ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: "LIKE WHO YOU ARE:" SOCIALLY
                              CONSTRUCTED IDENTITY IN THE MIDDLE
                              SCHOOL BAND

                              Adria R. Hoffman, Doctor of Philosophy, 2008

Dissertation Directed By: Philip E. Silvey, Assistant Professor of Music Education

        The purpose of this study was to explore the band classroom as a social

context and examine its influence on middle school students' identity constructions.

Identity theory in sociological research and social identity theory in the field of social

psychology provided the theoretical bases for this study. However, the integration of

both theories suggested by Deaux and Martin (2003) as well as Stets and Burke

(2000) proved most applicable to this inquiry. Both intergroup processes and role

identities were explored.

        This qualitative study included six band students enrolled in a large public

middle school located in a metropolitan area on the East Coast. Enrolled in the same

sixth grade band class, each of the six participants played a different instrument, and

therefore provided a unique perspective on social interactions and the school

experience. Ethnography and narrative inquiry informed the data collection process

and methodological choices for this collective case study. Data collection included

classroom observations, open-ended interviews, and weekly student journals. Data was collected over a period of 5.5 months, ending as students chose to continue or discontinue their band enrollment for the subsequent school year. Interview transcripts, field notes, and student journals were systematically coded first on a case-by-case basis, then compared, contrasted, and interpreted across cases.

Findings supported prior research on musical identity and music education. Students simultaneously valued perceived characteristics of their own group while devaluing those of other groups. In addition to supporting prior research findings, this study indicated that middle school band students make choices regarding course enrollment based on influences (rejection or affirmation) of those around them. Students initially chose to enroll in band because friends, teachers, and family members encouraged them to do so. Once they felt accepted as band members, they found particular roles in the band classroom. Based on others' affirmation or rejection of their competency in such roles, they reevaluated whether they felt they belonged in the band. Those who felt rejected or less competent chose to enroll in other courses. Students who felt successful and found unique roles within the band more strongly identified with the group.

"LIKE WHO YOU ARE:" SOCIALLY CONSTRUCTED IDENTITY IN THE
MIDDLE SCHOOL BAND

By

Adria Rachel Hoffman

Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the
University of Maryland, College Park, in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
2008

Advisory Committee:
Professor Philip E. Silvey, Chair
Professor Victoria-Maria MacDonald
Professor Marie McCarthy
Professor Janet Montgomery
Professor Steven Selden

Dedication

To Mr. Richard Wray and Mr. Bill Crowe, extraordinary educators and musicians who provided an emotionally and intellectually safe space for middle school band students.

And

To the many band students from whom I feel privileged to have learned:

Dhameer Adams, Noah Aldonas, Omar Amalou, Matt Ambrogi, Megan Ammirati, Jonathan Ammirati, Erik Anastos, Brett Anders, Jacqueline Anders, Jenna Anders, John Anderson, Jenny Andrade, Luke Angle, Will Angle, Demi Argiropoulos, Aliya Asmal, Nadia Asmal, Andrew Baker, Grace Ballou, Tasha Barnett, Sophia Barr, Lena Barsky, C.J. Bartholomew, Carson Barry, Jillian Becker, Mahmoud BelHadj-Nasr, Greg Benson, Eileen Berlyn, Jamie Berlyn, Daniel Bernstein, Nick Bierne, Michael Binkley, Bennett Black, Jonathan Bloom, Jamie Boisture, Brandon Boykin, Claire Brady, Isaiah Brennan, John Brigagliano, Alan Brody, Andrew Brown, Kate Brown, Alex Buckler, Emma Burd, Megan Burke, Laura Burt, Sam Burton, Brendan Buso, Nick Carbone, Yesenia Cardoso, Sean Cassidy, Taylor Castillo, Andrew Caughran, LaNia Charity, Max Chmelik, Christine Chong, Min Chung, Christina Clark, Kevin Clark, Monica Clark, Peter Clement, Nate Coddington, Taylor Coddington, Kelsey Coia, Erin Connors, Geosh Connors, Aidan Conroy, Megan Constantinides, Carroll Courtenay, Lindsey Cowen, Natalie Crippen, Kelly Crowley, James Crowley, Patrick Crowley, T.D. Crowley, Michael Cubby, David Curaca, Andrew D'Addario, Elizabeth Daly, Timothy Deasy, Matt Demsky, Max Denney, Patrick Denney, Khalil Doles, Anamarie Diaz, Claudia Dimick, Kirsten Dobson, Joe Donahoe, Mike Douthit, Sammi Dowdell, Alex Dragnich, Elizabeth Dreswick, Alex Druy, Thomas Duggan, Max Duncan, Ben Earley, Scott Ebert, Connor Echols, Daniel Edward, Liz Egbert, Amanda Ellison, Matt Ellison, Allison Ellkind, Chris Emerson, Matt Ernesto, Rosa Esquivel, Eddie Faulkner, Ian Feeney, Perry Fennell, Corinne Ferrari, Darion Fleming, Sarah Flourance, Dan Folsom, Allison Foster, Pete Foster, Stuart Foster, Ellen Fransen, Victoria Froberg, Charlie Fustero, Kate Gathro, Elsie Gibson, Michael Gilbertson, Colin Gilliland, Erik Gore, Malcolm Gore, Jake Goozner, Alec Gower, Alice Graham, Jeremy Green, Matt Greico, Molly Greico, Alex Grove, John Guerci, Bertrand Guerin-Williams, Nick Gunn, Katri Gurney, Liza Hadley, Simi Hadley, Joe Hager, Briana Hanafin, Patrick Hanafin, Nick Haring, Alden Hart, Savannah Hartline, Abdi Hashi, Jimin He, Ben Hecker, Alex Heimann, Chris Henley, Michael Henning, Sarah Herbst, Samantha Herold, James Heydinger, Tessa Heydinger, Marie Hickey, Mark Highsmith, Rebecca Hirschhorn, Ethan Hitchcock, Mary Hodson, Elizabeth Hooper, Thomas Hughes, Stephen Hunsberger, Chris Hunt, Melissa Hunt, Sammy Hunter, Ginny Huntoon, Wes Huntoon, Mio Ikukawa, Umit Isik, Laura Jennings, Dana John, Kelly John, Anna Johnson, Sara Johnson, Willi Johnson, Alika Johnston, Cody Johnston, Leah Jones, Matt Judd, Ben Kalkstein,

Philip Kang, Stephen Kang, Mary Karangelen, Aaron Katzman, Patrick Keating, Ehsan Keya, Dimitris Killinger, Weyem Kobrosly, Julianne Koch, Elena Konstantin, Chris Kyser, Kelly McCoy, Willie Leach, Esther Lee, Peyton Lee, Carl Leighty, Louis Linden, James Linek, Rachel Locke, William Lomax, Andriane Lopez, Samuel Lopez-Espana, Natalie Lynch, Jenico Macorol, Julia Magin, Emily Maier, Andrew Malone, Juliana Mannino, Laura Mansilla, Hillary Marker, Bianca Marquez, Alex Matta, Kelly McCoy, Devin McCue-Emery, Linden McCue-Emery, Nick McCulloch, Frances Meadows, Victoria Mellin, Abby Memmott, Denny Merideth, Nicole Merlene, Peggy Meyer, Megan Mohr, Michael Monaghan, Ryan Moore, Mason Moorman, Kyle Moseley, Moises Motto, Samantha Moyer, Annie Nardoililli, Ben Nava, Julianne Nava, Alice Nelson, Baylor Nelson, Liz Nelson, Cara Newlon, Thomas Newman, Sam Nottingham, Trueman Nottingham, Devin O'Connor, Lauren Oliver, Cory Oppenheimer, Greta Opsal, Elizabeth O'Neil, Chapman Paret, Raffi Parisi, Holly Parker, Alex Pasternak, Rachel Penney, Sarah Penney, Charlie Peterson, Jennifer Pierrot, Annie Plotkin, Roberto Polo-Sherk, Laura Posada, Brian Prescott, Emma Prins, Tamra Pristou-Glokobar, Jack Prominski, Patrick Puziene, Rosemary Puziene, Shamika Ranasinghe, Lindiwe Rennert, Sam Ridgely, Billee Ripy, Brent Risney, Juliette Roche, Andy Rockelli, Victor Rodriguez, Claire Rogers, Alex Roux, Sara Roux, Grace Rubinger, Katie Rubinger, Teresa Rubinger, Adrian Ruiz, Rick Rusincovitch, Jackie Sagar, Kate Sagar, Emily Sajewski, Andy Samora, Matt Samora, Anna Satterfield, Gretchen Schneider, Sydney Schrider, Michael Scholl, Colleen Schulz, Annie Schweikert, Justine Sequiera, Jacob Sherman, Ryan Shipley, Karen Sible, Ben Silliman, Emily Simmonds, Nick Simon, Lauren Sims, Alexis Singer, Caroline Sitcov, Sarah Sitcov, Carleigh Smith, Natasha Smith, Julie Sok, Audrey Sonntag, Jose Sorto, Victor Souza, Billy Spack, Erinn Spack, Wyeth Steigler, Max Stern, Steffan Stratton, Derek Stotler, Leah Stricker, Turmunkh Sukhbaatar, Mike Suiters, Colleen Sullivan, Hillary Sullivan, Nora Swisher, Daniel Taylor, Donovan Taylor, Maren Taylor, Margaret Taylor, James Taylor, Sam Teplitzky, Maeve Thomassie, Cameron Thomson, Tim Tishman, John Todd, R.J. Tolson, John Tomasek, Andrew Tomaszczuk, Charlie Townshend, Jason Truesdale, Scott Underriner, Alex Valera, Orry Vandermark, Kaity Vanderploeg, Juwante Vaughan, Krista Vikander, Doug Wackerle, Molly Waidmann, Chloe Walczak, Leslie Walczak, Jake Ward, Theressa Weller, Colleen White, Ian White, Mae Whitesides, Chris Whyte, Jennifer Wieboldt, Jack Wilson, Nathan Wilson, Maggie Winters, Sara Wolff, John Wong, Eileen Wyness, Daniel Yeatman, Natalie Yoder, Regan Young, Gloria Yoo, Michael Yuhas, Genta Yuzawa, Cody Zapata, Courtney Ziegler, Jackson Zoroya, Megan Zurowski

Acknowledgements

The dissertation is the result of a remarkable journey of the heart traveled not alone, but with the companionship of those who know the windy path much better than the one whose name appears as the author. I would like to acknowledge my companions on this extraordinary journey. First, I must thank the challenging, nurturing, and supportive educators who comprised my dissertation committee.

Janet Montgomery provided unique perspectives on music teaching and learning. I value her thoughts and continue to reflect on the ways in which I might improve my classroom practices and structures in light of her ideas. Thanks also to Victoria-Maria MacDonald who brought a wealth of knowledge regarding minority and urban education to the table. She is one of the most caring and knowledgeable educators with whom I have learned. It is because of the work she does that those of us in secondary classrooms might work towards improving schooling for all students. Steve Selden also brought a unique perspective to the discussion. I cannot thank him enough for the learning experiences I enjoyed during three courses as well as his insight regarding race, class, and issues of social justice.

Thanks also to Marie McCarthy, a remarkable woman who epitomizes scholarship and educatorship. I greatly appreciate her insights on sociological theories and research in music and education. I have come to understand that "Onward" encompasses both praise and a challenge to continue improving and working. She has challenged and encouraged me to give students the best possible learning experiences by learning from them. Lastly, I would like to thank my dissertation chair and advisor, Philip Silvey. An extraordinary music educator, Philip has been a teacher,

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Prelude

Prior to entering a doctoral program, I taught band in a large, public middle school located in a Washington, D.C. suburb. The school population was exceptionally diverse, representing a wide variety of ethnic, socio-economic, linguistic, and racial differences. I enjoyed teaching the diverse groups of students who sat alongside each other in my band classes and worked together to form an engaging and exciting learning community. However, I became disturbed by countywide curriculum policies that targeted specific groups of students to close achievement gaps. These policies sorted students into remedial and non-remedial classes, creating boundaries between diverse populations. I first learned of these policies when approximately a dozen students told me that they were no longer permitted to enroll in band classes due to placements in remedial math or language arts courses.

My most vivid recollection is of one student who felt particularly upset when removed from band. Deborah[1], as I will refer to her, first enrolled in band as a sixth grade student, volunteering to play the bass clarinet. I observed as she and her fellow bass clarinetist formed a close friendship. Frequently, the two girls told me how much fun they had in the band class and they even created a bass clarinet website during their free time at home. They gave me the website address and told me that it was

---

[1] All names in this report are pseudonyms. The names of the participants, school, and county in which the research site is located have all been changed to protect the participants' confidentiality.

1

"really important" to take the quiz. There was only one question: What is your favorite instrument? If someone answered anything other than the bass clarinet, the website proclaimed that he or she answered incorrectly. These two students proudly identified themselves as bass clarinetists and demonstrated their pride by playing in the band and making public their new skills.

As seventh graders, they continued their band enrollment as well as their friendship. During the second semester of their seventh grade year, they asked to speak with me after class. Deborah, eyes watering, looked down as she kicked the tile floor with the toe of her shoe, and told me that she would not be allowed to take band anymore. She explained that the school counselors told her she was required to take an additional class period of math. This additional instructional time would take the place of the elective period she would have otherwise chosen to fill with band. When I asked school administrators about Deborah's schedule conflict, I learned that new curriculum policies in our countywide school system targeted students who received special education services, were learning English, had previously earned low standardized test scores, or were otherwise considered to be in danger of poor academic achievement. In order to meet short-term goals of improving standardized test scores and enrolling more students in algebra, school administrators recommended that these students receive additional math or language arts instruction instead of arts education.

Middle School Band Students' Perspectives

Student Perspectives in Practice

Watching and listening to Deborah as she explained why she had to leave band, I felt as though the shortsightedness of school administrators could lead to unintended and undesirable long-term consequences. The ways in which these policies were implemented were also of some concern. The students were not consulted, but rather informed that their choices and decisions would from thereafter be overruled. Sizer (1984) states that students are often not part of decisions regarding their curriculum or learning. "Most children assume that knowledge just happens to them, that it is handed to them by some parentlike seer as if it were a peanut butter and jelly sandwich" (Sizer, 1984, p. 3). In K-12 schools, administrators, teachers, and parents primarily control the decision-making process. Students' perspectives regarding curricular decisions and the process of learning are often seen as less valuable, as children have less experience in schools than their adult counterparts.

Student Perspectives in Research

Pope (1999) notes that while a large amount of research literature on adolescents and secondary schools exists, few education researchers have examined curricular experiences from the students' perspective. Through a recent review of literature, I found student perspectives absent from music education research as well. Over the last decade, music education scholars have examined variables such as self-esteem, achievement, and motivation through quantitative methodologies (Gromko, 2004; Henley, 2001; Hewitt, 2001; McKeage, 2004; Morrison, Montemeyer, & Wiltshire, 2004; Schmidt, 2005). Other scholars within the field studied certain

aspects of music learning such as self-evaluation and assessment of middle school and high school instrumental students (Hewitt, 2002, 2005; Morrison, Montemeyer, & Wiltshire, 2004). Some researchers examined instrumental music students' motivations and instrument choices through quantitative analyses (Corenblum & Marshall, 1998; Cutietta & McAllister, 1997).

While many researchers in music education focus on factors that comprise the music learning experience in schools, few choose to explore music students' perceptions and experiences. Instead, interpretations of music education and aspects of teaching and learning in music education rest on adult voice. The few research reports of student voice that I found focus on choral music students' experiences (Adler, 2002; Carlow, 2004; Kennedy, 2004; Mills, 2008; Silvey, 2002, 2004, 2005) or high school and college instrumental music students' experiences (Berg, 1997; Conway, 2000; Fodor, 1998; Zhukov, 2006). There exists a lack of research on middle school band students situated in their curricular contexts.

Purpose of Study

According to Wood (1992), the answer to the question of what is learned in school "is best captured in the words of students themselves" (p. 200). In order to explore the importance of band in middle school students' lives, I consulted several high school band students who had been members of my former middle school band class. During a group interview at the high school marching band camp in August 2006, I asked them why they initially chose to enroll in middle school band. One rising ninth grade clarinetist told me that as a middle school student, "Electives are kind of, like, who you are." When I asked for clarification, other students sitting with

4

us told me that they chose to enroll in band because they "didn't want to be like the art kids." Other students said that they were not as outgoing as students enrolled in drama. It seemed to me that these students chose to enroll in band, at least in part, because it reinforced their emerging identities. More specifically, they appeared to want to identify with a specific social group (the band) and simultaneously portray their identities to peers and adults from within that context.

Wortham (2006) claims that academic learning and social identification are linked processes that occur during the school day. Goodlad (2004) refers to these interrelated learning outcomes as the *implicit* and *explicit* curriculum. By explicit, Goodlad describes the texts studied, tests taken, and stated teaching objectives and materials. Goodlad uses the term implicit to draw attention to the "messages transmitted by both the physical setting for learning and the kinds of social and interpersonal relationships characterizing the instructional environment" (p. 197). In other words, students learn both content knowledge and socially constructed understandings about themselves and their worlds as they sit in classrooms. I designed this study as an exploration of such interrelated social and academic knowledge situated in the specific context of a middle school band classroom in order to better understand the import of instrumental music education in the lives of students such as Deborah.

Rationale for the Study

Sadowski (2006) claims, "much of a student's success or failure in school- academically, socially, and personally- centers not on… external factors but on questions of *identity*" (p. 1). The ways students perceive themselves as well as how

they define who they would like to become are inextricably linked to the social interactions that occur in the school and classroom environments. The curricular structure of middle schools determines, and often constrains, students' social interactions. These structures may therefore influence students' identities based on their ability or inability to identify with content learned as well as other individuals involved in the learning process. Instead of determining local curriculum policy based solely on external measures of success, Sadowski (2006) instructs educators to form deeper understandings of students as individual people.

By conducting this study, I aimed to gain insight into the unique characteristics and experiences of middle school students as they navigated the middle school and middle school band classroom. The band classroom is a unique learning context. Students choose to identify themselves as band students and, more specifically, as particular types of instrumentalists. Their identities as instrumental musicians are more visible to outsiders than choral music students (among other social groups) because band members carry their instruments to and from school and sit in sections by instrument selection. Another aspect of ensemble learning that differentiates it from other classroom settings is that every lesson is a collective, collaborative project. The band is also distinctive in that students learn and socialize with one another both during the school day as well as various evenings during which they perform concerts. This study of socially constructed identity situated in the band classroom may provide a unique view of identity construction situated within a co-curricular, elective context.

Emerging Identity

According to Dewey (1928/ 1959), identity construction occurs "not in isolation but by interaction with the conditions which contain and carry subject-matter" (p. 122). Dewey suggests that the school curriculum, including the context in which the curriculum exists as learned subject matter, influences non-curricular outcomes. In fact, a student learns to identify his or herself within the subject matter, as he or she simultaneously learns about the curriculum and about her or his emerging identity (Pope, 1999; Wortham, 2006). Within the instrumental music classroom, this may be apparent in language used by the teacher and students to define flutists differently than trombonists (Dobbs, 2005). Identifying the varying purposes of various instrument parts (and possibly musicians) within the score may also contribute to students' emerging identities as learners and musicians.

Each middle school classroom exists as a social context in which students' identity constructions, academic learning, and peer relations vary. Therefore, each student has a unique perspective on learning, the classroom, and him or her self. According to Holland et al. (1998), "Perspectives are tied to a sense of entitlement or disentitlement to the particular spaces, relationships, activities, and forms of expression that together make up the indices of identity" (p. 44). A primary assumption of this study is that unique peer and teacher-student relationships, social and curricular activities, and musical forms of expression occur in the particular space under examination, the middle school band classroom (Adderley, Kennedy, & Berz, 2003; Dobbs, 2005).

Definitions of Terms

Theories and Descriptions of Identity

Social psychologists and sociologists introduced the concept of identity as a social construct during the twentieth century. Mead (1956) describes the identity, or *self*, as both a subject and an object that expresses and reflects the behaviors of the social groups to which the individual belongs. Noting that "selves can only exist in definite relationships to other selves," (p. 227), Mead suggests that an individual constructs identities in relation to the social context in which he or she resides. For the middle school student, the school building delineates a primary social context in which identity emergence occurs. According to Mead, scholars must examine the cultural contexts in which certain norms exist as the individual may express and reflect social norms or behaviors. "We divide ourselves up in all sorts of different selves with reference to our acquaintances" (Mead, 1956, p. 207). Social interactions, therefore, necessitate various identities, or selves, that we project outward to others.

The Meadian concept of identity encompasses "social positions and other roles crucial to the conduct of social activities and relationships" (Holland & Lachicotte, 2007, p. 103). This notion of identity differs from that of the psychologist Erikson who examined "questions of belonging and of locating oneself in society" (Holland & Lachicotte, 2007, p. 102). Holland and Lochicotte further explain:

> An Eriksonian "identity" is overarching. It weaves together an individual's answers to questions about who he or she is as a member of the cultural and social group(s) that make up his or her society. A Meadian identity, on the other hand, is a sense of oneself as participant in the social roles and position

8

defined by a specific, historically constituted set of social activities. (Holland & Lachicotte, p. 104)

Mead's theory of identity, now associated with the field of social psychology, encompasses multiple roles and aspects of identity. Unlike Erikson's overarching sense of coherent self, Mead's construct allows for evolving, multiple identities that emerge in relation to group, or social, identities. Adler (2002) states:

Adolescents do construct multiple identities for multiple contexts; that they may not be the same person at school as they are at home, and that they even portray themselves as different people between the schoolyard and the classroom, or even between different classrooms. (p. 178)

As this study focused on the emerging identity of the middle school band student, Mead's notion of identity best suited my theoretical framework.

Vygotsky built on Mead's theory of identity. While Mead describes a fluid, ever-evolving "I," Vygotsky's theory allowed for social groups to "author… new selves and new cultural worlds and try to realize them" (Holland & Lachicotte, 2007, p. 116). This means that not only does the sociocultural context influence the individual, but the individual also acts as an agent interacting with and shaping that context. The Vygotskian sociocultural approach to identity encompasses the nature of the sixth grade band classroom. Though the physical space, teacher, and larger school context all exist prior to the students' arrival, the class does not become a community until the students enter the space and interact with it. I therefore drew upon sociocultural theories of identity to inform this study of student identity.

As children enter adolescence, they begin to identify themselves as they believe others perceive them (Adler, 2002; Erikson, 1963; Mead, 1956; North & Hargreaves, 1999; Tarrant, North, & Hargreaves, 2001). In other words, middle school students' primary sense of self rests not on their uniqueness or individual goals, but instead on the ways in which they conform (or not) to their peers and others in their school and community cultures. Holland et al. (1998) maintain:

> People tell others who they are, but even more important they tell themselves and then try to act as though they are who they say they are. These self-understandings, especially those with strong emotional resonance for the teller, are what we refer to as identities. (p. 3)

Identity, then, is both the outward projection of who we desire to be, as well as the internalization of such desired behaviors and characterizations. "The interplay of a person's identities is thus open to and dependent upon a field of continuing social discourse and everyday interaction" (Holland et al., 1998, p. 251). For the young adolescent who spends a great deal of time in school contexts, identity may be projected to classmates, teachers, and adults with whom he or she interacts on a daily basis. Consequently, the various curricular contexts within the school influence the evolving identities students portray to others. Recent researchers' findings on music and adolescent identity support the aforementioned theories regarding outward projection of socially constructed identities.

For the purposes of this study, I approached identity as a social construct. Hogg, Terry, and White (1995) define *identity* as the "socially constructed self" (p. 262). McCarthy (1999) supports this definition, stating that identity is constructed

through social interactions and cultural constructions. Similarly, Tarrant et al. (2006)

use the term *self-concept* to refer to an individual's perception of his or herself in

relation to social groups. Adler (2002) notes that a self-concept includes self-

definition. In other words, a student constructs a definition of him or herself (such as

son, daughter, friend, singer, gymnast, or flutist) on which perceptions, or self-

concepts, may be based. Tarrant et al. (2006) allude to this when they stated that a

self-concept includes aspects such as personal appearance, self-esteem, and

relationships with other individuals. Due to the scholars' use of the term self-concept

in studies of music, and the term identity in studies both within and outside of music

education research, I use both terms interchangeably throughout this document. The

social aspects of the self-concept, or identity, (interpersonal relationships and social

interactions) were the primary foci of this inquiry.

Musical Identities

Similar to the aforementioned concepts in social psychology, Roberts (2004)

posits that a musical identity is a social construct that does not exist on its own.

Rather, musical identity is "constructed, confirmed, and maintained almost

exclusively through interaction with others" (Roberts, 2004, p. 3). North and

Hargreaves (1999) assert that music serves adolescents as an identifying badge with

which students associate with peers as well as certain behaviors. Membership in

musical ensembles, attendance at musical events and consumption of musical

products serve adolescents through the process of social identification. North and

Hargreaves (1999) and Tarrant, North, and Hargreaves (2001) claim adolescents'

perceptions of various social groups (based on musical affiliations and taste) lead to

11

positive social identity construction. Such social identity construction influences adolescents' identification with one another. The concept of contextual or social identity as a component of self-esteem exists in literature outside of music as well. Holland et al. (1998) assert that contextual identity "fills personal authorship with social efficacy, for identities take us back and forth from intimate to public spaces" (p. 272). As a badge of identity, music allows young adolescents to define themselves in private spaces, such as personal music players, as well as public places, such as a public concert space or music ensemble (North and Hargreaves, 1999).

Culture and Sociocultural Theory

Viewing identity as a social construct necessitates the study of the self in relation to the sociocultural context in which the individual lives. According to Minick, Stone, and Forman (1993), "the development of a sociocultural theory of mind demands careful attention to the institutional context of social interaction" (p. 6). Drawing on Vygotskian and Median notions of identity, this study serves as a bridge between the student and the sociocultural contexts of the band classroom and middle school.

Situating identity within a sociocultural context requires an understanding of the term *culture*. Nieto (1999) states the problematic use of the term as it historically referred to those with elevated social status, connoting activities such as a symphony orchestra concert or attending institutions of higher education. Nieto (1999) maintains, "Culture is used interchangeably with ethnicity as if both simply were passed down… Less often is culture thought of as the values one holds dear, or the way one looks at and interacts with the world" (p. 47). Rather than simplifying

culture to surface-level descriptions of food, music, or ethnic background, I designed this study as a means to understand the complex social contexts in which the students lived.

As Gay (2000) describes, "*Culture* refers to a dynamic system of social values, cognitive codes, behavioral standards, worldviews, and beliefs used to give order and meaning to our own lives" (p.8). In light of this description, the individual student may experience multiple cultures as they move between the home, school, and community organizations. Their behaviors, use of language, and values may evolve as they learn to navigate these varied contexts. Each of these contexts plays a role in the individual's construction of identity. While this study focused on the middle school band classroom, I accounted for the larger contexts in which this classroom resided. This helped me to understand each student's perspective as he or she interacted with the classroom context.

<div align="center">Framing the Research Questions</div>

The primary research question directing this study was: *How does the middle school band classroom as a social context influence students' identity constructions?* Drawing on previous research on young adolescent identity and musical identity, I recognized that a variety of social interactions and connections between social contexts influence early adolescent identity construction. Therefore, I developed four secondary research questions to guide my inquiry:

1. *What types of social interactions occur within the band classroom?*

2. *How do peer networks form and function within (and outside of) the band classroom?*

3. *How do middle school band students make decisions regarding music course enrollment and participation?*

4. *In what ways do social learning and musical learning intersect?*

Methodological Choices

As I aimed to examine identity within a specific social context, I drew upon the qualitative methodology of narrative inquiry "in order to adopt a particular view of experience as phenomena under study" (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006, p. 477). Narrative inquiry provides a method by which the researcher may study a particular phenomenon, such as identity, through stories. Connelly and Clandinin (2006) state:

> People shape their daily lives by stories of who they and others are and as they interpret their past in terms of these stories. Story, in the current idiom, is a portal through which a person enters the world and by which his or her experience of the world is interpreted and made personally meaningful. (p. 477)

Connelly and Clandinin (2006) describe three common aspects of narrative inquiry research: (a) temporality, (b) sociality, and (c) place. Temporality refers to descriptions of phenomena and individuals as fluid. In other words, each has a past, present, and future by which the researcher describes and places the person, event, or phenomena. Identity, as an evolving aspect of a middle school student's experience, necessitates knowledge of the individual's past, current experience, and potential future. The second commonality, sociality, refers to the interaction of the individual with the social context. As a study of the influence of the social context on students' identities, this aspect of narrative inquiry is inherent in the research questions.

14

Thirdly, place connotes an examination of how the specific location in which events occur influences the inquiry itself. Narrative inquiry appeared to serve well the purpose of this study. By collecting and analyzing data with regard to temporality, sociality, and place, I studied the phenomenon of identity using a methodological structure suited for understanding the interactions between individuals and social contexts.

My methodological decisions were also influenced by anthropological research traditions. I therefore drew upon ethnography to gain insight into the band classroom culture and case study design to examine the richness and complexity of the individual middle school band students, or cases. I aimed to highlight the unique qualities of individual cases in order to provide the reader with deeper understandings of young adolescent musical identity, the phenomenon at the heart of this study (Stake, 2006). I provide further details regarding this methodology in chapter three.

Conclusion

In various fields of public and social service, professionals compartmentalize their patients', clients', and students' various characteristics and capabilities in order to most efficiently diagnose and treat problems (Coles, 1989; Sizer, 1984). However, students are more than the sum of their technical proficiencies, comprehension levels, and reading scores. Instead of examining one aspect of the classroom experience (such as instrument choice or sight-reading processes), teachers and researchers might hear students' narratives. These stories reflect a more holistic view of the classroom experience and provide a detailed means by which we can understand schooling. Bruner (1996) states:

We frame the accounts of our cultural origins and our most cherished beliefs

in story form, and it is not just the 'content' of these stories that grip us, but

their narrative artifice. Our immediate experience, what happened yesterday

or the day before, is framed in the same storied way. Even more striking, we

represent our lives (to ourselves as well as to others) in the form of narrative.

(Bruner, 1996, p. 40)

Through this study, I prompted and collected middle school students' narratives in

order to report their experiences in their own words as sixth grade band members. By

hearing their perspectives, middle school educators may better meet students'

immediate needs and reflect on pedagogical practices and curriculum policies with

this information in mind. The narratives I present represent individual cases. Like

Coles (1989), I "err on the side of each person's particularity," (p. 27), in order to

give voice to the participants in this study. Only after presenting each individual's

unique perspective do I provide cross-case analyses and possible implications of such

interpretations.

I conducted this study as an exploration of socially constructed identity.

Socially constructed identity serves as an entryway to the student experience in band,

which is but one aspect of their greater middle school experience. Through a

collective case study design, I examined individual students (cases) within the

particular social context of the band classroom. The qualitative case study served as a

means through which I examined sixth grade band students' emerging and evolving

identities, which are closely tied to social interactions. According to Nieto (1999):

Learning cannot be separated from the context in which it takes place because

minds do not exist in a vacuum, somehow disconnected from and above the

messiness of everyday life. The way we learn, what we choose to learn, the

opportunities and resources available for learning, and the social and political

status of our identities all influence how and the extent to which we are

successful learners. (Nieto, 1999, p. 11)

To that end, I explored the social context of the sixth grade band classroom,

located within the complex social milieu of a public middle school located in a large

metropolitan area. Through a report of students' narratives, I highlight the way in

which this specific social context influenced students' emerging identities and the

ways in which students influenced the social context. I hope that this study may

inform our understandings of individual students within the classroom and school

contexts, bridging the gap between research on social and curricular aspects of music

education and middle school education.

Outline of the Document

I begin chapter two with an overview of two theoretical frameworks used to

examine socially constructed identity: identity theory and social identity theory. I then

review research on the social context of the middle school and the instrumental music

classroom in order to inform my understandings of the setting in which I conducted

this study. I then review research built on social identity theory. Following this

section, I examine prior research studies that fall into the category of identity theory. I

conclude this chapter by discussing the application of an integrated theory of identity

to best serve my research goals and inform our understandings of middle school students' identity constructions.

In chapter three, I review my methodology and provide an overview of the methodological traditions in which I ground my study. In particular, I review case study research, ethnography, and narrative inquiry. I then turn to an overview of the research site and my process for site and participant selection. Finally, I review my data collection procedures and finally discuss my process for coding and data analysis.

