination that required the student to enter a practice room alone and tape his or her exam. I asked Jennifer whether this was easier for her. She laughed, shook her head, and answered:

No. I messed up the last time, and this time, I'm going to walk in there [the practice room] and get scared. I did it before, and it was horrible. I didn't read the instructions. I just start [started]. I messed up. I just left the room. I know [that] I will mess up. (personal communication, March 10, 2004)

Esther, on the other hand, did not have difficulty with the sight-reading examinations. I asked her whether she had studied music in Ghana, but she said, "No, it all just made sense" to her. She told me that at first, she was scared, but since she took the class last year and had gone to the district festival, she knew that the whole class would be tested on rhythm and melodic sight-reading. She admitted that the course was much different this year:

Last year, the course was much easier. We didn't have to do—like—these tests. If we had to do it, she [Ms. Walker] wasn't serious about it in grades. She didn't really penalize you if you didn't do it well. Right now, if you don't do the assignment, it could really hurt your grade. (personal communication, December 12, 2003)

Although the course was much more difficult this year, Esther enjoyed this challenge. And while she thought she would probably not take chorus next year, her first year in college, because of time constraints, she felt that she was learning something important about music. Esther believed that she was learning to read musical notation.

She commented that she noticed that she was starting to feel better about her singing voice and that she found that she was becoming accustomed to singing in parts. She told me how she forced herself to learn the exercises from the *Melodia*, the sight-singing book that her class used in the melodic exams.

Like—if the notes are written in, I can sing it. Like—if we have them written in—like—*do re mi*. I know if it's going to be *do* or *re*, but I have to write it in.

Basically, the *Melodia* always starts on *do* and either goes up or down by steps. It is not really that hard. (personal communication, December 12, 2003)

Both girls found that the emphasis on sight-reading in the chorus class at Marshall High School required them to adjust their previous ways of learning music. Moreover, the requirement to demonstrate proficiency in both rhythmic and melodic sight-reading individually provided a marked contrast to their previous experiences of singing in their church choirs in Ghana.

Hearing Jennifer's and Esther's Voices: Praising Through Song

Despite her difficulty with the tests, Jennifer found that chorus at Marshall High School was “a fun and relaxing class.” She especially enjoyed singing the sacred and gospel songs that her class practiced. She loved singing “Hallelujah” from Handel's *Messiah*, and “Shut De Do,” a Christian pop tune. Jennifer considered the words of a song to be its most important element and enjoyed singing praises in worship service. Jennifer took great comfort from listening to gospel music on the radio.

I can listen to gospel when I am in trouble or something like that. At times, you can just listen to the words and forget about everything else. You forget to worry about something. From listening to it, you become happy. It reminds me of

singing at the beginning of my church [services] in Ghana. (personal communication, January 14, 2004)

As the Ghanaian-American church was too far from their home in Clairmont for Jennifer and her family to attend the services there regularly, as a family they often sat together and listened to gospel radio shows on Sundays. She told me that she loved listening to Cristy Lane. Jennifer's favorite CD was *One Day at a Time*. Cristy Lane was a White American Gospel/Country artist whom Jennifer had heard about in her church in Ghana. She was very comfortable singing gospel and sacred music in the chorus at Marshall and she did not understand why they could not sing more songs about Jesus.

As Jennifer regarded the words as the most important part of a song, she did not enjoy singing *Erev Shel Shoshanim* with the chorus at Marshall High School because she did not know what she was singing about. She said, "I could not really feel a connection with that particular song." She elaborated:

It was good, but I really didn't understand that song. I don't feel anything when I sing that song. We sounded good, but I don't really like it. I like singing "Shut De Do" because we're talking about shutting out the devil, and it is fun to sing. I like singing "Hallelujah" because we are praising. I like the girls in the green dresses singing "Like a Prayer" also. (personal communication, January, 14, 2004)

Esther also loved listening to gospel music, but did not have a favorite artist. In chorus class at Marshall High School, she very much enjoyed singing the "Hallelujah Chorus" and "Glad Tidings," a song with text based on the Gospel according to Luke from the New Testament. I asked her what kind of music she sang at school in Ghana, and she told me,

In school, they only teach us gospel songs. Not like gospel songs in this country. We sang songs with words from scripture. [They were] kind of like Christian songs. Yes, there were other kinds of music in Ghana, but my parents didn't buy those CDs. (personal communication, November 19, 2003)

Jennifer loved listening to hip-hop and said that Beyonce was her favorite American singer. Jennifer especially enjoyed listening to what she called "holy hip-hop," which was a combination of sacred rap text spoken over hip-hop rhythms. Esther had never heard of this variation and thought that if the words were based on scripture, her parents might allow her to listen to more popular music at home. Both girls' stories about their previous experiences of singing in choirs highlighted a number of important considerations about the different expectations between school and church choirs. While the distance between their previous and present experiences was in many ways vast, both girls found chorus at Marshall High School to be a safe and supportive atmosphere for music making.

Thematic Discussion

Students with differing personal circumstances perform differently on academic tasks at their grade level (Walqui, 2000b). While Jennifer and Esther emigrated from the same country, spoke the same language, and previously had attended private Christian junior secondary schools, their experiences at Marshall High School and in the chorus class were different. They both enjoyed chorus and had enrolled in the class for the second year at the time of the study, but they experienced different levels of success, affiliation, and personal growth as a result of their time in the class.

Linguistic Capital

Because of the high quality of the English classes at Esther's school in Ghana, she was considered fully literate and ready to begin mainstreamed classes. When she arrived at Marshall High School, she was able to test out of ESOL classes and thus avoided the stigma of being an ESOL student. While tracking and ability groupings are becoming outdated in the educational climate of the 21st century, they still exist, and, in many cases, they reflect discredited hypotheses of cultural deprivation (Sotillo, 2002). This is sometimes referred to as a *cultural deficit theory model* (Banks, 2001) and purports that some immigrant students' backgrounds hinder their learning process in their new schools because their previous education had been inferior.

While Esther's bilingual status put her far above Jennifer academically and in the eyes of Ms. Walker, who did not identify Esther as an immigrant student, Esther still struggled daily in reading, writing, and communicating in her new school. Esther told me that she was frequently relieved to speak to her friends in *Akan* at lunchtime. Jennifer, on the other hand, having been assigned to ESOL, Level 1, had fewer expectations placed on her initially upon her arrival at Marshall High School. Each girl earned an *A* in the first year of chorus, and there was not an immediate difference in their successes. In the second year, Ms. Walker began teaching and assessing sight-reading skills, and Jennifer quickly fell behind Esther.

As the process of second-language acquisition is complex (Corson, 2001; McPartland & Braddock, 1992; Walqui, 2000a), a host of factors enhances or impedes immigrant students' success in school. Walqui (2000a) cited a number of considerations that affect the second-language-learning process: language distance between the first and

second language, native language development, knowledge of the second language, dialect, and register differences. After reviewing recorded data from interviews throughout the 10-month data-collection period, I found that the register differences in Jennifer's versus Esther's spoken English made it much more difficult for me to understand Jennifer's than Esther's speech.

While both girls spoke rapidly, Jennifer spoke in darker more muted tones. She often lowered the volume of her speech at the ends of sentences and when I asked her to speak louder, her words came out in a thick nasal resonance. Esther's speaking voice was higher in range but came across as if she were singing her conversations on one pitch. While it was pleasant to listen Esther's speaking voice, I found myself struggling as I worked to adjust my ear to Jennifer's taped interviews.

Because of my difficulty understanding Jennifer's speech, I explored literature on pidgin English, a simplified language made up of elements of two or more languages currently spoken in countries and regions of West Africa, including Ghana, where English is the official language (Huber, 1998). Corson (2001) noted that those students who use nonstandard varieties of English in school still tend to see the standard variety valued in schools as the model of excellence against which their own linguistic varieties are measured. Corson claimed that students' readiness to stigmatize their own linguistic diversity meant that as children, as well as later as adults, they often condemn themselves to silence in public for fear of "offending norms that work against them in ways that they themselves sanction" (p. 74).

In other words, Jennifer's silence and her tendency to shy away from participating in classes at Marshall High School compounded her own frustration. Her unwillingness

to be heard in her school environment – especially her choral class, played an important role in her claiming her own identity as a Ghanaian immigrant. It seemed that she could only claim her “voice” when she was with other African girls. Because of the nature of choral singing as it was taught at Marshall High, she was able to blend or mask her true voice in a group with many others. This blending, while an important trait in choral singing did not allow for recognition of Jennifer’s identity to as a Ghanaian.

Jennifer’s soft-spoken voice and downward gaze appeared at first to be shyness, but later, the more I spoke with her, the more I realized that she was in fact quite frustrated by what she had learned as English in Ghana. She spoke softly because she was embarrassed at her limited grasp of the English language, particularly in its American form. Because of Jennifer’s inability to communicate well in class, Ms. Walker told me that she believed that Jennifer had “serious learning disabilities.” Esther, on the other hand, had pushed through the barrier of “English only” based on her linguistic prestige.

Walqui (2000a) suggested that the consideration of dialects and registers leads us to think about the relationship between the students’ first and second languages, the relative prestige of the two, and their cultural and ethnic associations. English was the official language of Ghana, but the teaching of English varied throughout the country due to socioeconomic and regional differences. Esther’s linguistic capital was far greater than Jennifer’s. Both girls are considered “voluntary minorities,” children who moved more or less voluntarily to the U.S. with their parents, who believed that this move would bring greater economic and educational success (Davidson, 1996). Both girls reported that they came with intact families who placed a high priority on education. However, one girl

came with more linguistic capital and quickly outpaced her peer in the highly regimented educational discourse structures practiced in U.S. schools.

The Musical Challenges

Before I began collecting data for this study, I was aware that Ghanaian musicians who practice indigenous musical traditions teach and are taught by oral/aural methods. I also knew that, in general, African music is more participatory than is music in the U.S. and that the integration of music in the activities of daily life gives it an intensity and importance that are rarely communicated in Western music (Adzenyah, Mairaire, & Tucker, 1984).

However, Flofu (2000) noted that despite its prominence in daily life in Ghana, music was not studied seriously in secondary schools there. Although talented singers were encouraged to pursue chorus in secondary school, average singers were encouraged to sing in choirs at church. Although the chorus at Marshall High School was not a select chorus, Ms. Walker held all her singers to a very high standard. She expected the chorus to sing a high-quality repertoire, to be able to sing a piece of music on sight, and to work toward superior ratings at music festivals. Interestingly, despite Jennifer's difficulty with sight-reading, Jennifer told me that she thought that chorus at Marshall High School was fun and relaxing.

Jennifer's statement seemed to contradict many of her previous statements on sight-reading, so I asked her to clarify her position. She explained:

It is like this. The sight-reading is hard, and I know that I will not get it. But I really like singing with others. I feel that there is very little outside work, and it is worth it. I would say that I enjoy myself during most of the class. I just get myself

through the sight-reading part, and it is over. (personal communication, March 10, 2004)

Esther, on the other hand, enjoyed the challenge of sight-reading. And just as she was able to adjust to learning English in less than favorable conditions in her classes in Ghana, she was also able to negotiate a new system of music reading in her chorus at Marshall High School. Because of her abilities, she was able to continue earning one A after another in chorus.

Esther and Jennifer shared their impressions of primarily rote methods of learning songs in Ghana. They spoke about how their music teachers in Ghana relied on written text on the chalkboard, combined with drilling on pronunciation, rhythm, and melody. They went over the musical parts many times. I observed, in many ways, a rote style in Ms. Walker's teaching of the boys in her classes, yet it seemed that she held her female students to a different standard in rehearsal. She expected them to be able to follow her in the score and did not repeat their parts as often. Esther believed that learning to navigate a complicated musical score was a complex skill. Jennifer did not always know where she was in the music, but she liked being challenged to read what she called "the paper music."

Esther frequently mentioned that her greatest challenge in the chorus at Marshall was singing harmony. She told me that in her very first day in chorus, she was very surprised to learn that the altos sang a different part from the sopranos. She knew about part-singing because her church had hymnals that were arranged for soprano and alto, but she had never sung in parts and did not learn to sing harmony in her youth chorus. She

said, “Maybe it was because I was younger, but I don’t remember that. I did hear someone with a deep voice, but I don’t know the part he was singing.” She continued:

Um, my greatest challenge in this class is when I first came here; I didn’t know [that] they had the alto part and the soprano part. Sometimes, they’ll be singing this part, and I’ll be singing that part, and I have to stop because I am learning the wrong part. And then, sometimes I get disappointed because I like the tune of the altos, and sometimes I prefer to sing with them. But mostly, I like singing with the sopranos. But last year, we learned the soprano part to the *Hallelujah*, and this year, because our altos can’t sing that high, we have to learn the alto part. I get really confused. But I would say [that] in this chorus class, you learn different parts of music, and you learn your part and how you can put it with the rest of the class. (personal communication, January, 14, 2004)

While multipart singing is very much a part of Ghanaian music, the structure of the music allows for group learning among a broad array of individual abilities (Adzenyah, Maraire, & Tucker, 1984). From Esther’s description, one might assume that when she was singing with her youth choir in Ghana, Esther sang in several parts and did not realize it because the parts were not drilled and refined in the same way that they were in her American high school choir.

However, Flofu (2000) noted that choral competitions in Ghana have become commonplace and that many schools spend hours and weeks just learning a competition song at the expense of other parts of the curriculum. He further suggested that chorus membership in the schools of Ghana usually consists of a small group of the very best singers. This flies in the face of indigenous music practices (Flofu) of Ghana. Neither girl

considered herself to be an excellent singer, nor did either sing in choir in secondary school in Ghana, so it is likely that their church choir experiences in Ghana were more geared toward traditional Christian church music. The reflections of both girls suggested that their previous singing in chorus in Ghana was based on more of a Christian hymn style of singing rather than traditional Ghanaian group singing practices.

Identification with Sacred Music

It became clear to me throughout the interviews with both young women that religion was a major cultural factor in their previous schooling, social life, and cultural life. They viewed the repertoire they sang in the chorus at Marshall High School as a channel for their religious beliefs. Both girls identified Christian gospel music in their selections of preferred repertoire and recording artists. Musical choice does enable youth to define themselves in relation to others (Lamont, 2002), so they found ways to bring their love for Gospel singing into our conversations, demonstrating the connection between their desire to participate in chorus class and their high regard for what they called “singing praises.”

Both girls’ desires to select chorus for a second year were shaped by a number of contextual influences. According to Lamont (2002), musical identity is often based initially on external and observable activities and experiences. Lamont elaborated that being a member of a group is often a significant factor in musical identity formation. In the case of Jennifer and Esther, their previous group musical activities stemmed from strong religious ties in their families and a significant culture of acceptance of all levels of musicianship in their church choirs in Ghana. This culture for both girls was centered around enthusiastic singing of scripture and hymns, something starkly different from the

goals of the chorus at Marshall High School, which focused on vocal production, vowel uniformity, and precise diction. However, the girls still found an important similarity in the chorus at Marshall High School that served as a bridge between their previous and present musical experiences.

The repertoire selected by Ms. Walker could have been interpreted as music suitable for Christian worship: in the May 2004 concert, I observed five titles (“Ride the Chariot,” “River in Judea,” “O’ Great Spirit,” “All His Benefits,” and “Shut De Do”) all of which could have been sung by choirs in a church service. The girls enjoyed this aspect of chorus, and one day, Jennifer mentioned that she did not know why they could not sing more songs about Jesus. Their comfort level with the repertoire provided a strong motivation for their selecting chorus for a second year. Once enrolled in the chorus at Marshall High School, they found a choral program that performed many sacred music selections. Both girls believed that they were learning about music while “singing praises” and enjoying a break from the rigid academic structures of their day.

Summary: Creating Kinship

At first, I found Jennifer’s desire to have Esther present for interviews troubling. I worried that Jennifer did not want to participate in the study. Jennifer seemed anxious for me to talk to her friend (Esther) and wanted to be in the room when I interviewed her. However, as the data collection progressed over several weeks and later months, I noticed that Jennifer seemed to enjoy our sessions. She began to speak using longer sentences and frequently interrupted Esther to share her opinion. Jennifer’s preference to have a linguistically similar peer in the room supported the notion that language usage improves when peers model language in use (Corson, 2001). Jennifer seemed to open up more

when Esther was in the room and was able to sound out her ideas as she alternately listened and contributed to the discussion between Esther and me.

Within the first few days in her chorus class, Jennifer had identified Esther as her ally in the class. Jennifer relied on Esther to help her follow along in rehearsal, to stay informed about upcoming tests, and to follow through on extracurricular class obligations. They frequently spoke *Akan* to each other in class and in the hallway. Despite their closeness, Esther was clearly on a higher level academically at Marshall High School, mainly due to her non-ESOL status. In fact, if Jennifer had not invited Esther to be a part of the study, I would not have had the opportunity to hear the story of her musical experiences because on the recommendations of the school district, I was relying on a student's ESOL program status to help me locate immigrant student participants for the study. Jennifer's reluctance to speak freely with me initially forced me to expand the scope of my study slightly. By including Esther, I had an opportunity to explore the kinship aspect of an immigrant student's experiences in school.

As a result, I was able not only to learn more about the challenges that face Ghanaian immigrant students from Esther's point of view, but also to observe the importance of the close ties that the girls had formed on the basis of their similar previous experiences in their church choirs. I watched as they sat together and laughed about the ways in which their church choir directors would write the words on the blackboard. Esther rolled her eyes when Jennifer told me, "People came late because they needed to take a bath." Esther told me that she knew that she was getting better as a singer despite Jennifer's teasing her by saying, "You know you can't sing, Girl."

Jennifer and Esther repeatedly mentioned their immediate connections with “other African girls” at Marshall High School. Their stories about their first days at Marshall High School and the support that they found through other African students highlighted the importance that kinship plays in immigrant students’ lives. Arthur (2000) suggested that strong kinship bonds sustained by and anchored in traditional African values have been pivotal in immigrant adolescents’ adjustment to life in America. Arthur contended that African women have undergone cultural transformations that have challenged traditional African gender ideologies as a result of their presence in the United States. The strong network of African girls at Marshall High School provided a way for Esther and Jennifer to preserve old ties, while adapting to the new realities that awaited them at their new school.