Chapters four, five, and six encompass the analytical elements of this research document. In these chapters, I present the data and my interpretations of the findings. Chapter four serves as an introduction to the research site and primary participants involved in this study. In this chapter, I provide the reader with a description of Cardinal Middle School, the band teacher, Mr. Wray, and the individual participants' stories in order to present the context in which the study took place. By gaining deeper knowledge of the context and the individuals who interact with the context, the reader may better develop their own interpretations of the data I present or comprehend more fully my assertions. Chapters five and six represent the cross-case analysis of the data. In chapter five I portray the social groups that comprise Cardinal Middle School, the sixth grade, and the Concert Band class. I describe the primary participants' experiences in this new social context of the middle school and middle school band in their own words, comparing and contrasting their perspectives. In chapter six, I move from descriptions and analyses of large social groups to individual roles and interpersonal relationships, such as teachers and students, section leaders

and classmates, and performers and audience members. Finally, I summarize my

findings and provide implications for curriculum policy and pedagogical practice in

chapter seven.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction: Why Examine Identity?

> Whoever engages in a musical performance, of whatever kind, is
> saying to themselves and to anyone who may be taking notice, This is
> who we are, and that is a serious affirmation indeed. (Small, 1998, p.
> 212)

. Olsson (2007) notes that a recent research "trend in approaching social issues

has been through the concept of identity, with personal and social identity as common

distinctions" (p. 995). In this study, I approach identity as a social construct,

specifically examining sixth grade students' identities as individuals and as members

of social groups. As middle school students' identities emerge and evolve within their

environments, or social contexts, they begin to describe their unique roles and

personality characteristics. They also identify with groups of students, such as band

members.

In this chapter, I review literature that directly informs my understanding of

socially constructed identity and secondary school music. This study encompassed

the social contexts of the classroom and school, as well as the individual students

within such contexts. Therefore, I begin by defining and differentiating two primary

theories of identity: social identity theory (SIT) and identity theory (IT). Both theories

provide a basis for examining identity within a social context. I then review literature

regarding the social contexts in which middle school music students exist: the middle

school and the secondary music classroom. Following this section, I provide an

overview of, and review of literature within, SIT. Next, I provide a detailed account

of IT and a review of literature as they inform understandings of role identities in

classrooms. Finally, I provide a case for an integrated theory of identity as I explore this phenomenon within the middle school band classroom.

An Overview of Identity Theory and Social Identity Theory

The social construct of identity is related to perceptions of peers, family, and other individuals encountered in various social contexts. Social identity theory (SIT) and identity theory (IT) serve as two conceptual frameworks on which researchers examine identity as a social construct. The individual's view of self also relates to the social role that the individual assumes within group contexts. According to Hogg, Terry, and White (1995), both SIT and IT:

> address the social nature of self as constituted by society, and eschew
> perspectives that treat self as independent of and prior to society. Both regard
> the self as differentiated into multiple identities that reside in circumscribed
> practices (e.g., norms, roles), and they use similar words and a similar
> language- but often with quite different meanings. (p. 255)

Both theories examine identity, defined as the "socially constructed self" (Hogg, Terry, & White, 1995, p. 262). However, researchers who align with SIT focus on intergroup processes termed social identities while those affiliated with IT examine interpersonal relationships, or role identities. Stets and Burke (2000) further differentiate a social identity (SIT) from a role identity (IT):

> Having a particular social identity means being at one with a certain group,
> being like others in the group, and seeing things from the group's perspective.
> In contrast, having a particular role identity means acting to fulfill the
> expectations of the role, coordinating and negotiating interaction with role

partners, and manipulating the environment to control the resources for which

the role has responsibility. Herein lies an important distinction between

group- and role-based identities: the basis of social identity is in the

uniformity of perception and action among group members, while the basis of

role identity resides in the differences in perceptions and actions that

accompany a role as it relates to counterroles. (Stets & Burke, 2000, p.226)

For the purposes of this study, a social identity may be described as the ways

in which individual students see themselves in a range of contexts: as part of their

instrument section, the larger ensemble (band), or as a member of their middle school

community. A role identity may be the individual interpretation of what it means to

be a flutist, or an instrument section leader, for example. Role identities may also

serve to delineate the interpersonal communications between classmates or between

the teacher and students. Role identities inform our understanding of the relationships

between individuals (such as the teacher and student) that may not be easily defined

as part of a larger group process.

The Social Context of Schooling

The band classroom is but one of the social contexts in which students live,

rich with social interactions and musical learning. Unlike other classroom settings,

the band often meets in a private, secluded space within the school building, as well

as in public performance spaces. Musical performances are social activities in which

both the performer and the listeners take part (Small, 1998). The social aspects of

performance are present in school music, such as graduation processionals, basketball

pep bands, marching bands that perform outdoors, and the performances by music students for their peers during school concerts.

Small (1998) claims that the portrayal of self occurs in part through such musical performances, noting performance spaces (such as school music programs) as social contexts. Froehlich (2007), like Small, describes school concerts as "public displays of musical learning" (p. 104) that are essential to the school music curriculum. She notes that the school music concert should typify the school music program as a portrayal of the aesthetic, social, musical and nonmusical values that define the program. As an elective in most U.S. secondary schools, the music ensemble class serves as a social context in which students may choose to identify themselves through such public portrayal of social values.

Middle School as a Social Context

As the following research findings indicate, multiple social groups exist within one school community. The school itself may form a large social group, but individual members of various subgroups within that larger community may evaluate, and therefore conceptualize, themselves in various ways. By doing so, they might form different comparisons of such social groups. One study of the social context of middle school particularly informs this inquiry both because of the middle school context as well as findings specific to instrumental music education.

Schlanger (1998) investigated middle school students' sense of belongingness to the school through a mixed-methods analysis of related psychosocial variables. Three primary foci guided this study: (a) students' perceptions of belongingness in relation to ethnicity, (b) students' general feelings toward school, and (c) feelings

23

regarding participation in school activities. Using observations, surveys, and focus groups, Schlanger used multiple sources of data to triangulate evidence across six independent variables: (a) gender, (b) academic grades, (c) attendance record, (d) elementary school attended, (e) length of residency in the school district, and (f) grade level. Schlanger (1998) found that orchestra was the only activity in the school under examination where the level of satisfaction was significantly related to belongingness, though a significant relationship existed between level of participation in band and school belongingness.

The Secondary Music Ensemble as a Social Context

Three studies address the social context of the middle or high school classroom music ensemble. All three directly inform this study as they highlight the connections between social interactions and musical learning. Berg (1997) examined the influence of social interaction on musical learning in the context of the high school chamber ensemble. Drawing on ethnographic research methods, Berg observed student rehearsals and coaching sessions in two chamber music ensembles located in two different high schools over a five-month period. The author made video and audio recordings of the observed rehearsals and transcribed all dialogue. Additionally, Berg formally and informally interviewed the ensemble coaches and students, and kept field notes for all observations.

Berg (1997) identified four patterns of social interaction and learning. The first pattern, musical topics learned during rehearsal, and the second pattern, amount and nature of the music rehearsed, dealt primarily with the content knowledge of the high school music curriculum. The final two identified patterns, types and frequencies

of verbal and non-verbal interaction and student rehearsal activity sequence, revolved around the social interactions supporting the learning process. Berg asserted that students' social interactions, including student-initiated learning strategies and prompts, assisted musical learning. In addition, Berg found that students in both ensembles asked peers for clarification, elaboration, and problem-solving, causing developmentally higher levels of learning over time. Collaborative learning in the ensemble setting, according to Berg, is complex and may both impede and facilitate content learning.

Similarly, Adderley, Kennedy, and Berz (2003) found that the social context of the music classroom influenced students' learning. The researchers conducted structured interviews with 60 students. Twenty of the involved participants were enrolled in choral music. Twenty participants were enrolled in band, and the remaining twenty were enrolled in orchestra. Accessibility determined participant choice. Sixteen sophomores, nineteen juniors, and twenty-five seniors participated in the one-on-one interviews. The researchers interviewed students with whom they had no prior association. Analysis included systematically grouping interview transcripts by musical ensemble and then by gender. In the second stage of analysis, the researchers grouped questions by issue. The social climate of the music classroom emerged as a pervasive element, specifically the beneficial importance of relationships in this context, which supported prior assertions by Berg.

Many student responses referred to positive feedback received in music classes. Students noted such feedback as beneficial to their sense of self and belonging. Participants also indicated that peer relationships were easier to foster and

more meaningful in music classes than in other content areas. Participants often mentioned collaborative work environments and group participation as benefits in musical ensemble participation. The researchers noted that the participants specifically mentioned the teacher's role as a social benefit, but no further explanation was provided. The students may have felt the social benefit of the teacher's influence on the classroom that provided the space for peer relationship development. Teachers often model content-specific feedback, so the music teacher may have prompted the positive peer feedback received in music classes that the participants mentioned.

Adderley, Kennedy, and Berz (2003) examined the "world" of the high school music ensemble. The social climate emerged from participants' responses as a prominent aspect of student perceptions of the high school music ensemble. Observations of the classroom in addition to the interviews may have provided richer understandings for the purposes of this study.

Dobbs (2005) examination of discourse in a middle school band classroom provides a rich, contextualized examination of the middle school ensemble as a social context. She explored how teacher and student talk in the classroom influenced music teaching and learning. She also examined how the participants involved in this study formed a social group. Drawing on ethnographic methodological tools, Dobbs employed discourse analysis and participant observation to explore discourse in the middle school band classroom. She made video and audio recordings of both a large ensemble class as well as a small group class. The researcher transcribed all talk and wrote field notes based on every video recording. She also employed a performative

discourse analysis based on Austin's speech act theory of 1962 in order to analyze all data.

Dobbs (2005) noted five categories of discourse: (a) teacher talk and action, (b) student talk and action, (c) talk and action related to music, (d) talk and action related to social group formation, and (e) talk and action related to announcements and school business. Dobbs found differences between discourse patterns in large and small classroom contexts. In the large classroom setting, the teacher dominated and determined the pattern of discourse. Student discourse in this setting was primarily responsive to teacher directives or questions. Dobbs found "clear boundaries between types of student talk within the rehearsals and student talk outside of the rehearsals" (p. 432). Conversely, student discourse in the small classroom setting was less structured. Students spoke more informally, asking questions, telling stories, and commenting on the learning process. Dobbs also noted instances during which students assumed leadership roles in this smaller setting.

The three research studies I presented in this section focused on the interactions between musical learning and the social context. Adderly, Kennedy, and Berz (2003), Berg (1997), and Dobbs (2005) all maintain that the social context of the instrumental music classroom influences and facilitates musical learning. In fact, all three studies include data illustrating positive learning experiences in which students specifically reference teacher feedback or peer interactions. The personal relationships developed and maintained in instrumental music classrooms appear to have a major role in music teaching and learning. These personal relationships also

appear to foster perceptions regarding social groups and students' desire to be included in such groups.

Social Identity Theory

A great deal of recent scholarship on musical identity has been based in the broad field of social psychology, premised primarily on SIT (coined by Tajfel & Turner, 1979). In this section, I provide a detailed look at SIT, specifically focusing on the ways in which researchers designed studies using this theoretical framework. I review research studies that focused on adolescent identity and social groups, as well as studies conducted by those interested in the role of music within identity construction. SIT provides an extension of preceding identity research, informing the research questions posed in this study.

Ingroups, Outgroups, and Musical Preferences

Researchers interested in SIT examine the roles of ingroups and outgroups. Ingroups are a person's circle of friends or peer groups with whom they regularly associate. Outgroups are made up of people outside of the peer or social group. Research studies based on SIT are premised on the finding that "when faced with evaluative situations, people have a tendency to favor members of their own social groups (or 'ingroups') at the expense of non-members (members of 'outgroups')" (Bakagiannis & Tarrant, 2006). Tarrant et al. (2006) explain:

> According to social identity theory, the heightened salience of one's social group memberships which occurs following social categorization encourages individuals to evaluate themselves in terms of those memberships.

Importantly, it is assumed that group members seek to evaluate their groups

positively; that is, they strive for positive social identity (Tarrant et al., 2006,

p. 628)

Social psychology research in the field of music supports this theory.

Researchers have found that adolescents associate members of their ingroup with

music they like, or value, more than they associate members of the outgroup with the

same genres of music (Bakagiannis & Tarrant, 2006; Tarrant, North, & Hargreaves,

2004). Lamont et al. (2003) found that adolescents more favorably judge ingroup

members than outgroup members based on perceived musical skill levels. This is to

say that adolescents evaluate themselves and their peers based on their peers' musical

preferences and abilities within social groups.

If adolescent identity may be influenced (even partially) by group musical

tastes, then SIT may inform our understandings of middle school students' elective

course choices. Tarrant et al. (2001) referred to the influence of musical participation

and listening on identity, stating, "it is possible that adolescents will use the

evaluative connotations associated with such activities as a means of distinguishing

between groups in order to maintain a positive social identity" (p. 599). North and

Hargreaves (1999) found that early adolescents who listen to classical music, for

example, are viewed as well-educated, upper class status, pro-establishment, and less

interested in having fun than those who listen to other styles such as metal and pop. If

students perceive their peers who listen to classical music to be more intellectual, and

they perceive this trait positively, then the choice to enroll in orchestra may be based

on both the music literature studied, and the perceived non-music-related characteristics of that social context.

SIT informs our understandings of the social meanings adolescents ascribe to music . Froehlich (2007) notes that performance-based school music programs are often structured by ability levels. As students advance (in technical and/ or musical proficiency), they elect to enroll in more advanced ensembles in which the social values of trained musicians are transmitted. However, students may bring their own set of values and meanings to the music courses, as North and Hargreaves (1999) found. Froehlich claims, "the musical and pedagogical challenges for the music teacher are actually caused by the varied meanings students attach to music as a social form of expression" (p. 111).

The instrumental music classroom has numerous unique characteristics that may be associated with SIT. Hogg, Terry, and White (1995) identify a number of important characteristics of social identity theory and the sub-category of self-categorization theory, noting that:

> 1) they are general theories of the social group, not constrained by group size, dispersion, and so forth; 2) they incorporate the role of both the immediate and the more enduring intergroup context in group behavior; 3) they account for the range of group behaviors (e.g., conformity, stereotyping, discrimination, ethnocentrism) in terms of a limited number of theoretically integrated generative principles; 4) they are basically sociocognitive; and 5) they do not construct group processes from interpersonal processes. (p. 262)

Due to the nature of the middle school band curriculum and the presence of social groupings within it, these characteristics of SIT inform the design of this study.

Unlike most curricular content areas, band is co-curricular. The course is comprised of both class meetings during the regular school day, as well as after-school performances, rehearsals, and community functions. The band curriculum is also unique in that students typically must choose to enroll. All middle school students must enroll in physical education, English, science, and mathematics courses, regardless of individual preferences. In instrumental music classes, students often choose the instrument they play in addition to their choice of ensemble. Thus, each ensemble is not simply one social group, but a grouping of smaller subgroups, or instrument sections. Each section fulfills a unique purpose due to its instrument's timbre and range. Within sections, students perform different parts, serving various content-specific purposes and, therefore, levels of melodic, rhythmic, and harmonic importance.

As I examined the ways in which students interpreted these purposes and levels of perceived (and real) importance, I drew upon this conceptual framework, in part, from the perspective of SIT. In the following section, I provide an overview of prior research grounded within SIT that examines how and why adolescents base self-perceptions and social group evaluations on perceived characteristics of musical preferences. These studies informed my observations and questions regarding group dynamics and intergroup relationships in the middle school music department.

Social Identity Theory and Adolescent Self-Concept

Researchers have been increasingly interested in the ways adolescent social groups influence self-concept, including self-esteem (Tarrant, 2001; Tarrant et al., 2006). According to social identity theorists, when individuals identify with particular groups, they tend to favor those groups. Accordingly, adolescents may choose to participate in groups they perceive to be more popular in school or whose activities they believe will lead to long-term social or academic benefits. Mark Tarrant, a British researcher in adolescent social psychology, has conducted numerous studies to examine SIT. Tarrant's research is unique in the field due to his specific interest in the role of music in adolescent identity. In this section, I provide an overview of three research studies that most directly inform this study. In the subsequent section, I review seven studies on the more specific topic of musical preference and social identity.

Tarrant et al. (2001) studied the connection between social categorization and adolescent intergroup behavior. Using a questionnaire, 149 male participants (ages 14 and 15) compared their ingroup to a specified outgroup. Tarrant focused on male adolescents due to prior researchers' assertions that females base their behaviors on relationships with close friends, rather than a large group. This study was purposefully exploratory in nature, as the study of adolescent behavior had not been previously examined from the perspective of SIT. Tarrant provided the participants with a questionnaire. On the first half of the questionnaire, participants rated behaviors or activities that described their social group (the ingroup) or another peer group (the outgroup). The participants then rated the desirability of each activity and

whether they thought their peer group (ingroup) would agree with their rating. The final section assessed participants' self-esteem.

Tarrant's findings support SIT premises. The participants developed a positive sense of self, or self-concept, through comparison with other social groups whose activities they perceived as less desirable. The participants in Tarrant's study "indicated that their own group was 'better off' than the outgroup; they reported that the ingroup was more fun, wore more fashionable clothes, and enjoyed comedy programmes and so on more than the outgroup" (Tarrant, 2001, p. 605). While describing participants' perceptions of the outgroup, Tarrant noted musical preferences. In addition to other categories, "the outgroup was assumed to enjoy listening to country and western music more than the ingroup, to enjoy listening to classical music more than the ingroup, and to be more 'boring' than the ingroup" (p. 605). These findings suggest that adolescents associate different musical genres with positive and negative personal characteristics. Thus, adolescents use the musical preferences of their peers to make value judgments about other aspects of their peers' personalities.

Following the aforementioned study, Tarrant (2002) investigated adolescent perceptions of peer groups and themselves. He administered an open-ended questionnaire to 115 adolescents (ages 14 and 15) from one suburban school in the UK. The adolescents responded to questions about their groups of friends and social activities with regard to peer group size, meeting places and frequency, as well as gender. Based on prior studies regarding adolescent leisure time, Tarrant constructed a list of social activities. Participants selected items from this list in order to represent

their own peer social group. Additional space was included for participants to list activities not mentioned. The next section of the questionnaire examined the degree to which participants identified with their peer groups. In the third section of the questionnaire, participants rated characteristics of a particular outgroup with similar demographics to their ingroups. The final section of the questionnaire tested participants' use of adjectives in the prior section by asking participants to rate how they perceived each characteristic in terms of desirability.

Tarrant found no gender differences within his sample, but did find that all adolescents tended to compare peer groups in ways that favored their ingroups. The more strongly adolescents identified with their peer group (the ingroup), the more positively they evaluated their peers. Similar to his earlier study, Tarrant's findings support the basic premise of SIT: individuals favor members of their social group while simultaneously devaluing members of outgroups.

Tarrant et al. (2006) examined the connection between adolescents' perceptions of themselves as members of peer groups in relation to their broader self-concepts. The researchers specifically asked if group identity processes might be linked to individual psychological advantages. The researchers investigated how group identity perceptions influenced broader self-perceptions and if social identification with groups during adolescence might predict various dimensions of self-concept, including self-esteem. The researchers administered a survey to 108 participants (ages 14 and 15) from four year-9 classes from one school in the UK. The survey was used to rate the students' sense of belonging within a social group. A second survey was then administered which asked the participants' levels of

importance and comfort with personal (e.g. physical changes), relational (friendship with others), and socio-institutional (graduating school) items. A third questionnaire assessed participants' self-esteem through questions regarding academic self-concept and non-academic self-concept (such as appearance and parental relations).

Using a 2x2x2 MANOVA, the researchers found that adolescents who strongly identified with a group of friends reported that personal and relational items were more important than those labeled *low identifiers (*adolescents who did not strongly identify with a particular social group). The same adolescents found relational tasks to be less challenging than their peers who did not identify as strongly with a group of friends. Those who strongly identified with a social group also tended to place more importance on the task of completing school. One of the most interesting findings from this study is the relationship between social identity and broader adolescent self-concept. Adolescents who reported stronger identification with a social group than their peers also reported higher levels of self-esteem than their peers.

Tarrant's findings indicate connections between group identity, musical preference, and broader adolescent self-concept. Adolescents use musical preference, among other characteristics, to differentiate between themselves and their peer social groups. A group of adolescents may describe themselves as fans of a particular artist or genre, distinguishing themselves from other groups who are not fans of that genre. As SIT research studies (and Tarrant's findings) indicate, adolescents favorably evaluate their own peer groups and express this preference by comparing their own groups with other groups. For example, marching band members may positively

evaluate other marching band members while negatively judging students enrolled in chorus. In other words, adolescents use comparisons to positively evaluate themselves at the same time as they devalue others.

As Tarrant's findings suggested, music plays an important role in the ways individuals identify with social groups. Within the fields of social psychology and music education, numerous researchers have studied the unique ways in which adolescents use music to portray their self-images to others as well as identify with certain peers. In the following section, I review these research studies. The findings inform this study in light of the unique processes of identity construction that occur in a music classroom.

Social Identity Theory, Adolescence, and Musical Preference

North and Hargreaves (1999) found that adolescents use music as an identifying badge (or outward symbol of identity). This badge allows them to associate with peers and also to link themselves to certain behaviors and public perceptions. In other words, adolescents listen to music and wear clothes that reflect particular musical groups and genres as a way of portraying their identities to those around them. While adolescence is often described as a critical time for social, physical, and emotional development, music educators often also view adolescence as a critical time for the development of musical preferences. Musical preferences may influence middle school students' choice to enroll in school music due to the perceived status of students associated with various ensembles. Through quantitative analyses, researchers demonstrated a clear correlation between perceptions of social class and musical taste. These studies indicate that musical preference influences

others' perceptions of a young adolescent's characteristics. Additionally, musical preference effects others' broader evaluations of that individual's positive and negative traits, including intellectual ability.

North and Hargreaves (1999) examined connections between music and young adolescent self-esteem. They found that young adolescents whose self-concepts were associated with fans of their preferred musical genres had high levels of self-esteem. Consequently, young adolescents may choose to identify with specific musical cultures to increase their self-esteem. North and Hargreaves also found that young adolescents perceive fans of more prestigious styles (according to peers) to be more popular.

North, Hargreaves, and O'Neill (2000) examined why adolescents listen to and perform music as a means to understand how, why, and to what degree they find music to be important in their lives. Their sample included 2465 participants (ages 13 and 14) nearly evenly divided in terms of gender. The 2465 participants were enrolled in year 9 at one of 22 schools located in the same region of the UK. The researchers administered a questionnaire to participants in order to examine their degree of involvement with various musical activities, the relative importance of music to other activities in their lives (via a rating scale), and the importance of several factors related to why adolescents listen to or perform pop or classical music.

The researchers found that more than half of the participants either played an instrument at the time of the study or at an early stage in their lives, though participation in vocal performance was not included in the survey. The participants reported listening to music for 2.45 hours per day, on average. The researchers found

that adolescents preferred listening to music above other indoor activities, but not above outdoor activities. Similar patterns emerged in student responses regarding underlying reasons for choosing to listen to and perform pop music instead of classical music. Adolescents reported that they listened to and performed pop music for enjoyment, to be creative, to relieve boredom, as encouragement, for popularity, for mood regulation, to portray a desired image, to please friends, and to feel less lonely. In contrast, adolescents reported listening to and performing classical music to please parents and teachers.

The social functions of music (performing to please others, elevating moods, and evaluating peers) during adolescence inform our understandings of how and why young people choose to enroll in music classes and participate in music ensembles. As previously stated, North and Hargreaves (1999) found that music functions as an identifying badge, or method of portraying self-image, to peers and adults. Put another way, "if adolescents listen to so much music, it is not unreasonable to suspect that an expressed preference for a particular style may carry an implicit message to other adolescents regarding a range of attitudes and values" (North, Hargreaves, and O'Neill, 2000, p. 258). The portrayal of a desired or emerging self through music may also inform our understandings of adolescent behavior.

> For example, this 'badge' function of music may explain why… adolescents
> who listen to certain 'rebellious' forms of pop music such as heavy metal or
> rap may also be more likely to engage in delinquent behaviours than those
> who do not listen to such styles. (North, Hargreaves, and O'Neill, 2000, p.
> 258)

While connections between adolescent rebelliousness and preferred musical genres is less relevant to this study, it is important to note that the social functions of musical preference may help to inform our understandings of students' decisions to enroll in school music performance courses. More specifically, the social functions of musical preference might inform our understandings of student ensemble participation.

Monks (2003) built on previously existing research in order to explore the connections between adolescent social identity, self-image, and vocal music performance through qualitative research methodologies. Three components comprised Monks' study of adolescent singers. The first component was a longitudinal study of 30 adolescent singers who participated in their independent school's choir program and private lessons. Monks recorded ten minutes of each singer's private lesson every other month over a year (May to May). The second component of this study was a collection of 15 case studies of students ranging in age from 11 to 17. The students in this subset assessed their own performance progress (under the headings of range, evenness, tone color, breathiness, strength, and confidence) over one year. The last component of this study was a performance scenario where 15 adolescent singers performed in an informal concert during the school day and then provided a self-assessment of their performance after viewing a video recording of the concert. Data also included questionnaire responses from post-adolescent singing students from another teacher, interviews with two prior choral students, and a research journal.

Asserting that the voice (as the medium by which we communicate with one another) is linked to social identity and self-image, Monks (2003) stated "it is not

uncommon for young singers to alter their vocal colour depending on the style of music, just as they are able to modify their speaking voices to the social group they happen to be with" (Monks, 2003, p. 255). She found that the musical context influenced their performance as a means of communication and made clear the connections between the social aspects of the musical context and the ways in which adolescent singers modified their performance. Monks also delineated between adolescent perceptions regarding their role as performers (entertaining the audience) and their sense of self as student musicians. While students were sometimes aware of the audience, they more often noted their own abilities to communicate through vocal performance.

Monks (2003) provided insights regarding choral students' self-concepts in light of their musical performances. She highlighted the perceptions students hold about social expectations and evaluations, including the ways in which adolescent singers modify performance based on those around them. Her findings support North and Hargreaves' (1999) assertion that music functions as a 'badge of identity.' If adolescents modify the ways in which they communicate through musical performance, they modify the ways in which they portray themselves to their peers or adults. The qualitative methodology used in this study allowed for examination of social identity and music in the social context of the school, providing richer and deeper study of individual students than quantitative research.

Tarrant, North, and Hargreaves (2004) examined the function of adolescent peer group identity versus national identity. They compared two adolescent social groups (90 participants ages 14 and 15) who were all enrolled in the same secondary

school in the UK. One group of participants rated adolescents from England (the ingroup) as well as those from France or Germany (the outgroups). The other group of participants rated members of their social group (the ingroup) and a specific outgroup of which they were not a part. Each group of adolescents completed questionnaires asking them to evaluate both their ingroups and outgroups, as well as formulate reasons for various positive and negative group behaviors (such as listening to different musical genres).

The team of researchers found that adolescents in both groups formed positive social identities within their perceived ingroups. The outgroup was more often associated with music negatively valued by the adolescents than the ingroup. Interestingly, national identity invoked lower perceptions of belongingness, or group identity, than membership in a peer group. With regard to music preference, the participants in the national identity group more favorably evaluated the outgroup's musical behaviors than did the peer identity group. These findings indicate that the more strongly adolescents identify with a social group, the increasingly negative their evaluations of other adolescents' musical preferences.

Bakagiannis and Tarrant (2006) noted prior research questions regarding ingroups and outgroups and expanded the research in the social psychology of music. They examined the inverse of prior studies, asking whether shared musical taste reduces discrimination between groups. The researchers studied whether information about shared musical tastes might lead to increased perceptions of similarity between groups of adolescents. Bakagiannis and Tarrant also tested how group members perceived how those outside the group might perceive them. They tested 97 students,

ages 14 and 15, during their high school classes. Using a 3 x 2 factorial design, the researchers analyzed the interactions between ingroup identity (common identity vs. uncommon identity vs. a control group) and ingroup interactions (expected vs. non-interaction). The researchers told participants about the similarities or dissimilarities of an outgroup's musical preferences. The participants then evaluated the ingroup and outgroup based on various characteristics and reported their perceptions regarding how their ingroup might be perceived by the outgroup. When participants believed the two groups to have similar musical preferences, they rated the outgroup more positively. The researchers' findings confirmed their hypothesis that perceived similarities in musical preference between groups might lead to less differentiation between groups. Bakagiannis and Tarrant (2006) stated:

> In the same way that music can be strategically used by adolescents to differentiate between groups in an intergroup context (e.g., Tarrant et al., 2004, 2001), the results of the current study indicate that music can also be used to promote improvements in intergroup relations. (p. 133)

This finding directly informs my questions regarding social group and peer network formation in a band situated within a diverse public middle school.

Two recent studies address the differences between young adolescents' musical preferences at home and at school. Boal-Palheiros and Hargreaves (2001) found that students in both Portugal and the UK listened to music in their free time. Lamont et al. (2003) also found that music listening and music making occurred both in and outside of school. Using a questionnaire with both closed and open-ended questions, Lamont et al. surveyed 1,479 students between the ages of 8 and 14 from a

stratified sample of 12 primary and 9 secondary schools. The sample was representative of the national (British) school population. Following the questionnaire, the researchers chose 134 students to participate in focus groups to glean more in-depth data collection.

One particularly interesting finding was that students placed emphasis on the social benefits of music courses and active music making. "Aspiring pupils emphasized teamwork and the social benefits of group work in class musical activities, in particular in relation to composing, and viewed the active aspects of music-making positively" (Lamont et al., 2003, p. 235). The researchers highlighted instrumental performance as a method of "music-making" that even students with less of an interest in music class (as well as students with greater interest in composition and performance) wanted to learn. Due to the nature of the study (primarily a survey), no interpretations of individual student experiences were reported, thus the social aspect of the music curriculum was left relatively unexplored. However, Boal-Palheiros and Hargreaves (2001) also noted a link between adolescents' social interactions and music. While Lamont et al. (2003) focused their research study on school music, Boal-Palheiros and Hargreaves found that music enjoyed by students outside of school served different purposes than music enjoyed in school. Outside of school, students reported connections between music and their emotions, as well as their social relationships, whereas school music was linked with specific curriculum.

The majority of research studies on adolescence and SIT were conducted using survey designs. Some questionnaires allowed for open-ended responses, but the findings of these studies do little to inform how students construct and modify

identities as they first make choices regarding their social groups and social status. The process by which adolescents come to know themselves as members of social groups remains unexamined through qualitative methodologies. There also exists a lack of students' perceptions reported in their own words. Though Tarrant purposefully designed some parts of his questionnaires to allow for participant-generated ideas and categories, input from these adolescents had to be reduced to listing categories for the purposes of his research. Reporting participants' perceptions and thought processes in detail may help to expand understandings of social identity.

Monks' (2003) study provides the first approach to understanding social identity processes through qualitative designs, but does not fully explore the ways in which students use music performance, preference, or ensemble participation to identify with others. As the tasks embedded in the study design required students to focus on their vocal performance, much of the data collected on self-perception related to technical performance skills. More qualitative designs are necessary to build on the existing literature and inform our understandings of the music classroom as a social context.

In the following section, I review research studies that focused on identity through interpersonal relationships and social roles. I provide a detailed overview of the theoretical framework known as identity theory used in these studies and review the most relevant research on this topic.

Identity Theory

As previously stated, identity theory (IT) focuses on social roles, or role identities. Role identities link social structures to individual actions, providing a basis for predicting social behavior. IT does not wholly encompass evaluative effects of others based on self-concept or social roles. While social identity theorists focus on the social relationships between various identities, identity theorists seek to understand roles, as opposed to the social context, to explain identity construction. Social identity theorists focus on the process by which the individual categorizes him or herself in relation to other social groups. This process is referred to as *self-categorization.* In identity theory, this process of self-identification is simply referred to as *identification* (Stets and Burke, 2000).

Hogg, Terry, and White (1995) assert, "role identities are self-concepts, self-referent cognitions, or self-definitions that people apply to themselves as a consequence of the structural role positions they occupy, and through a process of labeling or self-definition as a member of a particular social category" (Hogg, Terry, & White, p. 256). Common stereotypes of middle and high school students are based on school roles, such as the flaky cheerleader, dorky marching band member, or preppy class president. While each of these roles exists within a social or group context, the process of self-definition is the focus of IT. Silvey (2004) refers to the various roles played out by secondary students as *multiple selves*. When referring to the various roles (tennis player, chorus member, etc.) held by a student, Silvey asserts, "those who knew more of these dimensions knew or understood [the student] on a deeper level" (Silvey, 2004, p. 121). IT, as a basis for examining these multiple

roles, helps to frame an examination of the emerging identities students may form as they navigate the middle school and the band classroom.

"Role identities provide meaning for self, not only because they refer to concrete role specifications, but also because they distinguish roles from relevant complementary or counterroles" (Hogg, Terry, & White, 1995, p. 256). In other words, IT studies examine boundaries between individual interactions. "In their facilitating function, boundaries encourage interaction within the setting and thus foster the development and exercise of identities consistent with the structure. At the same time, the existence of boundaries discourages and impedes interaction outside the prescribed territory" (Deaux & Martin, 2003, p. 103).

Deaux and Martin (2003) also acknowledge that the concept of identity salience within IT is contextualized. The concept of identity salience "depends on a shared meaning system in which role expectations are defined by society and internalized by the individual" (p. 103). In the middle school band setting, various roles exist, such as section leader or soloist, which may carry peer and teacher expectations. According to Deaux and Martin's theory, individual students may internalize these expectations and therefore fulfill the responsibilities of their classroom roles. Wortham's (2006) study examines how classroom discourse contributes to adolescent identity formation through a contextualized set of meanings that emerge through interpersonal relationships.

The Interdependency of Content Knowledge and Self-Knowledge

Wortham (2006) explored the relationship between content knowledge and adolescent self-knowledge. Though Wortham's research lies outside of music

education, the non-curricular classroom processes that were revealed through his research can inform our understandings of classroom discourse, curricular understandings, and adolescent identity development. Wortham uses the terms "non-curricular" or "non-academic processes" to refer to social identification that occurs within formal school environments. Though Wortham's theoretical framework encompassed theories of discourse and relied on prior research in discourse analysis, his findings seem to support identity theory. As discourse analysis aims to do, Wortham examined the ways in which students and teachers interacted and the identity roles that emerged through this process. Therefore, his study of adolescent identity was based on the interpersonal network that existed within one classroom.

Wortham (2006) asserts that cognitive processes and non-academic processes could become co-dependent, linked phenomena. According to Wortham, "people learn as part of the same activities through which they act in the world, while performing social actions like identification" (p. 14). He expounded on this by recommending that knowledge should not be decontextualized, but understood in relation to activity and place. Specifically addressing social identification, Wortham stated that both "the development of cognitive representations and the exertion of power" comprise social classification (p. 16).

Wortham (2006) explored the relationship between academic learning and social identification through a case study of one ninth grade language arts and history classroom. As a non-participant, the author observed the classroom during more than 50 class meetings over the course of a school year. The class was team-taught by two experienced teachers. Located in a low income, urban area of Philadelphia, the school

context was of great import to this study. All classes were taught using the Paideia model, making connections between individual students' lives and curricular content more apparent than in other types of learning environments. While all students and teachers in the class participated in the study, two students became primary participants as the researcher observed a process of social identification of these two students by their peers and teachers. Specifically, their peers and teachers labeled these two students as outcasts.

Wortham used a process of inferring from and to relevant context, known as "contextualization" or "mediation" (p. 32) to interpret social identification through "signs of identity." First, he did not analyze signs of identity outside of their context. Instead he examined metapragmatic models of identity, such as the identification of black adolescent males as more resistant to schooling than other students that came to portray a particular identity in a particular context. Second, he used discourse analyses to look for patterns of signs over time. According to Wortham (2006), "a convincing analysis will trace the contextualization of a sign over time, showing how patterns of signs collectively come to indicate a particular identity for the focal individual" (p. 35).

The second methodological principle Wortham (2006) used was "entextualization," or "emergence" (pp. 35-36). This refers to the emergence of a specific organization of interactions across an event or events, making metapragmatic models more appropriate for the identification of individuals. The third principle that Wortham applied to his analysis was the study of life trajectories as they intersected with classroom events. According to Wortham (2006), "social identification happens

across a trajectory of events as signs of identity and metapragmatic models are consistently applied to and inhabited by an individual" (Wortham, 2006, p. 49).

Wortham (2006) found that individual students were socially identified by peers across trajectories due to the consistent application of metapragmatic models of identity. He elaborated on this, stating that participants made sociohistorical and local models of identity fit individual students within classroom, or contextual, events. The relationship was made clearer as the researcher defined learning to be "a process that only occurs across events," rather than something contained in a single event (p. 101). He found that social identification and academic learning facilitated each other due to the overlap between cognitive and metapragmatic models. Put another way, specific curricular themes become models of social identification while categories of such identification simultaneously become resources for understanding curricular content.

Wortham (2006) made clear connections between the role of the teacher and the classroom context. Throughout the narratives included in this study, Wortham portrayed the teacher as the embodiment of the curricular content. The teachers in this particular classroom interpreted the characters and themes. Then they applied these characterizations to students in the classroom. As a central component of the Paideia pedagogy, connections between students' lives and curricular content played a key role in social identification. "Cognition is itself just a type of embodied social action" (Wortham, 2006, p. 283). However, the author made evident that he did not conclude that academic learning serves mainly to cover underlying non-curricular processes. Instead he claimed only that students can draw on academic and non-academic resources to accomplish goals involving both academic learning and social behavior.

49

The connection between curricular content and the music teacher's role can be made clearer when examined through the lens of Wortham's (2006) findings. Wortham pointed out that learning takes place through action. In the case of an instrumental music classroom, students learn through actively playing an instrument in an ensemble. Therefore, students learn to associate specific characteristics with their peers while learning music through performance. Froehlich (2007) describes the school music event (a concert or a class) as a time and place in which "social and musical values interact" (p. 103). The act of performing provides an opportunity for self-identification, as North and Hargreaves (1999) and Tarrant, North and Hargreaves (2001; 2004) state. The teacher, as facilitator of the ensemble and decision-maker with regard to content learned, provides the social climate in which social identities may be constructed.

Gender Roles and Music Education

As I stated in chapter one, much of the existing research in music education was conducted in high school and university settings. While the research contexts differ, the research topics and findings inform the design and scope of this study. Due to the value of these studies, I present the methodologies and findings below. Within each section, I organize the most relevant research studies by age level. I begin each section with a study of the oldest students, moving to the youngest students, or those closest in age and musical developmental level to the middle school band students involved in this study.

Gender and the teacher-student relationship.

Many researchers have examined the role of gender in the construction of a musical identity, as well as the influence of gender identity in music education. Zhukov's (2006) study of instrumental music lessons at the college level provides some insight into the role of gender in music teaching and learning spaces. Zhukov videotaped and reviewed 24 instrumental music lessons at five institutions of higher education in Australia. She chose 12 wind, string, and piano instructors accustomed to teaching in public situations and ensured that each instrument group was comprised of equal numbers of male and female teachers. Each teacher taught a one-hour lesson to one female and one male student on his or her primary instrument. Following each lesson, the students were interviewed to ensure that the lesson was "typical" rather than "staged" for the camera and audience. Based on prior instruments used to analyze music teaching and learning, Zhukov created an analysis instrument that she then refined and modified based on a pilot study. She also tested the instrument for inter-judge and intra-judge reliability. She used this instrument to examine four categories: (a) lesson structure, (b) lesson content, (c) teacher-student relationship, and (d) teaching methodology.

Zhukov (2006) found differences between male and female instrumental music teachers in the categories of lesson content, teaching methodology and student-teacher rapport. She maintains that, "male teachers appear to take a more domineering role in lessons, using a command-style approach, more explanations, yet fewer answers and practice suggestions, and a more rigid attitude" (Zhukov, 2006, p. 30). She also describes male teachers as focused more on analytical elements of music

teaching and learning, as opposed to female teachers who emphasize expression and technique. Zhukov (2006) states that female teachers "seem to be more facilitating towards the students and relaxed in their attitude" (p. 30). Zhukov asserts that these findings support the traditional images of females as more emotional and males as more analytical.

Zhukov (2006) also found differences between male and female students in this study. The male students received more teacher criticism than female students, yet asserted themselves by playing more and asking more questions during their lessons. Female students appeared to relate better to their teachers, but demonstrated greater disappointment in their own performance. According to Zhukov, the male students' use of excuses for poor performance as well as their appearance of self-confidence in their instrumental technique invited additional teacher criticism. Conversely, the female students may have appeared to be more compliant by asking fewer questions than their male counterparts as well as joking with their teachers and agreeing with them more often. Zhukov maintains that male instrumental music students act more assertively than female students, though their female counterparts demonstrate compliance.

This divergent behavior between genders may, according to Zhukov, suggest different musical attainment based on gender. Though this study used a very small sample size, the findings support prior research on this topic and provide another way to further explore issues of student and teacher behavior in the context of instrumental music teaching and learning. In this study, observation and text analysis revealed distinct patterns of communication between female and male instrumental music

students. These differences, while located in the private lesson space, may permeate large instrumental ensemble classrooms as well. This research therefore informs studies of the instrumental music social context and the teacher-student relationships that exist within that context.

Zukhov's (2006) research provides insights regarding relationships between instrumental music students and teachers in the personal context of the private lesson. McKeague's (2004) research contributes to our understanding of contexts as she examined female participation in secondary and post-secondary jazz ensembles, a context primarily associated with male enrollment. Using an Instrumental Jazz Participation study that she designed, McKeague surveyed 628 college band students enrolled in 15 undergraduate programs. Forty-four percent of the participants were men and fifty-six percent were women. Sixty-seven percent of the sample were music majors and forty-three percent of the total number were music education majors. The 27-question survey included three sections. The first 13 questions asked demographic information about the students and their private instrumental music teachers, as well as their prior musical experiences and primary instruments. The second section, comprised of eight questions, asked specifically about experience in jazz ensembles. The final section included six questions about dropping out of jazz ensembles as well as an open-ended response area regarding their reasons for leaving jazz performance.

More than half (52%) of the female students reported that they participated in high school jazz ensembles while 80% of the male students had participated in their high school jazz ensembles. At the college level, just 14% of the female students and 50% of the male students continued enrollment in jazz ensembles. The researcher

found clear discrepancies between gender and participation. Students' reasons for dropping out of jazz ensembles also differed by gender. The female students stated that their choice of instrument, limited participation possibilities, comfort in traditional ensembles, and their career goals (unrelated to jazz performance) led to their desire to drop out.

One variable mentioned here, instrument choice, is of import when exploring instrumental music at the middle school level. While career goals and comfort in various ensemble settings may become clarified for students later in their educational experiences, their choice of instrument occurs at the beginning stages of instrumental music education. Often, these choices are made in the sixth grade. The influence of gender on instrument choice, and therefore ensemble participation (as McKeague found), may play a unique role in music education with regard to identity construction.

Gender roles and instrument choice.

Just as the preceding research studies contribute to our understandings regarding gender and the context of musical teaching and learning, other researchers focused specifically on the role of gender and choices in instrumental music. Abeles and Porter (1978) and Griswold and Chroback (1981) found clear differences in instrument preferences among instrumental music students. Both studies indicated apparent associations between certain instruments and gender. Their research raised the consciousness of music educators and music industry representatives, causing significant changes in marketing strategies and pedagogical practices over the last

three decades. More recently, researchers contributed new findings on gender and instrument choice.

Conway (2000) conducted a phenomenological study to explore high school instrumental music students' perceptions of musical instrument choices. Conway interviewed 37 high school students in order to gain their perspective on instrument choice many years after they began instrumental music education. The participants in this study were enrolled in two schools. The first site was a suburban public high school located in Westchester, New York. Conway interviewed 11 students whose instrument choices did not conform to gender stereotypes as well as seven students whose choices conformed to such stereotypes. The second high school was also a suburban public high school, located in northern New Jersey. Conway interviewed 12 students at this site whose instrument choice did not conform to gender stereotypes, as well as nine students whose instrument choices fell into traditional gender roles.

Based on prior research, Conway (2000) developed an interview guide that she used for all interviews. Though she asked each participant the same pre-determined questions, the interviews also contained several unstructured questions as well. This semi-structured approach allowed for both a clear comparison across cases as well as a conversational interview to understand the uniqueness of each situation. Conway stated that all participants in this study spoke of gender associations with instruments. Though many of the participants chose instruments not typically associated with their gender, many indicated that other individuals questioned their choices because of their gender. Conway also found that students who broke gender barriers in their instrument choices did so in order to be viewed differently from their

peers. These students, as well as those who did not break gender stereotypes, spoke of their parents' influence in choosing an instrument as well as the role of their elementary music teacher.

Conway (2000) also found that the characteristics of individual instruments also influenced decisions regarding instrumental music study. For instance, the size, timbre, and melodic or harmonic role in the ensemble influenced students' decisions to begin playing an instrument. Some students chose instruments such as the trumpet or clarinet in order to play more melodic lines, while others noted the appeal of the trombone slide. Although Conway specifically designed her study to involve older students, other researchers examined students' associations between gender and musical instruments at the age when students first chose to begin instrumental music education.

Delzell and Leppla (1992) examined fourth-grade students' associations between genders and musical instruments. The researchers surveyed 526 fourth-grade students enrolled in 13 elementary schools across six rural, suburban, and urban school districts that offered instrumental music education in the fourth grade. The sample size was nearly evenly distributed, including 254 female students and 272 male students. The researchers first administered a quiz to students in order to determine their ability to correctly identity various instruments. Following the quiz, students reviewed the correct answers so all participants were able to correctly identify the eight commonly played school music instruments included in the study (flute, clarinet, saxophone, trumpet, trombone, drums, violin, and cello). The second part of the study asked participants about their prior musical experiences and

demographic background. In part three, the researchers asked students to identify their first and second instrument choices as well as provide an open-ended explanation for choosing their first choice and last choices. The fourth, and final, section of the survey asked students to indicate which instruments, listed in pairs, a boy or a girl would be more likely to play. Fifty percent of the participants were asked about boys' choices, while the other half were asked about girls' choices. The sheets were distributed evenly across both genders.

Delzell and Leppla (1992) found that while boys favored playing the drums and girls most often chose the flute, these instruments were not the least favorite by either gender. Girls' second choice was the drums, while the flute was ranked as the fourth most popular choice for boys. The participants' perceptions of the opposite gender are also notable. Girls were more accurate in predicting the instrument preferences of their male peers than boys were of their female peers. The authors note that this discrepancy may be due to boys' interest in a limited number of instruments while the girls involved in this study were interested in a larger variety of instruments.

O'Neill and Boulton (1996) also examined instrument choices among students ages nine to 11 years. Unlike McKeague (1992), O'Neill and Boulton conducted individual structured interviews. While their sample size of 153 children was significantly smaller than McKeague's sample, the individual interviews provided richer data than a survey instrument would allow. This study involved 72 female and 81 male students enrolled in three schools located in the northwest part of England. O'Neill and Boulton focused their questions on six instruments (guitar, drums,

trumpet, piano, flute, and violin), asking students both their individual instrument

preferences as well as their perceptions regarding gender associations. The

researchers specifically asked children to talk about instruments they felt should not

be played by either boys or girls.

O'Neill and Boulton (1996) found that girls preferred the piano, flute, and

violin while boys preferred the guitar, drums, and trumpet. The researchers reported

that the strongest variable involved in instrument choice was instrument timbre. The

male participants also cited perceived difficulty level of an instrument as the biggest

impediment to their choice. The authors also found that both boys and girls share

perceptions about which instruments specific genders should not play. Both boys and

girls listed drums most often as the instrument that should not be played by girls and

the flute as the instrument that boys should not play.

While students' perspectives on instrument choice and gender at the time they

begin formal instrumental music education are important, other research involving

older participants may provide greater understandings of the role of gender within

instrumental music education. A primary limitation of the preceding studies is the

participants' limited ability to reflect on these choices. The methodology employed

by Delzell and Leppla (1992) and O'Neill and Boulton (1996) did not include follow-

up conversations or long-term observational data. The methodologies used limited the

potential for on-going conversation and reflection regarding instrument choice. While

Conway's study gave voice to students' experiences, music educators still lack

similar research reports at the beginning stages of instrumental music study.

All of the studies that I reviewed in this section contribute to the body of knowledge in music education by describing differences in instrumental music experiences by gender. While the social context of the instrumental music lesson and the ensemble setting appears to shift depending on the gender based interactions between the individual and such contexts, perceptions regarding social groups and gender roles may play a key role in understanding why these interactions vary. Researchers who explored instrument preferences and gender roles found clear associations between certain instruments (and instrumentalists) and perceptions about femininity and masculinity. The decisions students make regarding their gender role in relation to perceptions regarding boys or girls in classrooms influence their experiences in instrumental music ensembles and interactions with music educators.

Role Identities in the Musical Classroom

Adler (2002) conducted a qualitative study of adolescent boys' experiences in the choral classroom. He asserts that role identities function in students' decision-making process to enroll in chorus. He states that students evaluate their membership in the group "when the individual considers the responses of significant others regarding their having joined the choir. This may lead to a reevaluation of their joining decision" (p. 175). In other words, an individual student evaluates his or her role within the group based on individual interactions or perceived peer perceptions. Adler also asserts that assessments of performances (either individually or with others) "can lead again to a re-evaluation of their decision to join, particularly if feedback from significant others is not positive. This can lead to a reconstruction or addition to the individual's self-concept to include the self-definition of 'singer'"

(Adler, 2002, p. 175). Thus, young adolescent identity construction rests both on group social dynamics (as asserted by SIT researchers) as well as the individual interactions with other group and non-group members.

An Integrated Theoretical Framework

As I outlined earlier in this chapter, social identity theory (SIT) and identity theory (IT) address different levels of social context. SIT research focuses on broad social categories, while IT research examines immediate interpersonal relationships or peer networks (Deaux & Martin, 2003). While IT and SIT exist as separate research traditions to serve differing purposes, there exists a relationship between the individual role and the social group. In different social groups, individuals may assume differing roles. For instance, a newly enrolled band student who has never played an instrument may not be a section leader, but might assume leadership roles in other school contexts. The ways in which adolescents relate depends on the context in which they interact and the role identities they embody within those contexts. Adolescents form groups that serve both to define who they are through identification with peers as well as through identifying who they are unlike.

Role identities clearly comprise aspects of identity development. However, examination of role identities as defined in IT cannot help me to fully answer research questions regarding adolescent identity emergence. Deaux and Martin (2003) put forth the following criticism of IT with regard to the relationship between the individual and society:

Although IT focuses on social structures in which identities are formed, it fails to account for two key features that we believe complete the person-

society dynamic: (1) identity variability, which recognizes that group identities and the social roles associated with those categories fluctuate in meaning and status; and (2) the specification of the psychological process by which people negotiate their membership in these categories and the shared meanings that define them." (Deaux & Martin, 2003, p. 103)

Deaux and Martin (2003) assert that individuals and roles often overlap. For instance, a middle school student's teacher may also be their neighbor and their classmate in band may be their peer tutor for another subject. In this way, the role identity is not simply context-specific, but also malleable, depending on changing needs and various contexts. While both SIT and IT encompass individual identity construction through interactions with others, SIT focuses on the large-scale context influenced by group membership while IT focuses on the interdependent relationships with other individuals. Both theories discuss an "other." SIT situates a description of identity through comparison with other groups (ingroups versus outgroups) while IT compares roles to counterroles.

Due to the relationship between individual role identities and group identity, Stets and Burke (2000) argue for a more integrated definition of the self through the joining of IT and SIT:

The group and role bases of identity correspond to the organic and mechanical forms of societal integration analyzed by Durkheim ([1893] 1984), which formed the basis of much discussion and theory in sociology. People are tied organically to their groups through social identities; they are tied mechanically through their role identities within groups. A full

understanding of society must incorporate both the organic/ group and

mechanical/ role form because each is only one aspect of society that links to

individual identities in separate but related ways. (Stets & Burke, 2000, p.

228)

Deaux and Martin (2003) also support an integrated identity theory, stating:

By examining the interaction between these two forms of social participation,

we hope to offer a comprehensive picture of person-environment dynamics

that is not reductionist in the direction of either individual or society. Rather,

it allows us to look simultaneously at the constraining and the enabling

features of social context, where individuals manage themselves strategically

in relation to others. (p. 108)

The level of social identity that SIT encompasses, or collective identity, has

tremendous potential to support young adolescent identity and self-esteem. Group

membership "creates a context for social identification that provides not only a label

but also a potential network of other persons who share that membership" (Deaux &

Martin, 2003, p. 106). The role identities that are the primary focus of IT might also

serve to support self-esteem and academic learning. IT theories posit, "social

identities are enacted through the interpersonal networks of daily life" (Deaux &

Martin, 2003, p. 106). Self-esteem, self-efficacy, self-consistency, and self-regulation

all contribute to social identity (Stets and Burke, 2000). In light of this overlap,

adolescent identity construction should be examined on both the interpersonal level

that is the primary focus of IT and the intergroup level that is the focus of SIT. Deaux

and Martin make three assertions central to their model of integrated identity theory:

(a) Group membership "will dictate the primary interpersonal networks in which individuals participate" (Deaux & Martin, 2003, p. 109). (b) Desired social status influences social identity, as individuals seek social networks that support desired or achieved identities. (c) Interpersonal networks provide varying levels of support. The more support an individual receives from their social network, the more strongly one might identify with that group.

Deaux and Martin (2003) further describe the differences between the social contexts under examination in SIT and IT research studies:

> In general, the in-group of SIT is potentially a larger subset of people than is the interpersonal network if identity theory. In addition, however, more work is needed in specifying the characteristics of the social network. In the sociological traditions, networks often are assumed rather than assessed. (p. 115)

In this study, the participants are members of the band, identified by SIT as the ingroup. However, the students' perceptions of what it means to be in the band may be partially based on prior knowledge or experience in music ensembles, older middle school or high school bands in the community, as well as interpersonal networks formed in band class. Thus, I suggest an overlap exists between the SIT ingroup and the IT interpersonal network, and that both influence an individual's identity.

Summary and Conclusions

Tarrant et al. (2006) noted "few studies have attempted to demonstrate empirically the importance of social identity processes in developmental contexts, and those which have done so have focused mainly on relationships within large-scale

social categories such as ethnicity" (Tarrant et al., p. 628). Tarrant et al. also state that such studies may help to inform understanding of identity construction that may occur across various social contexts. I believe that this study may expand the existing research literature on young adolescent identity through the examination of individual students' sense of self as members of a specific organization (the band) at the beginning of their middle school careers. Stets and Burke (2000) assert that a practical application of the aforementioned integrated approach to examining social identity:

> We think that a merger of identity theory with social identity theory will yield a stronger social psychology that can attend to macro-, meso-, and micro-level social processes. Such a theory would address agency and reflection, doing and being, behaviors and perceptions as central aspects of the self. It would also provide a stronger integration of the concepts of the group, the role, and the person. (p. 234)

As the choice to be part of the band as a social group is also an academic choice (because the band exists as a daily class), the emergence of students' identities as band members may be linked to the construction of content knowledge. Therefore, my study may help inform middle school educators' and music educators' knowledge of identity within the social and academic context of middle school music education. Understanding socially constructed identity may also inform understandings of how young adolescents see themselves in light of their perceptions of those around them.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Prior research on instrumental music education at the secondary level focused on specific elements of teaching or learning, such as student self-evaluation or instrument choice. However, researchers who examined the middle school band did not seek to understand and report the actual experiences and social knowledge of young adolescents. "Music teaching and music teacher preparation have often been based on suppositions which are biased by adult perspectives… which have contributed to continuing inequities and injustices in the educational experiences of our students" (Adler, 2002, p. 61). As I outlined in chapter two, the majority of research studies on the topic of adolescent identity and music were conducted using quantitative methodologies. Using such methodologies, researchers placed student experiences into categories that used terminology set forth by adults and therefore biased, as Adler notes, by adult perspectives.

Bresler (1993) addresses the complexity of social contexts, saying, "Contextuality does not mean that people and settings are idiosyncratic. It does imply that people and the systems they build are complex, influenced by many factors and not reducible to simple variables" (p. 38). In other words, researchers who simplify the social contexts (and student experiences within those contexts) by categorizing variables do not reflect the complex social interactions that occur between individuals and their environments. Howard (2000) asserts that as research underpinning identity theories was conducted through experimental methodologies, "validation of these principles in sociologically meaningful contexts is crucial" (p. 370).

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) propose another method of examining the complexity in social experience and interaction: "Narrative inquiry is a way of understanding experience. It is a collaboration between researcher and participants, over time, in a place or series of places, and in social interaction with milieus" (p. 20). In order to understand participants' various identity roles (Deaux & Martin, 2003) and musical group identities (North & Hargreaves, 1999), I immersed myself in the social contexts of these participants. As students' experiences, and therefore identities that are influenced by social experiences, may differ between and evolve within social contexts, I familiarized myself with the multiple layers of experience in such social contexts. For example, in the context of the band classroom, various instrument sections in which students socialize are part of a specific band classroom that exists within the larger band program.

The larger middle school community encompasses many social contexts, including the aforementioned band community. I examined these interconnected social contexts as a means of understanding participants' nested identities (McCarthy, 2007). The uniqueness of each student's experience is worth exploring, as McCarthy (1999) points out. "Recognizing the uniqueness of all students in educational settings is believed to be wedded to the development of human dignity and self-worth, to the elevation of disenfranchised groups in society, and to the formation of an integrated identity" (McCarthy, 1999, p. 112).

In this chapter, I outline my research methodology and provide an introduction to the research setting I chose for this study. The focus of this study is the socially constructed identity, or perception of self in relation to others, examined

through the perspectives of six students enrolled in the same mixed-ability level sixth grade band class. Wortham (2006) asserts, "analyses of social identification must not rely on signs of identity abstracted away from their contexts of use" (p. 35). Unlike many of the prior studies on identity and music outlined in chapter two, this study examines young adolescent identity in a naturalistic setting. Based on the aforementioned factors, I chose to design a collective case study, drawing on narrative inquiry and ethnographic research traditions.

The primary question for this study was: How does the middle school band classroom as a social context influence students' identity constructions? My secondary research questions were:

1. What types of social interactions occur within the band classroom?

2. How do peer networks form and function within (and outside of) the band classroom?

3. How do middle school band students make decisions regarding music course enrollment and participation?

4. In what ways do social learning and musical learning intersect?

<center>Research Strategies</center>

Educational researchers have devised various strategies to examine qualitative elements of the student experience in school. In this section I describe the key elements of research traditions and strategies that best enabled me to answer my research questions regarding identity and musical learning. These traditions include ethnography, narrative inquiry and case study design.

Ethnography

Originating in anthropological research traditions, ethnography is the "practice of representing the social reality of others through the analysis of one's own experience in the world of these others" (Van Maanen, 1988, p. ix). In other words, ethnographers immerse themselves in these "worlds" in order to study the ways people make meaning of their lives. Through this immersion, they gain understandings of specific cultures. Researchers use ethnography to examine patterns of behavior and perceptions that constitute cultural understandings, while understanding that not all individuals within a culture will create the same meanings (Anderson-Levitt, 2006). While the definition of the term *culture* may be debated, Anderson-Levitt asserts that ethnographers in education agree that culture refers to "learning as opposed to whatever is biologically innate in humans" (p. 280). Rather than studying innate human tendencies or psychological traits, I aimed to gain understandings of how students learn about themselves and music within the culture of their band classroom.

Since this study focused on individuals' socially constructed identities, it does not represent ethnography in the strictest sense. However, ethnographic methodology informed this research design, as the classroom and school cultures are important contexts for understanding socially constructed identity. Students may choose to enroll in an elective due to shared self-perceptions, expectations, or behaviors. The teacher may establish classroom practices that influence the development of shared behaviors or beliefs that constitute classroom culture and therefore inform a student's identity construction (Wortham, 2006). Due to the interaction between the social

context and the construction of identity, ethnographic research informed my approach to data collection and methods of analysis.

Case Study

Creswell (1998) defines the case study as "an exploration of a 'bounded system' or a case (or multiple cases) over time through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information rich in context" (p. 61). Stake (2006) describes it as a "specific entity….[that] usually has working parts and is purposive. It is an integrated system" (p. 2). According to Stake (2005), the decision to design a case study is not a methodological choice, but a choice to study (or interest in) a specific case. As I was interested in how students perceived themselves within a specific social context, my interest lay in the individual students, or cases, and their experiences within the social context that influenced their school experiences. Therefore, case study research suited my research goals as it focused on the individual case and the influence of sociological contexts surrounding the case (Stake, 2005). An *instrumental case study* refers to research conducted to examine a particular issue or phenomenon. The case is chosen as an example of the phenomenon (Stake, 2005).

Case studies are used to gain in-depth understandings of particular phenomena or individuals, bounded by specific contexts. This goal of understanding the particular case through experiential knowledge differs from that of large, quantitative studies conducted to answer questions regarding a large population or combination of influential variables. According to Bresler (1993), "the purpose of case-studies is to facilitate understanding rather than contribute to basic research generalizations" (p.

38). Thus, my goal was to gain an understanding of individual students' experiences and self-concepts. As individuals' experiences and identities are inherently personal, I did not seek generalizability in the traditional sense. "Rather than generalizability, the issue at stake is transferability" (Bresler, 1993, p. 38). Bresler continues:

> Transferability refers to the extent to which the case-study facilitates the drawing of inferences by the reader that may have applicability in his or her own context or situation. Inferences are different from generalizations, the former being inductive, localized and contextual, the latter being context-free and time-free laws regarding human behaviour. (p. 39)

As I previously stated, this study was intended to extend prior understandings of musical identity and young adolescent identity through the examination of participants' experiences in the naturalistic setting, or local context. I therefore viewed inferences (as opposed to generalizations) as the intended outcome of my research. I examined individual students (cases) in order to gain understanding of the particular phenomenon studied (socially constructed identity).

In order to examine the specific phenomenon of identity, I designed a collective case study. This design differs from a single case study in both focus and analysis. While the single case study serves as a means by which the researcher gains insight into a particular individual or setting, the collective case study provides the opportunity to study a particular phenomenon in multiple settings or manifestations. Stake (2006) states:

> Each case to be studied has its own problems and relationships. The cases have their stories to tell, and some of them are included in the multicase

70

report, but the official interest is in the collection of these cases or in the

phenomenon exhibited in those cases. (Stake, 2006, p. vi)

Socially constructed identity is a complex and intriguing phenomenon. It exists as a

personal construction of self, unique to the ways in which individuals interact with

their social contexts. At the same time, identity occurs as a process dependent on

relationships with other people in various contexts. Therefore, I felt that a collective

case study design served my research goals as it offered the possibility to gain deep

insight into the single case, as well as "the opportunity to know how the study of

issues that cut across cases contributes to understanding the quintain [larger collection

of cases]" (Stake, 2006, p. vi).

Narrative Inquiry

As I outlined in the preceding sections, researchers who draw upon

ethnography and qualitative case study research seek to examine and better

understand the experiences of their participants. They often use similar sources of

data, such as interviews and journals. These interviews and journals are sometimes

reported as narratives. However, narrative inquiry holds important distinctions from

ethnography. At this time, I will provide an overview of narrative inquiry in order to

connect my research questions to the qualitative strategies outlined above.

Unlike researchers in the field of psychology, narrative researchers "often

treat narrative *as* lived experience" (Chase, 2005, p. 658). Chase defines a narrative

as an oral or written description of an individual's life, a story about an aspect of

one's life, or a "compelling topical narration" (p. 652). For the purpose of my study, I

aimed to elicit personal narratives that shed light on an aspect of the participants'

lives: their sense of self within their school context. In order to construct such

narratives, I used multiple data sources from which I co-constructed participants'

stories. Journals, observations, classroom artifacts (such as band flyers, participants'

written assignments, and recordings of performance assessments), field notes, and

classroom conversations all served to form narratives of the participants' lived

experiences.

Narrative inquiry, according to Connelly and Clandinin (2006), encompasses

both personal examination of emotions and thoughts, as well as social contexts and

structure that influence such emotions. Therefore, narrative inquiry served my study

as a means to examine the interaction between the social context (the band classroom)

and the individual construction of identity. Chase (2005) states:

> Thus, many contemporary narrative researchers approach *any* narrative as an
>
> *instance* of the possible relationships between a narrator's active construction
>
> of self, on the one hand, and the social, cultural, and historical circumstances
>
> that enable and constrain that narrative, on the other.... From this perspective,
>
> any narrative is significant because it embodies- and gives us insight into-
>
> what is possible and intelligible within a specific social context. (p. 667)

The use of narrative inquiry enabled me to connect identity theory to social identity

theory, linking social psychology and sociology. By doing so, I was able to examine

interactions between the individual student and the band classroom as a social context

in which he or she resided.

Summary of Research Strategies

Ethnographies and case studies often share similarities, both using narrative (such as written and oral expression) to examine lived experiences and social contexts. According to Van Manen (1990):

> Case studies and ethnographies very appropriately focus on a certain situation, a group, a culture, or an institutional location to study it for what goes on there, how these individuals or members of this group perceive things, and how they might differ in time and place from other such groups or situations. (p. 22)

In the past, ethnographers relied on "experience-distant" field concepts, or the study of cultures outside of their own primarily through field notes and observation. More recently, ethnographers have drawn upon concepts in phenomenology, discourse analysis, and symbolic interactionism, among others, favoring concepts termed "experience-near" (Van Maanen, 1988). My study fell within the category of "experience-near," as I focused on the socially constructed identities of students enrolled in band, the content area in which I specialize.