Although both girls had to adjust to different teaching practices, dissimilar musical notation, and new ways of singing in harmony, it was clear that they both had positive experiences in the chorus class. They enjoyed singing in the chorus at Marshall High School. The music reading was more difficult for Jennifer, but she found ways to cope and still enjoy the class. By the last month of my data collection, I noticed that Jennifer had begun helping Irina, another participant in this study, with her music reading. While Jennifer’s grade had not improved from a *C* all semester, Jennifer was nonetheless able to help Irina raise her grade from a *C* to an *A* in the class. I found the pairing of Irina and Jennifer to be unusual, but noticed that throughout the semester, they found ways to sit and stand together. In the final concert of the year, I noticed that Esther, Irina, Jennifer, and Juliana all stood side by side in rehearsal and in concert. Ms. Walker told me that this arrangement had not been planned in advance; instead, she noticed that

the girls seemed to gravitate naturally toward each other. Perhaps the participants in this study sought to extend the parameters of their own cultural identities to encompass a new kinship. This affinity was based not only on their *otherness*, but also on their newly perceived kinship in their process of becoming American through their participation in chorus in an American high school.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have presented five narrative cases based on a series of semi structured conversations with the primary participants of this study. These narratives were constructed over a 10-month period from data collected from interviews and observations. Each narrative was constructed to present the participants as five distinct and unique students. Following each narrative case, I discussed the larger themes that reflected the personal story of each girl. In the next chapter, I will examine a number of broad themes that emerged among the cases and will present them as a cross-case analysis.

CHAPTER 6:

VOICES IN TRANSITION: A CROSS-CASE INTERPRETATION

In this chapter, I discuss and interpret the central themes that emerged from the data collected for this study. To that end, I have organized the chapter around three broad themes that highlight the commonalities and dissimilarities of the musical experiences of the five primary participants. They are:

- 1) the factors that affect individual students' acculturation,
- 2) the role of language in the choral classroom, and
- 3) traditional discourse norms associated with high school choral music.

Throughout the interviews and observations, I continually revisited my primary research question: "*What are the musical experiences of immigrant students who sing in high school choir?*" My subsidiary questions centered on immigrant students' previous musical experiences, their perceptions of traditional choral practices, and their perceived contributions to and benefits from choral membership. I found that to make sense of what I heard from individual participants, I had to account for each girl's position in the unique process of becoming, as Irina put it, "fully Americanized."

As a clearer picture of each girl emerged from the sequential rounds of interviews, I became aware of the many interrelated factors that played a significant role in their experiences in the chorus at Marshall High School. I believe that knowledge of these factors forms the foundation upon which to build educational approaches that will assist immigrant students as they make their way into secondary-school music programs in the United States.

Factors that Affect Acculturation

Students with differing circumstances perform differently on academic tasks at their grade levels, depending on their personal histories and their educational backgrounds (Walqui, 2000a). During the data-collection process, I realized that each girl brought her own set of circumstances, which, in turn, affected her acculturation experience in the chorus at Marshall High School. As previously mentioned, acculturation is the learning of ideas, values, conventions, and behaviors that characterize a social group; acculturation can also be the result of contact between two or more different cultures. However, this learning process is rarely linear, as it occurs within dynamic social environments. It became clear to me that all five girls were in different stages of acculturation in their choral class at Marshall High School during the data-collection process. It also became apparent that some of the girls moved from one stage to another during the course of the data collection.

Each participant's narrative case presented in chapter 5 was unique. To make sense of these narratives, I began to explore the literature that focused on the social and cultural factors that might affect an individual student's acculturation process. Sussman (2000) suggested that an individual's culture forms a mental framework through which individuals define their personal philosophy, motivate and select their behaviors, and judge and evaluate the actions of others. I observed this clearly in my conversations with each of the five participants.

Irina was certain about what she would and would not say to Ms. Walker. This was clear to her, regardless of her perception that she was "being dissed" by her teacher. Irina believed that it would not be right for her to express her true feelings to Ms. Walker

directly. However, the group of four American girls whom I interviewed thought that they could go to Ms. Walker as a group and voice their concerns. Irina learned from both her father and mother before she started elementary school that, regardless of her feelings, teachers were to be treated with respect in all situations. Although Irina could not approach Ms. Walker directly, Irina felt comfortable addressing her complaints about her teacher to me. In schools in the U.S. (perhaps unlike Russia and Kazakhstan, where Irina had attended school before coming to the U.S.), it is not unusual for students and parents to openly challenge a teacher's authority.

Both Jennifer and Esther, although used to a less rigid rehearsal structure in their church choirs in Ghana, knew that they needed to alter their patterns of attendance in chorus to earn an A. Their previous framework for chorus was based on the concept of singing for worship and was centered on the process of practicing and demonstrating Christian identity through group singing. In that situation, the focus was on the spiritual experience rather than the musical experience of the singers. In chorus at Marshall High School, being present and "on time" at every rehearsal was an important aspect of the overall musical discipline that was advocated and monitored by Ms. Walker.

Additionally, the notion of chorus as an academic subject that met during the school day was new for each participant. Although high school choir as a school-day subject was a new idea for each student, the girls all tended to have similar experiences in their adjustment to viewing chorus as a daily academic subject. Each girl emigrated with at least two family members, but their reports of family support for the choral class varied. Some students reported strong familial connections that extended beyond the immediate family, while others did not.

Lucas (1997) suggested that the cultural and social factors that affect the acculturation process for adolescent immigrants in U.S. schools includes educational background, quality of education, adolescence (and its implications), English language proficiency, cultural identity development, and family support. Since each girl came from a unique educational system in her home country and demonstrated differing levels of English language proficiency. Therefore, it makes sense that their acculturation experiences were different. In the following section, I use Lucas's work as a framework for exploring the implications of differing educational backgrounds, the impact of linguistic capital, the cultural implications of adolescence for immigrant students, and the role of the family on the acculturation process of immigrant students.

Educational Background

Lucas (1997) argued that the strength of immigrant students' educational backgrounds plays a crucial role in their success in the U.S., in particular, their success in school. All five girls can be described traditional English-language learners (ELLs) with adequate schooling, in that each participant was literate in her own language and had attended school before arriving in the U.S. In fact, all participants, except for Juliana, attended private schools prior to their emigration to the U.S. The four participants who attended private schools emphasized specifically the disrepair of the public school systems in their home countries and praised the U.S. public schools by comparison.

Previous fragmented education or the lack of content-area readiness skills can become a major obstacle to academic success in the United States. The participants' previous daily educational experiences varied widely. Four of the five students attended school continuously, whereas Juliana had a somewhat disjointed educational experience

in El Salvador due to two natural disasters (a major hurricane and a major earthquake) that affected her seventh-grade and eighth-grade school years.

Secondary school in Ecuador was not mandatory. Liz told me that there were very few high schools that had not been disrupted by protests and riots. Teachers in public schools there worked for very little money and held frequent demonstrations. Liz believed that her family came to the U.S. so that she and her sister could take advantage of the “excellent public schools in America.” She was highly motivated to go to college to help her family live a more financially secure life. Her father had enrolled in an ESOL class and was eager to practice English at home with his daughters. Liz’s constant references to taking notes in class and working with her ESOL teacher and her father to make sure that she understood content material suggested a highly motivated student who was willing to make any adjustment necessary to succeed in school.

In Juliana’s case, secondary schooling in El Salvador was almost nonexistent, except for very expensive private schools. Had she stayed in El Salvador, where compulsory education ends after the ninth grade, it is likely that she would not have continued to go to school. Juliana traveled to the U.S. with her mother and brother to join an extended family whose members had been coming to the country since the early 1990s. No one in her family had completed high school, and Spanish was the only language that was spoken in her home.

Juliana often had no one to help her with homework and was frequently behind in her assignments at school. Despite her admiration for Mr. Caceres, her teacher, she was often afraid to tell him that she needed help. As her schoolwork increased in difficulty, Juliana fell further and further behind. Finally, she felt forced to accept *Cs* and *Ds* on her

tests without questioning her grades. She seemed to accept the reality for her that school was more difficult in the U.S. However, she knew that she could pass, even if this meant doing so with lower grades. Juliana reasoned that as secondary school was not mandatory in El Salvador, if she were passing her classes, this was “good enough.”

Similarly, for Esther, secondary school in Ghana had not been mandatory; it was considered an “elite choice,” as Esther put it. If she had stayed in Ghana, her parents would have had to sacrifice many comforts to put her in a private school. They had done so for her older brother, and although she was certain that they would have found a way to send her to a private school in Accra, Esther knew that being able to attend public school in the U.S. was less burdensome on her family. Moreover, she perceived that she was the recipient of many educational benefits from her years at Marshall High School. She was interested in studying foreign languages and found many classes at Marshall High School that she would not have been able to take in Ghana.

Both Jennifer and Esther spoke briefly about their perceptions of school life in Ghana. They were explicit in their comparisons between their own private schools and the public schools in Ghana. Jennifer said, “The public schools were just awful. You didn’t want to go there.” However, both girls were convinced that the overall academic rigor and expectations for secondary students in Ghana were far greater than those in the U.S. Despite the perception of lower expectations in their school in the U.S., both girls relied on study groups with their African-born friends to keep their grades up at Marshall High School. Study groups were common in Ghana, and both girls’ parents supported their daughters’ seeking out peers to work with at Marshall High School. Esther believed that if she were at the “top of her class,” she would be able to earn a scholarship and go

on to college. Jennifer did not have aspirations to go to college, but she enjoyed her study group nonetheless as an opportunity to do homework with girls who spoke her native language.

Unlike the other girls, Irina believed that her private schools in Russia and Kazakhstan were superior to the educational experiences available to her at Marshall High School. Her coursework in Russia was “more connected,” and she found her classes at Marshall High School “very disorganized.” She thought that her ESOL teachers were trying to help her and her classmates “figure it all out,” but she believed that all of her classes should stress more “common ground.” Irina’s confusion might have been based on the curricular differences between middle school and high school. In both Russia and the U.S., the middle school curriculum focuses on integrated learning experiences, while the high school curriculum presents material in more content-specific approaches to learning. Despite her frustrations with her new school, Irina believed that her life in the U.S. was better and appreciated that at Marshall High School, she could choose from a greater variety of course offerings.

The families of all five participants had moved more or less voluntarily to the U.S. because they believed that immigrating to the U.S. would bring them greater educational and economic opportunities. Each girl seemed to be aware that a high grade-point average was important, and each demonstrated their motivation to earn an *A* in chorus. Irina and Esther earned *As* during both semesters of the class, while the other girls earned either a *C* or a *B*. Of the five, only Liz and Esther spoke about future college plans, perhaps because both girls were seniors, but from our conversations, it also

appeared that the two girls had greater family support for their academic goals than the other three participants.

In my conversations with the participants, I learned about each student's perception of her progress in learning English, as well as her school experiences in her individual home country and previous music classes in school. Since all five had immigrated at the age of 15, I explored literature on the acculturation process of adolescent immigrants. In the next section, I explore the cultural implications of adolescence as it relates to the cultural identity development of immigrant students.

Cultural Implications of Adolescence for Immigrant Students

Researchers agree that the age of arrival in the U.S. is a major factor that influences the likelihood of having a successful experience in school (Banks, 2001; Lucas, 1997; Portes & Rumbaut, 1990, 2001; Sussman, 2000). As all of the study participants immigrated at the age of 15, each had to struggle to decipher and negotiate the expectations in her new school in a way that younger students would not have had to do. There were other immigrant students at Marshall High School who had arrived in the U.S. during their elementary-school years and had already come to consider themselves "very American" by the time they had reached high school, as Nita, a young African immigrant, had put it. Social development for those students who had immigrated to the U.S. at a younger age, while perhaps not complete, was further along than it was for the primary participants in the study. All primary participants left behind in their native land attachments to people, places, and customs that they had spent many years developing and were faced with making new attachments at a time of intense identity seeking (Pipher, 2002).

In her book *Coming of Age in Samoa* (1971), the American anthropologist Margaret Mead showed that the emotional stress of adolescence is not biologically determined or inevitable, but culturally determined. She found that the difficulties encountered during the transition from childhood to adulthood vary from one culture to another. In daily interaction with culturally similar others, cultural identity remains unformed and unrecognized, thus *cultural scripts* reinforce the normative and expected standard (Sussman, 2000). These *scripts* might refer to an expectation of academic excellence, the assumption of parental duties, or, as in Jennifer's case, a strict adherence to the family's religious beliefs.

Given that all the participants were adolescents when they arrived in the U.S., they faced the complications of the biological changes normally associated with the teen years, as well as being thrust into the sometimes overstimulating cultural experience of American adolescence. Furthermore, Pipher (2002) noted that young immigrant teenagers are often in the process of forming their individual personal identity when leaving their home country. She argued that adolescents try on many different identities for size and fit; nothing about their identity is fixed. This natural experimentation is intensified for immigrant teenagers and includes trying out new clothes, attitudes, music, friends, and cultural habits.

Almost immediately, I noticed that the clothing of all the participants was in keeping with fashion norms of suburban American teenagers: polo shirts, long-sleeved sweaters and shirts, low-cut jeans, and high-heeled boots. Through our conversations about MTV and American pop singers, they made it clear that they, like most American teenagers, were influenced by clothing trends initiated by celebrities in the U.S. Sheets

and Hollands (1999) noted that images, roles, values, behaviors, and identities of ethnic groups transmitted through the mass media could have a significant impact on the construction of the ethnic or cultural identities of immigrant adolescents.

From our first meeting, I sensed that the girls' Americanized styles of clothing and hairstyles provided an opportunity for the students to become invisible. In a visual survey of the chorus class, it was impossible for me to tell the American-born students from the immigrant students. When ESOL students were identified to me by Ms. Walker, I noticed they held back from class participation. They waited and watched their American peers for both social and academic cues. Despite their uniformity in appearance when compared to their peers, they still considered themselves outsiders in light of certain discourse norms that they observed in their classes.

In our interviews, each participant expressed her concern over and disapproval of the overall manner in which American students addressed teachers. Pipher (2002) noted that while American children are raised to be independent and anti-authoritarian, children from traditional cultures are often raised to have great respect for adults. She further suggested that immigrant teenagers are shocked by how they see American adolescents treat their teachers and parents. Four of the five girls expressed disdain for the behavior of their fellow students. Liz mentioned several times that she was very uncomfortable when "American students were rude to the teacher." Juliana was upset and disappointed that her classmates could override Ms. Walker's decision by refusing to sing "Silent Night" in Spanish. Juliana did not understand how the teacher would allow her students to overrule her. Juliana wondered why the students had the right to "go against the teacher." Jennifer became my ally as I tried to control an unruly class in the early stages

of data collection. Later, she said that she was ashamed of the behavior of the students in her class that day.

Many American students take their behavior cues from the media, but the participants in this study commented critically on the behavior of popular singers on American television. Esther mentioned feeling torn between listening to hip-hop with her friends and worrying about how her parents might react to the song lyrics. Irina expressed her dismay at how “rude” American pop singers appeared to be on American television. She viewed their behavior in contrast to that of Russian pop singers, who presented themselves as “nice and honest” on Russian television.

Defining personal identity is a significant developmental task for any adolescent. Guanipa-Ho and Guanipa (1999) studied the process of cultural identity in immigrant students and noted that adolescence is particularly complicated for students who have recently immigrated and are constantly negotiating between their parents’ ethnic beliefs and the values and norms of the mainstream culture. Often this negotiation forces students to assume different roles according their present situation. Guanipa-Ho and Guanipa suggested that some adolescents handle this switching between roles well, managing as translators and contact points for their parents. However, some students face many high hurdles as they attempt to make this transition.

Irina’s strong sense of her Russian identity did not seem affected by the fact that she looked Asian and that her teachers assumed that she was either Vietnamese or Korean. Her commitment to performing Russian popular music in the International Night show suggested that she was already secure in her Russian identity.

Esther mentioned her frustration at only having two options to identify herself on college applications, African-American or Other. She considered herself African, but chose African-American as her identity because, in her words, “*Other* is not a good way to say who you are.”

This transition to American identity is sometimes difficult for immigrant adolescents who have not yet committed to a definition of identity and may not have been able to explore all the identity options or alternatives. As mentioned previously, Esther frequently found herself conflicted between her love of hip-hop and her parents’ strong religious beliefs. Furthermore, she found herself having to spend less time at home with her parents to spend more time with friends, and she felt ambivalent about making this choice. While this is normal for most American adolescents, Esther’s previous cultural framework had incorporated strong family ties to Christian worship and emphasized listening to music together as a family.

Juliana’s relationship with her boyfriend, which was fully sanctioned by her family, was causing a conflict for her at Marshall High School. Both her sisters had married before they were 18, and in her family, it was considered normal for a young woman to date seriously at the age of 15. She met Paulo at the end of her first semester at Marshall High School. He was also in the ESOL program at Marshall High School, and he was frequently absent from school. When he did attend classes, both he and Juliana were usually late for their first class after lunch. They spoke to each other during lunch and in the hallway exclusively in Spanish, and Juliana had a difficult time switching from Spanish to English in her afternoon classes. This required *code switching*, alternating

between two languages (Corson, 2001). Often, after Juliana's meetings with Paulo, Juliana found it difficult to read and write in either language in her afternoon classes.

Linguistic Capital

The linguistic discourse practices authorized in schools can routinely repress, dominate, and disempower diverse groups whose practices differ from the norms that they establish (Corson, 2001). In most schools, the meaning-filled events and practices that students encounter every day are transmitted through speech, so English-language-learner (ELL) students are often left out of the learning process, however inadvertently. The process of second-language acquisition is complex. Hosts of factors enhance or impede immigrant high school students' ability to acquire a second language.

Walqui (2000b) suggested that the factors that enhance or impede immigrant high school students' ability to acquire a second language include the linguistic distance between the first and second languages, the student's proficiency in the native language, prior knowledge of the second language, the dialect of the native language, and the sociocultural status of the country of origin and the first language. Esther and Jennifer emigrated from countries where English was the official language, yet they struggled in their content-area classes and spent most of their social time speaking in their native languages. Both girls had learned English in their private elementary schools in Ghana, and Esther's written English allowed her to place out of ESOL classes. Jennifer had learned a dialect of English that was quite dissimilar to the type of English spoken in the United States, so she was often unable to understand the language of instruction used in her classes. She remembered feeling "lonely" in her beginning ESOL classes and

recollected that the teacher spoke English, while everyone else in the room spoke Spanish.