Site and Participant Selection

The Research Site: Cardinal Middle School

In order to explore the influence of the classroom as a social context, I purposefully sought a research site comprised of diverse subcultures. I believed that part of this exploration should encompass possibilities that the band context might serve as a unifying space, bridging pre-existing gaps between distinct peer social

73

groups (Bakagiannis & Tarrant, 2006). Conversely, a diverse school community might provide the opportunity to explore social divisions within the band classroom. I therefore chose to conduct my research in a diverse school community that borders a major metropolitan area on the east coast of the United States.

The student population is ethnically, racially, socio-economically, and linguistically diverse. During the 2007-2008 school year, Cardinal housed 848 students, an increase of 93 students from the previous school year. The enrollment statistics (using the terminology set forth by the Northampton Public Schools) for the 2007-2008 school year indicated that 18.4% of the student body identified as black, 12.5% Asian or Pacific Islander, 28.1% white, 0.5% unspecified, and 40.6% Hispanic. Approximately 14.0% of the students at Cardinal received services due to Limited English Proficiency during this past school year, though a larger percentage of the school population had previously enrolled in the English learning language program at various stages of their schooling years. Cardinal students spoke a wide variety of languages in their homes, including: Mongolian, Amharic, Arabic, Bengali Urdu, Tagalog, Tigrinya, Vietnamese, Thai, Cambodian, Malay, and Spanish. Students at Cardinal immigrated to the U.S. from El Salvador, Bolivia, Guatemala, Mongolia, Ethiopia, Honduras, Mexico, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Argentina, Philippines, Columbia, Peru, Eritrea, Morocco, Vietnam, Sudan, Puerto Rico, Thailand, Nicaragua, Cambodia, Malaysia, Spain, and The Dominican Republic. Over 45% of the students at Cardinal receive free or reduced lunches, based on federal income requirements. The faculty and staff are similarly diverse in ethnic and racial backgrounds. Due to the high cost of living in the metropolitan area, many

faculty and staff live outside of the school district in communities where housing is more affordable.

Participant (Case) Selection

In order to examine young adolescent social identity within a musical learning context, I specifically chose six participants enrolled in the same sixth grade band class. Cardinal houses students in grades 6 through 8, so this group of students did not have any prior experience as a social group within or outside of the school context as they attended various elementary schools across the Northampton Public Schools district. Sixth grade is also the first time that students have the opportunity to enroll in a daily music class, so a great deal about the experience was new to them. This study gave me the opportunity to understand students' first experiences in a secondary band ensemble. As I previously stated, I also chose participants who represented various ethnic, racial, and socioeconomic backgrounds in order to examine the possibility that differing school subcultures influence participation in the band program. A diverse group of students also offered the opportunity to examine the possibility that participation in the band program may influence young adolescent perceptions regarding the numerous school subcultures.

While the phenomenon in question (socially constructed identity) lends itself to a study of individual cases, I was interested in the larger phenomenon of identity within the social context of the band classroom, rather than individual identity, although there is overlap between the two. Therefore, I considered this study to be a collective case study. Stake (2005) describes the collective case study as an extended instrumental case study through which the researcher may gain greater understanding

of an even larger population. While the study of one case (student) may provide an in-depth understanding of an individual's experience and construction of social identity, the study of a few cases enabled me to compare and contrast themes across cases.

I first invited all sixth grade band students to participate in the study by providing each student with an Assent Form (see Appendix A) that described the students' voluntary involvement and roles as participants. I attached a Consent Form for their parents or legal guardians (see Appendix B) in which I provided an outline of the study as well as the details involved in their students' involvement. In order to glean information about demographics, musical experiences inside and outside of school, as well as self-perceptions with regard to the music program and band classroom, I administered a questionnaire (see Appendix C) to all enrolled sixth grade band students. The questionnaire provided me information about the students' perceptions and experiences as well as their abilities to articulate those perceptions.

Although the band teacher assisted me in the distribution and collection of the questionnaires, I read through the responses without assistance. This was, in part, due to the school district's stipulation that I would not share any data with faculty or staff at the school during the study. Subsequently, I invited 10 students to participate in the study, based on the following criteria:

1. Reflective and willing thinkers and writers

2. Level of comfort with data collection activities (interviews, journals and observations)

3. Dissimilar backgrounds

4. Regular attendance in school

76

5. Atypical OR typical band students (based on my experience teaching sixth grade band)

6. Experienced OR inexperienced on their primary instruments

Based on consent to participate and my evaluation of their questionnaires, the invited 10 students participated in a trial period of the study. I informed the students that their participation through the duration of the study depended on their willingness to complete my assigned tasks during this three-week period. During this three-week trial period, this group of 10 students posted weekly journal entries (reflections on prompts I provided) on their school's Blackboard website (see Appendix D for a list of journal prompts). Based on their ability to complete this task and my assessment of the potential for me to learn something from them, I invited six students to participate in the remainder of the study.

<center>Data Collection Methods</center>

I used a variety of data sources in order to attempt to understand the ordinary as well as the unusual (Stake, 2005). These data sources included observations, journals, and interviews. These multiple data sources also served to triangulate my assertions. Stake says, "The qualitative researcher is interested in diversity of perception, even the multiple realities in which people live" (p. 454). To reflect this desired diversity, data from primary student participants, secondary participants (such as teachers, counselors, and peers), and my observation notes served to identify multiple perspectives regarding participants' lived experiences.

Researcher Role

In order to understand the classroom context from the students' perspectives, I immersed myself in the setting, taking on the role of *participant-as-observer.* Shank (2006) describes this role as participating as a member of the group studied, while making clear to the other group members that they are being studied. I introduced myself to the class as a former middle school band teacher who wanted to conduct research with their permission. After gaining such permission, I brought my flute to class and at times sat among the students, participating as an instrumentalist in the classroom performance.

My goal was to become an unnoticed addition to the class and gain students' trust (a goal I believe I achieved, based on my observations of the students' behavior around me). Though they first watched me throughout the class period, they refocused their attention on the teacher and musical notation once I sat within the ensemble, performing alongside them. While they would become immediately silent or cease inappropriate behavior when the band teacher walked into the room, they did not cease throwing paper balls or speaking loudly across the room when I entered. This disregard for my judgment of their behavior occurred over time, just as they began to focus their attention on instrumental performance once I sat among them. They first spoke quietly around me, behaving toward me as they did toward their teacher. Students first asked me for permission to use the restroom or for a pass, just as they would ask the band teacher. After a few weeks, this behavior towards me as another teacher faded, and I became another band member, a participant within the social group I explored.

Observation

Following official approval of my study by the school district and parental consent, I observed the sixth grade band class for approximately two class meetings each week over a 5.5-month period. I began ethnographic observations 1.5 months after the school year began. I identified primary participants by late November and fieldwork spanned from October through the first week of April (as students made decisions regarding future course enrollment). This point of decision provided me with an opportune time to end my study in the field. I also observed the winter concert, pre-festival concert, and district band festival in which the sixth grade band performed. I made digital audio recordings of the classes to compare with my field notes and to analyze classroom routines, behaviors, and interactions. I also recorded classroom behaviors and dialogue through field notes, focusing on student response to peer and adult interaction as well as their response to peer musical performance. I reviewed all field notes at the end of each observation and personally transcribed all data.

Interviews

Interviews served as a principal means of data collection, providing insight into individual experiences as well as peer interactions and influences. I conducted and digitally audio-recorded open-ended interviews for the purpose of describing and interpreting themes within the participants' lived experiences (Kvale, 1996). Open-ended interviews also serve as a tool for understanding participants "on their own terms and how they make meaning of their own lives, experiences, and cognitive processes" (Brenner, 2006, p. 357). In order to understand students' socially

constructed identities (the central phenomenon being studied), I began the participant

interviews with a *grand tour question* (Brenner, 2006) such as "Tell me about your

band class." The grand tour question served to uncover language used in the students'

worlds and also helped identify topics that led to greater understanding of their

emerging identities. I used sub-questions derived from initial interviews to follow up

on themes identified by the participants.

I interviewed each primary student participant three times: during the first few

weeks of classroom observations in November and December, again following the

winter concert, and finally as they prepared to choose elective courses for the

following school year. The first interview allowed me to get to know each participant

and ask follow-up questions on themes that emerged from the initial journal entries.

The second interview occurred following the first daytime public ensemble

performance in the middle school band context. This provided an opportune time for

me to explore the students' interpretation of their first public display of knowledge

learned and musical identity. The final interview occurred following auditions for

seventh grade ensembles as the students decided whether or not to continue

enrollment in band. At the request of school administration, all student interviews

took place in the band room during lunch periods with one exception. Due to

unforeseen absences and conflicting field trip schedules, I conducted one final

interview with a participant at her home on a weekend afternoon. Her parents agreed

to this arrangement and remained in the home during the interview.

In addition to student interviews, I interviewed the band teacher, Mr. Wray,

and asked him to answer questions about his perceptions of the classroom

interactions, peer social networks, and individual participants' involvement in music. Interviews occurred following each set of student interviews in order to triangulate data. I also interviewed Mr. Vega (the sixth grade guidance counselor) once to gain insight on the social groups that comprise the sixth grade class. In addition, I attended sixth grade faculty team meetings and spoke with all sixth grade teachers in a group setting in order to gain insight regarding participants' behavior and social networks in other classes. I made digital audio recordings of all interviews with primary participants and personally transcribed all interviews.

Reflective Journals

I asked the six primary participants to post weekly reflective journals (or short narratives) on their school Blackboard website to maintain participant confidentiality. The participants typed and submitted these journals expressing their thoughts and feelings on their school musical experiences. I have found in my teaching experience that middle school students often need prompts in order to begin a reflective narrative. Similar to the grand tour interview question, I posted prompts (see Appendix D) once a week that addressed their friends, peer networks, comfort level in class, or other topics that emerged from the initial journal entries and interviews. I did not specify a page or word limit, permitting students to write however (and whatever) they felt comfortable sharing. All students had access to the internet at school, and many also had home access. Five of the six participants submitted a journal for each week, though sometimes they would send two entries at a time if they had forgotten to post their thoughts a week earlier. The other participant, David, sent a little over half the number of the journal entries requested during the course of the

study, but participated fully in interviews and was present during nearly all classroom observations. One participant, Kejah, posted her journal entries at the end of class once a week, rather than at home.

Data Analysis

Single and Multiple Case Analysis

I designed this study in order to examine a particular phenomenon, socially constructed identity, which I believe is best understood through a qualitative collective case study. The individual cases provided understandings of identity within one common social context (the band classroom) that is a part of a student's larger social context (school community). I believe that the "complex meanings" (Stake, 2006, p. 4) of socially constructed identity may be understood in greater depth because of the perceptions and contexts of each particular case (each participant).

Once I received the first week of journal entries, I began initial stages of analysis in order to identify and refine themes that informed later interviews and journal prompts. I used the responses from grand tour questions on the first journal entry and initial interviews to identify emergent themes and issues. Following this stage, I refined my interview questions and wrote journal prompts that explored these issues at greater depths. Though I studied a slice of socially constructed identity during a relatively small period of time, my immersion in the field over the first semester of the participants' sixth grade school year encompassed an important time period. During this time, students' identities evolved and emerged as they moved within a new school and classroom community. Their emerging identities (as pertaining to music) were made visible through the choice of electives at the

beginning of the spring semester. Therefore, I sorted the data both by themes and according to a timeline of social and academic growth in order to make the process of emerging identities evident.

Once I transcribed the interviews and copied the journals into Microsoft Word, I coded broad themes and organized these themes along a chronological trajectory on an individual case basis. Using the NVIVO software, I used the NODES to sort emergent themes from participant journals and interviews. As I classified data by conceptual labels (NODES), I essentially began the process of interpretation as well. In order to note emergent themes both within and across cases, I coded and organized the data into three tracks, as proposed by Stake (2006). The first track served to organize case findings within each case. The second track served as a place to merge similar findings from across cases, and the third track enabled me to explore influencing factors across cases.

Interpretations and Assertions

In order to gain understanding of identity in an instrumental music classroom, I explored individual students' experiences and narrative constructions of those experiences as they discovered what it meant to belong to a particular social and academic group, the sixth grade band. I reported students' voices in order to make their meanings clear to myself and others (Shank, 2006). Connelly and Clandinin (2006) describe narrative inquiry as a "view of human experience in which humans, individually and socially, lead storied lives" (p. 477). Narratives serve as the written accounts of such stories, providing qualitative researchers with rich data to interpret.

83

The data, consisting of interviews, observation notes, and reflective journals, are reported as narrative texts that I interpreted and analyzed.

According to Creswell (1998), interpretation "involves making sense of the data…such as interpretation based on hunches, insights, and intuition" (pp. 144-145). In other words, the researcher uses her experience in the field as practical knowledge or insights. Such insights (gained from my experience as a middle school music educator and researcher in the middle school setting) helped me to interpret the participants' stories.

As I conducted a collective case study, my interpretations and analysis took an inductive approach, moving from the specific (the individual participant or case) to the general (examination of socially constructed identity, the central phenomenon studied). Following my initial organization of themes into codes and NODES, I chose to "step back, to make deeper and more conceptually coherent sense of what is happening" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 72) by writing memos regarding the relationship between codes and fieldwork. These memos served to shape the stories I report in the following chapters. As my intent is to make public the voices of middle school music students, my data-analysis process involved using narrative text from each student's interviews and journals.

<center>Credibility</center>

In conducting a collective case study, I was concerned not only with triangulation within each case, but also across cases. As Stake (2006) asserts, collective case analyses must include triangulation of all descriptions and findings across the study. "The qualitative researcher is interested in diversity of perception,

<center>84</center>

even the multiple realities within which people live. Triangulation helps to identify these multiple realities" (Stake, 2006, p. 38). In order to confirm my interpretations of participants' realities, I employed member checking of my reported narratives. All primary student participants were given the written narratives to examine my interpretations and offer their suggestions for changes if desired.

I presented this process to the participants as an opportunity for them to read a story about themselves, explaining that chapter four of this dissertation would be a presentation of each of the participants' personal stories as sixth grade band students. I attended class again after data collection ended in order to personally hand each participant their "story," telling each of them to edit my writing so that I would represent them accurately. As I handed each participant a manila envelope with their pseudonym written at the top, they smiled at me, exclaiming, "Cool", "Thanks! I can't wait to read my story." Students individually thanked me for writing about them.

Due to ethical concerns, I chose not to provide all of the data to the participants for review. I specifically omitted sections regarding teachers' negative perceptions of the participants during the member-checking process. This omission was based on my concern that the negative portrayal of certain students during the sixth grade team meetings I attended would harmfully impact their sense of self and academic achievement during the remainder of the school year. Mr. Wray, the band director, also provided feedback on my narrative construction of the classroom environment and individual students (including data collected from sixth grade team

meetings) for truthfulness and possible misinterpretations. According to Eisner (1998):

> Structural corroboration, like the process of triangulation, is a means through which multiple types of data are related to each other to support or contradict the interpretation and evaluation of a state of affairs. These data come from direct observation of classrooms, from interviews with students and teachers (including a teacher's colleagues), from the analysis of materials used (texts, textbooks, projects assigned, workbooks, record sheets), and from quantitative information related to the interpretation or evaluation (p. 110)

The perspectives of both the primary participants, as well as secondary participants (sixth grade counselor, principal, band director, and other teachers in the school building) were included and compared in order to provide a more balanced interpretation of events and experiences. I wrote rich, thick descriptions in order to facilitate decisions by the reader regarding transferability (Creswell, 1998). Eisner (1998) notes that "consensual validation" refers to the "agreement among competent others that the description, interpretation, evaluation, and thematics of an educational situation are right" (p. 112). I asked other school faculty and the Supervisor of Arts Education for the school district to review my report and provide input to increase the level of credibility of my assertions. In addition to member-checking and triangulation of sources, I asked a colleague to serve as an external auditor. This colleague holds a Ph.D. in music education and has conducted qualitative research on the topic of music, learning, and identity. He reviewed my coding methods,

organizational system for storing data, and offered suggestions regarding the written report.

Clandinin (2006) cautions that researchers who employ narrative inquiry are "complicit in the world they study" (p.47). As I negotiated meanings and co-constructed narratives with the involvement of six primary participants (Clandinin, 2006), I became aware of my own biases and subjectivity. In addition to (and separate from) my field notes, I maintained a personal journal in which I reflected on my experience as the researcher. These reflections included my thoughts and feelings about the context and participants, as well as my experiences in the role of researcher. In order to make clear these biases, I systematically coded and analyzed these field notes and memos as a separate data collection. I included the analysis of my own subjectivity as an appendix (See appendix F).

Ethical Considerations

Numerous ethical issues must be considered before embarking on a qualitative study such as the one I conducted. Creswell (1998) states, "interpretive or qualitative research must give *voice* to participants so that their voice is not silenced, disengaged, or marginalized. Moreover, alternative or multiple voices need to be heard in a text" (p. 196). While my goal was to report student voice, possibly empowering middle school music students as they explored their "selves" in the band context, I was careful not to marginalize their perspectives by omission of certain themes or concepts they deemed important. I strove for a balance between data gathered through the lens of collective case study while also giving voice to individual students.

Creswell (1998) describes mutual trust and sharing between the researcher and participants as necessitated by qualitative research. My experiences working with middle school students for more than a decade have helped me to understand that young adolescents are more likely to share their honest thoughts and feelings with those whom they trust. This trust, according to my former students, is often viewed as, or equivalent to, care. By listening to what they had to say, I demonstrated that I care about them. Through the process of sharing experiences in a particular learning environment, and having an adult hear their stories, my participants may have felt safe to share their thoughts with other adults in their school. They may also have benefited from this study by consciously reflecting on their own experiences and decision-making processes. I attempted to maintain their trust by validating their thoughts and emotions while preserving their confidentiality.

I believe that these six students may have felt empowered by my interest in their experiences. At the end of the school year, I received an email from one participant who wrote, "Thank you so much for everything you have done! I'm so excited for you on doing this project. Thank you again for letting me be a part of it!" (Personal Communication, June 21, 2008). Another participant sent me this email message: "I am really excited and glad to have been participating in this study! Thanks!" (Personal Communication, June 14, 2008). I believe that these students' gratitude may have been based on their sense that participation in a research study was an important role. Additionally, this might have been their first experience in which a teacher-researcher asked them to speak openly about their negative and

positive experiences in school, rather than simply accepting a situation in which they found themselves. This process appeared to positively impact them.

Prior to beginning this study, I sought advice and approval from faculty members in my doctoral program. Following discussions of ethical conduct, design study, and possible challenges in conducting research at the middle school level, I submitted a research proposal to the university IRB committee. I simultaneously sent my proposal to the Supervisor of Arts Education in Northampton Public Schools and the Cardinal Middle School Principal for consideration. Both of these individuals supported this study and wrote letters of recommendation to the Northampton Public Schools Research and Evaluation Office to which I submitted an additional research proposal. Following approval from both the university and school district, I proceeded with data collection.

Limitations

While a collective case study design is suitable for understanding a particular phenomenon, it does not provide generalizability. As previously stated, I aimed to provide readers with possible transferability to other cases by writing thick descriptions detailing the particular context of this study. The collective case study provides for broader understanding of the phenomenon, as the researcher may look for commonalities across cases, while also noting differences that characterize the uniqueness of each case. Qualitative, or interpretive, research is limited by the subjectivity of the research interpretations or assertions. Misinterpretations are possible, though I made efforts to reduce this through member checking and an external audit of the final written narrative report.

As a collective case study, I limited the focus of my study to a particular phenomenon within a particular context. Socially constructed identity was the primary phenomenon I studied. I compared this phenomenon across six cases (sixth grade students) bounded by the time (October 2007- November 2008) and place (Cardinal Middle School sixth grade band). Therefore, I did not include other secondary middle school classroom settings, nor elementary classroom settings. While the context was a music classroom located within a larger school, I did not include in-depth observations of the orchestra or chorus classrooms. This study focused exclusively on the influence of the sixth grade band classroom (situated within a particular middle school) on identity. Additionally, conducting a study such as this relies on students' abilities and willingness to express themselves through writing. Therefore, some students' stories could not be heard and some experiences were left unexplored.

Summary

The collective case study design that I outlined in this chapter provided opportunities to study particularities of individual students and situations while simultaneously gaining understanding of a larger phenomenon across cases. I focused on the phenomenon of identity as a social construct. Therefore, the rich, in-depth approach to data collection and analysis characteristic of qualitative case study allowed me to examine the uniqueness of each sixth grade band student before making inferences across cases. The cross-case analysis that I employed helped me to compare the cases while preserving the uniqueness of each student's experience as he or she interacted with the layered contexts of the Concert Band classroom, sixth

grade, and Cardinal Middle School community. In the next chapter, I present

descriptions of the research site, band teacher, and primary participants. Chapter four

also serves to contextualize subsequent cross-cases analyses and assertions.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE SETTING, THE TEACHER, AND THE PARTICIPANTS

In this chapter, I describe the research site, the teacher, and the participants involved in this study. Through these descriptions, I aim to provide a context for understanding the interactions between individual participants and the learning environment. Rex, Steadman, and Graciano (2006) maintain that, "the physical and social contexts in which learning occurs become intrinsic elements of that learning" (p. 740). Therefore, I portray the participants' physical and social environments in order to contextualize my exploration of musical learning and students' identity constructions.

The social context I explored encompassed the school community, band classroom, and sixth grade class. The band teacher, whom I call Mr. Wray, figured prominently in students' conversations, journals, and interviews. Mr. Wray established classroom behavior and academic guidelines, created performance expectations, and constructed the daily classroom schedule. Therefore, he established the foundation for the social interactions I observed, as well as the overall climate of the band program. Additionally, the participants' family backgrounds, prior musical learning, peer networks, and school experiences outside of the band classroom comprised the conditions necessary for understanding middle school band students' complex identities.

The Setting

Cardinal Middle School

Cardinal Middle School is one of a number of public middle schools within the Northampton county school system situated just a few miles outside of city lines. Located adjacent to a major thoroughfare in an East Coast metropolitan area, students have easy access to public transportation and other public services, such as libraries, museums, and community parks. Though facets of urban life, such as apartment buildings and public transportation, are visible from school grounds, single-family homes with small, grassy yards and sedans parked in front also line the street on which Cardinal sits.

Housed in a building constructed just three years prior to this study, Cardinal boasts a unique focus program in arts and communications technology. According to the school's program of studies, arts and communication technology are integrated throughout the entire curriculum through an education and arts partnership with a national arts organization. In addition, courses such as dance and an integrated chorus, drama, and art course provide opportunities beyond the standard electives offered in other schools within Northampton County. Cardinal is also the only school in Northampton County to house a black box theater, dance studio, music practice rooms, and large concert hall. These facilities appeal to the public and are often used for local military band and professional dance performances.

While Cardinal primarily serves the students who live in the surrounding neighborhood, students from across the county may choose to attend Cardinal instead of their neighborhood schools. They make this choice in order to have the academic

opportunities provided through the arts and communication technology focus program. Unlike other magnet or charter school programs in existence, all students at Cardinal Middle School (regardless of choice to attend) participate in the arts and communication curriculum. This curriculum includes arts-infused coursework throughout the school year and instructional day, as well as the additional arts education course offerings.

The physical space.

Each time I entered the building, I noticed the open feeling of the entryway. Glass front doors of the building open into a wide hallway leading to an atrium with vaulted ceilings. The hallway is adorned with student sculptures, paintings, and displays in glass cases, such as the Hispanic Heritage Month display of pictures, national flags, and artwork set just inside the front doors. During the week of the dance concerts, two large hand-painted paper banners hung from the ceiling, touching each side of the hallway. The banners read, "Dance Concert!" followed by the dates and times. The artwork, display cases, and banners are well-lit by modern, frosted-glass sconces lining each side of the hallway. A few weeks prior to the winter music concerts, professionally created window decals were placed on the front doors displaying the dates, times, and locations of the band, orchestra, and chorus concerts.

At the end of the front hallway is a small atrium at which three hallways and the staircase meet. I could look directly up to the third floor, because of the vaulted ceilings. On the right is a suite of guidance counselor and student support staff offices. To the left is the main office, a small space with a large reception area made to feel more open by the glass windows looking out onto the school hallways. Past the

94

main office is a wide (perhaps 20 feet across) hallway with domed two-story ceilings. Natural skylights make the hallway seem even brighter on sunny days. The walls are made of smooth materials, a stark contrast to the concrete and tile in other school buildings where I have taught and visited. The walls are dark, solid, vivid colors (red, yellow, and purple) on which student artwork is prominently displayed.

On the right side of this hallway sits the concert hall, then the exploratory wing where elective classes (such as art, music, and technology education) take place. Past those classrooms is the cafeteria, a large open space that accommodates many rows of long, rectangular tables with attached stools as well as five picnic tables with umbrellas. Along this hallway are mounted flat-screen televisions. During the weeks following each school performance, students, staff, and visitors can view videos of the students' concerts and recitals while walking down the hallway.

By turning right just before entering the cafeteria area, I walk down another hallway. This hallway does not have the vaulted ceilings or the brightly colored, smooth walls. Instead, I see the cream-painted walls typical of other school buildings. Through windows to my left, I watch students in technology courses create small projects in aerospace engineering or design their first model cars. I walk past the chorus room to my right, where an expensive electronic piano and chairs designed to support good posture are arranged. Just past the chorus room is the door to the band room. During my first visit, I marveled at the resources available to students. The ceiling is well over 30 feet high and acoustical panels are mounted on all walls and the ceiling. Microphones attached to a recording system hang above the semi-circles of black band chairs designed to support students' posture. Just inside the door on the

right hangs the wall unit housing a multi-disc CD player, amplifier, turntable, cassette tape player, VHS player, mp3 inputs, and recording devices. As I turn left, I face the center of the room. A white board and smart board are mounted on the front wall of the classroom. Above the smart board, students face red, bold painted words that read, "Success is piece of mind in knowing that you did your best. –John Wooden (Head basketball coach, Emeritus UCLA- 10 NCAA Championships)." At each top corner of the wall sits a speaker, wired to the wall unit by the door.

Two large white cloth banners hang from the ceiling at the back of the room. Both banners appear to be painted by students. One reads "Class of 2006," while the other reads "Class of '07." Both are covered with painted handprints and autographs scrawled with various colored markers. The door underneath these banners connects the band and orchestra rooms by a hallway of soundproof practice rooms. Painted in red bold lettering above the door is the quote "The difference between the impossible and the possible lies in a (person's) determination." Underneath the quote, the wall reads "Tommy Lasorda (Hall of Fame Manager, L.A. Dodgers, 1976-1996)." Each practice room has glass windows and a studio piano. Students have brought many black metal music stands into various practice rooms to rehearse during lunch and after school.

Students.

Between the 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 school years, Cardinal Middle School's enrollment dramatically increased. According to one faculty member, the school administration did not expect as many sixth graders to attend Cardinal instead of their neighborhood schools (based on prior enrollment numbers). As of November

30, 2007, the sixth grade class numbered 305 students, while only 260 sixth graders were enrolled one year prior. This increase of 45 students led to overcrowded sixth grade classrooms. Approximately three months into the school year, additional teachers were hired to accommodate the increased enrollment. Students previously separated into sixth grade teams found each other in mixed-team (but not ability level) classes. Most students shared the same set of social studies, language arts, reading, math, and science teachers with half of their grade. Physical education and exploratory classes, such as band, included students from both teams.

Hallway interactions and social dimensions.

I walk down the hallway, past the main office, towards the arts hallway and cafeteria. I notice the time on the hallway clock as the hallway begins to fill with students, faculty, and administrators. The last class period just ended and students are changing places. Eighth grade students just ate lunch. They begin to walk towards me as they leave the cafeteria in the direction of the eighth grade classrooms. I soon see the principal, a tall, imposing figure, as he leans over the students while loudly telling them to "act respectfully and stay in line." (Field Notes, December 11, 2007)

I often witnessed this scene as I entered Cardinal Middle School to observe the Concert Band class. Administrators and faculty herded students into lines, strategically positioning themselves in order to keep the students from walking against the flow or through the middle of the hall. During these moments, students spoke softly, glancing upward at the adults as they moved from place to place in the school. Posters in the hallway clearly displayed the administrators' behavior

expectations, such as "No running" and "No cursing." Each expectation, or rule, was stated using negative terms, instead of promoting desired behavior. Students appeared to behave accordingly in the presence of administrators. Standing out of range of adult eyes, students behaved quite differently:

> I arrive just in time to see the students change classes before fourth period, the instructional time allotted for Concert Band. As I approach the band classroom, students enrolled in third period beginning band push each other, scrambling to exit the classroom as quickly as possible. They run as fast as they can towards the main hallway, yelling to each other across the crowded arts hallway. Some tell each other jokes, causing groups of students to laugh aloud. Other students ask each other about quizzes or tests in certain classes. As I enter, I notice that Mr. Wray is not present. A substitute teacher is loudly instructing the students to exit and enter calmly. The students do not appear to notice her directions as they push past each other. (Field Notes, November 14, 2007)

Pushing, laughing, yelling jokes, and running were the normal behaviors that I observed when administrators were not nearby. Students did not appear to physically harm each other as they pushed and shoved. They moved quickly and energetically from place to place. The few minutes between classes served as an opportunity for students to socialize, comment on each other's clothing, and ask questions regarding quizzes, tests, or projects assigned by various teachers.

The Band Program

Approximately 23% of the student population at Cardinal Middle School was enrolled in band during the 2007-2008 school year. The Cardinal Middle School band program is comprised of three large concert bands that meet during the seven-period school day, as well as the 25-member Big Kickin' Band, an audition-only jazz band that meets during an additional course time after school. As part of the arts and communication technology focus program, Cardinal Middle School offers an eighth period open to all enrolled middle school students at the school. Eighth period courses include jazz band, art, and technology education. The concert band classes are primarily divided by ability level, though school wide schedules often require that classes divide further by grade level. The beginning-level band, Cadet Band, includes 61 sixth and seventh grade students who meet during two separate class periods. The intermediate-level group, Concert Band, includes 69 sixth and seventh grade students who meet during two separate class periods. The Symphonic Band, the most advanced group, is a class comprised of 44 seventh and eighth grade students who meet in a cross-grade class period.

During the 2007-2008 school year, the sixth grade enrollment in band was the highest it had been in at least a decade, according to the county Supervisor of Arts Education. These sixth grade band students represented the diversity within the broader school community. Approximately 70% of the sixth grade band students represented various ethnic and racial minorities. Though recent state legislation regarding student privacy prevented me from obtaining specific socioeconomic data

for the band classes, the teacher informed me that approximately half of the sixth grade band students came from low-income homes.

The sixth grade beginning (Cadet) and experienced (Concert) band classes had some differences in ethnic and gender composition. Approximately 45% of the Cadet Band class was female, while girls comprised 55% of the more experienced Concert Band class. Approximately 60% of the Concert Band were students of color, while students of color comprised approximately 80% of the Cadet Band. Most of these students were Latino/ a, many of whom had received Limited English Proficiency (LEP) services during elementary school or were receiving such services during the 2007-2008 school year. Based on discussions with faculty and staff in Northampton Public Schools and Cardinal Middle School, I came to the conclusion that the clear difference in demographics between the band classes may have been due to available opportunities for students receiving LEP services at the elementary school level.

Northampton Public Schools offers instrumental music education beginning in the fourth grade. Students may elect to participate by missing one or two hours of regular (non-music) instructional time per week. English language learners often could not participate due to supposed scheduling conflicts. These students may have had their first opportunity to enroll in band at the middle school level, rather than beginning alongside their peers two years prior. In addition, students who had moved to the Northampton Public School district as sixth graders may not have had elementary level music instruction in their previous schooling experiences.

At the time of this study, I was unable to determine whether these pre-existing gaps in academic and musical achievement narrowed during the middle school years.

The band teacher, Mr. Wray, began teaching at Cardinal Middle School in 2004. When he began, the Cardinal Middle School band program enrolled under 50 students. According to other music teachers in the county, Mr. Wray's predecessor believed himself unable to meet the needs of the diverse population at the school and did not seek assistance in doing so. After just three years, Mr. Wray's band enrollment had increased to approximately 200 students.

While I may have interpreted the large sixth grade band enrollment and small eighth grade band enrollment as an indication of high attrition rates, I came to understand that most students who began band in the sixth grade continued in the program. The discrepancy in enrollment between sixth and eighth grade demonstrated the increase in the band program. Unfortunately, this meant that I could not draw comparisons between the grade levels or seek information regarding specific student populations and attrition or retention rates in the band program.

The Concert Band.

From October 2007 through April 2008, I examined the sixth grade Concert Band class as a social context in order to situate this study of identity. All six participants in this study were enrolled in the Concert Band class together. They, along with their classmates, attended this class every day for 47 minutes. As members of a band located in the larger school community, I came to know these students as members of overlapping social groups. I was also able to understand the distinctive characteristics of this band class as a unique setting within the Cardinal Middle School Band Program. On the syllabus, I found the following course description written by Mr. Wray:

Cardinal's band program is part of a continuous music curriculum that begins in the fourth grade and continues through twelfth grade. Learning goals are based on the National Standards for music education. This class is designed for students who have had one (or more) year of study on their band instrument in an ensemble and demonstrate a level of proficiency sufficient for this group. Elements of music in this class are approached through exercises of increasing difficulty which present challenging, interesting and enriching activities.

The sixth grade concert band students participate in this daily class as well as in numerous co-curricular (after school) activities that correspond to the daily curriculum. They performed two pieces during the Cardinal Middle School fall music concert in October. They then quickly learned two new pieces that they performed on the school winter band concert in December.

Twice during the school year, members of the local military band conducted sectionals. One representative from each instrument section provided small-group instruction to the Cardinal Middle School band students. Students who played the less popular instruments, such as tuba, oboe, and french horn often received private lessons during these visits. Mr. Wray also scheduled a series of clinics with music educators in the area so the students in all bands received constructive criticism from various perspectives at least once during the school year. In early May 2008, all band students attended a one-day trip to Hershey, PA, during which they performed for adjudicators in a nearby school, followed by a few hours of free time at Hershey Park. The day ended with an awards ceremony in the park. During the last month of school,

the concert band students performed during a spring band concert as well. Both the winter and spring concerts were held in the evening, with a shorter version of each presented during the day as an assembly for the entire student body.

Interpersonal relationships in Concert Band.

Participants in this study often described band as their favorite class. They cited reasons such as improvement of instrumental skills, as well as the "discovery" of new kinds of music. They said that they felt proud of how much they were learning, but one prominent theme emerged throughout the initial questionnaires, journal entries, and interviews: interpersonal relationships. Every participant cited the teacher, Mr. Wray, as a reason they enjoyed the class. Participants often described the classroom as a "great environment" or "fun" place to learn.

In a different setting, I often observed sixth grade students running from their fourth period classes to the cafeteria for lunch. They enjoy more freedom in this setting than in other school settings. From the choice of food (though limited) to the choice of where to sit and who to sit with, lunch is the only time during the day in which students may socialize across boundaries such as academic course placements or teams. Students are also provided a choice in seating and may communicate freely with one another. Socialization within the band room, by contrast, is teacher-directed. Students do not speak unless called on, and even those moments are irregular. Talk within the band room is primarily teacher-driven, while students respond to directives by performing on their instruments. I was therefore surprised when one participant told me, "It's [band is] kinda like lunch, but you don't eat." When I asked for clarification, she said, "you get to sit wherever you want to. Especially next to your

friends. But sometimes he [Mr. Wray] gets mad when you talk too much, but that's why I try to keep that on the low down low" (Kejah, Interview, December 21, 2007). Another participant described the classroom similarly, saying, "It's just, it's really fun and you get to do something fun and hang out with your friends at the same time" (Mariam, Interview, December 11, 2007).

Cardinal Middle School served as an appropriate research site for a variety of reasons. I was interested in the possibility that band might serve as a unifying context (Bakagiannis & Tarrant, 2006) within a diverse school. Cardinal Middle School's student population includes many subcultures within the larger school culture. It is possible that peer factors (other than musical taste) may influence students' decisions to participate in the band program. This type of inquiry might provide new understandings regarding the role of instrumental music study in young adolescent peer social contexts and in school culture, as well as the influence of instrumental music study on their emerging identities.

<center>The Teacher: Mr. Wray</center>

Mr. Wray currently serves as the full-time band director at Cardinal Middle School, a position he has held since 2004. He earned undergraduate and masters degrees in percussion performance before deciding to enter the education profession. Through an alternative certification process, Mr. Wray received licensure in instrumental music education. Before his employment at Cardinal Middle School, he spent multiple days over a period of two years observing experienced secondary band directors in Northampton Public Schools while working as a full-time substitute

teacher. He continues to invite colleagues to observe his teaching and seeks out information and guidance from those more experienced than he.

During his tenure, the band enrollment increased from just over 40 students to approximately 200 students. Participants in this study repeatedly referenced their band director when I asked them about their band class. These references initially occurred in response to my open-ended questions, such as, "Tell me about band" and "Tell me why you might or might not choose to take band again." Participants almost always spoke first about Mr. Wray, describing him as someone who "cares" and "can kinda relate" to middle school students.

Mr. Wray describes himself as a continuous learner, constantly working to improve his own pedagogical skills, as well as raise his standards of musicianship for students in his classroom. Toward the end of my data collection, he asked me if I might provide him with feedback on his teaching once the study ends. He told me that when a student experiences failure or seems that he or she "doesn't get it," he feels at fault. Mr. Wray seeks ways in which he might assist students in achieving musical success by continuously reflecting on his teaching skills and philosophy.

In addition to traditional band rehearsal lessons, Mr. Wray integrates learning activities and lessons practiced more often in a general music classroom than in a band setting. For instance, Mr. Wray guides students through a regular listening exercise in which he plays a recording of a large ensemble work. While he occasionally chooses recordings of bands, he uses this activity as an opportunity for band students to hear music from choral and orchestral genres as well. Mr. Wray provides only the composition title, composer and date as an introduction. The

students write this information at the top of a worksheet labeled "Listening Log." As the music plays, the students remain silent. Only the sounds of pencils on paper as the recording plays can be heard. Mr. Wray instructs the students to write what they hear, but advises them against writing "what everyone can hear." While everyone might identify instruments, dynamic contrasts and tempo, students might "hear" stories or musical pictures depicted. After the exercise, Mr. Wray asks volunteers to share what they wrote and then the class collectively discusses connections between the students' writing and the musical elements present.

<center>The Participants: Hearing Students' Voices</center>

Each participant in this study provided a unique vantage point from which I examined the Cardinal Middle School sixth grade concert band as a social context and identity construction. In this section, I weave together excerpts from each participant's journals and interviews to provide a narrative depiction of these six band students. As every student arrives at school each day by different means, from different homes and backgrounds, and with different interests, one can expect each individual to experience the same context in varied ways. To this end, I highlight the emergent themes within each participant's narrative, rather than highlighting themes that appear across cases.

Six primary participants (one boy and five girls) were involved in this study. Their pseudonyms reflect their ethnicity. Mariam, Lili, Sophia, Kejah, David, and Eileen all enrolled in the same concert band class during the 2007-2008 school year. Though all six had participated in their elementary school band programs, Lili and David switched instruments when they entered middle school. Lili, formerly a

<center>106</center>

clarinetist, now plays the oboe. David has experience on both the trumpet and alto

saxophone, but chose to take up the tuba in the sixth grade. Sophia continued to play

the alto saxophone in school band.

Mariam, a flutist, describes Sophia and Lili as friends. Eileen, a percussionist,

became close friends with Sophia, Lili, and Mariam during the 2007-2008 school

year. Kejah, a clarinetist, does not consider the other participants to be her close

friends though she has close friends in the band. David, the tuba player, also

considers other members of the ensemble to be his friends, but not his fellow study

participants.

Participant	Primary Instrument	Years of Experience	Gender
Mariam	Flute	3	Female
Lili	Oboe	1	Female
Kejah	Clarinet	2	Female
Sophia	Alto Saxophone	3	Female
David	Tuba	1	Male
Eileen	Percussion	3	Female

Table 4.1 Participants

The quotes from students appear exactly as they submitted them in their

journals, with numerous spelling and grammatical errors. I chose not to present a

grammatically correct and error-free document by editing the participants' spoken

words for grammatical errors or altering their written journals. I felt that by cleaning

up their words, the potential for an accurate portrayal might diminish because we lose

the way in which children use language (though as adults we may label this usage as

"incorrect"). In order to understand students' perspectives, I chose to hear them in

their own words, as they wrote or spoke them. I believe that they became comfortable

communicating to me in the same way they might communicate to peers, as many

journals included smiley faces and acronyms understood by those accustomed to instant messenger and text messaging. I also included words not easily found in standard dictionaries, though the participants used them to illustrate their points in conversation with great effect.

Eileen: "You don't try to be a musician, you sort of become one while you are learning"

Eileen is an 11-year-old Caucasian girl with blonde bangs and long, straight hair that she often ties up in a ponytail or loosely gathered bun. Though she is physically active through athletic activities, her cheeks are slightly rounder than most sixth graders. Her round face and figure give her the appearance of a younger girl, rather than a physically mature pre-teen. She typically wears solid colored shirts under fashionably form-fitting sweaters or hoodies paired with jeans. Eileen walks with her head raised, though her eyes are often focused on her peers around her. When I asked her to describe herself, she told me, "you could say I'm different" (Journal, January 6, 2008). Though she surrounds herself with five or six friends in the hallway and cafeteria, she often stands aloof in the percussion section, looking at her sheet music or the band teacher. Her general expression is of a more serious nature than her peers, as she tends to furrow her eyebrows, purse her lips together, and look directly at whatever task she aims to accomplish.

Eileen describes herself as a strong student who usually earns "As & Bs because I am serious about academics and I do my homework always" (Questionnaire response, October 2007). She feels remarkably self-confident about her academic and extra-curricular roles, such as writing, cooking, playing soccer, piano performance,

"being organized," and percussion performance. She feels less confident in her ability to leave "myself some chill time in my crazy life." She then explained, "in my free time, I like to write in my journal, practice percussion, play sports (soccer, basketball, softball, and swimming), and complete any extra credit assignments" (Journal, January 6, 2008). This self-portrait supports her teachers' description of Eileen as a perfectionist who "does everything you ask of her" and wants to learn. Though only halfway through the sixth grade, she already set career goals for herself. Her long-term goals include attending "a good college, medical school, becoming a doctor, and attending [high school] and becoming enrolled in their IB (International Baccalaureate) program" (Journal, January 6, 2008).

Eileen's teachers describe her as a leader who "likes to be in charge." During band class, I often observe her helping her section achieve high musical and behavioral goals, as depicted in the following field notes:

The class session begins with a review of the concert G-flat major scale. Eileen stands by the uppermost octave on the xylophone. As she plays each pitch, she turns her head to look at two fellow percussionists playing the vibraphone. She specifically looks at their mallets as they play through the scale, simultaneously correcting pitches verbally with her head turned towards her classmates. (Field notes, February 21, 2008)

Prior musical experiences and parental influences.

Eileen has taken private piano lessons for nearly three years, in addition to the music classes offered through her elementary and middle schools. Eileen enrolled in

her elementary school band program in the fourth grade as a percussionist, though she details the difficulty she experienced when choosing her instrument:

> My dad played clarinet. And he was really good. And I had my heart set. I was like gonna play clarinet…. I just sat down with the clarinet and I played it. I was like, Do I really want? 'Cause I, I had really been into instrumental music and I wanted to play 'cause I'd been playing piano and then I was, like, oh well, clarinet you know, I tried it and was like, this doesn't seem that great. So, I was, like, Well, maybe I should uh take the, 'cause we had to take a mini-test on percussion to see if we had the rhythm. So, I was like, maybe I should do that. So, I tried it and she's [band teacher] like, "You passed!" I was, like, "Oh that's nice. Hmm... How many people are there in the clarinet class?" I was asking her and she was like, "there's like 14." And I asked, "How many people are in the percussion class?" She was, like, "Uh, two." So I said, and I was really pressed for time and I think if I hadn't been pressed for time, I might have chosen clarinet. But I was, like, Uhhhhhhhhhh... Percussion! (Interview, November 27, 2007)

This difficulty choosing an instrument seemed to be based, in part, on her parents' influence. She based her initial choice to play the clarinet on her father's experience as a clarinetist. She revised her choice based on two other factors: musical success and a desire to be part of a smaller group. As she explained in the preceding narrative, Eileen successfully performed a rhythmic test, qualifying her to enroll in the percussion class that, coincidentally, was a significantly smaller group of students. Her parents' influences on her musical and educational experiences (evident in her

narrative) resurfaced during a discussion about her decision to attend Cardinal Middle School.

Eileen's family does not live in the Cardinal neighborhood boundaries. She chose to attend Cardinal instead of her neighborhood school, which was an extremely high-performing school as measured by standardized test scores and district music festivals. Her decision to attend Cardinal was partially based on her experiences as a fifth grade band student. During the prior school year, Eileen successfully auditioned for the countywide fourth through sixth grade honors band, directed by the Cardinal band teacher, Mr. Wray. "I knew Mr. Wray from Jr. Honors Band, and he was part of the reason I transferred to Cardinal" (Questionnaire Response, October 2007). When asked about her decision to attend Cardinal instead of her neighborhood school, Eileen contrasted the different foci of the two middle schools and noted her mother's influence, stating:

> At [elementary school] it was all academics. And I was a straight A student. And so going to [neighborhood middle school] my mom said, "You would have done fabulously there. It would have been great, but I am more than happy that you're at Cardinal because I really like the arts. And also the music program!" (Interview, November 27, 2007)

School involvement.

A self-described honor student, Eileen takes advanced courses, including seventh grade math as a sixth grade student. In addition to her coursework and musical education, she is an active soccer player. Earlier in the fall, she played for her school on their soccer team, as well as continuing her basketball on a non-competitive

house team. Eileen describes another, less public, school activity as one of her favorite things. She participates in her school TAB group. Eileen described her involvement in this group:

> It's Teen Advisory Board. It's... You go during lunch, and you have these certain books that you read and you talk about them. And you read some unpublished stuff, and then they pick books at the end of the year. They publish a list in the library of stuff from your school that people liked. So, I like that. And that's during lunch and you don't have to do anything extra for that. (Interview, November 27, 2007)

While Eileen seeks out opportunities to perform publicly (as an athlete and musician), she also looks for small groups in which she might form new friendships through common interests such as academic achievement. This desire to find a niche in a small peer group led her towards the percussion section as well as the Teen Advisory Board.

Prior musical experiences: comparisons, contrasts, and choices.

Eileen participated in her elementary school chorus. While she expressed some guilt for letting down her music teacher when discussing her choice to end her choral music education in sixth grade, she described the experiences as strikingly different to her:

> I was in chorus for a while, and I gave it up because I just felt like I liked instrumental music better. My teacher was very sad, but I said, you know what, I have to do this. Because I felt like it was... better. And, you know, I didn't really want to be going in and singing every single day. And just going

in and singing every day, I just don't think I would like that… I think chorus

it just. Maybe it's just me but it didn't challenge me as much as band did.

(Interview, November 27, 2007)

Eileen enjoys the kinesthetic challenges that band provides, as well as the more complicated notation on auxiliary percussion parts. She sympathizes with a peer who had performed an auxiliary part incorrectly, saying "'cause like it was one of those sheets where you have, like, shakers and claves and stuff but it's on different lines, and it was really confusing" (Interview, November 27, 2007). She also describes an instance where she incorrectly performed a complicated percussion part, though she clearly remembers the experience quite positively:

I like playing the smaller instruments, like, uh, yeah. In honors band, I played,

um, I played bongos. And I really liked that. Because, it's... I had this big solo

at the beginning and it was African, so it was there was a big part and so I got

the CD and it just sounds really cool I think. And then at the end, I like really

messed up and I hit it at the wrong time. But, that's okay. It was fun!

(Interview, November 27, 2007)

A musician.

Eileen repeatedly speaks of her desire to become more technically proficient on percussion instruments and develop better aural skills so she can improve her timpani tuning ability. Her desire to achieve higher levels of performance ability indicates a specific interpretation of musicianship, one that is based on technical skill. However, she does not perceive formal music education to serve as an indicator of

musicianship. In response to my journal prompt asking participants to describe a musician, she outlined her interpretation of musicianship and musical identity:

> I would describe a musician to be a composer, conducter, musically inclined person, or someone who participates in a musical activity and enjoys it. I consider myself to be a musican, because I am partially musically inclined, and I participate in two musical actvities and I really like them. They are percussion at school and piano through a private instructor. I consider everyone in any of the Cardinal Bands, Orchestras, and Chorus to be musicians, if they really like playing or singing. And of course, I consider Mr. Wray, [and the chorus and orchestra teachers] to be musicians. Most people who do musical activities are or become musically inclined. My mom and my dad think I am musically inclined, but they didn't know that until I started piano, and then even more, percussion. A musician isn't someone who has to go to college undergrad, and then attend graduate school and get a masters or any degree. They could just be someone on the street who has a good voice or can whisle fast. You don't try to be a musican, you sort of become one while you are learning. (Journal, December 5, 2007)

David: "I get both atmospheres."

David is a stocky 11-year-old Caucasian boy who typically has a grin across his face. At about five feet tall, he stands somewhat taller than his male classmates. His blonde, curly hair, cut shorter in the front to give him bangs, hangs to his shoulders in the back. He wears it scruffy, as if he had forgotten to brush it. Often wearing slightly baggy blue jeans with an un-tucked t-shirt and sneakers with at least

114

one shoe untied, David walks with a small shuffle to his step. When I stroll casually through the hallway, I can often hear him from yards away while he speaks loudly, laughing along with other sixth grade boys. Using his vocal projection to gain other students' attention, he often shouts greetings and jokes across the hallway or cafeteria table.

David often forgot to write any journals for three to four weeks at a time, but would later send a string of two to four journals at once. He apologized to me after not writing for three weeks, saying that he "had a lot of homework," his family's Christmas tree had fallen over and they had to clean it up, and his dog "went psycho" due to an internal infection that caused quite a mess. While he perceives some of his peers to have "natural" musical ability, David explained that he does not, stating, "I'm regular." He believes that musical ability is an acquired skill, but that some individuals have innate abilities or strengths with regard to music performance and understanding.

David's non-music teachers described him as academically capable and bright. They surmised that his ability may be due, in part, to having "more advantages than other kids." David is the only child of two upper middle class parents, distinctly older than the parents of his peers. David spoke of his mother's musical background, once describing the flutes she played that are now stored in his garage. His teachers also described him as an enthusiastic student whose outspokenness sometimes "puts other kids off." Though his teachers described him as loud, I did not see him behaving in such a manner during band class.

Sitting in the fourth row beside a small group of trombonists, David plays a thee-quarter sized tuba, the largest instrument in the winds section. The bell of the tuba stands taller than David' head when held in his lap. After playing both the saxophone and the trumpet in elementary school, David decided to switch to the tuba in sixth grade. One of his friends from elementary school also switched to the low brass section, and he followed him, thinking, "Why not? I'm not really skilled at the saxophone that much. Um. And we needed a tuba" (Interview, December 3, 2007). David cites his size when discussing why he feels well suited to play the tuba, saying that he is larger than most of his peers. His size helps him to hold the large instrument without strain. One of his classmates said that she admires David:

> … for switching to his new instrument the tuba. He is quite brave to switch to a new instrument knowing he has to catch up with everyone else. He is also the only one so it is probably kind of nervousing. I think he really likes playing his instrument and he is doing quite well. (Journal, November 19, 2007)

Joking around with other boys.

One of the first things that David pointed out to me was that he was in an all-male section. Every low brass player in the Cardinal Middle School Concert Band is a boy. This, according to David, is a very good thing. "I mean, you can pretty much say whatever you want. You don't have to be careful what you say" (Interview, December 3, 2007). He elaborated, specifying that boys are not concerned "about spilling secrets." The flip side of this positive male perspective is the fact that the only all-female section, the flutes, sits on the receiving end of the low brass jokes,

116

according to David. Sitting among his male friends, I often noticed friendly one-upmanship. One boy would tell a joke and another would jump in to immediately try to make the other boys laugh even harder.

During listening activities, David often writes outrageously comedic or imaginative stories. He would then wave his hand in air, saying "Ooo! Ooo!" to gain Mr. Wray's attention in order to read his narrative aloud. As an example, David wrote the following story while he listened to an excerpt from Prokofiev's Romeo and Juliet:

> Dracula's dad died. Dracula then killed his teddy bear. He went to school, where is a popular and a bully. He becomes vegetarian. Then, an army of giants comes to rule the world. Dracula finds a secret passage to a candy world. (Field Notes, January 11, 2008)

Prior musical experiences.

In addition to his brief attempts at the saxophone and trumpet during elementary school, David has six years of experience playing guitar. In fact, he has taken private guitar lessons for all six of those years, plays in a band with friends, and often plays accompaniment for his mother who sings in their home. At the school talent show, David and his band performed the Green Day popular rock song, Boulevard of Broken Dreams. When I asked him about his rock band, he explained, "We just haven't found a time or place where we can do another performance, so we haven't really gotten together yet. But we've all written a couple of songs" (Interview, February 7, 2008). He openly discusses his informal musical experiences at home and in his band, clearly proud of his non-Classical musical skills.

117

Comprised of David (playing guitar chords), another student on lead guitar, and a third on the keyboard, his rock band serves as a more "relaxed" place to perform music. "You don't have the pressure of you having to practice this every night and stuff" (Interview, February 7, 2008). He explained that in the student-directed band, "we're sort of more of a group since we're the same age. We're not critiquing each other as much or pointing stuff out" (Interview, February 7, 2008). David says that he enjoys both the formal and informal musical contexts. He likes being part of both ensembles because "you get both atmospheres." David enjoys the self-directed nature of the rock band and the teacher-directed band classroom, enjoying both venues for musical learning.

School involvement.

David typically earns honor roll grades. He told me that his parents provide monetary motivation for earning high grades. "They give me five bucks for each A I get on my report card" (Interview, February 7, 2008). David's parents also encourage him to enroll in challenging coursework. During an interview David explained:

> I want to take Latin and then in high school I want to take German. My dad
> and mom really want me to take Latin because it will help me in philosophy
> classes and stuff. 'Cause, like, a lot of words are based on Latin roots.
> (Interview, February 7, 2008)

While David enrolls in advanced (intensified) coursework, he struggles to maintain a B in the seventh grade math course he takes as a sixth grade student. He describes the class as "kinda stressful," though he prefers the challenge to the possibility of feeling bored in a lower level course. His description supports his teacher's statements that he

118

lacks confidence in math class, though he demonstrates sincerity and seems extremely capable.

David sets high academic goals for himself beyond immediate coursework. He told me that he would like to get into the International Baccalaureate high school program and then enter Harvard University in order to earn a Ph.D. in mechanical engineering. Though he told me that he didn't know anyone who had earned a Ph.D., he provided an interesting gateway to his thinking when he told me, "Well, I want to get a Ph.D. in mechanical engineering. They're a really good school and I'd have a lot of job opportunities. I want to get a masters in civil war history" (Interview, March 27, 2008). David remains open to academic possibilities, so long as he might explore such possibilities in a prestigious setting.

David told me that he might want to study music as an undergraduate student. I asked him what he thought it might be like to study music in college. He responded, "It'd be pretty cool. I mean, not, like, in a band. More like composers." While he does not desire to compose "*band,* band music," David enjoys the possibilities of composing jazz and bluegrass, while learning "why the composer did certain things and composed the song a certain way." He told me that "I watched a special on the history channel and it was, like, about Mozart's life. And, like, when he was a kid and when he died. And it was really interesting. Sparked something." After learning about the composers' lives, David explains that the music "has more meaning" for him on a personal level (Interview, March 27, 2008).

In addition to participation in the band program, David participates in the school intramural sport program. Over the course of his childhood, he has a

considerable amount of sports experience. He has played basketball for five years, baseball for four years, soccer for five years, and flag football for one year. This year, he successfully tried out for the school wrestling team, as well. Along with his more public sports team and music ensemble participation, David participates in the school Garden Club, though during our first interview he admitted, "so far, I've only dug holes." He then said, smiling, "I got covered in mud both times" (Interview, December 3, 2007).

Kejah: "I chose band to discover more."

Kejah is an 11-year-old African-American clarinetist with shoulder-length braids and large, dark brown eyes, framed by thin, black, wire-rimmed glasses. At five feet, two inches, she stands taller than many of her peers. Thin and tall, she might be mistaken for a seventh or eighth grade student. She often wears form-fitting blue jeans, old sneakers, and long-sleeved, V-neck knit shirts layered over T-shirts or camis. Kejah typically wears two gold hoop earrings in each ear to complement her attire. She also wears a small opal ring on her left ring finger. Though her attire and jewelry do not stand out among her classmates, Kejah tends to pays attention to her appearance:

> Mr. Wray lifts his hands as the class breathes together. As his hands bounce
> from an unseen point, indicating the downbeat, students begin to play an
> intermediate-level band piece. Just before the second clarinets' notated
> entrance, Kejah's stand partner tells her that both of her gold hoop earrings
> "are in the same hole." Kejah responds, "Oh no! They are?" She holds her
> clarinet between her knees, pressing her legs together to keep the instrument

from falling. She takes out one earring, seemingly unconcerned that the rest

of her section is now playing. She asks her stand partner to help put her

earring in the other hole. The stand partner shakes her head "no" while

continuing to play. Kejah turns to a female trumpet player behind her and

tells her to help replace the earring in the correct hole. (Field notes, January

14, 2008)

Beyond this focus on personal appearance, Kejah's journals and interviews produced

some interesting themes. Kejah eloquently described "knowing" her notes and

"discovering" her instrument, as well as her social role in the band.

Kejah provided a descriptive self-portrait when I asked the participants to

describe themselves in a journal entry:

My strenths are runner and a basketball player.My weaknesses are

cockeroches and snakes and spiders.My dream is to live in a house with a dog

and two wonderful parents.My hopes are to be a sucessful parent making

money by being a lawyer or teacher or business woman.I am a dancer and a

daughter with siblings.I like to blend in and not stick [out] sometimes i stick

[out] on proposs.I like to dance in free time.I have a great pesonality that

makes me what i am today. (Journal, January 5, 2008)

Kejah views her strengths as roles (runner and basketball player). Interestingly, these

are both sports in which she participates on teams. She also views herself as a dancer

and as a family member. Her weaknesses are not roles, but phobias or fears. Her

dream of living with two parents may reflect her reality as the daughter of a single

mother. She connects the reality of a two-income home with greater financial and social strength, adding the canine family pet to her vision of stability.

During all three interviews and in her journal entries, Kejah spoke of herself openly and positively. She does not settle on her perceived weaknesses, but speaks in more detail about her goals, dreams, and perceived strengths. Though she does not dwell on the negative, Kejah once described her personality as "a kinda purplish blackish blue" (Journal, January 9, 2008). She explained that they represented emotions because she felt "kinda mad, kinda sad." The colors she used to describe herself are rich, yet dark, providing another way to examine the complexities of her sense of self. During our final interview, I again asked Kejah to describe herself. She responded succinctly, "I would describe myself: funny, active, favorite color purple. Playful, creative, I think that's all" (Interview, March 11, 2008). While she previously referred to her strengths and weaknesses in terms of roles, she now described herself in terms of personality characteristics. Again here she used color to define herself.

Due to her use of color to describe feeling and emotion, I asked her to choose colors that might describe the sound of the clarinet. She told me that the clarinet could be described as "pink, 'cause it could be soft. Black cause it could be like low, hard. Maybe red, cause it could be, like, kinda mean I guess" (Interview, March 11, 2008). Kejah told me that she thinks of moods or emotions in colors, just as she perceived instrumental timbre to convey emotion.

Family influences.

Unlike some of her peers who take private guitar or piano lessons, Kejah's only formal music instruction takes place at school. The clarinet is her only

instrument, though she has heard music in her home for many years. Her mother plays the violin and two of her aunts play the flute and the bass clarinet, respectively. Three of her uncles also play musical instruments. One uncle plays the French horn, while another the cello, and the third plays the trombone. Close connections with friends and family played a role in Kejah's decision to begin playing the clarinet. She says that her friend's older sister, now a member of the Cardinal Middle School Symphonic (advanced) Band played clarinet, so she wanted to as well.

Who I want to be.

During most of our conversations and interviews, Kejah answered my questions politely and honestly, but did not expound on her thoughts unless prompted. Her journal entries, equally succinct, were often comprised of just one to two sentences addressing the journal prompt that I provided. Her honest, sometimes negative, opinions about school and certain teachers gave me the impression that she did not provide succinct answers as a form of compliance. Her interest and awareness of certain topics I prompted led me to believe her shortness derived from her lack of interest in much of her school experience.

One moment stood out from the rest in our dialogue about Kejah's experiences. She described her involvement in an after-school program where college students mentored local middle school students:

We made these career books... On the title, it said whatever you wanted to be. On mine, the first one, it said lawyer. And then, I think on the fourth or fifth page, we put pictures of a lawyer, or of a dancer or something like that- on the fourth or fifth page. And then on the sixth page we had our second one we

wanted to be. So, like, I put teacher. And then, on the seventh page, um, I put

pictures of a teacher. (Interview, February 13, 2008)

Kejah described her after-school program experiences in detail. Due to Kejah's

excitement and fast speech patterns during this interview, I was unable to ask many

questions in between descriptions of her activities that lasted minutes at a time.

Unlike other conversations, Kejah described this program in rich details, clearly

demonstrating her interest in college preparation and her awareness that adults were

interested in her life goals and aspirations.

Talking to friends.

During the first semester, Kejah took advantage of Mr. Wray's unassigned

seating policy, typically sitting in the second row of clarinets, beside the two other

female students of color that she described as close friends. She wrote that her

clarinet section is "not very exciting except we get to sit with are friends and get to

talk" (Journal, December 11, 2007). During an interview, she told me, "I talk to my

friends, about like... I talk about what kind of grades I get and stuff like that. And,

like, what happened in their day and who's going out with who and stuff like that"

(Interview, March 11, 2008).

While Kejah placed a great deal of importance on talking to friends

throughout the school day, she acknowledged that talking during classes could

interfere with her ability to succeed in school. She explained, "Like while he's talking

sometimes I talk. And like, I play or finger my notes and not really pay attention"

(Interview, March 11, 2008). Kejah placed a great deal of importance on socializing

124

with friends, while performing accurate pitches and rhythms seemed a secondary concern during band classes.

Knowing the notes.

While many of her classmates began formal instrumental music instruction in fourth grade, Kejah did not begin until the fifth grade. During my classroom observations, I moved around the band room, enabling me to hear individual students' instrumental performances. Toward the beginning of the school year, Kejah's technical ability on the clarinet was below most of her peers, though she told me that she regularly practiced in order to increase the tempo at which she could perform her scales. While her classmates could sight-read pitches spanning more than an octave, Kejah often asked other clarinetists for help interpreting the musical notation. Kejah's limited classroom performance may be based, in part on her visual processing skills. In an interview she told me, "I don't know the notes. Like I don't know none of my notes, so I have to write them in." When I asked her to elaborate, she said:

 I'm writing in the letter. And .... I know some of my notes from memory, 'cause I know 'em. But I don't... Like when I play my music, I don't... I can't really, like, read music, so I have to read my writing [written] music.

(Interview, December 21, 2007)

During another conversation, Kejah expounded on this obstacle, saying "Well, I know some of the fingerings, but I only know them in letters. 'Cause like on the scale sheet, I know them by that. But, like, them in notes, I don't know that" (Interview, February 13, 2008).

Kejah often pretended to play during full band rehearsal, though she did not yet identify the written musical notation on the page with clarinet fingerings, as evident in the following passage from my observation notes:

> I am sitting to Kejah's left, between the clarinet section and the bass clarinet. As the class performs scales in unison, Kejah asks me for help. She explains that she did not know how to finger Eb or low E and F. During the ensemble performance of notated tone exercises, Kejah quietly plays scalar passages unrelated to written notation, though she looks at the written notation on the page. (Field Notes, January 14, 2008)

Kejah's difficulty reading and writing using academic language and notation was not limited to music. All of her journals included numerous spelling and grammatical errors not present in the other participants' journal entries. Kejah admitted that language arts is her most difficult, and least enjoyable, class. She said that the most challenging aspect about language arts was that, "you have to remember pronouns and some of that stuff I don't remember" on quizzes and tests (Interview, December 21, 2007). Kejah demonstrated difficulty reading and processing written language and musical notation. As classroom performance in her band class relied heavily on music literacy skills, this may have hindered Kejah's clarinet performance. This difficulty with formal literacy skills contrasted Kejah's ability to verbally convey thoughts and emotions. As evident in the interview quotes I present throughout this portrait, Kejah clearly describes her life as a sixth grade student, daughter, and band member.

When I first met her, Kejah did not view herself as an exceptionally skilled clarinetist. I asked her what she thought the outcome of auditions for the following year might be. She told me that she assumed she would not "move up," or advance by technical level, in band classes, but that Mr. Wray would again place her in the concert band. She explained her reasoning, saying, "'Cause, my friend... Her sister's in the symphonic band and I've seen their music and it's really hard. And I can't understand some of the notes. And they play, like, really fast" (Interview, February 13, 2008). Though she referred to a personal connection with an experienced student, Kejah explained that she was unsure whether this more experienced clarinetist would be able to help her learn to play more difficult music. She asked me for help during my classroom visits, but did not seek out her teacher's assistance during the course of this study. Based on Kejah's descriptions regarding other adults who asked questions about her personal aspirations and experiences, I believe she sought my help because I was another adult who was interested in her opinions and perspectives.