After three years in the U.S., both Esther and Liz considered themselves to be bilingual. However, both girls were often frustrated at not being able to understand Ms. Walker's instructions in chorus class. Esther, during her first semester in chorus, recalled being able to comprehend only a fraction of Ms. Walker's written notes on the chalkboard. Esther said, "I heard her talk and then I saw her writing, and it just made no sense to me" (personal communication, November 11, 2003).

Liz frequently worried that she was missing important information in the chorus class, and she often asked me about rehearsal times and concert attire, two topics of particular concern for her. She knew that she was helping the other ESOL students in the class, and she did not know what they would do without her because it was difficult at times for them to follow Ms. Walker's instructions.

Irina did not participate in fundraising because she had "no idea whatsoever" of what Ms. Walker was talking about in class about selling citrus fruits to raise funds. Both Esther and Liz were considered advanced language learners, yet they were still experiencing difficulty grasping the nuances of the instructional language used by Ms. Walker.

Another factor that influences the language learning process and ELL students' overall success rates in content-area classes is the level of the students' own native-language development (Corson, 2001; Walqui, 2000a). The more academically sophisticated the student's native-language knowledge and abilities are, the easier it is for that student to add a second language to his or her repertoire. This observation may help

explain why foreign students tend to be successful in American high school classes: foreign students often already have attained a high school level proficiency in their native language (Walqui, 2000a).

This was illustrated in my three interviews with Anita, the Ecuadorian foreign student who was Juliana's classmate in ESOL, Level 1. She came to every session with a Spanish-English dictionary and worked very hard to speak only English to me. She knew that she was in the country to learn English for one year and viewed her participation in this study as an avenue to support that goal. In many instances, foreign students have English-language study included in their education prior to their coming to the U.S. Anita's father held a prestigious position in the World Bank, so she had been encouraged to learn and use English in as many situations as possible so that she could converse with her father's business associates and their families.

Juliana, on the other hand, while also a beginning English speaker, preferred to speak and write to me in Spanish throughout the data-collection process. Her ESOL teacher, Mr. Caceres, told me that he worried that she was becoming discouraged with speaking English due to her limited academic success at Marshall High School. Of the five participants, Juliana was the one who had had the most limited prior experience with English in her native country. By the end of the data-collection process, she had acquired some basic conversational English and was able to add a few slang phrases in her writing, such as, "forget it" and "no way."

However, as mentioned previously, she also faced difficulty reading and writing in Spanish. Most of her journal entries were written in both English and Spanish. Frequently, she was unable to write out words in her language to describe her feelings or

to make herself clear. Given that her level of reading and writing proficiency in Spanish was also limited, she faced serious hurdles in becoming fully literate in English by the time she graduated from high school.

Walqui (2000b) also noted the importance of dialect and register differences in acquiring a new language. Immigrant high school students are often confronted with the process of acquiring speech patterns that differ significantly from those in their native language. Jennifer was especially challenged by this. She and Esther had come from the same country at the same age, so it was logical to compare the two girls in English language proficiency. It is significant to note that Jennifer was aware that Esther was not an ESOL student and perceived that she held a higher position in the class because of her “easy way of blending in.” When I asked her about this, Jennifer said, “It is how she talks.”

In Jennifer and Ms. Walker’s view, Esther’s linguistic capital outweighed Jennifer’s (Bourdieu, 1984; Corson, 2001; Walqui, 2000a). Esther’s knowledge of English, her use of vocabulary, her syntax, and her accent allowed her to produce grammatically well-formed expressions and to produce the right expressions at the right time for a particular event. Corson further asserted that there is much evidence that vocabulary use is the most consistent marker of proficiency used throughout education. Esther’s linguistic prestige, as viewed by her peers and teachers, combined with her desire to excel in challenging academic situations, put her far ahead of the other recent immigrants in the chorus class.

Family Support

Family support plays a crucial role in immigrant adolescents' acculturation to a new learning and social environment (Lucas, 1997). Parents' ability to nurture and sustain a child's educational needs is often predetermined by their own educational background, socioeconomic status, and reasons for emigrating. Byng-Hall (1995) examined *script theory*, the patterns of relating and functioning within a family that have emerged out of those that have been established throughout generations.

Davidson (2002) suggested that this theory appears to play a significant role in establishing musical identities, as well as in passing down attitudes and values about participation in music classes. In Liz's case, her father viewed Liz's opportunity to perform with the school chorus as an honor that Liz earned for their entire family. Group music making was highly regarded in Liz's family, and her role in performance was praised and encouraged by her father. Conversely, Irina's mother saw her daughter's performance in the concert choir as a "step down" from the soloist image that Petra had firmly established for her daughter, based on her performances prior to immigrating to the U.S.

The presence of what Davidson (2002) called *key others* is also a highly influential factor in students' motivation for participating in musical activities. Early on in the data-collection process, I began to sense that the perceptions held by several participants concerning their experiences in the chorus class were directly related to the attitudes that their parents held about music in general. Borthwick and Davidson (2002) suggested that parents and their children form a "coalition" and that children are

frequently influenced by the musical identities of their parents. These authors asserted that this “pull” is even greater when the child plays the same instrument as the parent.

This pull was clearly illustrated in Liz’s description of her father’s desire for his daughters to “learn to love music, as he did.” Liz told me, “He loved playing the guitar and brought it to America, so I was happy to learn it.” She spoke of singing Andean folk music with her father and sister at home in Ecuador and in the U.S. This coalition formed a strong musical link between Liz and her father and was strengthened by her successes in learning to play the instrument at Marshall High School.

Irina had also participated in informal music making with her mother in Russia, Kazakhstan, and the United States. Irina recalled singing Russian folksongs at parties and remembered feeling especially close to her mother, Petra, during those times. I found it striking that Irina’s description of her mother’s negative reaction to the chorus concerts at Marshall High School was conspicuously different when compared with her mother’s positive emotional reaction to her daughter’s solo performance at the International Night show. I witnessed Petra’s physical reaction to her daughter’s performance. She stood, swayed, clapped, and sang along with the music.

Irina and her mother were “bored” with the choral concerts and noticed that Petra did not cry. Perhaps even more tellingly, Petra had remained seated throughout the concert. Irina noted this and mentioned that in Russia, her mother had always stood up and showed her support for her solo performances by clapping and swaying with the music. In many ways, it appeared that Irina was also “bored” with chorus class and choral performances and that she had learned this behavior from her mother. For Irina, her mother’s musical preferences produced a negative labeling of chorus class, which

devalued the experience for her because she had been nurtured and praised as a soloist by her family. In keeping with the concept of key others (Davidson, 2002), Irina's mother's support was crucial to Irina's acceptance or rejection of the choral culture. Petra, through her reaction to the choral concert, clearly transmitted her disdain for the choral performance to her daughter Irina.

Juliana's teacher, Mr. Caceres, told me that her parents were unable to support her by helping her with her homework or by attending concerts. He was concerned that Juliana was falling behind in all of her schoolwork and might never catch up. Despite her admiration for her teacher, Juliana was afraid to tell Mr. Caceres about the difficulty that she was experiencing with her sight-reading tests. Furthermore, her parents worked in the evenings, when choral concerts were scheduled, and therefore, they were unable to attend the concerts. As her family could not support her academic achievements because of their work schedules, as well as their limited educational background, Juliana was forced to face her requirements for public performances and individual testing in chorus alone.

Esther's family also did not attend choral concerts. Her parents supported her school activities, but they did not take the time to go to school concerts because they considered the chorus class to be an extracurricular activity. In my conversations with Esther, it became clear that she also viewed chorus in this light. She frequently spoke of the "easy A" that she was earning in chorus and was pleased that she was able to receive college credit for a class that required no "outside work." Esther believed that she had learned a great deal about singing in the course, but she knew that her parents did not consider singing a useful skill for a college-bound student. They were surprised that chorus was a class held during the school day at Marshall High School. Esther's parents

only allowed Esther to take the course for the second year because she convinced them that earning an *A* in the course would boost her grade-point average.

Jennifer's family attended a prayer service on Thursday evenings and therefore was unable to come to choral concerts at Marshall High School. Her parents thought that singing in the choir was a good extracurricular activity, but only if it did not interfere with her basic schoolwork. They supported Jennifer's first semester in chorus because she needed a fine-arts credit for graduation. In her second year, Jennifer told her parents that she enjoyed taking a class with other African girls. They allowed her to take the course a second year, but cautioned her to make sure that she kept up with her schoolwork.

Both girls' parents had formed their impressions of participation in a choral group from their previous understanding of the choral singing that had been directly connected with worship services. In this framework, singing was extracurricular and provided young people an opportunity to develop Christian friendships and values outside the home. Because of the strong emphasis on academic achievement in Ghana, combined with both sets of parents' previous understandings of choral singing solely as a vehicle for worship, they did not see the validity of choral music as an academic subject. Despite the clash between their parents' values and chorus presented as an academic subject in the secondary, high school curriculum, Jennifer and Esther were able to negotiate between values that they considered to be typically American and their parents' cultural beliefs and values to achieve a balance between both worlds.

In this research, I have collected pieces of information that have contributed to the construction of stories that provide explanatory answers about immigrant students'

experiences in choral classrooms. Narrative reasoning does not reduce itself to rules and generalities, but maintains the level of specific episodes (Boutte, 2002). Therefore, I explored a number of factors that contribute to the acculturation process of immigrant teenagers and the manner in which those issues surfaced in this study. In the next section, I will examine the role of language in the choral classroom.

The Role of Language in the Choral Classroom

Teachers are beginning to recognize the unique perspective that each student brings with him or her to school. Because language is the central medium of instruction in school, it is essential to provide experience-based encounters with content as well as language in the classroom. First, I examine the various linguistic competencies that must be reached for ELL students to be able to understand in-depth content information. Then, I explore the specific language of instruction that was used in the chorus class and how the participants negotiated their linguistic background and competencies and the language used in the classroom. Finally, I examine teachers' perceptions of immigrant students' participation in the choral classroom. These explorations will highlight a number of different perspectives.

Linguistic Competence

By the time younger immigrant children reach adolescence, their first languages are usually established well enough to support the learning of a second language without first-language support. As a result, high schools meet most of the needs of those students by giving them the widest possible academic and informal exposure to English through ESOL classes, as well as through content-area classes (Corson, 2001).

However, there are many priorities that need to be met to facilitate academic learning in English for students who immigrate to the U.S. when they are adolescents. As it can take five to seven years to acquire a second language at a level of proficiency adequate to begin to deal with ordinary high school classroom activities, Corson (2001) suggested that the following competencies are essential for ELL students' success in content-area classes: linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence, social competence, sociocultural competence, and strategic competence.

Linguistic competence involves the use and interpretation of the structural elements of English. In the choral classroom, ELL students must be able to interpret and understand directions, instructions, and grading information, whether they are written or spoken by the teacher to the student. Most of the teaching that I observed in Ms. Walker's classes was centered on oral teacher instructions and critiques of students' daily performance in class. The participants were not required to respond in English, but were held responsible for knowing the information given either orally or in writing by their teacher. They were required to demonstrate musical competence through a series of tests that did not require English proficiency. Nevertheless, the participants' previous experiences with musical notation were in most cases dramatically different from the music reading requirements at Marshall High School. Immigrant students were therefore usually unable to grasp Ms. Walker's discussions of the concepts, so, for the most part, they performed below the average on tests.

Sociolinguistic competence is concerned with using appropriate language in any given situation. In my observations of and conversations with the participants, I noticed that all of the participants, with the exception of Esther, seemed reluctant to speak to their

classmates or to Ms. Walker in English. They often asked me to talk to their teacher or found ways to ask me about rehearsal times or about the requirements of the dress code.

On my last day of observations at the school, I watched as Juliana spoke to Ms. Walker through another girl in the class. Juliana's friend was bilingual, and she explained to Ms. Walker that Juliana was nervous about being late for the final dress rehearsal and that she wanted her teacher to know that she would be present at the concert the next night. Having spent nearly a year in conversations with Juliana, I knew that she could have initiated and sustained this conversation with Ms. Walker, but I also knew that she lacked confidence in her sociolinguistic abilities.

Discourse competence involves understanding separate phrases in meaningful patterns. In other words, students are required to make sense of seemingly unrelated linguistic patterns that are a part of traditional classroom norms. I saw this play out in my observations, as well as in my conversations with the participants in the area of fundraising. To most American music students, fundraising is a traditional and acceptable part of group membership. However, the primary participants were perplexed about their role in selling poinsettias, oranges, and pizzas, as well as how that was related to their participation in their choral class.

Liz's confusion about the citrus sale highlighted the many linguistic nuances that are present in second-language competence. Liz sold the oranges to a teacher who first told her that he wanted the product. However, when she tried to deliver the oranges, she thought that he told her that he never intended to order the fruit. The next day, the teacher complained to Ms. Walker that he had ordered fruit, but did not receive it. Later, Liz learned that he did not have a check with him at school and had asked her to redeliver it

the next day. Liz misunderstood him and felt ashamed because she had “let Ms. Walker down.” The discourse skills that were required to complete the transaction were beyond Liz’s linguistic ability, and she was therefore unable to feel successful in her efforts to participate in that activity.

Socio-cultural competence is attained through a familiarity with the real-world context in which English is practiced. Esther acted as Jennifer’s peer translator and rehearsal mentor in the chorus class. As mentioned previously, Liz nurtured the two Spanish-speaking girls in the class similarly and thus believed that she was helping both Anita and Juliana through what she herself remembered as a difficult transition. Conversely, Irina’s feelings of isolation and lack of connection to other students and teachers in chorus could be attributed not only to her limitations with the English language, but also to her lack of a linguistically similar peer in the class. She was unable to make Ms. Walker or other students aware of her loneliness or homesickness because she had no way of communicating those emotions in words to them.

Using Previous Understandings to Make Linguistic Accommodations

Walqui (2000a) noted that immigrant students are often promoted from ESOL classes into mainstream classes based on their conversational ability alone, but once promoted, they are often not given any further linguistic supports. As a result, these students often lag behind their native English-speaking counterparts in academic progress. Ovando and Collier (1984) suggested that the ability to use language in a variety of content-based contexts and to apply a content-specific language in more complex oral and written modes requires approximately 4 to 10 years of study and practice.

As all five participants had taken music classes prior to their arrival at Marshall High School, those experiences had prepared them for a good portion of the daily work of chorus. With the exception of the sight-reading drills and examinations, they all had previous singing experiences. Each girl loved to sing, and the fact that chorus existed in the curriculum as an academic subject made it even more attractive as an elective. Despite their difficulty interpreting much of the language used by the teacher, they were able to make some connections in their choral classroom because they all had prior group singing experiences.

Each girl exhibited a high degree of strategic competence in using verbal and nonverbal strategies to make up for gaps in her knowledge of the English language. All the girls were highly motivated by their desire to earn an *A* in the class. Esther found the music reading requirement challenging and she believed that the demands Ms. Walker put on the chorus students to learn to sight-read music made Esther work harder in class than she had anticipated. Yet, she found the overall workload of chorus easier than the workloads of other classes, so she found the time to practice sight-reading music at home.

Irina became a regular attendee at the lunchtime sight-reading classes and quickly learned what she had to do to earn an *A* in the chorus class. Jennifer also attended the lunch sessions, and although her grade did not improve, she made sure that she was on time for every rehearsal and concert. She knew that she was not going to get an *A* because she still did not understand sight-reading, but she believed that she could probably earn a *B* by following all the other instructions.

Anita relied heavily on her Spanish-English dictionary and drew pictures when she could not find the words that she wanted to use in the classroom, while Juliana often

depended on peer translators. To compensate for her fear of taking the rhythm tests, Liz used her prior experiences in guitar class with Ms. Walker. Liz “knew the pattern of the class” run by Ms. Walker, and found ways to figure out what was going on in class based on what she had experienced the previous year in Ms. Walker’s guitar class.

Throughout the 10 months of data collection, I observed each participant’s struggle as she worked to find footholds in the musical and academic content of choral instruction as each slowly gained linguistic competencies pertinent to her success in the class. Since the main work required of students in the class was group singing, their previous singing experiences provided the girls with an immediate sense of being part of a large group of singing peers. Even if they could not pronounce or understand all of the words that they were singing, they were able to take advantage of the frequent use of repetition and drill. Furthermore, they benefited from the full group participation, which offered them opportunities for interaction and practice in understanding spoken English.

Context-Dependent Language Use in Choral Instruction

All of the primary participants in the study had previous group singing experiences, so their group singing skills were somewhat developed prior to their entering chorus at Marshall High School. However, the language of instruction that Ms. Walker used in the chorus class was in many ways context-dependent. She relied heavily on shared knowledge, common gestures, vocal inflection, facial expressions, and situational cues that were unfamiliar to the primary participants in this study.

Additionally, Ms. Walker’s use of verbal instruction relied heavily on her own knowledge of vocal production. From my observations, it seemed that Ms. Walker’s teaching style assumed prior knowledge of the breathing process and vocal production.

She frequently started rehearsals with warm-ups that included breathing exercises, yet I did not observe her explain the process of breathing to the class.

It appeared that despite the status of the group as one that had not had to audition, Ms. Walker's lessons were geared toward intermediate singers who had already learned rudimentary concepts in choral singing. Much of the terminology that she used made little sense in the context of the participants' previous singing experiences. For example, Ms. Walker repeatedly instructed students to "sing from your diaphragm" or to "raise your soft palate." In most cases, these phrases were not only beyond the grasp of the ELL students in this study, but also a number of the American-born students in the choral class. However, many of the students in the chorus had heard similar phrases from previous choral teachers. In my conversation with the four American-born students, I learned that each girl in the group had previous experiences in elementary-school and middle-school chorus and believed that they had learned enough about the breathing process necessary for singing. The exercises that they did in the chorus at Marshall High School were reminders of what they already knew about correct vocal technique.