Over the course of the study, Kejah's music literacy skills improved. During a discussion about a new piece, I asked Kejah if she needed to write in the notes. She told me that she didn't need to write in the notes because, "they're easy." At the end of the study, Mr. Wray described Kejah's sight reading ability as superior to her classmates, explaining that "she nailed the sight-reading" during the audition for the advanced symphonic band at Cardinal.

Prior musical experiences.

Kejah participated in her elementary school chorus, though she came to the conclusion that she doesn't like chorus because she's "not a good singer." She said

that no one else told her that she wasn't very good. She felt more confident playing an instrument. She dismissed the possibility of becoming better as a singer, stating her ability as what already was. Her statements regarding her ability as a clarinetist were not stated in the present, but rather in the future:

> Well, I chose band to discover more about the keys, like more keys. 'Cause, like, the B and C I didn't know. And Bb, alternate B I didn't know that. So, I'm kind of happy that I'm in band 'cause I'm learning more stuff. And I guess some people... Some other people did band because they wanted to go on those cool field trips. But I did band because of the discovery of the keys and the field trip. But mostly, more of the instrument. (Interview, December 21, 2007)

This quote speaks to the possibility of discovery and improvement. Kejah doesn't focus on what she can't do, but the possibilities of what she may learn.

> *Becoming a leader.*

> As I walk towards the band room, students crowd by the door. They point and stare at a piece of paper on which Mr. Wray posted results from auditions for placement in bands for the following school year. Kejah suddenly notices me, turns toward me, stands taller, pulls up the corners of her mouth and proclaims, "I'm principal second clarinet!" "That's awesome!" I respond as she runs inside the band classroom. (Field Notes, March 11, 2008)

I asked Kejah what she thought this new role would mean. She responded, "I think it's gonna kind of be, like, nervous. 'Cause, like, a lot of people look up to me and stuff like that in my group" (Interview, March 11, 2008). Referring to her prior

classroom behavior, I asked Kejah if she planned on doing anything differently as a section leader (principal chair). She replied, "I don't want to be, like, a bad principal. Or like a strict, mean principal. I want to be just right" (Interview, March 11, 2008). Kejah wanted to serve as a positive role model for her classmates. She told me that she decided to practice more now that she had earned this new role. Conversely, she did not want to be viewed as a disciplinarian by her peers.

Sophia: "I'm not shy if I'm, like, in a group."

Sophia is an 11-year-old Caucasian alto saxophonist with long, straight, honey ash colored hair and light, bright blue eyes. She often wears it pulled back in a ponytail, or parted on the side, hanging a few inches past her shoulders. Standing just below five feet, she is average height among her peers. In the school hallways, she walks with her head pointed slightly downward to the floor, rarely making eye contact with adults or peers she does not know well. Her typically pale skin serves as a stark contrast to her bright, red cheeks that become flushed when she feels embarrassed or uncomfortable. Sophia has an average, thin build. Casual, loose fitting knit shirts with bold stripes or polka dots fashionably complement her comfortably fitting blue jeans and gray and pink name-brand sneakers or soft, colorful ballet flats. Her outfits, while fashionable, are often more brightly colored than her peers. For instance, Sophia will pair a 1960s-style flowing shirt with matching bright green ballet flats.

Sophia rarely talks to classmates during instructional time, though she will excitedly volunteer to answer a question posed by Mr. Wray. She eagerly creates imaginative story-like portrayals of music, as encouraged by Mr. Wray during

listening activities. When she speaks, she speaks fairly quietly, in a very high register, sounding like a young child. She told me that when she first meets someone she feels "soooo shy!!!" One of her teachers expressed concern that she "kind of disappears" in large groups due to her reticent social behavior. Though Sophia regularly smiles throughout class, she does not seem to make eye contact with anyone else. Her smile seems to be an unconscious indicator that she is enjoying the moment. She does not mind doing things a bit differently than her peers, such as eating her pizza sideways ("so I always have cheese with my crust"), even when her peers tease her.

Sophia's journals are literally colorful, as she types each sentence in a different, brightly colored font. She often types a smiley face at the end of each narrative. Her interest in visual display is apparent in her description of herself: "I am an aspiring photographer. I luv taking pictures, of every thing. I have to document every thing so that i can remember it when I'm older" (Journal, January 3, 2008).

Prior musical experiences.

Sophia participated in her elementary school chorus, but chose not to continue her choral music in middle school. During our first interview, I asked her why she chose band instead of chorus. Her face became immediately flushed as she turned her head downward, looking at the floor. She turned from side to side in her chair, no longer directly facing me. Smiling crookedly, she responded, "Because, um, some people you know, um, are really shy about singing and stuff." In an almost inaudible voice, she added, "And that's me" (Interview, December 11, 2007). Following winter break, Sophia joined a countywide youth chorus that met once a week after school. When I asked her about her decision to join, she explained that her elementary school

music teacher served as the director of this countywide ensemble and specifically asked her to be part of the ensemble. Three of her friends also participated in the county chorus. Though she said she enjoys learning some of the choral music, she likes "band music better."

Sophia began playing the alto saxophone in fourth grade, when she joined her elementary school band program. She said that she was initially drawn to the saxophone because "it's just really cool and you get to play all the, like, jazz music. Not just, like, regular music." When I asked her to define "regular music," she explained that she meant Classical music. She elaborated, "You wouldn't, like, find it [saxophone] in a normal orchestra. And a lot of people think of it as more of jazz when they first, like, see it and stuff. And then, it's like, you play all the other stuff" (Interview, December 11, 2007).

Sophia said she "loved" elementary school band, and chose to continue at Cardinal. She began taking private lessons with a professional saxophonist during the fall of 2007. Though she repeatedly spoke positively about band and band music, she did not initially sign up for band while registering for seventh grade coursework. Only after a successful audition for the advanced band did Sophia choose to enroll for another year. In addition to her saxophone, she recently acquired an electric guitar. With her father's assistance, she is slowly teaching herself the notes.

Non-musical school involvement.

Sophia describes herself as an academically successful student who typically earns A's and B's "because I like doing good in school" (Questionnaire response, October 2007). During the course of this study her grades slipped to C's and D's.

131

According to her teachers, Sophia's attendance became increasingly inconsistent over the course of the first semester. Though she is enrolled in advanced coursework, she was "not holding her own" during this time of irregular punctuality and attendance. Sophia did not consistently turn in homework, though all of her team teachers said that she typically displays a "great" work ethic. During a conversation regarding her instrumental practice schedule, Sophia told me that she does not consistently practice because "I'm just so frazzled sometimes." During an interview, she elaborated on this "frazzled" state:

> ARH: Because you are doing a lot of stuff?
>
> Sophia: Yeah.
>
> ARH: Homework or what?
>
> Sophia: Everything.
>
> (Interview, January 30, 2008)

Sophia explained that she involves herself in one or two extra-curricular activities four out of five school days each week. She often spends additional three or more hours away from home after school, limiting her otherwise available homework and practice time. When I asked her to describe her extra-curricular schedule, she explained, "I'm in chorus on monday and privet band lessons on thurs. and I'm in act two on thurs. and tues. Um I do soccer during spring and fall which starts soon and swim team during summer" (Journal, February 16, 2008).

Sophia is a voracious reader. She especially loves the Harry Potter and Artemis Fowl series. Sophia told me that the longest book she had read was a Harry Potter book of approximately 850 pages, "which I read in about a week and a half."

However, she does not demonstrate strong writing skills. In the preliminary questionnaire, she explained, "Well personally no afense to Mrs. T I mean shes a great techer but english isint my fav subject I just well, I'm not the the strongest in writing & spelling" (Questionnaire Response, October 2007).

Outside of coursework, Sophia finds time to be involved in other aspects of school. She enrolled in an additional art class that meets after school, and previously took additional extra-curricular media technology classes as well. Sophia has played soccer and participated in competitive swimming since she was six years old. She has also been playing tennis for two years.

My music and my dad.

Outside of school, Sophia enjoys listening to popular rock band music. Her favorite bands are All American Rejects and Good Charlotte. She also enjoys listening to Colby Calet. She identifies with rock music of the 1960s and 1970s, as well. Her father regularly listens to Led Zeppelin, The Beatles, and Pink Floyd. According to Sophia, she has been listening to her father's music throughout her childhood. Sophia says she enjoys the music and learning to play the electric guitar, just like her father. She hopes to "get good at" it. Her New Year's resolution was to increase her practice time, but has not met that goal due to her busy schedule.

Mariam: "I don't like feeling left back."

Mariam is an 11-year-old flutist. Her mother's Lebanese features are apparent in her olive skin and thick, wavy chestnut-brown hair that hangs just past her shoulders. Standing four feet, 10 inches tall, she is not taller than many of her peers, though she is not the shortest student either. With a petite frame and graceful arm

movements that accompany her conversation, she moves like a dancer even when not dancing. Every time I observe Mariam in school, she wears a smile that runs from one side of her face to the other, lips slightly parted. This smile often accompanies laughter. She nearly always wears blue jeans with blue and white brand name tennis shoes. She also tends to wear dressier shirts than some of her peers who rely on various hues of t-shirts to complete their wardrobe. Mariam complements her attire with small necklace on a thin, silver chain and earrings.

Mariam always has "someone by my side- never lonely," and views herself as "not shy." Her teachers also describe Mariam as very social. She enjoys making her friends laugh. According to her teachers, Mariam often functions as a peace-maker in social circles, though some of her peers view her kindness as "goody-goody." Mariam describes herself as "friendly, caring, playful, and as a hard worker" (Journal, January 5, 2008). She aims to do her "best in school and dance," and appears very "serious when needed." This corroborates her teachers' descriptions of Mariam as an extremely organized student whose assertiveness helps her succeed in school. Mariam typically earns straight A's and enrolls in advanced (intensified) reading and language arts courses. While she excels in those areas, she is enrolled in sixth grade math because "it's challenging for me." She hopes to be a doctor, but keeps her options open, saying, "But who knows? It's all in the future!" (Journal, January 5, 2008).

When Mariam initially handed in her questionnaire, she told me that she was excited to participate. She ended her first journal entry with the line "Thank you Ms. Hoffman for including me in your study" (Journal, November 9, 2007). Each journal entry included the words "thank you" and, after I had interviewed other participants,

134

she wrote "P.S. I can't wait to be interviewed!!!" (Journal, December 11, 2007). Mariam regularly told me how happy she was to be included in the study. She also complimented me on my flute (she said it was "pretty") and my flute performance when I sat among the flute section during classes.

Prior musical experiences and family influences.

Mariam began playing the flute in fourth grade when she enrolled in her elementary school band program. She described her memories of the event saying:

> Okay in fourth grade, I was really excited because they had a sign saying, All fourth graders and fifth graders can start playing an instrument. And so what happened was, I was really excited. I wanted to either play the flute, the drum, or, um, the violin. But flute was my first choice. They said to have three choices. Yeah, I really wanted to play the flute 'cause my mom used to play the flute. Yeah, and then my friend, Samantha, she was also playing it and we were best friends and we still are, I guess. Yeah, and so I really wanted to play it. It was my first choice. (Interview, December 13, 2007)

During this interview, Mariam told me that her mother passed away after battling cancer when Mariam was in second grade. She noted that life "is different without my mother but I still keep on pushing life forward" (Journal, January 5, 2008). I asked Mariam if she ever heard her mother play the flute. She said that she had never heard her mother play, but knew that she had once played the same instrument that she chose.

Her father, who now works part-time due to a physical disability, is the sole provider for both Mariam and her older sister, Karen. He attended every band concert

when her older sister played the trumpet. He now attends every band and dance performance in which Mariam participates. Mariam told me that if she were to take up another instrument, she would be interested in the trumpet because her sister used to play the trumpet in her school band.

School involvement.

Mariam's other love, besides playing the flute, is dancing. She has taken dance through a private dance studio in the area for many years, performing in the local production of the Nutcracker every winter. She proudly told me that she would be doing "those pointe shoes thing" beginning in January 2008. During the 2007-2008 school year, Mariam attended jazz class once each week and ballet classes three times each week, in addition to her school dance class. Cardinal has a dance studio attached to the large gym. Students, like Mariam, may opt to take dance instead of the typical physical education course throughout their school year. She explained that they dance "instead of playing basketball, or whatever" (Interview, December 13, 2007). Mariam spoke often of her dance class, telling me when she had performances and solos. Many of her fellow flutists take the dance class with her, along with some other girls in other instrument sections.

Being a dancer and musician.

Mariam greatly enjoys performing. Just before the winter concert she wrote, "I am quite excited for the concert coming up. At my old school we only had one concert a year. This is our second already this year" (Journal, December 11, 2007). Like Eileen, Mariam does not live within the Cardinal Middle School boundaries. She chose to attend Cardinal "'cause it's new and it's all arts and technology" (Interview,

December 13, 2007). She views herself as a dancer, saying that the arts focus of the school appealed to her because she "does a lot of dance." Mariam also views herself as a musician, as she responded to my journal prompt asking the participants to describe or define the term:

> I describe a musician who does not complain and enjoyed playing their instrument. Especially when they put aside something not important to practice every day for a while. I guess I consider myself a musician because I enjoy what I do, concentrate in class, and work hard to find time to practice. (Journal, December 4, 2007)

Mariam views herself as successful in band and other classes (earning A's and B's) because she works "very hard" and takes "things seriously" (Questionnaire response, October 2007). Her friend and classmate, Lili (one of the six participants involved in this study), wrote in a journal that she thinks Mariam "is very talented. She helps me and she is very nice. U can tell that she practices" (Journal, November 25, 2007). Mariam repeatedly uses terms like "focus" and "concentrate" to describe her approach to learning music and other subjects. Her view of a musician is not unlike her views of successful individuals in any area. Mariam views success as the inevitable result of "hard work," and therefore views herself as successful in a number of roles in which she works.

Mariam's work ethic may be due, in part, to her social awareness. She strives to remain in the same classes and social circles as peers she perceives to be strong students, such as a friend in the flute section whom she knew previously from elementary school. She told me that she wants to successfully audition for the

advanced symphonic band because "I don't like feeling left back or anything" (Interview, February 1, 2008).

Lili: "I would count myself as part musician."

Lili is a 12-year-old Chinese oboist. Lili is now a year older than many of her classmates because she arrived in America just seven weeks before the end of the school year at the age of six. Her mother felt that only seven weeks of school was not enough preparation for Lili, who was also learning English. She therefore chose to retain Lili in the same grade for an additional school year early in elementary school. Now 5 feet tall and one year older than most sixth grade students, she stands taller than many of her peers and exudes a sense of confidence by making eye contact with adults and peers alike. She often walks with her head held high and a smile on her face. Her teachers describe her as an excellent student who advocates for herself and conveys a mature demeanor. Lili wears her straight black hair parted on one side with bangs covering the top of her forehead, cut at an angle just above her shoulders. She typically wears skinny-cut blue jeans, brand-name brown and blue sneakers, and graphic t-shirts over long-sleeve pullover shirts.

Lili describes herself as "smart" and athletic. When I asked her about her grades, she responded, "I love my grades! They are awesome" (Interview, February 14, 2008). While she often describes band as a "fun" class and speaks positively about public performances, she explains that prior to band concerts, "I get really nervous." When I asked her to elaborate, she said, "I don't really like anything that I have to perform at. Or, like, speak in front of. I get nervous" (Interview, February 14, 2008). This supports her teachers' statements that while Lili is often "self-confident"

138

in class, she has moments during which she second-guesses herself. For instance, she may raise her hand to answer a question or volunteer in class, but almost immediately lowers her arm before the teacher can call her name.

Lili describes herself as "kind and outgoing." Lili's teachers accurately describe her as someone who "keeps lasting friends." Sophia is her closest friend, having attended the same elementary school enrolled in the same classes for all but one year. This year, they are both on the same sixth grade team, sharing teachers and classmates. Their families take vacations together, including a week at a lodge during spring break this year. According to Lili, most of her friends are also enrolled in band. I often observed her sitting with Sophia, Mariam, and other band students during lunch.

Similar to Sophia, Lili types her journal entries in many different colors. She often changes the font color mid-sentence or thought. She also types each entry in a different font than the preceding week. This seems to suggest a desire to be unique. Most of her interview and journal responses are succinct, providing clearly-written responses, but do not include a great deal of emotion or personal details. During our second interview, she asked me for less open-ended questions, saying "some questions, just like projects, I need structure. So I need more detail" (Interview, February 14, 2008)

Lili's responses may be due to her desire to talk about her strengths rather than her weaknesses. Just as she refrains from publicly making mistakes by answering teachers' questions incorrectly, she also avoids any question I pose regarding her weaknesses. When I asked Lili what she feels she is "good at" in band,

139

she responded, "I'm good at the scales. And I'm good at being quiet" (Interview, February 14, 2008). However, when I asked her about areas in which she might improve, she shrugged her shoulders and looked at the floor.

Prior musical experiences.

Lili's first memory of learning music was with her mother. Her mother adopted Lili from China when she was only a few years old and sang children's songs in English to her so she "learned how to speak English from music" (Interview, December 19, 2007). Lili remembers singing songs with her mother from "little books with songs in them" (Interview, December 19, 2007). Lili and her mother live by themselves. As her mother does not play any musical instruments, the only instrumental music Lili heard throughout her childhood was her own performance as she practiced.

Lili took private piano lessons for a brief period of time, a basic skill she continues to use to play excerpts of her band music on the piano. She enrolled in her elementary school band program as a clarinetist when she was in fourth grade. When I asked her why she decided to switch to the oboe as a sixth grade student, she said, "Well, I don't know. Because Mr. Wray said that there's like a lot of, um, clarinets. So I just...I wanted to switch to an instrument before this too. So, I just decided oboe" (Interview, December 19, 2007). She wanted to try something different, but didn't know what instrument she wanted to try. She relied on her band teacher's recommendation and feels as though she made a good decision. Lili began private instruction on the oboe in October 2007 to supplement her school music instruction. Though she is the only oboist in the concert band, she told me that she doesn't enjoy

drawing attention to herself. In fact, she described the most difficult aspect of oboe performance as "being the only one."

Learning music slowly.

Lili is remarkably self-aware. She knows her capabilities and limitations, clearly and calmly discussing both in her journals and interviews. In her journal, she described her definition of a musician and her perception of herself as not fully fitting that role:

> The way I define a "musician" would be that they live and breath music. I think they can tell what the music sounds like before playing it and they can speak music. I would count myself as part musician. I play an instrument and sing but i don't compose. (Journal, November 30, 2007)

While she comfortably described herself as an oboe player who also sings, she admitted that while practicing her oboe, "if I mess up, I have to sort of start all over again" (Interview, December 19, 2007). She told me that she felt unable to begin a piece from a middle point. It appears that she is therefore relying on her aural memory of musical sections more than her ability to read and comprehend music notation. Lili also contrasted the speed at which she learns music to her classmates:

> 'Cause, like, some people, after they get their piece, they can just sort of already practice it. It takes me much longer than that. It takes, really... It takes a long time. (Interview, December 19, 2007)

Being in band.

Lili likes "saying I'm in band and I play an instrument." When I asked her why she enjoys telling other people, she explained that she thinks "being in band is

pretty cool." She elaborated, saying that she doesn't think other students feel the same way, but she and her friends (most of whom are in band) think band is "cool." During a discussion about future band involvement, she explained that she avoids auditions "unless I'm really, really confident about it" (Interview, February 14, 2008). Lili finds auditions to be "scary." Even though she avoids public situations in which she might take risks, such as sports try-outs and ensemble auditions, Lili admitted that she would take an audition for an ensemble if she knew the quality of the ensemble sound and wanted to play musically challenging literature.

Implications

This chapter provides an overview of Cardinal Middle School, Mr. Wray, the band program, and the six primary participants involved in this study. The description of the setting and people involved serves as the basis for understanding the interaction between the classroom as a social context and the participants' constructions of identity that I will present in the subsequent chapters.

Cardinal Middle School provides a unique place for students from a variety of socioeconomic, ethnic, racial, linguistic, and national backgrounds to socialize and learn. The band program encompasses these diversities, providing an exceptional setting in which to explore multiple perspectives regarding the school band classroom and individual sense of self as a member of such a classroom. Additionally, the large enrollment in band provides the impression that students feel a sense of group membership by enrolling in the class. By choosing to enroll in such a large group, students choose both the class as well as express their desire to be part of a large group of students in the middle school level. Exploring the social context of a new

subgroup (the Concert Band) within an established social context (the Cardinal Band Program) is a desirable goal in this setting.

The six participants entered Cardinal Middle School with diverse prior experiences. The diversity of experiences encompassed their range of socioeconomic classes, family backgrounds, ethnicities, various elementary schools attended, gender, prior musical experiences, and social circles. The preceding descriptions provide an overview of these students' backgrounds and thoughts so the reader may understand excerpts from their journals and interviews with this context in mind.

CHAPTER FIVE

SOCIAL GROUPS IN THE MIDDLE SCHOOL

> Since schooling is one of life's earliest institutional involvements
> outside the family, it is not surprising that it plays a critical role in the
> shaping of Self. (Bruner, 1996, p. 35)

The six primary participants involved in this study told me stories about their

school experiences through journal entries, classroom conversations, and interviews. I

initially analyzed each participant's story as a unique entity, noting how each

participant and each story yielded a distinct perspective on the middle school band

context. At the same time, I became increasingly aware of the similarities in themes

that emerged in more than one participant's stories. These stories were naturally

intertwined as the participants were all students in the same school, members of the

same grade, and classmates in the band classroom I observed. In light of these

commonalities, I chose to present the participants' responses and stories grouped by

themes that emerged across cases. In doing so, I am able to discuss the participants'

interconnectedness within the context of Cardinal Middle School and the Concert

Band, which best suits my aims to understand socially constructed identity.

Early in the data collection process, all six participants chose to describe

themselves in terms of their membership in particular social groups. They told me

anecdotes about their social worlds, identifying their friends and desired friends by

activities in which they participated. Only after a few months as middle school

students did the participants describe their unique roles in these social groups and

include details about interpersonal relationships in their stories and journal entries. I

therefore chose to introduce, explore, and interpret themes in the same order the

participants in this study first introduced them to me. For that reason, this chapter

begins as the participants first navigate their new school as a large social context; a

social context that encompasses various social groups and curricular choices.

I grouped subcategories of themes under these broader headings (social group

identities and role identities) that emerged chronologically in an attempt to relay the

students' perspectives of the middle school band experience as it unfolded for them.

In this and the subsequent chapter, I present the findings as a series of texts that

collectively comprise a larger story co-constructed by the participants and me as we

experienced the social context of the Cardinal Middle School Concert Band together.

I weave together the six participants' narratives, or texts, to portray similarities as

well as contrasting interpretations of the social milieu they navigated during the 2007-

2008 school year.

This chapter serves as the beginning of the story. Here the reader may enter

the social world of the sixth grade band student as he or she begins to find a place in

the new middle school context. In this chapter, I present my findings regarding social,

or group, identities. I begin with students' first impressions of the middle school as a

social context. I then narrow the focus to the specific subcultures and spaces in the

school, and finally to the center of this study, the sixth grade band classroom and

instrument sections contained within.

First Impressions of Middle School

As I indicated earlier, the 2007-2008 Cardinal Middle School sixth grade class had the largest enrollment of any grade level in the school. Lili noted this fact during the first semester, stating, "It's a pretty big sixth grade, so you can't really stand out" (Interview, December 19, 2007). During the first round of interviews, each participant described groups of students they recognized as part of the Cardinal Middle School sixth grade class as well as groups of their peers in the Concert Band. This was perhaps the quickest way for them to answer my questions and prompts about peers, but as Adler (2002) notes, the use of labels and broad categories poses numerable challenges in discussions about schools and students. He states:

> Whenever possible, labels- even the self-labels of the participants- should be used with caution, in order to avoid the conceptual pigeon-holing of individuals, and the self- and group-fulfilling prophecy of a change in the way individuals and groups view themselves and each other. (Adler, 2002, p. 179)

The categories I introduce and discuss are all constructs that emerged from the data I collected. I use them as analytic themes for the purposes of this study. I chose to include these labels and broad categorizations both to report the students' experiences in their own words, as well as to provide a means for me to analyze themes that emerged from the data. During the initial phase of data collection, the participants rarely referred to their peers individually. Instead, they spoke about their classmates by describing large social groups or categories. They seemed to make sense of interactions with a vast number of unfamiliar peers by categorizing their observable attributes or interests.

Only when describing friends from elementary school or individuals in their instrument section did the participants use first names. Otherwise, students referred to their peers by affiliations with school groups and activities, or racial, ethnic, and gender categories. For example, when I asked Eileen about students who attend Cardinal Middle School, she responded:

> Um, well there's kind of the, um, the soccer player people if you want to call them soccer players, but only two of them are. And then there's my group, which is kind of anyone. Um, it shifts. And then there's kind of the, um, really popular people who sit with really popular people. And the less popular people. Not like, really, like no one knows them, but kind of like in the middle. And then there's the group, the nerds. (Interview, February 15, 2008)

Eileen not only listed peer groups by social status and extra-curricular activity affiliation, but described her social group as something that "shifts." Nakkula (2006) asserts:

> Identity is not the culmination of a key event or series of events… In fact, it is not the culmination of anything. It is, rather, the lived experience of an ongoing process- the process of integrating successes, failures, routines, habits, rituals, novelties, thrills, threats, violations, gratifications, and frustrations into a coherent and evolving interpretation of who we are. (p. 7)

Eileen's "shifting" social group demonstrates well the "lived experience of an ongoing process" that Nakkula details. As I report these students' lived experiences, I acknowledge and attempt to make the reader aware of the process by which these students formed and modified their identities as they entered the middle school

context. I begin this exploration of social groups and intergroup relationships by retelling the students' experiences as they moved in and among middle school social circles. In telling these stories, I highlight the places and spaces in which students' associations with others emerged and shifted as they shaped evolving identities during their sixth grade school year.

Choosing Cardinal Middle School

As I outlined in chapter four, students may choose to attend Cardinal Middle School instead of their neighborhood middle school for the arts and communication technology focus program it offers. Eileen and Mariam both chose to attend Cardinal Middle School instead of another middle school. I found this choice notable because both of these students lived within the Old Trail Middle School zoning boundaries. Old Trail houses a student population with the lowest percentage of students who qualify for the federal free and reduced lunch program in the Northampton Public Middle Schools. In other words, Old Trail Middle School represents the wealthiest student population in Northampton Public Schools. Old Trail Middle School's standardized test scores are among the highest in the region and the school's technology education program was recognized as the best in the state by the state association for technology education.

In addition to these accolades, Old Trail Middle School's instrumental music ensembles typically earn superior ratings (the highest possible on the assessment rubric used by the statewide band and orchestra directors association) when performing grades 3 and 4 level music at district festivals. Performing grade 4 music is an ambitious goal for most middle school programs. Many high school programs

begin their curriculum at this level, graded by experienced music educators on musical and technical difficulties such as range, articulation, rhythmic complexity, and breath support. By all accounts, Old Trail Middle School would appear to be the preferred school choice for students and families living within its zoning boundaries. I asked Eileen and Mariam why they chose to attend Cardinal Middle School instead of Old Trail Middle School. Their responses were insightful and served to uncover some underlying perceptions they held about Cardinal Middle School and the students' social places within this world.

Eileen told me that she attended an elementary school outside of her neighborhood that also boasted a magnet academic program similar to Cardinal's arts and communication technology focus. This particular elementary school emphasized behavior, character education, and a grading scale that reflected "high expectations," according to the school website. Eileen described her elementary experience saying, "at [elementary school name] it was *all* academics. And I was a straight A student" (Interview, November 27, 2007). When she and her mother discussed middle school options, they compared the elementary school to Old Trail Middle School. Eileen's mother told her, "You would have done *fabulously* there. It would have been great." However, both Eileen and her mother sought a more balanced focus in school curriculum. As a "straight A" student, Eileen pushed herself to succeed academically. Her mother wanted her to have other opportunities throughout her secondary school experience. While Old Trail Middle School boasted strong indicators of musical success, arts were not highlighted as a focus according to the school's website. Cardinal Middle School, on the other hand, served the Northampton Public Schools

as the arts and communication technology focus program. According to Eileen, her mother told her at the beginning of the 2007-2008 school year, "I am *more* than happy that you're at Cardinal because I really like the arts. And also the music program" (Interview, November 27, 2007).

Mariam's older sister, Karen, attended Old Trail Middle School when Mariam was enrolled in elementary school. During our first interview, Mariam explained that her sister did not have a positive experience at Old Trail. According to Mariam, Karen "didn't like it very much." Karen experienced difficulty forming friendships with her peers at Old Trail. In addition, her mother passed away after battling cancer while Karen was in the sixth grade. For reasons unknown to me, not all of Karen's teachers knew about her mother's illness and death. This left her feeling unsupported and alone during the first few months of her middle school experience. Mariam appeared aware of this and sought a place where she might have a different experience than that of her sister.

Later in the school year, Mariam elaborated on her initial impressions of Old Trail and Cardinal Middle Schools, saying, "I'm glad this is a person variety school. 'Cause, like, um Old Trail is a little different. There's more of a variety of people here." I then asked her to describe the contrasting populations between the two schools. She told me:

> I never went there, but I've been there. Some of the students are kinda um, different with the money. I mean not everybody here is in poverty or anything. I don't think anyone here is in poverty. But, I mean, we're not all, like, Jaguars and Lexus people or anything. (Interview, April 4, 2008)

150

This description paints an interesting picture of both Old Trail and Cardinal Middle Schools. While approximately 12% of the students who attend Old Trail qualify for the free or reduced lunch program, the significantly higher percentage of families who do not qualify for the federal meal program fall into the highest end of the socio-economic spectrum. Mariam seemed aware of her peers' socio-economic status when she told me, "I'm not that wealthy." While approximately 46% percent of Cardinal Middle School students qualify for free or reduced lunches, Mariam did not perceive her classmates to "be in poverty." Mariam sought a place for herself that included a diversity of socioeconomic classes. Mariam felt a sense of belongingness based on her perception that many of her classmates came from families with similar income levels as her own family. Her perceptions regarding socio-economic status gave her the sense that at Cardinal Middle School, she had found a place where she could "fit in."

In addition to the socio-economic diversity within the Cardinal Middle School population, Mariam noted the ethnic and racial diversity as appealing to her. She told me, "The people, we have a lot of different races here. So there's different religions and beliefs" (Interview, April 4, 2008). Eileen's mother also mentioned the ethnic and racial diversity as a primary factor in her decision to send Eileen to Cardinal Middle School. Eileen's family could be described as upper middle class, since they owned an expensive single family home in one of the most desirable (and costly) Northampton neighborhoods. However, her mother's prior experiences as a teacher in segregated schools influenced her belief that learning in a diverse environment benefits all students. Eileen's mother also earned a masters degree in Social

Foundations of Education. During her graduate study, she examined the social and political structures of schooling, specifically focusing on issues regarding equity and access. She explained to me that her background in educational foundations led her to seek out opportunities for her children to interact with students from socioeconomic, racial, and ethnic backgrounds different from their own. She felt strongly that her children needed these experiences. Mariam's expressed desire to attend school with peers who represent diverse ethnic and social groups resonates with Eileen's mother's goals for her children. Mariam told me, "I think that you can kinda try to respect everyone. You can learn how to" (Interview, April 4, 2008).

While Cardinal Middle School houses students who qualify for the federal free and reduced lunch program in addition to those whose parents can afford luxury sedans and sport utility vehicles (as Mariam described), the choice to attend Cardinal instead of a school with a more socio-economically and ethnically homogenous population is notable. The wealthier families who send their students to Cardinal make this choice aware of the diversity they will encounter in this community. This information is apparent on the school website and brochures available in various languages. This sets Cardinal apart from other schools in the Northampton Public Schools system, as well as many schools across the United States.

While Mariam and Eileen chose to attend a school with a socio-economically diverse population, all of the primary participants in this study (including those who lived in the Cardinal Middle School boundaries) spoke about diversity and their place in such a community. To some of these students, this type of middle school environment was similar to their elementary school contexts. To others, the

differences between elementary and middle school were more striking. All of these

sixth grade students compared and contrasted their social experiences in elementary

school with their new middle school experiences.

"There's a Big Change" From Elementary School

When people navigate a previously unknown social context, they tend to first

compare and contrast the new experience with prior social experiences. Silvey (2002)

maintains that, "external characteristics of the new and unknown are noted and

compared to that which is already known" (p. 119). Participants in this study

described their middle school social interactions and music class experiences by

distinguishing them from prior elementary school experiences.