Ms. Walker sometimes used physical gestures to demonstrate her instructions by massaging her own cheeks with her fingers to show a dropped and relaxed jaw and by modeling the position of a deep breath. However, she used language that relied on students' understanding of this terminology. Given that the study of vocal technique was not part of the study participants' previous experiences of choral singing, the teacher's use of such terminology frequently caused confusion among the participants. Regular schooling gradually helps children develop the skills necessary for decoding academic language, but ELL students who enter at the secondary level are often unable to

manipulate academic concepts in such a setting (Chamot & O'Malley, 1989). This was clear in Esther's comments about how much more she understood chorus in her second year in the class, and in Liz's comment that she "knew the pattern" of testing in her choral class.

Frequently, I observed the more recent immigrant participants cope with this knowledge and comprehension deficit by holding back in their participation. Juliana was often afraid to sing because she was not always certain about when she was supposed to start and stop singing. Both Liz and Juliana mentioned their concern for Juan, the boy from El Salvador, who was frequently absent from chorus class. One day, Liz asked me to try to talk to him about his poor attendance. She told me, "He doesn't understand this class, and he feels bad when he comes, so he don't [*sic*] come no more" (personal communication, October 13, 2003).

I spoke to Juan the next week and learned that he had never sung in chorus before. He said "I have no idea how to make my voice work." Juan had missed many days of school because he had to work to help his family pay bills. Juan's difficulty in understanding Ms. Walker's language of instruction, coupled with his lack of previous singing experience, made his successful participation in the chorus class nearly impossible.

Only Anita had previous experience with a more traditional classical musical vocabulary. In our second interview, she proudly told me that she had taken a music class in her secondary school in Ecuador, but it was more about "concepts" rather than "singing the music." As she had studied musical terms in her private school, she was able to make the connections with the musical language that Ms. Walker relied upon in her

teaching. Anita found performing isolated rhythm patterns difficult, but she had studied rhythms from a textbook in her school in Ecuador, so she thought that if she studied hard enough, she would be able to pass the exams.

Esther's first few days in the chorus were very strange because she had a difficult time hearing what Ms. Walker was saying while the group was singing. She dealt with this confusion by imitating her peers. In her first semester in the class, she was often lost because Ms. Walker frequently shouted instructions about breath support and vowel formation while they were singing. Jennifer laughed when she heard Esther say this and shook her head. "Yes, Girl, I did not know what was going on for the first few days. If I didn't have you, I would not have made it!" Then Jennifer told me that in her church choir in Ghana, they "just started singing" and kept singing the song "over and over" until it was correct. The experience of having a teacher critique the performance verbally using musical language was a new experience for Jennifer.

Teachers' reliance on the academic language of their content area is expected in secondary classes, yet terminology that assumes understanding by all students is often used. Corson (2001) suggested that it is easy to place too much value on the academic vocabularies of a certain academic discipline. In doing so, teachers face the possibility of devaluing the vocabularies and previous experiences of their students. In the next section, I examine teacher perceptions of immigrants students' participation in light of the linguistic challenges presented in choral classrooms.

Teacher Perceptions of

Immigrants Students' Participation in the Choral Classroom

In an informal email survey of 18 choral teachers from the Holton County school district (see appendix E), I learned that high school teachers expected that their choral students would learn basic breathing and vocal production in elementary-school and middle-school chorus. Several teachers noted that their ESOL students seemed to love to sing, but often had no concept of formal vocal technique. Many teachers who participated in the survey believed that their ESOL students were often lost in chorus due to their unfamiliarity with English.

One teacher wrote, "It is quite difficult to bring them along with other kids, who often have had many years of choral experience." Another said, "Too bad we can't just have an ESOL chorus so [that] they could be together and learn at the same rate." These statements highlight two common viewpoints about immigrant students in content-area classes: the *cultural deprivation model*, which stresses that all immigrants come from culturally deprived backgrounds and need to be brought "up" to the level of the rest of the class (Gay, 2003) and the view that all ELL students learn at the same rate (Walqui, 2000a).

I had many conversations with ESOL teachers, guidance counselors, and instructors about the class participation of immigrant students. With the exception of Ms. Walker, I sensed that these educators did not consider chorus to be an academic subject. Therefore, they did not believe that the course required significant linguistic competence. Ms. Peters, Irina's ESOL teacher, told me that instructional assistants hired by Marshall High School's ESOL Department were required to assist beginning ESOL students in

their academic classes. She told me that there was a high demand for this assistance, and because there were more than 100 ESOL students at Marshall High School, but only two full-time instructional assistants, it was not realistic to expect that these instructional assistants would be able to schedule time in chorus to assist the ESOL students who were enrolled in that class. She sensed that ESOL students were often “lost in their mainstreamed classes” and that some teachers “did better than others in accommodating them,” but given that most ESOL students loved to sing, she did not think that sending instructional assistants to chorus class should be a priority.

Mr. Caceres believed that ESOL students did best when they were able to “mainstream in small groups so [that] they could defend each other.” He noted that Juliana and Anita helped support each other throughout the school day. Mr. Caceres also cited a number of instances in which peer modeling under the guise of competition between the two girls spurred Juliana to participate more in class. “When Anita answers a question, then Juliana will answer. When I praise Anita, Juliana wants praise. She gets it by following Anita’s example. So I would imagine [that this] is the same in the chorus class.”

Corson (2001) claimed that students learn to perform even simple acts by observing how others do them and using others as models. I saw many instances of peer modeling throughout my observations in chorus class. I watched as Jennifer and Esther quietly conferred during class. I also observed the three Spanish-speaking girls converse back and forth during the instruction. During the first semester, I noticed Irina, without a linguistically similar peer, sit alone, withdrawn from the class.

During the second semester, I watched as alliances among the participants began to shift. First, Jennifer tutored Irina to help her to pass the rhythm exams. With Liz and Anita no longer in the class, I observed that Juliana began to rely heavily on Jennifer as well. Then I observed Irina, Juliana, and Jennifer standing together each day during class, while Esther stood apart from the other three. I watched as the three girls quietly whispered and motioned to each other during rehearsals, yet they remained respectful to Ms. Walker by maintaining eye contact with their teacher to a greater extent than I had observed during the first semester.

I was not certain whether they had formed this alliance due to the knowledge that they had been singled out for this study or whether they gravitated toward each other for different reasons. Whatever the reason, it seemed that they had formed a cross-cultural peer group that appeared to give them opportunities to engage in conversations—perhaps both social and academic—during class time. These conversations, in a sense, facilitated their participation in the chorus class. Corson (2001) wrote:

Clearly, discourse plays the central role in learning. No matter what the subject area, students make new concepts their own largely because of the use of language. In other words, when they listen and talk, read and write about what they are learning and relate this to what they already know, they are learning. . . . Students need frequent opportunities to interact in small group discussions that focus on exploring new concepts. (p. 111)

Juliana, Irina, and Jennifer had formed an alliance that helped them to navigate the new concepts that they were learning in a new language in chorus class. These concepts were part of the discourse norms of a choral culture with deep roots in the

Western classical music culture that have been passed down in American high school chorus classes for many years. In the next section, I discuss some of the traditional discourse norms associated with high school choirs in the United States and how the primary participants in this study perceived them.

Traditional Discourse Norms Associated with High School Chorus

Walqui (2000b) noted that teaching immigrant adolescents to speak English as a second language is not sufficient to enable them to succeed in American middle and high schools, where they will be required to perform at sophisticated levels in subject-specific areas. She further suggested that the future success of ELL students also depends on developing their ability to use central concepts, discourse practices, and canons that are associated with different academic subjects in school.

Discourses function and circulate by appearing as normal, as common sense, or by claims to scientific knowledge. Each discourse then promotes meanings that are particular to a specific group, culture, and historical period (O'Toole, 1994). In this dissertation, discourse norms are defined as *cultural meaning systems* (Corson, 2001) that apply to the culture of high school choir. For example, the performance and study of Western classical choral music is one example of a discourse norm in high school choir. Another example of a traditional choral discourse norm might be the hierarchical nature of high school choral programs, starting with a mixed choir that has not had to audition as the foundation of the program and moving up in skill and difficulty level to a highly select choral ensemble.

Discourses create positions within which an individual asserts the value of a certain belief. In the following section, I explore a number of guiding principles and

curricular traits that have been historically and socially established and reproduced as dominant norms and curricular traits in high school choral music in the United States.

Expected Patterns of Behavior in the Choral Classroom

Foucault's (1979) *curriculum of discipline* identified desirable classroom behavioral patterns and habits that were appropriate for each particular learning situation. An important concept in choral music centers on the strict set of standards by which appropriate choral musicianship is displayed. Often, this manifests itself in the physical arrangements in choral rehearsals and performances. O'Toole (1994) noted:

The choir is enclosed in a room and partitioned upon the risers according to their voice type and possibly according to their talents. The director is then positioned in front of the choir, which allows the singers to see the director primarily and each other only peripherally. All attention and focus move toward the director. (p. 18)

In considering the seating practices in traditional choral classroom settings, O'Toole further suggested, "The choral discourse that makes sense out of this arrangement of bodies discourages horizontal interaction that might create (dangerous) community among the singers and detract from the director's control of the music-making" (p. 21).

In my observations of the chorus class, I noted that Ms. Walker relied on a highly regimented system of discipline to keep order in her classroom. She frequently stopped rehearsal and forcefully corrected her students' talkative behavior. However, on more than one occasion, I observed that the primary participants in this study had found ways for "horizontal" interaction, including quiet whispering and nonverbal gesturing to each

other. Ms. Walker believed that they were helping each other, and as long as their behavior did not interfere with the class, she allowed these practices to continue. Her lenience in this area suggested an empathy to her immigrant students that was not extended to other students.

Throughout the course of the 10-month data-collection process, I observed Ms. Walker's use of verbal reminders of class rules that seemed to reflect her own desire for the pursuit of choral excellence. She was consistent in her grading policies and was thorough in her follow-through in scheduling tests and quizzes. Students seemed to know realistically what was expected of them at all times in her classroom. I watched as she took roll exactly the same way at the start of each class.

She kept her grade book on the piano at all times, and when a student came to class without a music folder or was found to be chewing gum, Ms. Walker made a mark in her grade book. I watched as Anita was marked down for not having her music during her second week of classes at Marshall High School. This seemed harsh to me because I knew that Anita had only been in the U.S. for four weeks. However, Ms. Walker noted that after losing a grade point for the first offense, very few students forgot their music in her class a second time.

O'Toole (1994) suggested that one of choral pedagogy's conventional discourses is that power is granted to the director over the singers. She asserted that the strong emphasis on self-discipline in music study supports Foucault's (1979)*docile bodies* theory. O'Toole noted:

The conventional wisdom states that to become a "good musician," one has to display a great deal of self-discipline. Additionally, "great" ensembles are created as a result

of discipline and hard work. The practice of spending hours drilling and rehearsing intricate physical acts to produce subtle musical phrases is an example of the immediate effect [that a] disciplinarian discourse has on the body. (p. 19)

Ms. Walker wanted the choral program at Marshall High School to be regarded as one of the strongest musical programs in Holton County. She knew that for that to happen, all her classes had to work as hard as she did. She expected the singers in the chamber choir to lead the choral program in attitude, work ethic, and performance.

Hierarchical Ranking of Choral Groups

The program at Marshall High School was organized around a traditional high school choral curriculum that offered classes for beginning, intermediate, and advanced choral students. The hierarchical ranking of these groups was communicated very clearly to the singers, as well as to the general community.

As noted previously, the traditional end to every concert featured a large combined chorus known as the concert choir, which was comprised of all three choral classes. One day near the final concert of the year, I observed a concert choir and rehearsal, at which I heard Ms. Walker say, “I cannot believe that the students in the chamber choir are talking. You guys are supposed to be the example here, and look at how you’re acting!”

Ms. Walker held the singers in the chamber choir to the highest standard and expected them to set the behavior and musical standards for the other groups. As this ensemble was, in Ms. Walker’s words, “very hard to get into,” on the basis of sight-reading ability and vocal technique, a hierarchical ranking was openly sanctioned by the

teacher and apparently accepted by all the students in the choral program at Marshall High School. O'Toole (1994) wrote:

Within choral music, then, there is a similar ranking of knowledge and skills that sorts people into power-laden categories. . . . This sorting is made possible by the existence of institutionally valued skills, such as sight-reading, ear-training, and analysis abilities, [in addition to] knowledge of historical time periods, performance practices, performance skills, and conducting skills. Consequently, these “legitimate” skills and knowledge are then valued and promoted over other types of skills, such as social skills or the love of singing. (p. 22)

In my conversations with students at Marshall High School, many singers in the chorus class told me that they were frustrated that they were not allowed to perform separately as a class, but only as the combined concert choir, which included the two advanced groups, as well as their own chorus class. Below is an excerpt from a conversation that I had with Brianna and Ruth, two U.S.-born singers who were in the chorus:

Brianna: I like it—singing with a big group—because I think it’s a better sound, but the only thing is that trebles and chambers, they’re their separate groups and sing their own separate songs, but we don’t sing our separate songs. They sing with us.

Regina: How do you feel about that?

Brianna: I feel kind of—I’m not saying that Miss Walker thinks—like—she’s putting us down or anything, but it makes me feel like I’m not good enough to sing by myself, in a choir—just the choir, the regular chorus.

Ruth: 'Cause this year, she was saying that we sound a whole lot better than her choir did last year. . . .

Brianna: (*interrupts*) Yeah. A lot of people in the regular chorus think that, but we never told Miss Walker. We asked her why we didn't get to sing our own songs. She'll just say that every choir class comes together as the concert choir. But the trebles, they're [a] higher level than us [*sic*], they sight-read better than most of us do. Chambers is the highest level; they have to try out too. You have to be able to have the highest level of sight-reading [to get into that group], but we still don't get to sing our own songs; and if we sound fine in class, then we should be able to sound fine onstage. (personal communication, March 10, 2004)

While this practice of putting all levels of chorus together for a large festival-type chorus seemed to bother the U.S.-born students whom I interviewed, four out of five of the primary participants thought that singing in the larger group made for an overall better choral sound. They did not seem puzzled by Ms. Walker's apparent mixed messages to the chorus class about their performing abilities.

Liz said, "I like singing with the larger group because if I mess up, there are others who can help me." Jennifer and Esther laughed, and Esther said, "I can't really sing anyway, so it doesn't bother me!" Juliana was happy that she did not have to sing in a small group. Only Irina said that this practice made her feel "dissed" by Ms. Walker. She told me that she thought that Ms. Walker did not consider the students in her chorus class to be good enough to sing alone as a group.

Later, I reviewed the interview transcripts of my conversation with the four U.S.-born student participants. I learned that all four girls were planning on auditioning for

either the treble chorus or chamber choir, and they had, as one girl put it, “completely bought into what it takes” to sing in one of those select choral groups. Ruth told me that it was hard for her to sing in “just the chorus, when my best friends are in trebles and chambers.” Two of the girls had auditioned for the select groups in the spring of 2003, but had not passed the audition. They were returning to the chorus class (which did not require an audition) for the second year. One girl told me, “I totally messed up in my chamber’s audition. I’m going to try again this year. I know what I did wrong.”

When I asked Jennifer whether she would like to audition for one of the select groups, she said, “Um, maybe, but I won’t get in. I cannot sight-read. I like their outfits a lot better than our choir robes, but I know I won’t make it.” Both Liz and Esther were seniors, and they did not think that they would audition for the advanced groups, even if they were not graduating in June of 2004. Liz said, “I am not a singer. I love to play guitar.” Esther said, “I didn’t have to take this class; I just did it so I could get the A.”

Both participants who had selected chorus for a second year viewed their status in a chorus that did not require an audition differently. They appreciated the fact that the class gave them an opportunity to work in a group and to perform as a group. They were relieved that they did not have to “stand out as individuals,” which would have entailed risking possible embarrassment about their perceived inadequacies as singers. Neither girl was interested in taking an audition to sing in one of the select choirs. Although Jennifer “liked the girls in the green dresses,” she did not believe that she had the skill to pass an audition to sing in the treble choir.

Irina was vehement in her rejection of chorus at Marshall High School, and was certain that she would not audition for one of the select choirs for the 2004–2005 school

year or remain in the chorus. She knew that “one year was enough” for her and that she would continue to sing at International Night and with her family. Juliana had considered taking chorus the following year, but was not sure that she would actually sign up for the class.

From their comments and responses, it appeared to me that the primary participants did not buy into the hierarchical ranking that was practiced in the choral program at Marshall High School. They were not motivated by the possibility of membership in the advanced choirs in the same way as were the American-born students whom I interviewed. This could be due to their own insecurities about their musical abilities or perhaps their reluctance to be involved in more extracurricular activities. Only Irina seemed certain that she had advanced vocal skills, but even she made it clear that she did not enjoy singing as a chorus member. I also sensed that the participants believed that they did not fit in with the typical advanced choral student. This was surprising because there were a number of first-generation and second-generation Americans in the treble choir, and the girls could have fit in visually with the group.

In my survey of secondary choral directors in Holton County, I learned that few ESOL students elected chorus for a second year and that even fewer sang in the more advanced choruses. One teacher wrote:

In the high school, my guess is that the percentage of ESOL students who select chorus for a second year would be much lower, since the process is much more selective than it was in the middle school. For example, only 30 students are able to participant in the school musical. It is often difficult for the ESOL students to

compete with kids who have had voice lessons and much more practice sight-reading. (personal communication, January 14, 2004)

This teacher went on to suggest that it was not as difficult for the few ESOL boys who auditioned for higher-level classes because of the limited number of boys in the overall program. I saw this clearly in my observations at Marshall High School. In the next section, I discuss gender issues in the choral classroom and the discourse norms in choral music education that surround the trend of promoting boys more rapidly than girls in high school choral programs.

Gender Issues in the Choral Classroom

In Ms. Walker's classroom, the piano was at the center of the room, and she stood behind it, facing her singers as she taught her classes. I noticed that in her two mixed choral classes, chamber choir and chorus, the boys were seated in the middle of the classroom directly facing Ms. Walker, with the girls fanning out on the sides. From this vantage point, the boys in the class had most access to their teacher.

Throughout the course of the data-collection period, I observed that Ms. Walker spent far more time in rehearsal working with the boys in her classes than she spent rehearsing with the girls. She frequently asked me to run bass sectionals in the chorus class. She often shouted verbal instructions to the girls while the chorus was singing, such as, "Sopranos, more vowels!" or "Altos, come on!" Ms. Walker felt that she had to "build a men's section," whereas the women already came to chorus "knowing how to sing." She believed that she could not have what she called a "top choir" without a strong men's section. Because she had fewer boys in the choral program, she often had to recruit male singers who were less vocally proficient than the females. By comparison, the girls

believed that they had to perform at a very high level to sing in the advanced groups.

Brianna commented, “I know [that] there are too many girls in chamber choir, so, unless I’m really, really good, I know [that] I won’t get in.”

O’Toole (1994) noted:

The top choir in a program is generally the mixed choir, which requires a balance between the men’s and women’s voices. Traditionally, choral programs have a shortage of men and an overabundance of women. What this would mean in a program that has two choirs is that one choir will more than likely be mixed, and the other will be a women’s choir. The balance issue then justifies the practice of putting all men in the “top” (mixed) choir and requiring the women to compete for the same honor. The women’s choir then becomes the “dumping ground” for women not talented enough to be in the top choir. (p. 27)

I did not find this to be true of the women in the treble choir at Marshall High School. As noted in chapter 4, treble choir functioned as an ensemble that was highly committed to working with its teacher. Ms. Walker’s frequent references of being “all girls in this together” carried them far. I observed a high degree of concentration in rehearsals and sensed a feeling of kinship that I did not find in the other two choirs. Both the choir and its teacher seemed to transcend the stigma of the women’s choir as a place for the “extra” girls. The chorus class, however, for which no audition was necessary, took on the “dumping-ground” status at Marshall High School. Many of the high school choral directors surveyed noted this in their own experience. One teacher wrote:

I found that many ESOL students are “dumped” into chorus, along with many folks who have never sung and never intend to sing. It is quite discouraging. The boys I get

in that class, if they're any good at all, get moved out as quickly as possible to the upper-level classes. (personal communication, January 14, 2004)

However, I found little opposition to the traditional practice of promoting the boys quickly to the advanced choir among the primary participants, as well as the four U.S.-born students whom I interviewed. They did not think that it was unfair that the boys in the class got more attention. Ruth noted, "A lot of them can't really sing, and we can, so it makes no sense for her [Ms. Walker] to spend time on us, when they are struggling so much. Plus, there are way more of us than [of] them" (personal communication, March 10, 2004).

Throughout the data-collection period, I observed a general attitude of support of and positive feelings about the boys in the class. Several times, I watched as girls smiled and shook their heads when the boys repeatedly sang the wrong pitches. Jennifer said, "We can't have the choir without them, and they really need to learn the notes." Esther chimed in, "Plus, we can relax while they are rehearsing" (personal communication, January 23, 2004).

At Marshall High School, a female singer's ability to sight-read music was a major factor in determining her future in the choral program. If she showed promise as a sight-reader in her audition, she was moved "up" to the treble chorus; if she could not pass this test, she was required to stay in the chorus class (for which no one had to audition) for another year. In the choral program survey, out of 39 respondents in the choral class, nearly one-third of the girls were in their second or third year in the class. Boys were given more leeway in the sight-reading portion of the chamber choir audition because there were fewer boys in the program. As a result, only two out of nine boys repeated the

general chorus class. The rest either moved up to chamber choir or did not choose choir for a second year.

Demonstrating Proficiency in Sight-Reading

It is generally accepted that choral singers in secondary schools must be taught to read music. There are many valid arguments that support this premise, including expediting the learning of a musical work (Small, 1998) and the ability to be a self-sustained musician (Collins, 1994). Skills such as sight-reading, ear-training, and analysis abilities are often valued and promoted in the choral classroom over other types of skills or knowledge, such as social skills or the love of singing (O'Toole, 1994). However, rigorous sight-reading programs sometimes overwhelm inexperienced singers as they enter secondary choral programs. These inexperienced singers might be encountering such demands for the first time.

Durrant (2003) wrote:

If singers who have little experience with sight-singing, however, are expected to sight-sing melodies a cappella, they will perceive that expectation as a considerable threat to their well-being. A fairly strong unpleasant feeling will occur (anxiety), and some form of the fight, flight, or freeze behavior will occur. (p. 30)

In a survey given to all students in the choral program at Marshall High School (see appendix D), a majority of the 84 respondents indicated that they selected chorus because they loved to sing. In all three classes, most students thought that the sight-reading drills and exams in the choral curriculum at Marshall High School would improve their sight-reading. However, yet, in early interviews, the primary participants

were quite vocal about their confusion over and their discomfort with the sight-reading tests.

Neither Irina nor Juliana understood why sight-reading was a course requirement for the choral class. Perhaps this was because their memories of previous singing experiences in their home countries did not include sight-reading examinations. However, as mentioned above, Irina learned that if she wanted to earn an *A* in the class, she had to improve her sight-reading. Irina, who ultimately chose “flight” from her chorus class, first chose to “fight” to learn how to pass the tests.

Juliana, on the other hand, did not perform well on the tests. Unlike Irina, she chose to “freeze” and did not seek help. Liz did well in the rhythm tests, but she was not as sure of the *solfege* exercises; however, she believed that Ms. Walker was “working hard to teach us something about music.” Liz sensed there was more to chorus than singing, yet she ultimately left the class in the middle of the academic year, after only one semester in the chorus.

Jennifer was confused by the sight-reading requirements, and despite her attendance at several lunchtime tutoring sessions, she admitted to “freezing up” in her individual rhythm exam. Only Esther found the rhythm and *solfege* exercises and exams challenging, but “not really difficult.” She was invigorated by the musical challenge that was posed by the rhythm tests and practiced for them at home.

Three of the four U.S.-born students I interviewed had studied rhythmic and melodic sight-reading in middle-school and elementary-school chorus. Each had attended Holton County public schools from kindergarten through high school. Allie, who had had no previous sight-reading experiences, was born in Colorado and had moved to Holton

County in the seventh grade, but she did not take chorus while she was in middle school. She found that for the first few weeks in chorus at Marshall High School, it was difficult for her to keep up with the class, but as she was highly motivated to audition for the treble chorus, she knew that she needed to learn to sight-read and did not find the tests difficult once she practiced the rhythms at home. Ruth believed that learning to sight-read would help her to learn the repertoire more quickly and found that as she played piano, she was able to transfer her music-reading skills from instrument to voice.

From my observations, it seemed that Ms. Walker's justification for incorporating sight-reading in her curriculum was related to preparing the choirs for the district choral festival. Throughout the data-collection period, Ms. Walker made many references to the sight-reading portion of the festival to her students, which indicated to them that they would receive low ratings if they did not learn how to sight-read.

However, in our conversations, she stressed a desire for her students to leave her classes with more than simply "having sung a great repertoire." While she wanted her students to be self-sustaining musicians, this was not apparent from her verbal comments in her choral class. Perhaps if she had made it clear to her beginning choral students that she wanted them to be self-sustaining musicians, the participants in this study would have been able to connect the drills and exercises with the choral-music repertoire that they studied in class. Throughout the observation period, I noted that despite the regular adherence to sight-reading drills in warm-ups, Ms. Walker mainly relied on a rote style of teaching new musical material to her chorus class. She frequently played or sang the parts along with the choir, and there were few instances where she used new musical material based on the sight-reading drills in the warm-ups. The sight-reading exercises were

largely removed from the context of the repertoire that the students performed. Therefore, the students seemed to regard sight-reading as a skill separate from performing the repertoire.

Many Opportunities to Perform a Broad Repertoire

I found the choral curriculum at Marshall High School featured performance as a primary motivational factor in the educational process. The focus of all three classes was organized around the repertoire for upcoming performances. This is not uncommon in high school programs. Collins (1993) wrote:

Performance-oriented classes are justified [for inclusion] in the curriculum because: (1) students learn by doing, (2) students have a need to be recognized, (3) performances serve as a primary motivator to learning, (4) students have a need to entertain, and (5) the process of preparation for performance teaches cooperation, esprit de corps, discipline, and many other positive social and intellectual virtues. (p. 390)

The repertoire that choral directors select for study and performance has a pervasive influence on the choral curriculum and is the vehicle through which students learn performance skills, musical concepts, music history, and cultural awareness (Forbes, 2001). Ms. Walker programmed two concerts in the fall semester and two in the spring semester, and each concert featured a completely different program.

I noted that all choirs performed a broad range of styles, including spirituals, gospel arrangements, show tunes, multicultural folksongs, and choral arrangements of pop music. The students seemed to enjoy listening to the richness and diversity of the repertoire selections that their peers performed in these concerts.

Ms. Walker appeared to regard the repertoire as her central curriculum and used the musical problems that occurred along the way as her daily class objectives. She enjoyed presenting musical challenges to her students through a broad range of repertoire that culminated in choral performances. She consistently factored concert attendance and performance into her grade scale, and all of her students knew that their attendance would affect their grade in the class.

It seemed that the choral performances at Marshall High School were, as one student put it, the “pay-off.” The primary participants in the study were consistent in their love of performing on stage with the large massed chorus. Despite her initial impressions of the class and the songs they performed as “boring,” Irina told me, “I love being on stage. I want everyone to see how happy I am, and I just can’t stop smiling.” This comment seemed to contradict Irina’s earlier feelings of being “dissed” by Ms. Walker, yet certainly, Irina’s comments illustrated that the end result of concerts often overshadowed the daily grind of the rehearsal process. Juliana told me that she felt nervous about going onstage at first, but once she realized that there were many other people on the risers with her, she felt more comfortable.

Jennifer thought she was “singing like a professional” in the concert and was certain that Marshall High School was the “top choir” at the county choral festival. Esther believed that despite her “terrible voice,” she was proud to sing with such a great choir. Similarly, Liz was proud to represent her school as a chorus member. She also loved showing the younger ESOL students that they could be a part of a school group.

These personal statements all seemed to support the notion that the opportunity to perform as a chorus in concerts was an enticing goal of the work in the choral classroom.

All the students I interviewed were motivated by the upcoming performances and wanted to do their best for Ms. Walker. While many of the findings of this research revealed negative feelings about the chorus class, it appeared that much of the students' frustration about the class was due to Ms. Walker's emphasis on sight-reading exams.

I found that with the exception of Irina, the primary participants enjoyed the repertoire that they sang in the chorus class. I also got the sense that they viewed this aspect of their class as nonnegotiable. Liz did not think that it was her place to say whether she liked the songs in the class. She believed that Ms. Walker had selected the pieces for them, and it was their duty to sing them to the best of their ability. Esther and Jennifer preferred singing spirituals and gospel songs, but thought that other selections were "fine to sing." Juliana was disappointed that all the songs, with only one exception, were sung in English. She would have preferred to sing at least one song in Spanish. In a sense, the primary participants seemed to view the repertoire as their vehicle to success in these concerts. While they indicated that they liked some pieces better than others, they were consistent in having a favorable opinion about the choral music that they performed.

I noticed that the repertoire selected for the chorus class and ultimately the concert choir was almost exclusively contemporary choral music that featured a number of spirituals and settings of popular songs. Primarily, these pieces were considered standard high school repertoire, and most of them were found on choral festival repertoire lists. In my years as a high school choral director, I had performed many of the same works with my choirs that Ms. Walker had selected. These musical works represented a canon of sorts in that they are widely performed by high school groups.

O'Toole (1994) noted:

Traditional choirs produce a desire to sing and to study the “great” works of the Western canon. By learning and performing this music, one has a basis for measuring one’s success because of the historically rigidly defined standards that surround performance of Western music. Further, singing this music can give one the sense of belonging to a greater tradition that includes many “great” performers and musicians. (p. 390)

While the musical works selected by Ms. Walker represented a broad palate of musical styles and cultures, they could not be viewed as a repertoire that solely centered on a Western classical canon. Nonetheless, in many ways, the repertoire represented conventional practice in an American high school choral culture. From our conversations, it became clear to me that the participants thoroughly enjoyed singing these musical works.

Voices in Transition: Conclusion

Immigrant adolescents transition through many stages as they acculturate to the academic and social expectations in American high schools. These stages are the result of a confluence of issues, experiences and conditions that vary across individuals. Yet, all the participants met in the same choral class daily and joined with other adolescents to work toward the common goal of performing choral music. On the basis of my observations in the chorus class at Marshall High School over a 10-month period, I believe that the performance of musical works enabled the student participants to find a common ground with their American-born peers throughout their varying stages of transition to the choral culture at Marshall High.

As I was able to observe the first and last concert of the school year, I was struck by the apparent increase in the comfort level of all the participants in the choral class. While each student came to the chorus class with a widely different levels of education, musical experience, linguistic competence in English, and knowledge of traditional choral discourse norms, all of the participants were able to blend into the combined choral performances at the end of the year with very little visible stress.

It is true that overall, the comfort level of all singers is usually increased over a prolonged period of rehearsal and that study of any choral classroom over a 10-month period would produce the same observation. But the nature of the combined chorus served to mask the participants' obvious otherness by virtue of the presence of the nearly 100 other singers who sang with them. Overall, the participants viewed this performance differently from the way their American-born peers viewed it. Those American-born peers preferred individual recognition to the anonymity of such a performance experience.

In many cases, the participants were able to push through their limited understanding of musical notation largely because the music used in performance was drilled and refined in their choral class in a rote-teaching method. While the participants often experienced difficulty in deciphering much of Ms. Walker's instructional language, they learned to follow and model their peers' actions during rehearsal. Despite the differences in their previous and present musical discourse norms, the students again were able to look to peer guides to help them negotiate any unfamiliar terrain to perform with the group.

In this chapter, I presented a cross-case interpretation of the central themes that emerged in the course of the data-collection process. Because I had an opportunity to witness many changes in the participants during the course of the 10-month study, I organized the chapter around the acculturation process that I observed in each girl during the study. To justify such an organization, I relied extensively on literature that centered on immigrant students in content-area classes that I had explored in the theoretical framework of this study.

First, I explored a variety of factors that affect immigrant students' acculturation process, including the cultural implications of immigration during adolescence, the significance of students' educational backgrounds upon arriving in the U.S., the identity development of immigrant teenagers, and finally, the role of family support in immigrant students' school experiences. Throughout this exploration, I illustrated the varied and unique situations of each participant by highlighting, in several cases, how these factors helped or hindered the students' interface in the choral classroom during the acculturation process.

Next, I examined the role of language use and linguistic expectations in the choral classroom. I explored the area of linguistic competence in light of students' own perceptions of how they saw themselves in the larger view of the classroom. This section highlighted individual students' processes as they worked to negotiate the use of unfamiliar terminology and linguistic patterns in their choral classroom.

Finally, I focused on traditional discourses in the choral classroom and how each girl perceived these common practices. First, I identified a number of discourse norms and curricular traits that were dissimilar from the participants' previous experiences in

choral music. Despite many instances of disparity, I found one unifying discourse in choral music education that served to validate the girls' participation in chorus: large group performance of a musical work. The performance-based curriculum at Marshall High School was a strong motivator for involvement in the choral program for the immigrant students whom I interviewed. Furthermore, I contend that the strong emphasis on performance of choral works acted as the mediator for each girl in her varying stage of her transition process to the overall choral culture at Marshall High.

Based on these findings, in the next chapter, I will present a summary and conclusion of this research project. The following chapter will be organized around my original research questions, and I will proffer suggestions for accommodating immigrant students in choral classes. Finally, I will explore the implications of the phenomena of immigrant students in high school choral classes in the broader context of music education.

CHAPTER 7:

VOICES HEARD: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

All of you believe in something, in a better world than the one we have at present. That's what is in your heart. Use the ideas [that] you are reading, the theories that help you think and frame ideas, the intellectual tools you are developing—but also listen to your heart. Your heart will ground your writing.
(Sleeter, 1999, p. 200)

Throughout the data-collection process, it became clear to me that each participant's recollection of her previous experiences shaped her ability to describe her present experiences. As each girl told her story, she began to reflect on her past, her taken-for-granted beliefs about choral music, and she began to make more sense of her present environment, the chorus class at Marshall High. The five narrative cases presented in chapter 5 provided insight into the lives of a previously silent minority in music education research literature: immigrant students who sing in high school choir. Chapter 6 examined and interpreted the common themes that surfaced in the narrative cases.

In this chapter, I summarize the major elements of the study. First, I revisit my rationale for using narrative inquiry as a means to facilitate the conversations with recent immigrants in the high school choral classroom, and then I return to my research questions and review the findings of this study to contextualize my assertions in the setting of the choral classroom. Finally, I explore the implications of this study in the broader context of music education and present suggestions for future research.

The data collection and interpretation for this research sprang from the primary research question: “What are the musical experiences of immigrant students who sing in high school choir?” The subsidiary questions were: “What are the past and present musical experiences of immigrant students who sing in high school choir? How do immigrant students perceive the repertoire, rehearsals, performance requirements, and other traditional practices of high school choir? To what extent and in what ways do immigrant students feel that they belong to, contribute to, and benefit from the high school choir?” To answer these questions, I constructed a theoretical framework to guide my data collection and interpretation that centered on narrative inquiry, the naturalistic setting of the choral classroom, and curricular norms in choral music education. In the following section, I revisit the important role that personal stories play in deepening understandings in the classroom.

The Use of Narrative Inquiry

I framed the initial design of this study on a quotation that I had found in *Releasing the Imagination* (1995) by Maxine Greene, an educational philosopher and teacher. She wrote, “To help the diverse students we know articulate their stories is not only to help them pursue the meanings of their lives, [but also] to find out *how* things are happening and to keep posing questions about the *why*” (p. 165). I was moved by the notion of hearing students’ voices, specifically the stories of students in secondary music classes who have been labeled as “other.”

From my own experiences as a teacher, I knew that I brought many assumptions about my relationships with immigrant students to the research site. I had spent years working with a mostly non-English-speaking population of elementary students and

found ways to accommodate my instruction for these students by my own process of trial and error. As many of the students had immigrated to the U.S. when they quite young, they were eager and ready to learn to speak English and they quickly became acculturated to the way of life in an American public school.

When I began teaching in a secondary school and working with adolescent immigrants, I was struck by the contrasting attitudes and learning difficulties that older immigrant students—as opposed to immigrant students in elementary school—experienced as they made their way through my classes. I discovered that it was very easy to make assumptions about immigrant students and that often, because of their minimal participation and the difficulty they encountered in speaking English, these students were easy to ignore. I soon learned that if I wanted to get to know those students, I would have to learn about the different communication and attitudinal patterns that these students brought with them from their home countries. Greene’s writing captured my attention, and I set out to explore more literature on the use of narrative inquiry in educational research.