During an interview, I asked Eileen about popular students at Cardinal Middle

School. She responded by telling me that in elementary school, "you had to be in

everything," but that she didn't yet understand how to create more friendships or be

viewed as popular in middle school. I asked her if she thought middle school

popularity worked differently. She explained, "There's kinda too much. You can't be

involved in everything" (Interview, November 27, 2007). Lili viewed middle school

as an opportunity to "transition" by taking up a new instrument. In an early journal

entry, she wrote, "When i was in elementry school i played the clarinet. but i like the

transition [to oboe]" (Journal, November 16, 2007). The move to middle school

signified a shift in activities through which Eileen and Lili could portray themselves

to others. Lili chose a small move, playing the oboe instead of the clarinet, which

allowed her to maintain her affiliation with the same school group, the band. Eileen, a

student previously involved in numerous school activities, searched for places to "be

153

involved," while she attempted to prioritize her commitments. Eileen's search for affiliations with school activities is important because "adolescents with the opportunities and resources to take advantage of specialized… school-sponsored activities were able to affirm a positive personal identity" (Kinney, 1993, p. 22).

In terms of mobility and independence, Kejah described elementary school as a place where students move as a group, walking with their teacher from place to place. During her elementary school experience, she had to "stay with your class the whole day." In middle school, on the other hand, "you don't do that. You just walk by yourself. Or with their friends" (Interview, February 13, 2008). Kejah's description of the elementary school curricular structure centered around her physical location in relation to her peers. As elementary school classes remain together, moving from their main classroom location to art, music, physical education, and lunch, students remain together as a group. The schedule does not provide opportunities for students to form multiple social groups based on their course schedule. The middle school curricular structure differs greatly, as students find themselves surrounded by a new grouping of peers approximately every 50 minutes. As students move to each class, their social worlds shift. Every day, students must find their place in the social structures of eight classrooms as well as the cafeteria.

Eileen also spoke of the different elementary and middle school schedules in stronger terms, saying that the change from a weekly to a daily band class made her feel as though "you've just been shaken." She explained, "A lot of people came in with the attitude: This is going to be fun and easy like elementary school. But it's a lot harder. There's a big change" (Interview, February 15, 2008). Both the change in

the daily routine and the higher academic standards in middle school caused students some sense of discomfort at the beginning of the school year. As an event, elementary school band represented a break from the daily routine, while middle school band occurred as part of the daily curriculum where students were expected to achieve higher levels of achievement (in this case, higher levels of musical and technical skill). The "big change" that middle school represented to these students caused them to reevaluate their perceptions of themselves as musicians.

Eileen regularly spoke of the difference she found in musical content in middle school band. She told me that a weekly band class in elementary school did not challenge her, explaining, "We played one of the same pieces throughout the whole year." Due to limited instructional and rehearsal time, her elementary band often learned "just the same material" for months at a time (Interview, November 27, 2007). Due to the daily instructional time for band at Cardinal Middle School, Eileen felt, "everyone there is like they haven't stopped and they're, like, really focused." Unlike elementary school band, daily performance meant uninterrupted instruction and rehearsal. The pull-out schedule that characterized the elementary band program only allowed for group rehearsals only once a week, leading Eileen to describe the learning process as "stopping" in elementary school, while her middle school peers "haven't stopped." Lili described band as "a very committed thing" (Interview, January 14, 2008).

Nakkula (2006) claims:

A program, an activity, or a hobby that calls for deep investment of time and

energy does more than build skills and interests in a particular area; deep

investment builds into and upon the very sense of who we are. (p. 13)

As Eileen and Lili experienced a change in the curricular structure of middle school

and, therefore, in the level of commitment required to achieve success in the band

program, they experienced a change in their emerging identities as well. They chose

to remain involved, becoming "committed" members of this co-curricular school

program. Participating in the weekly elementary school band did not seem to impact

their sense of self in the same way that being a part of the daily, co-curricular middle

school band program did.

By virtue of the change in the curricular structure of middle school, it was

necessary for Eileen, Lili, and their peers to practice their instruments more often and

therefore gain more musical experience. For the first time since entering school,

Eileen and her peers had a daily music class. This increased instructional time led

Eileen to perceive her peers as "really focused." The school structure, as well as the

extra-curricular and co-curricular activities offered within the school, influenced

students' perceptions of their peers and themselves. The students searched for their

physical and social places within this new and different middle school structure, as

they explained to me during the first semester of their sixth grade school year.

"All the Same:" "Clique People" and "Being Cool"

When I asked about friends, students in this study spoke about social status

among groups of students at Cardinal Middle School. Mariam explained popularity

by describing certain classmates as "more, more playful people, I guess I could say. They have, like, a bunch of friends- kids that are cool or whatever" (Interview, December 13, 2007). Being seen with "a bunch of friends" portrays a popular identity to peers in the sixth grade. According to Adler (2002), "popularity can be explained as the consistent positive response from significant others which ratifies an individual's personal characteristics and actions" (p. 184). Just as students perceive themselves in light of how they believe others perceive them, they search for ways to gain positive feedback from peers in order to form a positive self-image. Adler (2002) explains that popularity is important to students:

> because of the personal/ social security it conveys; to be popular is to know that you will have support when issues of personal criticism arise, particularly with regards to criticism for participation in activities about which the individual holds some insecurity. (p. 184)

Lili did not identify specific groups of popular students saying, "There really aren't any popular kids except if you're popular in your one group" (Interview, December 19, 2007). She later told me, "Well you can't really say they are in groups because everybody's sort of linked together some way with their friends. Yeah. There's really no main group or anything" (Interview, January 14, 2008). While Lili did not experience distinct groups with elevated social status, or popularity, she did tell me that certain school activities could be viewed as "cool" and "uncool." For example, she believed band to be "cool" amongst her group of friends, but not necessarily to those outside of that group.

Lili's statements support Adler's notion of popularity. She described her membership in her social group as a social safety net; a net to which students look for peer support due to insecurity or doubt regarding their involvement in various activities. More specifically, they evaluate how those activities may result in associations with "uncool" peer labels. While Lili did not identify popularity in the same way as some of her peers, she did seek an elevated social status by affiliating with "cool" social groups, such as band. This affiliation with band, in which most of her friends participated as well, gave Lili a sense of security in her choice of school activities.

As outlined in the preceding paragraph, the participants' interpretations of social groups and social status contained contradictions as well as similarities. I asked follow up questions regarding students' descriptions of social patterns within Cardinal Middle School in an attempt to understand these students' interpretations of popularity and friendship. Through this process, I became aware of a few salient themes, all of which closely related to public portrayal of self through social associations. Gender seemed to be of import to these students, specifically whether or not boys and girls publicly interacted. Clothing, another public display of individuality or uniqueness, was also noted by the participants in this study. When Mariam told me about groups of students in her band class, she described the clarinetists as "more serious people." She then contrasted this depiction by saying, "the trumpets are more of like, a… I guess, clique people" (Interview, December 13, 2007). When I asked Mariam to elaborate on her description of "clique people," she replied, "Well, some people aren't, like, by themself, normally. Some people always

have friends by their side and talking a lot or laughing" (Interview, December 13, 2007). In addition, the participants discussed affiliations with school activities as ways to feel popular as members of smaller social groups within the school and sixth grade.

"Sitting with girls and boys."

The girls in this study discussed their awareness of the opposite gender when I asked them about popularity. David, the only male participant, did not discuss girls in the same way. While he had much to say about the girls in his classes, he seemed confused when I asked him about seeking out friendships with girls in his grade. When I asked about girls, he stared blankly at me, not seeming to comprehend why he might want to interact with them. I will therefore explore gender barriers and social interactions through the eyes of the female participants as it relates to social status, or popularity.

Eileen told me about a group of girls she perceived to be the "top" of the social ladder in the sixth grade. She explained that they displayed their status to others by associating with a certain boy:

There's this crazy guy named Chris, who's like... I don't know how you would describe it. He's in orchestra, but he's hyper. Very hyper. So, people will just walk up to him and just be like, Oh, Chris! And hug him. And that's supposed to be like the cool thing. But most people, like some of my friends are like that's ridiculous. 'Cause, I mean, whenever [another student] sees him she's like, Chris... Chris! And they walk up to Chris every morning. And Chris is just sitting there on the bleachers and they'll be, like, Hi, Chris! And the next

159

one will come up and be like, Hi, Chris! And the next one, Hi, Chris! And

they'll sit down and then their posse will come over. (Interview, November

27, 2007)

Mariam's description of her own social status also contained references to public

interactions between boys and girls:

Um, well there's usually a table where most of the popular kids always sit

together with… girls and boys. But when I sit with Eileen and a bunch of

other girls, we're just always laughing and talking. We're not, I guess we're

not on the popular table, but we're popular to each other because we're always

friends and really good to each other. So it's like a table of all these girls who

are laughing and having fun with each other. (Interview, December 13, 2007)

Both Mariam and Eileen describe situations in which girls and boys interact in public.

Physical proximity to members of the opposite gender seemed to indicate elevated

social status to peers. In Eileen's story, girls display their popularity to one another by

publicly hugging a boy in their class. Mariam describes the "popular table" as a place

where boys and girls eat lunch together. When I observed students during their lunch

period, this appeared to be the only table at which boys and girls sat together. Other

tables included heterogeneous groupings of students comprised of various ethnic and

racial backgrounds, but otherwise students appeared to self-segregate by gender. As

lunch tables are visible to every sixth grade student, seating choices draw attention to

those who feel comfortable or confident enough to cross gender barriers.

Dressing "the same."

When Mariam, Lili, and Eileen described their peers they each noted similarities in attire. Although they did not tell me about their personal clothing choices or what those choices signified, they did describe and interpret the attire of other students who were not their close friends. Eileen was aware of her peers' attire when she first entered the sixth grade, noting similarities in clothing choices among social groups. She described the girls she viewed as popular stating, "they all, like, dress the same. It-It's just like everyone thinks they're the top. They all dress the same. So, yeah, it looks very much like a movie. Because they all dress the same" (Interview, November 27, 2007). Mariam also described "clique people" (peers she regularly saw with large groups of friends) saying, "they dress different sometimes" (Interview, December 13, 2007). Mariam used the word "different" to describe students who distinguished themselves from other groups by their clothing choices, while simultaneously associating themselves with other students. Though Lili repeatedly stated her opinion that there were no specific groups of people, she did tell me, "Well, I notice a lot of people wear black. A lot of people. Mostly, like, the dark... uh... Hispanic people and stuff. They wear a lot of dark colors." When I restated her description of the group, she corrected her earlier statements regarding social groups by saying, "The African Americans and, like, the Hispanics. They usually hang out together" (Interview, January 14, 2008).

Attire serves as another public portrayal of self (Cousins, 1999; Horvat & Antonio, 1999). Clothing worn by students displays a certain image to their peers and simultaneously identifies them with others who dress like them. On one visit to

161

Cardinal, I noticed small groups of girls in the hallway wearing sleeveless, form-fitting, green-sequined shirts. When I asked the band students about the sparkly attire, they told me that the girls were members of the dance team that performed at basketball games. While this instance of attire identified students with a school activity, other attire served to identify students as members of various other groups. As I walked through the school hallways, I noticed groups of Hispanic students, as Lili indicated, wearing black pants, black t-shirts with screen-printed logos, and large silver belts or jewelry. This clothing style served to identify students who wanted to associate with one another beyond innate physical appearances.

I also noticed similar styles of clothing worn by groups of students seated together in the cafeteria for lunch. David and his friends typically wore the same style of baggy blue jeans, oversized T-shirts, and sneakers. Just as musical preferences (when made public to others) may serve young adolescents as an identifying badge (North and Hargreaves, 1999), clothing appears to also function in the middle school setting as a form of social identification. According to Cousins (1999), emergent trends in music and clothing "are incorporated into personal and public politics" (p. 310). As school music (and specifically band music) may be viewed as a separate category or genre from popular music, these participants' "personal and public politics" of which Cousins speaks might only exist in the unique social context of the secondary school community. As indicated in the next section, students' choices regarding participation in school activities, such as band, demonstrate another means by which we might understand such personal and public portrayals of identity.

"Choosing one or the other:" Activities and social status.

At Cardinal Middle School, students often must choose between co-curricular and extra-curricular activities. This choice makes their identification with certain groups clearer to others, though some students might otherwise wish to identify with multiple groups of peers. Due to the rehearsal and concert schedules that often conflict with extra-curricular practices, students are unable to participate in both band and school sports. Lili explained, "Band is a very committed thing. So are the sports. So you either choose one or the other" (Interview, January 14, 2008). Eileen's account of her experiences with school athletics support Lili's story:

> Okay- so at the beginning of the year, I tried out for the soccer team. And I got on the soccer team so I played soccer and I had no conflicts. But especially with the after-school rehearsals. I was gonna try out for basketball, but I had to sign something saying I wasn't in band and I wasn't in orchestra and I wasn't in anything that could mess up the season. So, this girl who plays clarinet is on the basketball team and in band and she missed an after-school rehearsal because the coach is very... like, you have to be at everything, you have to be at *all* the practices, all the games, everything. And, I was gonna try out, but I couldn't try out because I was in band. (Interview, November 27, 2007)

Athletic coaches and administrators created policies that acted as boundaries between groups of students who were unable to participate in certain pairings of activities. These barriers between band students and athletic teams presented me with an interesting viewpoint on students' processes of social identification.

As the participants described their experiences in band, I became aware of their internal conflicts regarding band membership and their social experiences in the larger middle school context. Lili told me that she thought other students did not perceive membership in band as "cool." She immediately contrasted this statement by telling me, "I think being in band is pretty cool" (Interview, January 14, 2008). Within her own group of friends, most of whom were band students, Lili described her school activity as "cool," though she was aware non-band students might not share the same opinion.

Litowitz (1993) states, "mastering activities and establishing a sense of oneself are not two distinct lines of development but are, rather, entwined in complex ways- that one cannot 'study' one without the other" (p. 184). Due to their inability to pursue all school activity-related interests, students' weighed the "coolness" factor associated with certain activities against their desire to participate. Depending on their membership in (or rejection from) social groups, their choices to continue participating in the band program may have been based more on peer influence than prior experiences or individual interest. I explore this further in subsequent sections.

Eileen perceived some groups of her peers to be closed social circles. She told me, "like the soccer people who... I mean I'm not gonna say they're mean, but they're not very friendly. And they have like a social circle that is just them, and that's it" (Interview, November 27, 2007). Possibly because of her initial rejection by the soccer players, Eileen referred to other groups of students involved in a school activity (such as a sport) as unwelcoming to outsiders or non-participants. During our first interview, she described some of her classmates saying, "They all play travel

softball. And oh, they're all very snooty about it, too" (Interview, November 27, 2007).

While interactions between genders, clothing choices, and activity affiliations all contribute to perceived social status within the middle school context, there is no clear recipe for "being cool" or gaining membership into a "clique." Mariam told me that she is neither popular, nor unpopular. She explained, "I have lots of friends, but not 'cause of the way I dress, 'cause I'm always like making people laugh and everything, yeah" (Interview, December 13, 2007). Eileen contradicted her earlier statements when she told me that many of her peers were friendly. She said, "since they're nice, people are nice back to them. So they get to be popular" (Interview, November 27, 2007). Contradictions, such as the preceding statement, provided me with lines of questioning and journal prompts that I would otherwise not have pursued. As participants contradicted each other and themselves, I found avenues by which I could ask follow-up questions regarding ingroups and outgroups, as well as popularity, to gain deeper insight into these students' middle school experiences.

"Annoying:" The opposite of popular.

Lili, Eileen, and Mariam all used the term *annoying* to negatively describe peers who they did not consider to be friends. Lili succinctly defined this term when I asked her if there were certain students who she viewed as clearly unpopular. She told me, "I'd guess I'd say they're sort of annoying sometimes." Resonating with her previous statements regarding blending in and sticking out, Lili described annoying classmates saying, "They like to be, like, really out there." As an example, she told me about one peer who "just randomly" called out to her in the hallway between

165

classes. "There's this one person who called my name, like, every day. And I don't know why. And I'm like… I think it's really strange" (Lili, Interview, December 19, 2007). Inappropriate or atypical behavior seemed to cause frustration among these participants, warranting a description of their peers as annoying.

Mariam stated that learning alongside large numbers of boys caused her frustration. When I asked why, she stated that they could be annoying. Elaborating on this description, Mariam said, "Well, they have their different likes and they can be obnoxious. So it can be, um, sometimes hard to concentrate in class" (Interview, April 4, 2008). Eileen also described a peer as annoying due to his disruptive classroom behavior. Bill, a fellow percussion student in the concert band, is annoying to Eileen because "he tells me, You don't know *anything* about percussion." Bill "just makes me mad because you know, I really try hard at it and I like it. So, for something to say that, it just really gets me" (Interview, November 27, 2007). In another instance, Eileen described a moment in which Bill's behavior caused her frustration, leading her to describe him as annoying:

So, Rimon, he was just like playing the clave[s] part, which was sixteenth notes and Bill was, like, "Rimon what are you doing?" And Rimon was, like, "oh I'm just, uh, I'm playing cymbal" and he was, like, "You're playing it wrong." But Bill, he's not, he doesn't try to be funny. He kinda mocks people sometimes so not very many people like him. (Interview, November 27, 2007)

Instead of telling his classmate, Rimon, that he had performed a rhythm incorrectly and then offering some constructive advice, Bill chose only to criticize. Eileen interpreted Bill's choice to speak negatively, rather than cooperatively or

166

constructively, as annoying. On another occasion, Eileen brought up Bill's name when describing annoying behavior in the classroom. While the previous example demonstrates a relatively personal interaction (between members of a small instrument section), the following example describes peers drawing public, negative attention to themselves and their section by acting inappropriately (according to the Cardinal Middle School code of conduct). Eileen specifically stated that she found Bill annoying because he "got the section in trouble:"

> And he just gets really annoying. Like he'll stand behind me and scream curse words, not like say curse words. And I'm like, "I'm playing leave me alone!" Or he'll take mallets and try to play too. And I'm like, "if you want to play, play on a different instrument. We're working on this piece." And today I was like, "Here take my music and play on vibes." And he said, "Oh I don't wanna play." (Interview, February 15, 2008)

In this narrative, Eileen describes Bill's "annoying" behavior as non-compliant and attention-seeking. Mr. Wray noticed Bill performing the incorrect parts and speaking inappropriately (when he cursed at his classmates), causing undue attention toward the percussion section.

Eileen, like Lili, was made to feel uncomfortable by a peer who drew attention to both himself and each of them. They both described this behavior as "annoying." Conversely, the participants in this study perceived those who "fit in" as more popular than those who "stuck out." Perceptions of "annoying" behavior seemed to be based, in part, on the possibility of "sticking out." The physical location of these social interactions seemed to influence perceptions of social status and self-

confidence. Being the only student to play the oboe or tuba inside the band classroom did not appear to make a student "stick out," but being singled out in the hallway could be labeled "annoying," and, therefore, "uncool."

Social Spaces

Lunch: A Place to be "Noticed"

Students do not have assigned seats during the lunch period. When walking through the cafeteria, I observed groups of students talking and laughing as they ate. I instantly noticed the way students grouped themselves at tables in the cafeteria. The physical place chosen served to associate some students with peers, while simultaneously disassociating with others. Eileen succinctly described her search for a social group and a place to sit, when she told me, "It took me awhile to like, find where I should really be." She explained that during the first few days of school, she sat with the only classmate she knew as a friend. Searching for a place she "should really be," Eileen sought out friendship with girls she associated with soccer, an activity in which she had participated through various organizations outside of school. She explained:

> I sat with the soccer people who all play travel soccer and it was about seven
> of them. And I sat there the whole lunch and no one would talk to me and I
> would just sit there and sit there and, like, no one said a word to me. So, I-I-I
> was, like, determined 'cause I wanted to fit in there. So I was, like, I'm gonna
> keep sitting here and they're gonna notice me. (Interview, November 27,
> 2007)

Eileen searched for a social group, rather than just one friend. She additionally sought friendship with those who she felt she shared common goals and interests. As a confident soccer player, she viewed her peers positively, trying to "fit in" with them even while they ignored her. Though this initial attempt failed, Eileen found friendship elsewhere:

Aliya, she was just like, "okay they're not talking to you. And, you know, this is just getting ridiculous 'cause you're being miserable at lunch, so come sit with my friends." So she met this group of people, like Lili and Sophia, this other girl, Regina, and I. And we all sit together with some of their other friends, too. (Interview, November 27, 2007)

Aliya, a fellow band classmate and percussionist, saved Eileen from an uncomfortable social situation although they had not known each other before the 2007-2008 school year. Lili, Sophia, and Regina were also members of the band and sat together during lunch, in part, because of these common interests. Eileen both found a place for herself among friends, as well as a place to portray to others an aspect of her emerging identity as a middle school student.

For many sixth grade students at Cardinal Middle School, lunch is the only time throughout the day during which students might socialize in ways that break through pre-determined physical and academic boundaries. Students often move from one class to the next based on computer-generated schedules in order to balance the number of students enrolled in each class section. Students are also grouped into grade-level teams, named at Cardinal Middle School after transportation vehicles: the "Gliders" and the "Jets." Each team of students shares the same "core" teachers in

language arts, social studies, math, science, and reading. However, students from both the Glider and Jet teams share the same lunch period in the same cafeteria. As I found during both observations and interviews, the boundaries established by adults governing the rest of the school day also permeated the lunchroom, even though the students had the freedom to cross these boundaries and break through the adult-imposed team and course groupings.

Teams: The Gliders and the Jets

During the initial interviews, participants talked about their perceptions of the two teams and shared their experiences regarding interactions between members of each team. Through these conversations I learned about differences between the two groups of students and how this divide may or may not have influenced their social interactions. Eileen, a member of the Gliders, described her initial impressions of the two sixth grade teams:

Okay, so you've got the Gliders and the Jets. And they're on two totally different sides of the hallway. Two teams. We all have the same teachers, but, the Jets, they all have such teachers and they all take from those teachers. And Gliders have their own set of teachers. I'm a Glider. But in terms of Jets, I have no idea, like, who's popular over there. And so, a lot of my friends are more popular Jet-wise. And I think people are nicer to me who are Jets. Which, you know, I'm happy on the Glider team, you know. I have some friends there. and stuff. All my teachers are nice though. Um, yeah, but a lot of my friends are more popular on the Jets team. (Interview, November 27, 2007)

This description paints the two teams as social worlds with distinct differences. These worlds, in Eileen's eyes, functioned with different standards for social status. Mariam, a Jet, noted differences in academic status between the two teams as well, saying:

> Well, somehow I think the Gliders have more of the popular kids than the Jets. The Jets are more the serious, smarter in like seventh grade math instead of sixth grade math. Mhmm. 'Cause most of the, like, popular kids, uh, are on the Gliders side. (Interview, December 13, 2007)

Eileen also stated that the separation led to conflict between the two teams. "Jets and stuff, uh.. who... like some of them are still friends with Gliders. But you kinda have to keep it a secret because people will be, like, Oh my gosh, you're friends with Gliders?" (Interview, November 27, 2007). This perceived difference in social structure and physical separation between peers caused Eileen some frustration as she searched to form new friendships in her new school, a place where she knew few peers prior to beginning sixth grade.

Lili, a member of the Jets team, presented a different viewpoint. While she referred to her close friend, Regina, as being "on the Glider side," she stated that she has friends on both teams. She used the word "side" to describe teams (possibly due to the physical locations of the classrooms), though she felt no social pressure to maintain friendships only with teammates. Mariam's description of the process of forming social groups resonates with Lili's account of social interaction. Mariam, a member of the Jets team, told me that she eats lunch "with my friend, Carol, and she's not in band. And, um, a bunch of other girls, like, Beth. She's a flutist. And,

like, some people. I sit with Gliders, too." I then directly asked Mariam if the differences between the teams were simply for class placement. She replied, "Yeah. 'Cause you have the Gliders and the Jets and at lunch they're all together. They're all friends" (Interview, December 13, 2007)

"Blending In" and "Sticking Out"

All six participants discussed their first impressions of Cardinal Middle School and their search for a comfortable social group. Students appeared to be highly conscious of peer associations with various school activities, including comparisons of such activities with similar elementary school involvement. Though they all searched for their place in a social group, Lili, Eileen, and Kejah used the terms *blending in* and *sticking out* to describe the process of finding their personal space in the social world of the middle school. Eileen first used this terminology when she told me, "I usually try to blend in and sometimes I start my own groups or trends" (Journal, January 6, 2008). She considers herself "a leader, not a follower," but due to her desire to "blend in," she uses her leadership skills to influence peers. As her classmates and friends act and dress similarly to her, Eileen no longer feels as though she sticks out. When I asked Lili to define *sticking out* she replied, "Yeah, I don't like being the center of things" (Interview, January 14, 2008). Kejah also described sticking out as calling attention to oneself, as she told me about a fellow clarinetist she admired:

> Kejah: 'Cause he can play good. But he sits in the second row so
> nobody really notices him, except Mr. Wray.
> ARH: So he doesn't make himself stick out?

172

Kejah: Yeah. He blends in.

ARH: Interesting. Is that better than sticking out?

Kejah: Yeah it's better than him showing off. (Interview, February 13, 2008)

Lili explained that she likes being part of the band because she blends into a large social group. She does not feel as though she sticks out when she plays an instrument in her chosen elective content area though she has the ability to try something unique. Lili agreed to play the oboe, even though no other sixth grade students played that instrument. She left her previous section, the clarinets, to learn a skill unlike anyone else in the band. When I asked her if she felt as though she stuck out as the only oboist, she told me that she did not because she blends in with the large band. As a member of the larger group, Lili did not often feel as though she stuck out, rather that she held a unique position in the band.

Only after reviewing all of the transcripts and journals did I become aware of an interesting fact regarding this theme. Two of the three participants who used the phrases blending in and sticking out were also the only two students of color involved in this study. Lili, a Chinese student, and Kejah, an African-American student, both expressed efforts to search for ways to blend in at Cardinal Middle School while still maintaining their awareness of those who stuck out. In her research on multicultural education, Gay (2000) finds that students of color, specifically African-American and Latino students, form social groups before engaging in school learning activities. Gay states:

In making these connections, individuals are readying themselves for "work" by cultivating a social context. They are, in effect, activating their cultural

173

socialization that an individual functions better within the context of a group. Without the group as an anchor, referent, and catalyst, the individual is set adrift, having to function alone. (Gay, 2000, p. 94)

The students' desire to blend in and not stick out may demonstrate their need to establish a social "anchor" in their school setting, as Gay proposes.

Classes and Labels

Popular media forms, such as films, have contributed to stereotypes such as the popular cheerleader (as in the movie *Mean Girls*) and the band geek (as portrayed in the movie *American Pie*). Though many students with whom I have previously worked referred to themselves as band kids, I did not approach the participants in this study with that assumption. As they had only recently enrolled in a secondary band program, their understanding of the curriculum remained limited during the first semester of the school year. However, as early as November, participants began to categorize groups of their peers in terms of course enrollment.

Lili told me that she chose to sit primarily with friends from band during lunch periods. When I asked her if being in band helped her to find a group where she felt comfortable, she replied, "Well, all my classes do. 'Cause I have friends that I don't even sit with" (Interview, December 19, 2007). Eileen told me that she doesn't "really pay attention" to students she doesn't know from classes. When she described a group of students with whom she did not associate, she explained, "I don't have any classes with them either." At the beginning of the school year, Liza, the first friend Eileen sat with at lunch, did not share any classes with Eileen. This lack of curricular association during the school day put distance between them. She told me, "We didn't

have any classes together. So it just got kinda... I don't know." Eileen then sought out

friends on her sixth grade team, the Gliders, and band classmates rather than continue

eating lunch with Liza, a member of the Jets team. During our first interview, Eileen

told me, "It might just happen by coincidence, but a lot of my friends are in band.

Like Aliya. She's in percussion. Anna: she plays trumpet. And Lili, who's on oboe.

And Sophia: She plays saxophone" (Interview, November 27, 2007).

Eileen also described friends she chose to sit with at lunch. I decided it might

be helpful to ask Eileen to tell me about groups of kids she chose not to sit with at

lunch. She described "one group. I think, well, none of them are in band. They all

take... I dunno something" (Interview, November 27, 2007). She regularly saw these

students eating together during lunch, yet did not know how to categorize them. Her

default category at this stage of the school year was course enrollment, just as both

she and Lili described their formation of friendships based upon shared courses.

Unfortunately, without knowing what classes her peers chose, Eileen was unable to

categorize or identify them other than to differentiate herself in relation to them.

Kejah also experienced this difficulty. After she listed approximately a dozen

friends and their instruments, I asked Kejah if she had friends in other elective

courses. She replied, "Um, I'm not really sure. 'Cause I have friends, but I don't

know their elective" (Interview, February 1, 2008). She identified many of her friends

as band students, specifying their chosen instruments as she listed their names.

Conversely, she had no identifying descriptions to accompany her other friends'

names. Participants' initial descriptions of peers seemed to be based, in part, on their

association with coursework.

"Nerds and friends."

Cardinal Middle School, like many public schools in the United States, offers multiple course levels. For example, sixth grade students might enroll in a sixth grade math class or instead take an advanced math class in which the coursework mirrors the seventh grade math curriculum. Cardinal Middle School also categorizes sixth grade social studies as either regular or intensified. Students labeled "gifted" or advanced in their subject area enroll in the latter category. Both participants and teachers regularly spoke of these course designations during interviews. When I asked open-ended questions regarding peer groups and friends, many of the participants described each other using evaluative language and referencing course enrollment. For instance, Mariam commented, "There's a lot of popular kids that are in seventh grade math" (Interview, December 13, 2007). Given the connection Mariam suggested between popularity and academic achievement, it is not surprising that Eileen aired the following concern with her peers' perceptions of her as an advanced student:

> So no one wants to be friends with nerds. Yeah, that's what I found out, like, the second day of school. I was, like, "Hey I'm in seventh grade math! I'm a nerd!" And everyone was like, "Oh yeah, you're a nerd." And I was, like, "Oh that's not good." Yeah, that didn't work out so well. (Interview, November 27, 2007)

As Eileen searched for a place to "blend in," she moved between groups of students she associated with different aspects of the Cardinal Middle School curriculum. Eating lunch with a member of another sixth grade team "didn't work out

so well" so Eileen attempted to "blend in" with members of her team, the Gliders. She spoke of them as "the soccer players" who did not accept her. Her feeling that peers perceived her as a nerd also influenced how she formed social connections with others toward the beginning of her middle school career.

As Mariam stated, the Gliders appeared to include fewer students enrolled in intensified, or advanced, courses than the Jets. I asked the sixth grade counselor, Mr. Vega, about possible differences between the teams regarding students' academic achievement or course level placements. He stated that due to a philosophical difference between the faculty members of the teams, the Jets did in fact have more sections of intensified language arts than the Gliders did during the 2007-2008 school year. However, each team still maintained approximately the same number of students in advanced math courses. The results of this philosophical difference appeared to influence students' perceptions of themselves in relation to coursework. Eileen, a member of the Gliders team, did not share her status as an advanced student with as many members of her team as she did with members of the Jets team. According to Kinney (1993), "Forming friendships and new interests helps one avoid standing out because of one's intelligence and reduces the possibility of being stigmatized as the nerdy type" (p. 32). Eileen's membership in band permitted her to form friendships with other advanced students and students who shared an interest in instrumental music.

Choosing band, choosing friends.

David, Sophia, Kejah, Mariam, and Lili enrolled in the Cardinal Middle School Concert Band knowing at least one other classmate who also chose to enroll in

177

this band class. Lili told me that she "chose band this year because i like playing an instrument and being with my friends" (Journal, January 20, 2008). Sophia decided to enroll in band because "it's also fun to play with my friends (most of my friends r in band)" (Journal, January 21, 2008). Mariam explained that she "chose band because it was one of the popular choices" (Journal, January 21, 2008). When she used the term "popular," she referred to the large number of students enrolled in the band program.

When choosing her courses, Mariam specifically sought out places where she might have opportunities to meet large numbers of peers and possibly form friendships with those who had similar interests or skills. I asked the other participants if they thought about their classmates when they made course choices. David told me, "Well, kind of. Because then you're not, like, a loner." He stated that avoiding feeling "like a loner" was important because "then you have to start over" the process of forming friendships. I asked him if he thought choosing electives, such as band, encompassed choosing the content as well as the peer group. He explained, "Sort of. 'Cause, like, if you chose a class that no one you know is in… it's gonna be a pretty tough year." (Interview, March 27, 2008).