Square Peg, Round Hole

Soon after I read *Releasing the Imagination*, I began to investigate narrative inquiry in educational research that centered on multicultural student populations. I began to read the works of Geneva Gay, Christine Sleeter, Carl Grant, Anne Locke Davidson, Jo Ann Phillion, Min Zhou, and other researchers who had focused their inquiry on the articulation and sharing of multicultural students’ voices. I became convinced that to teach students from a culture different from my own, I would have to learn how to adapt my instruction and assessment procedures to my students’ educational backgrounds. To

do that, I needed to know about my students' previous cultural and educational experiences. Bishop and Glynn (2003) wrote:

Prior knowledge forms the foundation for further conceptual developments. New ideas are incorporated by being linked to prior knowledge; hence the importance of creating learning contexts where students' prior knowledge is welcome and indeed essential. Such notions explain why children who are not socialized into the culture of the teacher in the traditional classroom are unable to learn in these classrooms. Any places [that] they have to position the new ideas, or any "hooks" or "linkages" to their family and cultural experiences are neither recognized nor validated in the classroom. The notion of *storying* and *re-storying* also provides us with a clear metaphor for seeing knowledge not as finite, static, and complete, but [as] constantly in a process of reformation: as an organic process of invention rather than a process of passive accumulation through receipt of transmissions. (p. 187)

Bishop and Glynn (2003) further suggested that narrative inquiry highlights the significance of students' knowledge by promoting the construction of *power-sharing* relationships in the classroom. I began to explore the notion of *de-centering* classroom power using Delpit's (1995) assertion that teachers must allow students to be "experts on their own lives" as they tell their stories and affirm their own heritage, culture, and beliefs. I set out to design a research study that was grounded in a belief that all students had the right to "share in the power" of the classroom through telling their own stories.

Gay (2003) wrote:

Stories . . . serve many different functions. They can entertain, educate, inform, evoke memories, showcase ethnic and cultural characteristics, and illuminate abstractions. Stories are means for individuals to project and present themselves, declare what is important and valuable, give structure to perceptions, make general facts more meaningful to specific personal lives, connect the self as a cultural being, develop a healthy sense of self, and forge new meanings and relationships or build community. (p. 3)

After reviewing the educational research literature, I soon discovered the difficulty of creating space and time for conducting narrative research in a secondary choral setting that was not my own classroom. Once I located a student population that suited the focus of my study, I had to find a way to facilitate conversations and discussions with immigrant students whom I had just recently met. One colleague exclaimed, “Conversations during chorus? What’s that going to prove? They need to spend time learning the music. They’re behind already!” (personal communication, October 10, 2003).

Despite this colleague’s initial reaction, I decided to converse with other choral directors in my school district to get their opinions on the best way to embark on this project. From their responses, I began to get a sense that many of the choral directors I talked with were operating from a *cultural deficit theory* perspective (Trueba & Bartolome, 2001). The cultural deficit perspective assigns disproportionate academic problems to low-status students, such as their supposed cognitive and linguistic deficiencies, low self-esteem, and poor motivation, as well as supposed pathologies or

deficits in their sociocultural background. My colleagues' responses often included references to ESOL students as being "lost in class" or "totally behind" in their course work. One teacher said, "I know [that] they love to sing. [Singing] doesn't require an instrument, and everyone has a voice" (personal communication, January 11, 2004).

These and similar comments could be attributed to secondary choral teachers' overwhelming workload, or, as one director put it, "being swamped and pressured by so many upcoming performances" (personal communication, January 11, 2004). Throughout the 10 months of the study, Ms. Walker frequently referred to feeling constant pressure with regard to upcoming performances. Although she appreciated my presence in her classroom, I believe that she saw the benefit of my time in her classroom because I provided "another set of musical ears" in her rehearsals, as well as a presence that assisted in the educational and cultural transition of her immigrant students.

Finding an Opening

Throughout the course of the data-collection process, I found myself having to "steal time" away with students for conversations and journal exercises. I found I was struggling to find space for relationships with the participants within the confines of a classroom that was not my own. I reasoned that only if I came to know the students would they trust me with their "stories." Yet, the allotted time for data collection in the choir class seemed too short and a number of time factors involving students' availability after school and during lunch also made it difficult to connect with the participants. As I explained the focus of narrative inquiry of this research to Ms. Walker, she too wondered how she might find time, space and access for getting to know her ESOL students in her classes.

Ms. Walker had agreed that I was welcome to interview the students during chorus class, and the students agreed to come to the chorus classroom during their lunch period as well, but I found that they were more open in their sessions when we sat in the music office during the rehearsal time. Many hours of interview audiotapes revealed the soft-spoken voices of the five primary participants with the sounds of the Marshall High Chorus warming up or singing some of their concert repertoire in the background.

However, I soon discovered that giving students a medium for telling their stories did not guarantee that the students would actually tell them to me, a middle-aged, White, monolingual teacher who came into their choral class two or three times a week. I found that the students were quite eager to talk with me about the frustration and confusion surrounding the rhythm tests. This subject became an icebreaker in all our initial interviews.

Nonetheless, it took at least two initial interviews, and, in the case of Juliana, three sessions, to get the girls to open up and to provide more in-depth information about their previous experiences in chorus and about their families' reasons for coming to the U.S. Additionally, I found that the participants were uncomfortable at times telling their story from their "insider perspective" (Gay, 2003). Quite simply, they did not understand why I wanted to know about their lives. In the early days of our interviews, the participants seemed to view my questions as another "test" in their chorus class.

Interviews as Conversations

After the first few weeks in the field, I realized that my own research agenda was guiding the interviews, and therefore, I was not hearing the authentic voices of the participants. I found myself asking questions that were based on conclusions that I had

already formed. Almost immediately, I discovered that the girls were tending to give “yes” and “no” and other one-word answers to my questions, even when I thought that I was asking open-ended questions. I sought a way to enrich our interviews and to develop a reciprocal, dialogic relationship based on mutual trust, openness, and engagement (Bishop & Glynn, 2003). I knew that my role was to keep each question open and to set up and maintain interview situations that were conducive to hermeneutic conversations so that I could help the participants to reflect on their experiences so that they shared them with me (Van Manen, 1990).

The major obstacle in these conversations was the language barrier that all participants faced to varying degrees in communicating with me. From the most recent immigrant (Anita) to the most seasoned student in the U.S. (Esther), each girl struggled to find ways to communicate in-depth with me. Additionally, the girls seemed overwhelmed by the prospect of reading a 15–20-page typed transcript of their interviews. After our second interview, I noticed that Jennifer stared blankly at the typed transcripts that I had just given to her. I asked her whether she needed them to be translated into her language, and she said, “No, I just hate reading in any language.” Irina read one of the interview transcripts and said, “I don’t care what you write. I stand by what I say.” Juliana seemed to enjoy reading her transcripts in Spanish. However, even she did not make any changes to the notes.

Bishop and Glynn (1999) suggested:

The person who receives the (often huge) transcript is obliged to spend a considerable amount of time interacting with the text. The arrival of a vast colour-coded transcript in the mail, assuming recipients are interested enough to interact

at the level of concentration practiced by the researcher, raises the issue of the “response cost” in terms of the “cost of noncompliance,” that is, the cost of resistance in terms of time and effort required may be too great for them to engage in. . . . The problem may be compounded in cases of cross-cultural translation of meaning. (p.113)

The potential problems of communicating with and gathering data from English-language learners (ELLs) were obvious from the start. However, I knew from my own teaching experience that establishing a trusting relationship with a linguistically dissimilar student was possible; I just needed to find a way to be consistent in my presence at Marshall High School and to find ways to show these girls that I cared about them. I found myself seeking each girl’s gaze at the start of every class observation or individual interview and eventually came to acknowledge each girl every time I entered or left the choral room. Throughout the data-collection process, I could feel our relationship shifting from one of interrogation to one of collaboration (Van Manen, 1990).

I found Patti Lather’s writing helpful in suggesting a sequence of deeper probing of research issues by the process of returning to topics that had been raised in previous interviews. In the third round of interviews, I began the conversations with a review of highlights, and I read key statements previously made by each participant aloud at the opening of the session. This opened up the conversations and gave the participants an opportunity to weigh the appropriateness of the selected theme or passage (Lather, 1991).

In the next section, I review the research questions of this study in relation to the narrative-inquiry process and discuss the findings of this research as it pertains to the broader issue of immigrant students in the choral classroom.

The Research Questions

In this section, I discuss the findings from this study in light of the original research questions. To address the primary question, “What are the musical experiences of immigrant students who sing in high school choir?” I found that I had to consider the subsidiary questions first. What follows are the findings from the subsidiary questions of this research. In the summary of this section, I discuss the findings of the primary research question. Our initial interviews were focused on the previous and the present musical experiences of each participant. This subsidiary questions were formed on the basis of the belief that music teachers need to know background information about their students to help them succeed in their classes.

1. What are the Past and Present Musical Experiences of Immigrant Students Who Sing in High school Choir?

Previous Musical Experiences

Five of the primary participants’ previous musical experiences relied heavily on an oral tradition for learning songs. Additionally, all five girls noted that their previous experiences involved either folk music or religious music. None of the participants had performed choral music from the Western classical tradition, and although each girl had seen musical notation in her previous musical experiences, each considered the style of

musical notation used at Marshall High School to be distinctly different from her previous encounters with printed music.

Oral Tradition and Antiphonal Style

Both Esther and Jennifer described learning music from other members of their choir. Esther said, “Sometimes a person from the church would just stand up and keep singing the song until we get [*sic*] it right.” Jennifer added, “We learned the songs from the choir director, who just sang them and sang them until we knew it [them] well.” Juliana spoke of singing psalms in church in antiphonal style, which she described as “singing back and forth with each other.” Liz remembered echoing songs to her elementary music teacher, who improvised games as he was teaching music to his students. Even Irina, who described her middle-school chorus as primarily “popular music from the radio,” shared her experiences of learning Russian folksongs “from a tiny baby.” Irina later explained that for as long as she could remember, her family sang “old songs from Russia” at parties and family celebrations. She remembered learning them by singing them with her mother.

Campbell (1991) noted, “Oral transmission is frequently associated with folk music genres; in fact, folk music is often referred to as ‘traditional music’ or ‘music in the oral tradition’ ” (p. 112). Esther and Jennifer sang in Christian church choirs in Ghana prior to their coming to the U.S., and they learned sacred music that was also taught primarily through oral transmission. Juliana had also sung in her church choir in El Salvador. She learned many songs quickly by “echo singing” the song leader. Liz recalled learning music as a child in Ecuador as “really easy, just listening and playing games to the songs” (personal communication, November 11, 2003).

All of the participants had experienced musical notation in some form prior to their coming to the U.S., yet taking chorus class at Marshall High School was the first time in which any of them had been expected to read a musical score in a choral rehearsal. Each girl shared her frustration with and her confusion over navigating a musical score. Jennifer had never seen such a “long music sheet” until the chorus began working on Handel’s “Hallelujah.” Irina remembered her previous idea of music reading as “the words and nothing else.” Juliana had sung “the *do re mi*” in El Salvador, but had “never really paid attention and [had] never read it before on paper.” During our last interview session, Juliana remarked that she liked learning to read the notes because now she was not “as confused” (personal communication, March 10, 2004).

Singing as Christian Worship

Three of the five participants’ previous choral singing experiences had been based solely on singing in youth choirs that participated in church services. A significant cultural assumption of choral singing experience for Juliana, Esther, and Jennifer was based on their ability to express their Christian faith through song. Additionally, by her participation in the church youth choir, each girl became connected to the larger network of the church, the spiritual goals of which were clearly communicated by her choir director and reinforced by her pastor. The girls indicated that in their previous church choirs, musical goals were secondary to the significance of the public demonstration of faith through group singing, social time with young people with their same religious beliefs, and the assumption of church leadership through music ministry.

By contrast, in their experience in the chorus class at Marshall High School, Ms. Walker clearly stated and pursued her goal of choral excellence at every rehearsal and

concert that I attended. Her emphasis on sight-reading, vocal technique, artistic interpretation, and singing a high-quality repertoire were clear signals that she put the musical goals of her students before their social or cultural needs. She considered the music that she taught to be the “even playing field” where all students met, studied, and produced excellent choral performances. Although her musical expectations were not clearly stated in each class period, they were implied by the way in which she pushed and prodded her students throughout their rehearsals. This cultural mismatch between their previous and present experiences of choir appeared to cause some initial stress and confusion for the participants. However, because of the dominant musical goals expressed by Ms. Walker, the students became integrated at certain levels in the choral culture at Marshall High School and enjoyed singing in choral performances.

The Day-to-Day Experiences

of Singing in the Chorus at Marshall High School

Students were initially more comfortable with speaking to me about their day-to-day experiences in the chorus class than they were in speaking about their previous musical experiences, so our early interviews were focused on their present experiences. In all five cases, I found that singing in a chorus class during the school day was a new experience for all the participants in the study, and they generally enjoyed their time in the chorus at Marshall High School.

The Chorus Class: An “Easy Place to Be”

Overall, each girl found aspects of the class that suited her individual desire for a less rigorous academic environment. Liz found the class “relaxing,” and Esther said the

class was “not difficult compared to [with] her other subjects.” For Jennifer, chorus was her “easiest subject,” while Juliana told me that she loved singing every day at school.

Despite these positive claims, I also observed the girls’ sporadic participation and lack of connectedness to the overall goals of the choral program. This became clear to me when they revealed no interest in auditioning for a place in one of the select choirs or, as in Liz and Anita’s cases, when they enrolled in chorus for one semester only and then took a completely different elective during the following semester. From our conversations, it appeared that instead of enrolling for the intrinsic musical rewards, they had enrolled in the class to pursue the immediate goals of getting an “easy A” and being relieved of the responsibility of note-taking in class or, as Liz put it, avoiding “a lot of homework,” as opposed to seeking a musical experience.

A Focus on Music Literacy

After examining the data from all of the participants, I learned that language and, in particular, the rapidity of the language spoken by Ms. Walker, was the primary obstacle to students’ successful adjustment to the chorus class. Once they began to understand what was being said in the class and thus were able to better follow directions, they began to worry about their performance on the individual exams that were part of the assessment structure of the course. These tests highlighted the focus on music literacy that is prevalent in most U. S. high school choral curricula (Collins, 1994; O’Toole, 1994).

Because the class did not require an audition for enrollment, I sensed that there were probably a number of other students in the class who were just as uncomfortable with Ms. Walker’s emphasis on sight-reading. However, in an interview with four U.S.-

born students in the chorus class, I learned that these students believed that they had been prepared by their previous experiences in middle school to expect to demonstrate their ability to sight-read in high school chorus. Allie, an American-born student, said, “Actually, my middle-school teacher was even more demanding than Ms. Walker [is] about sight-reading” (personal communication, March 8, 2004).

Performing as a Combined Concert Choir

All of the participants enjoyed singing in the concerts and, for the most part, they were satisfied in singing with the large concert choir, which was comprised of the general chorus class, the treble choir, and the chamber choir. The study participants differed from their U.S.-born counterparts, however, who voiced displeasure with singing “only as a combined chorus” and not being recognized as the fourth-period chorus class that they attended every day. Brianna, Allie, Ruth, and Jeanine, chorus students, all of whom had been born in the U.S., viewed themselves as being on the “bottom rung” of the hierarchical choral program because they “only sang with the chorus,” whereas the immigrant students I studied told me that they were relieved to be surrounded by so many singers and were proud to be on the stage.

Irina, who was the most vocal about her displeasure with the chorus class and her feelings of discomfort with Ms. Walker, shared that her love of being onstage outweighed her complaints. She told me, “It is worth it 100 percent because I love being on the stage and singing in the concerts. I know that part will happen when everything else gets boring” (personal communication, November 12, 2004). Each girl expressed similar feelings about daily frustrations as compared with the experience of performance in concerts.

Thus the participants in this study regarded the day-to-day experiences in the chorus class at Marshall High School, in a number of significant ways, as incongruent with their previous choral singing experiences. The rapidity of language spoken by Ms. Walker, as well as the focus on sight-reading and reading musical scores, made for a difficult initial adjustment for the immigrant students in this study. Nonetheless, the participants enjoyed performing and found that working toward set musical goals, which resulted in singing as a combined chorus each semester, was a positive motivator for them.

2. *How Do Immigrant Students Perceive the Repertoire, Rehearsals, and Other Traditional Practices of High school Choir?*

The Repertoire

One of the basic assumptions of this study was that the traditional choral repertoire was a disenfranchising factor in the participation of immigrant students in high school chorus. Based on my own teaching experience in an urban high school setting, I believed that the traditional choral repertoire was one of the reasons why many immigrant students did not want to join the school choir. When I had taught high school chorus, my students told me that they thought that most immigrant students did not participate in chorus because the music was, as they put it, for “White kids.” This was surprising to me because I had many students of color in my classes, yet not many ESOL students stayed beyond their first year in choir. I had assumed that the choral repertoire that I was selecting discouraged newly arrived immigrants from staying in my choral program. For this reason, I devoted one interview session of this research project to

discussing the participants' perceptions of the repertoire that they performed in the chorus at Marshall High School. I was surprised by their comments.

With the exception of Irina, the students whom I interviewed at Marshall High School all seemed to enjoy singing most of the music that they sang in the chorus class. All of the primary participants seemed to take the repertoire selected by Ms. Walker as "set in stone" and therefore not subject to negotiation. Because three of the girls had sung in church choirs in their home countries, the significant presence of Christian themes in the music seemed to affirm rather than to subordinate or negate their previous experiences. Liz's previous experience in Ms. Walker's class had clearly established the teacher's superior knowledge in Liz's mind.

Juliana initially expressed her disappointment at not having an opportunity to sing in Spanish, but during the interview session devoted to the repertoire selection, she admitted that she loved "the beautiful songs [that] we sing." Only Irina made it clear that she did not like singing traditional choral music and stated her preference for popular solo music. Irina based her decision not to return to chorus for another year on the "boring songs we sing" (personal communication, March 10, 2004).

I asked the two participants from Ghana to tell me about their experience of singing "*Betelehemu*," a choral piece based on a contemporary Nigerian version of the story of the birth of Jesus of Nazareth. Jennifer said, "It was nice, but the other people made fun of the jungle sounds [that] the teacher told us to make, and so I didn't do it." Irina enjoyed singing *Erev Shel Shoshanim* because she liked the "romantic sound [that] the piano made," but she was worried that her mother might not understand the words to the song when she was in the audience at the concert. Esther and Jennifer did not like

singing that particular piece as much as they enjoyed singing “*Shut De Do*” and “Ride the Chariot” because they preferred singing Christian songs (personal communication, January 14, 2004).

My conversations with the U.S.-born students revealed a slightly different thread, which suggested that they felt that the chamber choir “got to sing the best songs” and that their chorus class, in contrast, “only got to sing stuff that ended the concerts.” Indeed, most of the music that I heard the chorus class perform was repertoire more suited for larger choruses. In each concert that I attended, I observed the combined chorus performing a rousing spiritual as a final piece.

Corson (2001) suggested that just to begin using the signs of academic language, against the backdrop of their complex and content-specific rules of use, English-language learners (ELLs) are faced with great challenges. Clayton (2003) noted that immigrant students in secondary schools generally try to fade into the background as opposed to being oppositional or confrontational in their classroom presence.

I suspected that the primary participants’ apparent compliance with the choral repertoire selection was mainly due to their desire to fit in as well as the vast array of other needs that demanded priority in their acculturation process as American high school students. They also came from educational cultures that regarded the teacher as the ultimate authority in the classroom. The primary participants did not question the repertoire selected by their teacher because that would have appeared to undermine Ms. Walker’s authority. Despite Irina’s oppositional stance in our interviews, she worked very hard at not showing outward resistance directly to Ms. Walker. In the minds of the five primary participants, the greater problem was in negotiating the musical score, not the repertoire

selection. With the exception of Irina, they did not appear to have a preferred repertoire that they wanted to sing in the school chorus. The findings of this research did not suggest that repertoire selection alone was an obstacle to retaining the membership of immigrant students in high school choir.

The Hierarchical Structure

of the Choral Program at Marshall High School

In the survey given to all students in the choral program, I noted that many of the members of the select choirs had been in the choral program at Marshall High School for three or four years. My conversation with four U.S.-born students in the chorus class highlighted their motivation to stay in the choral program throughout their four years at Marshall High School. Many started out in the chorus class and moved “up,” either to the treble chorus or the chamber choir. In my own teaching, I had built my choral program on a similar hierarchical model, so I was curious to learn how the immigrant student participants viewed this hierarchical structure.

The primary participants revealed that the immigrant students had a completely different motivation from their U.S.-born peers. Although Esther and Jennifer’s choice was to select chorus for a second year, neither of them considered auditioning for one of the select choirs. Both girls indicated they did not want to put in the extra work that they knew that those ensembles required. Irina was firm in her commitment that she would not audition for either advanced choral group. She was clear that she was not interested in singing in chorus for another year.

In all the prior music-making activities that the primary participants described, they shared stories of learning music for the good of the group and remembering happy

times with friends. Irina recalled her rehearsals in Kazakhstan: “We went to rehearsal and concerts because we loved our teacher, and we wanted to make her happy. Here, Ms. Walker just worries about looking good for the principal.” Jennifer said, “We wanted to sing in worship because we wanted to help our friend witness and share Christ’s love” (personal communication, December 12, 2003). Adzenyah (1995) noted, “In organizing the musical groups [of Ghana], consideration is given not only to the significance of the occasion, but also to the needs of the participants” (p. 3). Esther and Jennifer sang in their church choirs because they believed they were participating in a group that served the spiritual needs of their peers.

Clayton (2003) suggested:

Collectivist cultures thus favor cooperation rather than competition. Harmony within the group is important, and cooperation brings that about more than competition. In more individualistic societies, children tend to be socialized to be competitive rather than cooperative. The competitive culture of the United States thrives on descriptions with superlative adjectives: the biggest or best or longest or highest or most expensive. (p. 37)

The highly competitive nature of auditioning for a few openings every year in the select choirs seemed culturally discontinuous with the participants’ previous experiences of chorus and music making in general. They tended to regard their musical abilities as “not good enough” as reflected in what Esther said: “I have a terrible voice, so I’ll just stay in this choir.” By contrast, the four U.S.-born students whom I interviewed were quite motivated to “move up” out of the chorus class into one of the two select ensembles. Ruth had identified mistakes from her previous year’s auditions and had

worked out a sight-reading improvement strategy that included working with friends in one of the select choirs.

Data analysis indicated that the primary participants were not motivated to audition for membership in the select choirs. Specifically, the hierarchical nature of the overall choral program at Marshall High School did not appeal to them at all. They cited poor sight-reading skills, shyness, and an overall lack of confidence in their vocal abilities as reasons for not pursuing membership in the advanced choirs.

Fundraising and After-School Activities

The survey of Holton County teachers revealed that only a very small number of ESOL students participated in fundraising and after-school activities, such as choir tours, the school musical, and off-campus performances. Ms. Walker confirmed this by saying, “Not one ESOL student participated in fundraising.” The participants believed that they were “letting Ms. Walker down” by not selling fruit or poinsettias, but again, it appeared that the immigrant students whom I interviewed were generally preoccupied with trying to understand the language of instruction in the classroom and were often confused when the subject of fundraising arose in class situations. The participants cited as reasons for not participating in fundraising activities: being confused with oral instructions given by Ms. Walker, having too much homework to do in the evenings, and not wanting to burden their parents with the responsibilities of selling and delivering the goods that were being sold.

When I questioned the girls about participating in after-school activities, such as the spring musical or all-state chorus, both of which required auditions and a high level of solo performance abilities, I found that they again cited similar concerns. They mentioned

a high volume of homework; uncertainty about dates, times and requirements for auditions; and family responsibilities after school. I sensed that they viewed these as activities suitable only for the advanced choral students, and as they did not consider themselves as such, they did not pursue those activities.

I also contend that these particular after-school activities are considered the norm in the context of a traditional high school choral program in the U.S., yet the participants in this study were not aware of their meaning. Concessions were not made to students who might not be aware of the traditional significance of involvement in these highly coveted after-school activities. Instead, the immigrant student population at Marshall High School was focused on involvement in the International Night show, which resulted in effect in highly segregated extracurricular performance options for immigrant vs. U.S.-born students.

3. To What Extent and in What Ways do Immigrant Students Feel that They Belong to, Contribute to, and Benefit from the High school Choir?

Belonging to a Group

The participants seemed to feel that singing in the chorus gave them special status in the larger context of Marshall High School, and, as Liz put it, “you can belong to a school group where you don’t need English.” Irina felt strongly about appearing in the chorus photograph for the school yearbook, and Juliana purchased a chorus tee shirt to wear at school pep rallies. On the day of my visit to Mr. Caceres’ ESOL class, I observed Juliana’s apparent pride at being singled out in front of her ESOL classmates for a viewing of a video close-up that had been shot during the chorus’s winter concert.

For all five girls, their participation in the chorus class at Marshall High School appeared to foster a sense of belonging to the larger school community. As the work of a chorus requires a “team effort,” as Liz put it, she found that she was automatically working together with a group of people toward the same goal every day that she attended chorus.

Because of Ms. Walker’s intense drive as a teacher and the high standards that she set for her students, group membership in the chorus at Marshall High provided the participants with an opportunity to be competitive as a group, while remaining true to their more collectivist cultural identities.

Additionally, the opportunity for the participants to connect with other singers who also expressed their love of singing appeared to be an enormous stress reliever for them. Once they got through their initial discomfort with the sight-reading part of each rehearsal, they were able to settle in and enjoy singing with a large group of other teenagers. For the immigrant students, singing in chorus at Marshall High School was a significant opportunity for meeting and connecting musically with other students.

Benefits of Membership

The participants seemed to find a number of linguistic benefits from singing in the chorus. Esther told me that she enjoyed chorus because there were other girls from her country in the class, and, at times, she was able speak her own language, as well as listen to the way “Americans pronounce the words to something.” Liz believed that chorus was a much easier class for her than most because there were other linguistically similar peers in the room. She loved chorus because the immigrant students in the chorus class “practiced pronouncing words” and had an opportunity to learn to “say it just like

everyone else.” She found the emphasis placed on articulation and phrasing to be quite helpful to her in learning English (personal communication, November 14, 2003).

In almost all cases, the students found that the chorus class was a “lower-pressure” environment than their other classes. While all the participants were concerned about the individual testing, they were also aware that the workload for the class was much lower than it was for the other academic courses that they took at Marshall High School. Esther and Liz frequently mentioned the benefits of having chorus on their transcripts as they made their way through the process of applying to colleges. Irina found the concerts and festival performances to be her “pay-off for a year of hard work.” It was clear that, despite the challenges that faced them, the participants in this study experienced many benefits from their membership in the chorus class at Marshall High School.

Revisiting the Primary Research Question

There were a number of specific issues that were raised during the data-collection process for this study that highlight the musical experiences of immigrant students who sing in high school choir. In the following section, I will summarize findings that address the primary research question, “What are the musical experiences of students who sing in high school choirs?”

Each participant either reported feeling substantial culture shock upon her arrival in the chorus class or was observed to exhibit behaviors that suggested a sense of disorientation. Research has suggested that this is normal for newly arrived immigrants, yet in her second year of the chorus class, Jennifer’s muted responses and lower rate of participation seemed to Ms. Walker to be symptoms of a learning deficiency. While

Jennifer believed that she had adjusted to the choral class, her teacher did not. However, as Jennifer came to feel more acclimated to the expectations of the chorus class, she found the experience to be a positive group activity, regardless of the *C* grade that she received.

The participants agreed that the chorus class helped them to improve as singers, and all of them believed that they had learned a lot about vocal technique and sight-reading during their year in chorus. Nevertheless, the overall structure of the chorus class did not appear to support simultaneous linguistic and musical development for them. Despite their more advanced English language skills, both Esther and Liz were frequently lost during Ms. Walker's oral instructions and were unable to support Jennifer and Juliana. Irina, being the only Russian-speaking student in the class, had no linguistic support from peers in the class and reported feeling "stressed" and "alone" in the class.

The teacher presented the concept of musical notation to the students in the chorus at Marshall High School mainly through the musical scores that they used during class time and by the sight-reading exercise sheets. However, Ms. Walker did not emphasize a relationship between the two forms of written music in the class. Therefore, the students often had trouble understanding that the skill of learning to sight-read a piece of music was directly related to the ability to learn a musical work more quickly and efficiently. The chorus class was the first opportunity that any of the five participants had to learn from a musical score. Unfortunately, they were unable to see the rationale for sight-reading examinations in their chorus class, and they also viewed the score as "sometimes getting in the way" of their singing time.

The participants reported enjoying the opportunity to sing in school every day and, as noted, two students enrolled in the class for a subsequent year. Additionally, all participants selected the response “I love to sing” in the survey given to the entire choral class. However, the findings of this study have suggested that the immigrant students whom I interviewed did not feel a strong sense of affiliation with the overall choral program at Marshall High School. I base this assertion on three factors that surfaced during the data-collection process. First, none of the students expressed interest in auditioning for the select choirs. Furthermore, none of the students participated in the fundraising activities to raise funds that were earmarked for the choral program at Marshall High School. Finally, the reasons that Liz, Jennifer, and Esther cited as their primary motivations for selecting the class were: no homework, an “easy A,” and a chance for a more relaxing class, none of which suggested any intrinsic musical motivation, such as learning more about music or further developing any of their musical skills.

Overall, immigrant students’ lack of enrollment in the choral program at Marshall High School suggested that their participation in the advanced groups is hindered by their encounters with musical notation, as well as by the traditional discourse norms associated with high school choral music classes. That being said, as all of the rehearsals I observed in the chorus class were motivated by the goal of performance excellence, and many students in the group could not read music, much of the teaching of notation was done “rote style.” Therefore, the pace of instruction, which emphasized repetition and drill, provided an opportunity for the participants to assimilate into the larger group without

appearing to be deficient. Moreover, the experience of singing well with a large group of same-age peers was an invaluable musical and social experience for them.

In further considering the research question “*What are the musical experiences of immigrant students who sing in high school choir?*” the findings of this study have suggested that despite immigrant students’ feelings of frustration in a linguistically dissimilar environment and their encounters with unfamiliar choral discourse patterns, immigrant students experienced many benefits from their experience in high school chorus. These benefits included feelings of belonging to a school group, opportunities to practice English text, a lower-stress mainstreamed environment, the ability to earn credit toward high school graduation, and the ability to enhance the attractiveness of their college applications by including their membership in an extracurricular school group.

In the subsequent section, I will discuss the broad implications for music teacher education, and K–12 music education, in light of the findings of this study.

Implications for Music Education

Several educational researchers have identified the need to address the issues that music teachers face when working with a culturally diverse student population (Abril, 2003; Campbell, 2002; Robinson, 2002; Standley, 2000). Campbell (2002) noted that this multicultural music education movement, although it highlights the musical traditions of various groups, has focused less on the cultural diversity of the students themselves and the communities from which they come. She continued, “In shaping music education in this time of cultural transformation, there are grand leaps forward, but also concerns that the profession may become complacent with [its current] accomplishments in

diversifying the curriculum” (p. 31). Her statements, to some extent, support the rationale for this study.

The choral conductor survey results suggest the music education profession has begun to move forward from the great strides made in multicultural programming and authentic musical resources. I believe that choral music educators, in particular, are beginning to take notice of the needs of the diverse students in their programs and genuinely want to learn how to integrate successfully these students into their choral classes. In fact, Ms. Walker’s perception of not being proficient at communicating with her immigrant students, which was the outgrowth of genuine concern for those students, was the primary motivation for her to allow me to have access to her chorus classroom.

Gay (2003) wrote, “We know for certain that teaching in U.S. schools is increasingly a cross-cultural phenomenon, in that teachers are frequently not of the same race, ethnicity, class, and linguistic dominance as their students” (p. 1). Music educators face similar challenges, and while the profession as a whole has begun to identify a need to address these broad issues of diversity, the integration of language and content instruction for immigrant students in secondary choral classes requires significant modification of traditional choral teaching methods.

Yet, while the music educators I interviewed acknowledged the need for more support in working with immigrant students, each also expressed reservations about the amount of time needed to accommodate these students in their classrooms. In the following section, I highlight some of the challenges that face music educators who work with immigrant students. Based on my research, these challenges are improving professional development for music educators, accommodating linguistically and

culturally diverse students in entry-level performance classes; the use of context dependent language in music classrooms; validating and affirming all students' previous backgrounds; and forming positive relationships with diverse learners. I also explore possible solutions to these challenges and offer suggestions for future research.

Music Teacher Education and Professional-Development Opportunities

Robinson (2002) asserted that teacher education is the most powerful and pervasive barrier to effective multicultural music education practice. She wrote, "Music educators are expected to teach musical and cultural content and perspectives for which they have little to no education" (p. 229). She also noted that while many colleges and universities acknowledge the importance of moving beyond Eurocentric curricula that stress Western literature, philosophy, political theory, history, art, and music, many educators and others do not embrace this multicultural initiative. She wrote, "American music education curriculum has changed very little since the early 1900s" (p. 230). Volk (1998) pointed out that despite the prevalence of non-Western musical performers in communities, there are few non-Western musical ensembles in music schools, colleges and universities. Mary Goetze's work in developing materials for presentation of vocal music from diverse cultures for use in teacher education programs and school vocal ensembles is a notable exception. Her work in this area has helped broaden the scope of world musics included in college choral repertoire.

Yet, coursework focused on developing and implementing curricula for diverse populations in school music programs, is not traditionally included in music teacher education programs. At best, most pre-service music teachers receive minimal training in working with language-minority children (Abril, 2003). Additionally, most of today's

teachers completed music education programs prior to the current emphasis on teaching multicultural content and perspectives (Robinson, 2002). Furthermore, many current music teachers have had little instruction or guidance in working with linguistically diverse students. In my survey of Holton County choral teachers, I learned that of 15 respondents, only 3 teachers indicated that they had attended a workshop or professional development session on how to work with a diverse student population

Although many colleges and universities are finding ways to incorporate world music and multicultural methods in their traditional general, choral and instrumental methods courses, there are still many deficiencies in pre-service preparation for working with English-language learners (ELLs). The findings of this study have suggested that teacher preparation courses, as well as in-service training, should focus on accommodating the linguistically diverse students who are enrolled in music classes. Pre-service and in-service music teachers need better preparation in how to structure course content and discourse patterns in their music classrooms to assure that all students receive a music education that is accessible and meaningful for the linguistically diverse students in their classes.

Teachers' Perceptions of Entry-Level Choral Classes in High School

The entry-level choir in high school traditionally serves a diverse population; students are often either assigned to the class by administrators or may elect the course with no prior musical experience. Music teachers frequently refer to the course as a “dumping ground.” The statement reflects music teachers’ perception of having students “dumped on them” by forces beyond their control. Many special needs students who sing in chorus class are assigned to choir so they may experience the social aspects of large

group singing. The “regular” students in the class are enrolled for a variety of reasons; because they need a fine arts credit, do not want to take an audition for a more advanced group or are unable to pass the audition. The rationale for placement of ESOL students into the entry-level chorus is, as one guidance counselor put it, a way to “help them learn the language.” The concept of “music as a universal language” was frequently mentioned by the music teachers surveyed who saw the course as the “catch all” and “the ya’ll come” group, as one choral teacher put it.

Music teachers frequently feel overwhelmed at the prospect of teaching an entry-level class of sometimes more than 50 students who often come from diverse educational, musical and linguistic backgrounds. In these situations, teacher frustration frequently becomes obvious and sends a clear message to students that they are not “worthy” of the same opportunities and experiences of the more musically advanced choirs. The only way to gain entry to the upper level choirs is for students to demonstrate excellence through traditional avenues such as sight-reading and solo singing. The exception to this case is male students who because of the need for tenor and bass voices, have an easier time stepping out of the “dumping ground” if they wish to pursue choral singing at a higher level.

The role of choral music class in a large high school is to re-create choral masterworks at an appropriate level for the singers in the group. For entry-level singers in some high school choral programs, their true purpose is to provide the “docile bodies” (Foucault, 1979) for the large massed choir. The performance of the massed group then provides many singers with a sense of recognition. The recognition earned is not for their unique sound as a group of “beginners” but as a polished massed-choir that represents the

larger goals of the choral program at the school. The diversity of musical, linguistic and educational backgrounds in the entry-level class are not acknowledged, but assimilated and homogenized to achieve a faceless choral conglomerate, which represents the advanced musicianship of the conductor and the elite choral singers in the school program. In order for all students to be recognized and to “see themselves” in their choral performance, special attention must be paid to the repertoire selection and how the music chosen reflects the membership of a given group of students.

The Use of Language in Choral Music Education

Choral music educators who want to find ways to involve all students in a high-level learning process must address the linguistic competencies of their ELL students. To address this issue, I suggest that choral music teachers examine their use of terminology in the classroom and devise strategies that involve smaller group work that affords students the opportunities to use such terminology. Sakadolskis (2003) wrote:

While it is understandable that many music educators and theorists have argued for less “talk” in the music classroom in favor of [more] actual “music making,” one should not lose sight of the fact that the way teachers use language to describe musical concepts can facilitate or hinder their students’ musical understanding. (p. 192)

Additionally, choral teachers must find ways to equalize the balance between student-led and teacher-led activities in the classroom. We must find ways to incorporate linguistic models, as well as musical peer models, in our teaching strategies and include communicative games (Corson, 2001) to extend opportunities for interactive learning for ELL students.

If we factor in the linguistic challenges as well as the different musical discourse norms that many immigrant students bring with them into the choral classroom, it is clear that music teachers' references to musical concepts and their musical expectations often confuse and hinder the learning process of immigrant students in their music classrooms. Music teachers must find ways to give their immigrant students meaningful engagement with the language of music, as well as frequent opportunities to use the words themselves in the course of music class. A careful study of how content language is present in ESOL classes is recommended for music educators. Additionally, choral rehearsals should be structured around opportunities for students to engage in purposeful language about musical concepts.

Affirmation of Previous Experiences

Students' stories and personal histories can help inform teachers about ways to facilitate the learning process. Music teachers must begin to identify ways to form connections between the previous experiences that their immigrant students bring with them to school and the musical goals they have for their classes.

All too often, peer translators are used as a quick fix, and students are seated next to whichever student the teacher happens to believe is a linguistically similar peer, only to find in many cases that the peer translator speaks an entirely different dialect or language (Clayton, 2003). Under the proper circumstances (linguistic similarity being one), a peer translator can provide a grounding for the immigrant student; however, using an adult community member or a teacher who speaks the same language as the ELL student as a cultural and linguistic facilitator can offer the possibility of even greater academic and linguistic support for the student. Additionally, bringing in an adult cultural

broker from the community can provide the entire class with an opportunity to learn more about the culture of the immigrant student in the class.

Many language translation programs are available on the Internet, as well as in software-for-purchase formats that could facilitate immediate sharing of background information. In this study, I found that when the participants had a means to write and communicate in their native language, they were better able to participate in the interviews, thus affording me a better opportunity to learn more about them. Choral teachers can easily access these computer software programs and find ways to learn more about their ELL students' previous musical experiences.

Forming Positive Relationships with Diverse Learners

Early in the multicultural music education movement, it was assumed that by integrating multicultural materials into the music curriculum, students would come to better understand the myriad of diverse cultures within our society. Through this exposure, all students would develop empathy with members of these cultures and appreciate the contributions of these cultures to the music of all humanity (Burton, 1997). Yet, the difficulty in forming relationships with linguistically and culturally dissimilar students often presents a challenge for monolingual educators who continue to follow traditional curricular norms that were put in place at the turn of the twentieth century.

Positive relationships between students and teachers involve mutual respect, shared responsibility, mutual commitment to learning goals as well as effective communication and feedback. These kinds of relationships are much easier to achieve between linguistically and culturally similar students and teachers. When teachers have little understanding of the students' families and communities, efforts to form effective

relationships with students is challenging. The identities of non mainstream students frequently are dismissed by schools and teachers as immaterial to academic achievement (Nieto, 1999).

Teachers' high or low expectations of students can wield a profound influence on them. The current hierarchical structure of many high school choral programs reinforces the notion that some students bring musical skills that are highly valued and some students do not. When music educators make a commitment to respect the students in their classrooms labeled *other*, based on who they are and what they know, they can begin to build positive connections with them and teach music equitably and *multiculturally*.

Directions for Future Research

As a result of this research, I am aware of a number of promising new research directions to pursue concerning immigrant students in music classes. In this next section, I frame these possible directions as broad research questions and sketch possible study designs.

1. *What are best practices in accommodating linguistically diverse students in music classes?*

During the course of this research, a number of music teachers working with linguistically diverse populations sought me out to ask for help in structuring their classes to better meet the needs of their ELL students. I was able to offer a few suggestions based on my own experiences, but found very little research that highlighted the unique needs of music teachers who work with immigrant students in performing ensembles in secondary schools. A study of the accommodations used by high-school choral or band

teachers in programs that successfully incorporate ELL students would provide valuable information to music educators. This future study could take the form of survey research or could be structured as a multi-case instrumental study situated in a number of choral classrooms and examining a number of exemplary programs that had a high proportion of ELL students.

2. *What are the experiences of music teachers who teach linguistically and culturally diverse students?*

The focus of this dissertation has been to examine the experiences of immigrant student participants. It also minimally explored the experiences of Ms. Amanda Walker, their teacher. A study directed at the ongoing experiences of music teachers who work with linguistically diverse students at the secondary level not only would highlight the significance of the broad issue of accommodating diverse students in the music classroom, but also could illuminate the process of how teaching music to *other* students affects the music learning environment. Historical or ethnographic research methods could be employed to explore this question. For example, the teaching careers of two or three secondary music teachers who have been identified as effective in working with linguistically diverse students could be examined to highlight their philosophies of teaching, their teaching styles, and their beliefs about linguistically diverse students in the choral classroom.

3. *How can dialogue journals be used effectively in the choral classroom?*

As I read and responded to the immigrant students' journal entries, I became aware that they were sharing information about themselves. As the dialogue journals represented only a small percentage of the data collected, I was unable to develop formal

assertions about the benefits of their use with ELL students in the choral classroom. Research centered on the use of regular dialogue journals in the secondary choral classroom and, in particular, their role in bridging communication among immigrant students and their teachers would greatly benefit the music education profession.

4. *How can music educators encourage immigrant students to enroll in secondary choral programs?*

Lind's (2001) study suggested that Hispanic students need to feel affiliation in the choral classroom. This study laid the groundwork for answering this question. Studies that examine choral participation in individual ethnic groups could contribute to our understanding of immigrant students. Such studies could focus on high-school choral programs that have significantly strong continuous enrollment among immigrant students and could take the form of either survey research or a multi-case instrumental study.

Conclusion

This dissertation set out to hear the “voices” of the students labeled “other” in choral music classes. When examining the phenomenon of immigrant students in the context of the choral classroom, I encountered many descriptors and labels for these students: English-language learners (ELL), culturally diverse, foreign, English Speakers of other Languages (ESOL), linguistically diverse, students of color, at-risk, and special-needs students. I found that my quest to explore their experiences was often met with surprise and suspicion, not only by the students themselves, but also by teachers and other adults in the school.

All the content area teachers I interviewed acknowledged they needed help in learning how to communicate with their immigrant students. Yet, this seemed to be based

on a belief that immigrant students needed to “fit in” and be fully assimilated into the mainstream of their classes. This *assimilationist* perspective pervaded their thinking and teaching practices regarding their immigrant students. Even the ESOL teachers I interviewed wanted the students to find ways to blend in and learn as much English as quickly as possible in their mainstream classes. The ESOL teachers and the school guidance counselors saw chorus class as a way to “help them learn the language” and satisfy the state fine arts requirement for graduation. Moreover, many teachers and school administrators I interviewed tended to view music as a “universal language.” Based on this understanding, a non-auditioned choir class was a place where all students would have equal access as well as equal chances for success.

Yet, if music classrooms have the potential to create democratic spaces, and the primary work of secondary choral music education is to reproduce a limited set of standardized choral practices, then music class for some students labeled as *other* functions as a form of subjugation. In recent educational reform movements standards-based educational priorities put pressure on teachers to “teach to the test.” This results in *education* taking on the role of *training* that involves the transmission of stock knowledge to be learned by everyone in exactly the same way. Students are sorted and screened by their performance of this knowledge. This same practice occurs in school music programs.

Students who perform at a lower level in choral classes are consigned to study a music curriculum that is designed for less able students. Their musical opportunities are less rich than those for students in advanced choirs. They feel less affiliation and in many cases do not develop their talents, but instead, are absorbed into the background of the

class. Because of pressures to excel musically and many performance demands, secondary choral teachers often do not have time to form relationships with students who are viewed as *other* but believe that they should spend time giving them as many helpful suggestions to become “Americanized.”

Becoming “more American” as one ESOL teacher put it, might be a suitable short term goal, but it flies in the face of true multicultural education. Indeed, the students I interviewed desired to fit in and found comfort in blending in with the large massed choir performances. Throughout the study, I felt a tension between what I knew were standard definitions of “multicultural education” and the reality I observed in my data collection based on my perspective as a teacher-researcher.

Advocates of multicultural education propose that every student comes to school with an ethnic identity that in turn must be recognized and respected by the teacher. The experiences of the student ought to become the starting point for the curriculum and the teaching and not the goals of the teacher. Yet, too often in school music classes, the musical goals and repertoire reflect the musical preferences, tastes and comfort level of the teacher and not those of the students in the ensemble. The students then, are relegated to the role of, as one teacher put it the “blank canvas on which the teacher paints the image of the music in his or her head.” This suggests Freire’s (2002) banking concept in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor of musical knowledge.

One of the prevailing themes that I encountered in my research was the cultural deficit theory, which suggests immigrant students were already so “far behind” that they would never learn enough content to pass high-school graduation examinations. Because

of this imagined deficit, the notion of immigrant students bringing valuable musical resources and knowledge to the choral classroom was not even considered. Moreover, I encountered many teachers and guidance counselors who thought that “time was running out” for immigrant students in high school. This way of thinking perpetuated the belief that these students continued to place a burden on their teachers and other students in the classrooms by their mere presence in class.

In providing an opportunity for telling the stories of the participants in the context of the chorus at Marshall High, I found that the students themselves became more aware of their own process of acculturation. The design of this research, called them to reflect on their own journey as choral singers. The act of deliberate consideration of their previous and present experiences of chorus and singing allowed them to view themselves as a part of their American high school chorus. It also provided an opportunity for me to share their stories with a larger audience. It is my hope that music educators will continue to embrace the challenge of becoming multicultural educators who find ways to hear and embrace the diverse voices of the students in their classrooms.

APPENDIX A

October 10, 2003

To the Parent/Guardian of _____:

As a doctoral candidate in the School of Music at the University of Maryland, College Park, I have a strong interest in examining English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) students' involvement in Choral Music Programs. I have already completed a great deal of reading and research in this field of study and hope to add to the base of information about the ways in which exemplary high school Choral Programs accommodate and include ESOL students in their classes.

Data will be collected from individual student narratives and a series of journal writing activities. The names of students will not appear in the research, and confidentiality will be carefully maintained. Please be assured that no identification of any particular student will be included in the study. **Student interviews will be audiotaped and then transcribed. Student journals will be examined. If you are willing to allow me to interview your child during his/her lunch period, please sign below, and return the form in the envelope provided.**

I believe that this research could be helpful in creating music curricula and programs where all students are challenged and served at the highest possible level. I hope that you will give your permission. If you have further questions or concerns, please contact my Dissertation Committee Chairperson, Marie McCarthy, at the School of Music, University of Maryland, College Park, 301-405-5503.

Sincerely,

Regina Carlow
University of Maryland, College Park

I GIVE permission for the above-named researcher to interview, audiotape, and transcribe the interview sessions with my child. I understand that portions of my child's written work may also be used. I understand that all information about individual students will be held strictly confidential.

Parent / Guardian Signature Date

I DO NOT give permission for the above-named researcher to interview, audiotape, and transcribe the interview sessions with my child record and transcribe the interview with my child.

Parent / Guardian Signature Date

APPENDIX B

el 10 de octubre de 2003

Al Padre/Guardián de _____:

Cuando un candidato doctoral en la Escuela de la Música en la Universidad de Maryland, el Colegio Estaciona, tengo un interés fuerte a examinar a estudiantes de ESOL' la participación en Programas Corales de Música. Yo ya he completado un montón de lectura e investigación en este campo del estudio y la esperanza para añadir a la investigación información despreciable acerca de las maneras en las que la preparatoria ejemplar los Programas Corales acomodan e incluyen a estudiantes de ESOL en sus clases.

Los datos se reunirán de narrativas individuales de estudiante y una serie de actividades de escribir de diario. Los nombres de estudiantes no aparecerán en la investigación, y la confidencialidad será mantenido con cuidado. Sea asegurado por favor que ninguna identificación de cualquier estudiante particular se incluirá en el estudio. Las entrevistas del estudiante serán la audiofrecuencias, grabadas, y entonces transcritas. Los diarios del estudiante se examinarán. Si usted está dispuesto a permitirme entrevistar a su niño durante su período del almuerzo, por favor signo debajo de y volver la forma en el sobre proporcionado.

Creo que esta investigación puede ser útil en crear los planes de la música y programas donde todos estudiantes se desafían y son servido en el nivel alto posible. Espero que usted dará su permiso. Si usted tiene las preguntas adicionales o concierne, por favor no vacila en contactar mi Presidente del Comité de la Disertación, Marie McCarthy, en la Escuela de la Música, la Universidad de Maryland, el Parque Colegial, el 301-405-5503.

Sinceramente, la Universidad de Regina Carlow de Maryland, el Parque Colegial

DOY el permiso para el investigador encima de-denominado para entrevistar audiotape y transcribir las sesiones de entrevista con mi niño. Entiendo que mis porciones de mi niño's el trabajo escrito se puede utilizar también. Entiendo que toda información acerca de estudiantes individuales se tendrá estrictamente confidencial.

Padre/la Fecha de Firma de Guardián

Yo NO DOY el permiso para el investigador encima de-denominado para entrevistar, registrar, y transcribir las sesiones de entrevista en el audiotape.

Padre/la Fecha de Firma de Guardián

APPENDIX C

SAMPLE JOURNAL PROMT

Autobiography: NAME _____

I was born in the year _____ on the _____ day. I am _____ years old. I was born in _____ in the country of _____. I lived there for _____ years. My life in the town was (describe your town/city): _____

My mother's name is _____ and my father's name is _____. I have _____ brothers/sisters. Their names are _____ / _____ / _____ / _____.

I first went to school in the town/city of _____. The name of my first school was: _____. My favorite classes in school were: _____ / _____ / _____.

I came to the United States in _____. I came by _____ (transportation). I came with _____ / _____ / _____ (family or friend). My first day at _____ high school was _____ - _____ - _____.

My favorite class at _____ high school is _____. I like this class because _____.

My hardest class at _____ high school is _____. I think it is hard because _____.

My favorite music in my country was _____. My favorite music in the United States is _____. I like American music because _____.

	Freshman	Sophomore	Junior	Senior	
Chamber Choir	1	8	4	7	
Treble Choir	1	9	6	2	
General Chorus	14	12	8	4	
Total Years in Chorus	One	Two	Three	Four	More than Four
Chamber Choir	1	2	3	3	9
Treble Choir	1	2	2	2	12
General Chorus	11	3	3	4	10
Reason for Taking Chorus	Love to Sing	Arts Credit	No other option	Other	
Chamber Choir	18			2	
Treble Choir	16	2		1	
General Chorus	32	4	2	4	
Sight-reading tests will improve my skill in this area	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
Chamber Choir	2	1	1	8	7
Treble Choir	1	2		6	8
General Chorus	3	2	5	14	15
Number of ESOL students enrolled in class in October 2003					
Chamber Choir	0				
Treble Choir	0				
I don't like American music because	_____.				

Figure 1 Marshall High Choral Program Survey Results

APPENDIX D

APPENDIX E

Choral Teacher Questionnaire

Dear Colleagues,

Jan. 21, 2004

As some of you may know, I have been working on my doctoral dissertation, which has centered on the experiences of ESOL students in choir. I have spent the past five months interviewing six students who sing in high school choir and am interested in your perception of some of the central issues in my study. While the primary data is interview transcripts, journals, and simulated recall of the six students, I am also interested in how my colleagues perceive ESOL involvement in secondary choral music programs.

I am writing to request that you take a few minutes to answer the following five questions. At the end of each question, I've provided space for any comments you might wish to make on your answers. You may either send them back to me via attachment or send the directly back as part of an e-mail. **As part of my agreement with the Internal Review Board and the Human Subjects Division, pseudonyms will be used in place of all names, individual schools, school systems, and any other identifying features of the data.**

Thanks for your time. I know how precious it is!

Regina Carlow

1. Which of the following courses do you teach? How many total students are enrolled in each class? How many ESOL students are enrolled?

	Total Students	ESOL Students
--	----------------	---------------

- | | | |
|-------------------|--|--|
| a. General Chorus | | |
| b. Women's Choir | | |
| c. Show Choir | | |
| d. Chamber Choir | | |

GENERAL COMMENTS:

2. In your experience, how long do ESOL students stay in the choral program at your school?

- a. One semester
- b. Two semesters
- c. Three semesters
- d. Four semesters
- e. More than four semesters

GENERAL COMMENTS:

3. In your school, what is the approximate percentage of ESOL student involvement in the following extracurricular activities?

- a. Drama Club
- b. The School Musical
- c. International Night/Show
- d. All State Chorus
- e. County Chorus
- f. Fundraising Activities
- g. Choir Trips

GENERAL COMMENTS:

4. In your experience, what kind of education or in-service training have you attended that was centered on accommodating ESOL students in content-area classes in at your school?
 - a. Half-day workshop
 - b. Full-day workshop
 - c. Graduate course
 - d. Undergraduate course
 - e. None

GENERAL COMMENTS:

5. Do you have any thoughts or suggestions about successfully including ESOL students in high school choral classes?

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