Lili also described the influence of friends on her enrollment in school music and other activities. She told me that she and Sophia "usually do things together:"

> Like she was going to try out for the soccer thing yesterday. So was I, but I know it was yesterday and I was sick yesterday, so I didn't go. She didn't go either. She wanted me to go. I wouldn't have gone either if she didn't go. (Interview, January 14, 2008)

178

These middle school students' course enrollment decisions appeared to be based, in part, by their perceptions of their abilities to "fit in" as well as knowledge of friends' course choices. Enrollment in most coursework does not constitute a decision, but rather a pre-determined placement based on academic achievement and the need for equal enrollment numbers in course sections. While students do not choose their language arts, reading, math, and science classes, they are aware of how they may be evaluated by their peers based on their class and team placements. By enrolling in band, students were able to choose with whom they would spend a portion of their day. Thus band, as their elective class, appears to serve social functions in addition to learning musical content knowledge. Even if these participants did not know many band classmates prior to the 2007-2008 school year, they understood that band was a "popular choice," providing increased opportunities to form friendships and create a place for themselves within the larger Cardinal Middle School community. Though these students shared mixed experiences regarding perceptions of band outside of their band ingroup, the sheer number of students enrolled in the program provided a social safety net as they began lives as middle school students.

Being in Band

"Telling People I'm in Band"

I am sitting in the audience at Cardinal Middle School watching and hearing the fall music concert that takes place just prior to Halloween. I am happy to have a seat since I notice that there is standing room only in the large middle school auditorium. Mr. Wray walks on stage wearing a tuxedo, vampire cape,

179

and white gloves, dressed appropriately for a performance that takes place around Halloween. The beginning level Cadet Band members are already seated on stage holding their instruments. Rather than wearing their black and white formal concert attire, the students are wearing various costumes for this October performance. Mr. Wray introduces the ensemble and the two-line beginning band exercise they are about to perform. As they finish performing their first two-line piece of music, an older student in the audience yells, "That's straight from the red book!" [band classroom method book used by the sixth grade students and remembered by older seventh and eighth grade students] After two more selections, the Cadet Band files offstage while the Concert Band simultaneously enters the stage from the opposite side. The audience applauds throughout this transition. The Concert Band performance two pieces. After the final cut-off, they receive an instantaneous standing ovation from their families and peers in the audience. Nearly the entire audience jumps to their feet as I hear many whistles and cheers from the student section lasting minutes at a time. (Field Notes, October 19, 2007)

Peer support for band students was audible throughout this first public performance. The whistles and cheers I heard from audience members as well as the standing ovation conveyed a sense of admiration for the band members. I saw a few students smile at the audience as they exited the stage following their performance. They appeared to be happy about the very public experience. Lili told me, "I like saying I'm in band and I play an instrument" (Interview, December 19, 2007). Her statement corroborates my perception of band as a publicly acceptable (even

laudable) experience in the Cardinal Middle School community. The enrollment

numbers across the three music programs (orchestra, band, and chorus) also

demonstrate students' clear preference for the band program. The band program

encompasses four large ensembles and includes nearly a quarter of the school

population. No other elective program boasts enrollment numbers this large. The

orchestra program includes less than 50 students, while chorus numbers fluctuate

between grading periods. I will explore many of the factors that influence such

enrollment later in this document. In the next section, I present the students'

perceptions regarding band as they compare and contrast self-perceptions with music

outgroups, in this case the orchestra and chorus classroom communities.

Other Music Classes

I asked Kejah why she chose band instead of other music classes. She

responded, "I like band. Because, um, like it's a more excitement" (Interview,

December 21, 2007). Lili told me that she chose to enroll in band instead of orchestra

because she "just thought band was really cooler" than orchestra (Interview,

December 19, 2007).

> The Cardinal Middle School String Orchestra walks onto the stage for their
>
> first performance of the 2007-2008 school year. They wear uniform dark
>
> green T-shirts with the word "Orchestra" printed in bold, capital letters on the
>
> back. Paired with jeans, the T-shirts are casual yet clearly coordinated. The
>
> orchestra teacher wears simple white and black concert dress. They perform
>
> transcriptions of symphonic literature in the Western, classical tradition. As
>
> they perform, I hear adults and children in the audience talking audibly with

181

one another, apparently paying more attention to their conversations with one

another than to the students' performance on stage. Following each selection,

the audience members stop talking, quietly applauding for an appropriate, yet

brief, few moments. (Field Notes, October 19, 2007)

In the fall concert I observed, the differences between band and orchestra were

marked. The contrast in performance attire (T-shirts versus assorted Halloween

costumes) and the audience response attested to the degree of this difference. The

students expressed a similar characterization when they talked about choosing to

participate to band instead of orchestra. Mariam told me that while band and orchestra

students shared many commonalities, such as "good grades," she had more friends in

the band. According to Mariam, she became friends with band kids "because they're

more of the fun people to me" (Interview, December 13, 2007).

Band students demonstrated their "fun" qualities both publicly on the concert

stage as well as in the privacy of the practice room or their home. Adler (2002)

asserts that two levels of identity exist. The first, "private selves," refers to "inner

self-perceptions," while the second, "public selves," refers to "perceptions of how

they are perceived by others" (Adler, 2002, p. 177). Adler continues:

The two levels of identity are reciprocal; their developing private identities

determine what they allow themselves to show others; their experimenting

with developing public identities shows them what elements of the "self"

would return positive or negative responses from others, and therefore which

elements are appropriate to remain as part of their final "self" product. (p.177)

These participants demonstrated an interest in instrumental music, but their impetus for choosing the band class over orchestra seemed to be based partially on their perceptions of the groups' public performances. Unlike other classes such as math or language arts, music classes encompass both individual achievement as well as group achievement. The individual student is not necessarily aware of other students' progress in their math class. Students in math classes do not typically perform their mathematical knowledge publicly for the rest of the community. Music classes, on the other hand, demonstrate knowledge and skill through public performances. While all of the band students appeared to enjoy music performance, the band class served as a demonstration of their "public selves." Therefore, they were quite aware of peer responses to various ensembles. Lili told me that her friends in the sixth grade responded positively to their concerts. Students' choices to participate in band were based, in part, on such positive responses. As Tarrant et al. (2001) state, "adolescents will use the evaluative connotations associated with such activities as a means of distinguishing between groups in order to maintain a positive social identity" (p.599).

In addition to their outward appearances during their first public performances, the band and orchestra performed contrasting styles of music. The participants in this study described their perspectives on these differences when asked to compare the ensembles. Sophia explained that orchestra and band students share more similarities than differences, saying "I don't think we r different exept what kind of music we play" (Journal, November 25, 2007). Kejah also noted the difference in musical literature when she told me, "I don't really like orchestra

because their music is kind of soft" (Interview, December 21, 2007). When I asked Sophia about the band music she was learning, she described it as "cool" and "fun to play." I asked her if she would describe orchestra music similarly. Her immediate reply was "The music they play isn't really good" (Interview, December 11, 2007). Mariam elaborated on how performing different music publicly influenced her perceptions of band students as "more of the fun people," saying, "I think that band is more of a fun thing compared to orchestra because you can be louder, more expressive, and not always solemn" (Journal, December 4, 2007).

These students described band music positively and orchestra music less so. According to Bakagiannis and Tarrant (2006), "musical preference makes an important contribution to the formation and maintenance of social identity by providing individuals with a basis for social comparison and self-evaluation" (p. 129). While prior research encompassed many genres of music (including classical and popular subgenres), these scholars did not study music written specifically for school ensembles. In order to gain deeper insight into how the students perceived differences between band and orchestra music, I asked the students if they were initially drawn to band music and what, if anything, they liked about the music itself. Sophia explained that she wanted to play the saxophone because "you get to play all the, like, jazz music. Not just, like, regular music. It's just really cool." (Interview, December 11, 2007). I asked Sophia what she meant by "regular music" and she explained that she had referred to music in the Western, Classical tradition. She then said, "You wouldn't, like, find it [saxophone] in a normal orchestra."

As the band students began to contrast their experiences regarding band and orchestra in the school context, I asked them about their experiences with choral music. All six participants had participated in elementary choral and general music education, but none had chosen to enroll in chorus as they entered middle school. Mariam explained that "chorus is more free" than band (Journal, December 4, 2007). By using the word "free," Mariam referred to the classroom structures and effort she felt necessary to achieve success in that content area. In a journal entry, Eileen explained:

> Chorus is not as complicated as band, from my point of view. The music is usally written on the treble cleff, which I think is easier to read. You almost always sing the melody, and you have a lot of people who are singing the exact same thing alongside of you. (November 26, 2007)

Eileen's description of chorus and band also resonated with Mariam's description of band as more difficult and chorus as more "free." Eileen told me about her elementary choral music experiences:

> Maybe it's just me but it didn't challenge me as much as band did. And it's just like you're singing, and that's it you know. You breathe and stuff and sometimes you get really complicated, but with band you have to multi-task. (Interview, November 27, 2007)

In a journal entry, Eileen defined multi-tasking in band by saying that a band student must "blow air, press keys or hit something, read music, and watch the conducter" (Journal, November 26, 2007). Although choral music performance involves all of these elements except for instrumental technique, Eileen used this rationalization to

explain her interest in instrumental music performance. She qualified these judgments by reflecting on her place in the band. As a percussionist, she acknowledged that she uses different technical skills than her wind instrument playing peers. "Maybe 'cause I'm in percussion and you don't use your breathing. And that might be part of it. But, I don't know. Just comparing it, I don't think- I thought they were *very* different" (Interview, November 27, 2007). Mariam's description of chorus as "more free" was also based on her perception that choral music performance itself was "easier" than band performance. Similar to Eileen, Mariam described singing as an easier skill than instrumental music technique:

> Well, in band you have to figure out how to breathe and you're fingering and everything. And you have to learn how to play and song and the dynamics and everything. And in chorus you can just, like, sing. (Interview, December 13, 2007)

Some of the participants described orchestra as a more challenging class than band due to their perceptions of technical skills required to play string instruments. Eileen explained, "I think orchestra is almost the same as band as far as diffuculty goes. Except, it's probably a little bit harder because of the finger positions and such" (Journal, November 26, 2007). Mariam felt that orchestra required more "concentration" than band. Eileen told me, "I personally think orchestra is harder because you have to yeah get all the stuff and the bow and the strings" (Interview, November 27, 2007). Based on this perceived difference in difficulty level, I asked Mariam if there were differences in academic achievement between instrumental music students (band versus orchestra). She told me "kids in orchestra get better

186

grades" than students enrolled in band. Mariam explained that her choice to enroll in band was based on her feeling that, "band is in the middle of orchestra and chorus with a lot of concentration and a lot of enjoyness" (Journal, December 4, 2007).

Band Students "Do Better"

As Eileen and Mariam indicated, participation in the Cardinal Middle School Concert Band required "focus" and "concentration." All six participants in this study described the band classroom as a place in which students achieved high levels of performance by complying with a rehearsal routine and behavior expectations. David described himself and his classmates saying, "Well, I mean. It shows that a lot of band students get better grades in math and stuff. But, I think it really depends on who you are" (Interview, December 3, 2007). In this statement, David said, "it shows," but could not tell me what "it" was. I then noticed advocacy advertisements published in music education journals posted on a bulletin board at the front of the band room. The posters presented data on higher standardized achievement scores, lower school attrition rates, and a variety of other benefits touted by music education advocates as effects of enrollment in formal music education. This and other media could have influenced David's and the other participants' thoughts regarding their fellow music students.

"I have a lot of skill."

When I asked Kejah what it was like to be a band member, she told me that she felt a great deal of responsibility and believed herself to posses more "skills" than her peers not enrolled in band. She explained that enrollment in band carried:

A lot of responsibility. 'Cause he like makes you take your instrument home and bring it back. And always have your music and a pencil. I always have a pencil. And that I have a lot of skill. And he doesn't like it if you throw away one of your music pieces. (Interview, March 11, 2008)

Kejah previously threw away two clarinet parts, believing that the Concert Band would no longer study those pieces following a performance. Mr. Wray informed her that disposing of music was not permitted and she needed to pay for the lost parts. Mr. Wray held students to a high standard of musicianship as well as professional behavior in the traditional concert band setting. Kejah's perspectives regarding responsibility were based on Mr. Wray's choice of language and behavioral methods used to gain students' attention.

As I walk in to the classroom a few minutes after class began, I sense a palpable tension. All of the students look directly at Mr. Wray. Their faces and bodies are nearly still. They sit straight in their chairs, positioned toward the front of the seats with a few inches of space between their backs and the chair backs. They hold their instruments upright in their laps. Mr. Wray is speaking to the class about "hair pin dynamics," also known as a crescendo followed by a decrescendo. He draws an analogy between the dynamic contrast and a crashing wave. Mid-sentence, Mr. Wray shouts "Discipline!" in a raised voice. Students immediately and silently sit taller in their seats as Mr. Wray looks at one student who picks his instrument up off of his lap. (Field Notes, February 15, 2008)

The students in the Concert Band class heard Mr. Wray use words like "discipline" and "responsibility" to describe behavior he deemed appropriate for class. While Mr. Wray consistently and frequently articulated classroom behavior and performance expectations, the students appeared to internalize this language as I observed them behaving similarly in some other settings.

David heard and read positive statements about band students from Mr. Wray, family, and friends. He also regularly heard the language used in the band classroom to describe appropriate behavior for band students. As described in the narrative below, his experiences as a band student supported these prior assumptions. He wrote in a journal entry:

> A LOT OF THE STUDENTS WHO TAKE BAND DO BETTER
> ACADEMICALLY AND DONT THINK OR ACT ACT AS VIOLENTLY
> AS OTHERS. A LOT OF US LISTEN TO THE LUCH STAFF MORE, AND
> WE ALL ARE (FOR THE MOST PART) FRIENDS. (Journal, November 25,
> 2007)

This is the only example of David's writing in which all words are typed in capital letters. This may be due to his positive feeling about the band or because of a simple accidental keystroke. While I saw band students interacting differently with peers and teachers in other settings, my observations in the cafeteria supported David's description. Most of the Concert Band students sat together during lunch periods. Though I witnessed school administrative staff discipline other students in the cafeteria, I never observed any table comprised of band students singled out in this setting. The Concert Band students who grouped themselves together as friends

appeared to interact similarly both within and outside of the band classroom. As their friendships seemed to form due to their relationships inside of the band classroom, their group interactions and behaviors were maintained even when they left that social context.

"In band you have to perform"

Mariam and David perceived band students to be academically successful. I asked Mariam to describe kids who want to play instruments. She told me "that's a kind of person who could really pay attention and focus. That gets pretty much good grades" (Interview, December 13, 2007). Mariam then compared this to one of the courses offered to sixth grade students:

> Well, in band you have to perform. And if you don't listen to the directions and what they tell you to do, then you're gonna fail in the performances or tests or anything. And home ec. [home economics] is more like just a hobby you do. Not like an instrument, but making jewelry, I guess, or a pillow or something. (Interview, December 13, 2007)

Eileen also described sixth grade band students as "really focused" (Interview, November 27, 2007). When I specifically asked her to compare band students to other sixth grade students, she told me, "most people in band, compared to the exploration, take intensified classes more in band than the people in exploration" (Interview, February 1, 2008). Exploration is a course rotation over the duration of the school year. Sixth grade students who want to try many elective content areas or who do not have a particular area in which they are motivated to enroll may instead choose Exploration. Some of the students enrolled did not have any desire to take a particular

in-depth course of study in addition to the six other yearlong classes. Mariam formed a belief that band students were more "focused" in comparison to students in the Exploration rotation.

Participants' perceptions that fellow band students were more academically successful or "focused" may be due to their experiences in the band. However, these perceptions may have also been influenced by their course enrollment outside of the elective period. For example, the students commented on their social status in relation to peers enrolled in intensified versus regular level courses. Eileen may have felt comfortable in the band class because it was a setting in which she found more students enrolled in intensified classes than on her team, the Gliders. The perception of students enrolled in Exploration as less "focused" may also have been based on students' experiences with their band classmates, peers they viewed as academically successful and well behaved. Bakagiannis and Tarrant (2006) maintain, "people have a tendency to favor members of their own social groups (or 'ingroups') at the expense of non-members (members of 'outgroups') (p. 129). This evaluative tendency to devalue members of an outgroup was demonstrated repeatedly by the primary participants as they described both members of the band (their ingroup) and students who did not participate in the band program (the outgroup).

Within the band classroom, subgroups formed during the 2007-2008 school year. These subgroups appeared to function as even closer friendship groups than the large band class. According to Giordano (1995), "the world of intimate friendships can still be considered a kind of safety zone when compared to the wider circle" (p. 681). As students identified more closely with their instrument sections, or subgroups,

191

they also began to devalue other members of the band who were not members of their subgroup.

<p style="text-align:center">"You Get Closest With Your Section"</p>

Just as Cardinal Middle School Concert Band students began to form friendships and a community of band students, instrument sections (seated together in the band classroom) also served as spaces for community building. Mariam wrote, "Taking band helps you make new friends. You get closest with your section though" (Journal, November 9, 2007). When I asked Kejah to tell me about her friends, she told me "most of them- they're in my clarinet section" (Interview, December 21, 2007). Sophia looked to her fellow saxophonists for help and support as she developed her musical skills. She explained, "I'm not the greatest saxophone player, but im getting better & my friends in sax section r helpful" (Journal, November 16, 2007). Similarly, Mariam described her fellow flutists as friends. She told me that her best friend was also a flutist, "but everybody's also really nice" (Interview, December 13, 2007). David described his section as a group of friends as well. When I asked him to tell me about his section, he replied, "the low brass sectin (at least in this band) has its own little groupe, we hang out during and after school and we have our own little circle of friends" (Journal, November 25, 2007).

While these participants described their classmates on like instruments as "friends," they also spoke positively about the sound produced by their instrument sections. David spoke proudly about serving as the "foundation of the band" by playing the low brass lines. As the only tuba player in the low brass section, he wishfully told me, "It would be cool to have a bunch more tubas though. It'd be an

awesome sound" (Interview, February 7, 2008). On another occasion, I observed Mr.

Wray publicly stating a similar sentiment to the entire band:

> Mr. Wray listens to the low brass section perform an excerpt of music. As the
>
> rest of the class observes and listens, Mr. Wray expertly asks guiding
>
> questions in order to assist the low brass students in problem solving and
>
> correcting their technical errors. The low brass section performs this task very
>
> quietly. Mr. Wray addresses their dynamic level, saying that the low brass
>
> section should have strength in their sound. He tells them that when they play,
>
> it should sound "like turning on the shower and tubas come pouring out!"
>
> David pumps his fist in the air, smiling. (Field Notes, February 13, 2008)

Both the friendships formed and the increasing musical skills attained on their

instruments seemed to heighten students' self-confidence as band members. The

students also indicated other aspects of their section as important to their ability to

identify as members of groups.

"Boys and Girls in My Section"

The first journal prompt I provided read, "Tell me about your section."

Sophia's timely response was telling. She wrote, "Well, my section is pretty cool! I

luv sax. Every one in my section is nice. Including me there is three girls & two boys

in sax section" (Journal, November 16, 2007). Each student, similar to Sophia,

referenced gender within the first few sentences of their response to this prompt. Lili

responded, "i like my section, all of them are girls and all of them are very nice"

(Journal, November 16, 2007).

According to Green (1997), female students' musical development and identity formation occur simultaneously. The students' naming of gender in their descriptions of their instrument sections, or ingroups, aligns with this theory. Though Lili played the oboe, she told me that she was part of the flute section. Rather than state that she was the only oboist, she chose another section with which she could associate herself. Lili had switched to the oboe from the clarinet, so I asked her if her new flute section was different from her previous section, the clarinets. She responded, "Well, there are no boys" in the flute section. (Interview, December 19, 2007). David also named gender as a notable variable in his identification with his section. When I asked David about his change from the saxophone section to the low brass section at the beginning of the year, he noted that being in the low brass section was "a little different," "'cause I mean there's boys and girls" in the saxophone section. David, Sophia, and Lili noted gender as being important in the context of their instrument sections. These students indicated where they sat in relation to others of the same gender as a noticeable distinction between sections. Based on this information, I speculate that musical learning and gender identity formation may be interconnected for both boys and girls at the middle school level.

Though I did not specifically ask these students about the gender composition of their sections, gender emerged as a prominent theme as they spoke about their instrument preferences and the social structure of their band classroom. McCarthy (1999) asserts:

Music is one pathway to self-knowledge, and since music as culture is

inextricably linked to gender relations, the classroom is potentially a site for

the experience of music as gendered, and the development of gender

knowledge and identity through such experience. (McCarthy, 1999, p. 110)

In this band classroom, students shared differing musical learning experiences as they

pertained to gender. Possibly due to their limited experience with large concert band

settings, the students associated apparent physical characterizations of instrument

sections (such as gender composition) with individual characteristics or identities.

Boys, girls, and "getting along more."

Eileen, one of just two female students in the percussion section, relayed a

sense of discomfort when speaking about her section. She told me "it's kinda weird

because there's only two girls. It's kinda like you don't have much to talk about"

(Interview, March 30, 2008). She then contrasted her experience as a minority in a

large, predominantly male section with the experience of her friend and fellow

participant, Lili. At the beginning of the second semester, a second female oboist

joined the Concert Band. Eileen described her view of their experiences saying, "Like

the oboes. My friends, Colleen and Lili, they're like... Oh it's so awesome for them."

According to Eileen, being in an all-female section allows students to "cooperate"

with one another due to better communication between girls than boys and girls.

Mariam's experiences resonated with Eileen's thoughts. She explained that in a group

of all girls, "you can get along more" (Interview, April 4, 2008).

As McCarthy (1999) states, "gender relations are a major force in the

formation of identity and are inextricably linked to other social processes that shape

one's personal world" (p. 115). Eileen and David described their social interactions in

the band classroom by referencing gender. While Eileen felt some unease and

frustration in her inability to communicate with her peers in a largely male percussion section, David found comfort in a section where he identified with all of his male peers.

David told me that his section (low-brass) was comprised of all boys. When I asked him what it was like to be in a section of all boys, he responded, "It's pretty good. I mean you can pretty much say whatever you want. You don't have to be careful what you say" (Interview, December 3, 2007). I asked David for an example of a time when he and the other low brass section members could say whatever they felt. He told me, "Like when Mr. Wray's talking to the flutes or something. We make a lot of jokes that we don't want other people to hear" (Interview, December 3, 2007). He also stated that he and his friends mainly tell jokes at the expense of the flutes, a section comprised of all girls.

Other students also noted the gender make up of the low-brass section. Mariam described David' section saying, "mostly they're boys, so they're more, like, playful." Mariam then used positive statements to describe her flute section, saying "The flutes, they just are like more sweet, ya know, playing and everything. But they're mostly girls, though" (Interview, December 13, 2007). Mariam elaborated on her experiences with male and female band students' classroom behavior during a conversation about the gender composition in various instrument sections. She told me that Eileen and Aliya, the only two female percussionists, spent the majority of their time standing physically near each other during class periods. Based on my classroom observations, she accurately described the social interaction between members of the percussion section.

Students' associations between music and gender also impacted their beliefs regarding musical achievement. Mariam explained that the percussion section tended to draw negative attention from Mr. Wray because most of the students in that section were boys. According to Mariam, girls take band more seriously than boys who view the class as "just playing an instrument" (Interview, December 13, 2007). She interpreted her female classmates' actions in relation to the behavior of the male percussionists, saying that the girls would not want to "sit around those boys 'cause they're not always serious paying attention a lot …I guess." When I asked her to explain these thoughts, she replied:

> I think that, uh, the girls pay attention more than the boys because the boys, I guess, um, are more playful. Like they're not always concentrating and focusing on the work. And the girls are always, like, together and hanging out while they play their instrument. (Interview, December 13, 2007)

Mariam described a "serious band student" as someone who practices "a lot. Like, for an instrument. And they focus and listen to the directions the teacher says to do. (Interview, December 13, 2007). Mariam perceived girls as more "serious" students than her male classmates. However, she described female behaviors that might be interpreted as compliance rather than focus, concentration, or higher academic achievement.

Galley (2006) maintained that differences exist between boys and girls in the school context. Specifically, "many of these differences may be related to the ways boys and girls see themselves as learners, what might be called their 'learner identities'" (p. 57). These findings support this claim as the sixth grade students began

197

to speak of themselves and their social interactions in the band classroom in terms of gender, compliance, and perceived musical achievement.

David' description of joking around with his fellow male low brass players matched Mariam's description of boys' "playful" behavior. This playfulness sometimes caused David and other members of the low brass section to draw negative attention from Mr. Wray. During one observation, my seat beside David gave me an opportunity to observe this kind of play:

The class performs a short piece of sight-reading material. After they complete their performance, Mr. Wray compliments the low brass section, specifically mentioning the tuba. David says quietly in a deep register, "Tu-baaaaaahhhhhh" while smiling. He then returns to writing valve combinations on his sheet music and talking quietly with his peers. Less than one minute later, David begins hitting the lead pipe on his tuba with the palm of his hand. His face becomes pale and he turns toward me. He informs me that a pencil "is stuck" and asks if I know how to fix it. I ask him how far down the pipe the pencil has gone. Instead of answering, David says, "Oh, no. Oh, no. Mr. Wray is going to kill me. My parents are gonna kill me." His lower lip quivers and his eyes become red, filling with tears. I tell him to wait, walk to the storage area in the back to find the repair kit, and return with three kinds of pliers. I manage to safely retrieve the pencil from the tuba on the first attempt. David looks at me. With great relief in his voice, he says "thanks" three times. (Field Notes, November 20, 2007)

While the thought of harming his instrument caused David anxiety, his desire to joke with the other boys often resulted in a warm, positive classroom environment. Mr. Wray often acknowledged this joking manner and responded in kind:

> This is the last class meeting before the day of the winter concert. Mr. Wray discusses the logistics of both the daytime and evening performances with the students.
>
> Mr. Wray: Tomorrow, all students will go to eighth period except you. You will come here.
>
> Various Students: Yes!
>
> David: Sweet!
>
> Mr. Wray: Large instruments. You need to bring your instruments from home. Large Instruments. David!
>
> David: [looks up quickly] Sorry!
>
> Mr. Wray: You don't need to apologize, just bring your tuba.
>
> David: Sorry! [pretends to weep into hands which he uses to cover his face, then laughs aloud with the other boys in his section]
>
> (Field Notes, December 12, 2007)

During my classroom observations, the low brass students' attention to the musical content and ability to perform such content never appeared diminished when compared to other instrument sections. David performed his tuba parts as, or more, successfully than Mariam performed her flute parts, though his social interactions were more easily heard and seen than Mariam's. These findings support Green's (1997) assertion that "girls are constructed as conforming to teachers' expectations,

standards of behaviour, and musical values" (Green, 1997, p. 163). Though David's more audible social classroom behavior did not appear to limit his musical achievement, his band teacher and female classmates told me that they perceived his achievement level to be lower than that of the female band students, as Mariam indicated in her description of all-male sections.

"Manly" sounds and instrument preferences.

As Mariam contrasted her all-female flute section with the all-male low brass section, I became interested in her experiences with gender and instrument choice. I asked her why she thought the low brass section was comprised of all boys while the flute section only had girls. She replied:

Well, the brass has more of the lower sounding. And it's more, you know, with the loud and everything. And girls, you know, mostly chose by the sound. Like how high it is. And the brass is low. It's more manly. Well, that's what they think I guess. Like I'm sure the people who take trombone wouldn't want to take flute. Yeah, I don't think that would happen. They wouldn't want to. (Interview, December 13, 2007)

These comments support Conway's (2000) assertion that perceptions regarding gender and instrumental preferences (particularly the flute) may create barriers to musical learning opportunities in school. If middle school students perceive certain instruments as masculine and others as more feminine, they may not identify with an instrument that they might otherwise choose to play.

Lili also associated instrumental timbres with gender characteristics. She told me that girls likely chose to play the flute because "you would think you like the soft

200

melody part. You like quiet things" (Interview, December 19, 2007). Mariam's experiences with school music led her to associate specific instruments with femininity or masculinity. She explained that, "most of the flute players that I've met are girls. Like hardly any guys I've met play the flute. They play, like, brass or trumpet. And clarinet, sometimes. Percussion" (Interview, December 13, 2007). Her subsequent statements regarding instrument preferences allowed me to understand her perspective on instrument choice and gender. Mariam explained that she likes the sound of the flute because "it's all sweet tone and so I like that better than the trombones." Not only did Mariam characterize the tone as "sweet," she also highlighted the range of the flute when she said she likes "how high the flute can be." She said, "I like the higher pitch better than the low trombone thing" (Interview, December 13, 2007). The varying ranges of different instruments were perceived by participants in this study to correspond to male or female speaking ranges. Students appeared to choose instruments with a range similar to their gender-specific speaking voice.

According to McCarthy (1999), "gendered knowledge is learned, caught, transmitted, through social relations" (p. 114). As Mariam met most instrumental musicians in school or through her school music program, the band classroom served as place in which gendered knowledge regarding music and self was both formed and maintained. These students described attributes they learned to associate with specific genders. While they sometimes spoke in terms of broad generalizations, they told stories about their classes or specific instrument sections to provide a basis for the attributes they learned to ascribe to gender.

"My Section is Better"

Some students believed that performance on their instrument of choice demonstrated greater personal strength than those playing other instruments. I asked David what characteristics he felt low brass players should possess if they are to experience success. He told me that low brass players "can blow really hard, um, have confidence. 'Cause it's not easy. Compared to like, um, percussion" (Interview, December 3, 2007). David also told me that the flutists possess less skills and confidence than his peers in the low brass section:

> I think they kinda get ticked off a little easier 'cause, like, no one can ever hear them. And people just tend to laugh at them more. 'Cause like, when Mr. Wray did that thing where we blow on the paper and we try to keep it up on the stand, and the flute players didn't keep it up for, at all. (Interview, December 3, 2007)

In this story, David described the flutists' supposedly limited lung capacity, providing support for his perception of the flutists as less skilled than he and his peers who play low brass instruments. According to Bruner (1996), "we form a representation of the world as much from what we learn about it through others as from responding to events in the world directly" (p. 165). David drew from his classroom experiences to form opinions regarding individuals based on their membership in certain groups. In this case, David grouped his peers by membership in specific instrument sections.

After hearing students' descriptions of their sections in comparison to other sections, I directly asked them if they thought students in their section were better

202

students than their classmates in other sections. Kejah explained, "they're kind of better than the trumpets. 'Cause the trumpets only have three notes and the clarinets, you have to, like, finger a lot" (Interview, December 21, 2007). She also told me that playing the clarinet requires "a little bit more memory than the trumpet. 'Cause you have to know what note" to finger. Kejah's experiences learning to finger various pitches in order to increase her performance range led her to believe that her instrument required more technical skills than the trumpet. She watched her classmates learn combinations of fingerings comprised of just three valves, a technique that appeared easier to her as she learned to play the clarinet. Additionally, Kejah told me that the individual she least respects in her band class is a member of the trumpet section, the very group to which she contrasts her section's value and skill level.

Mariam viewed her flute section positively when compared to the percussion section. She told me that percussionists are:

> a little different from us 'cause… we pull it up and we're ready to play and we're looking at the music. But they just, like, they don't always have a whole song. Like a melody, I don't think they would always have melodies.
>
> (Interview, December 13, 2007)

Mariam's perception of herself and fellow flutists as more focused musicians is partially based on their behavior, though the musical literature learned in class appears to have also played a role in this self-perception. As a flutist, Mariam primarily performs the melody lines in grade 2 concert band music. The percussionists rarely perform melody lines in this grade level and genre of music.

Instead, they often provide harmonic support on the timpani and rhythmic structure on non-pitched percussion instruments. The pitched mallet parts performed by these sixth grade percussionists included melody lines as well as numerous periods of rest. This difference in musical content contributed to Mariam's perceptions of flutists as superior when compared to percussionists.

As evident during a classroom observation, students' self-perceptions often intersected with the musical lines they performed as members of specific instrument sections:

> During the class period, the band teacher discusses which instrument sections play the melody, counter melody, harmony, or provide rhythmic support for the ensemble. As students hear their instrument referred to as "the most important" section or part during a certain musical excerpt, they sit taller in their chairs and make direct eye contact with the teacher. When Lili hears that she has "a really important part" playing a two-measure melodic soli with the trumpet section, she smiles. She then raises her eyebrows, looks pointedly at the music on her stand, and shakes her head from side to side, saying that the music is fast and she needs to practice it. (Field Notes, November 14, 2007)

As students perceive their instruments as more or less important, they begin to see their own importance as group members increase or diminish based on their instrumental parts. As they begin to think of their section, and therefore themselves, as important, their classroom behavior changes. They also begin to view other groups, or instrument sections, in relation to their degree of import. Bakagiannis and Tarrant (2006) claim that "the more strongly identified the group members were with the

ingroup, so the more they differentiated between the ingroup and the outgroup" (Bakagiannis & Tarrant, 2006, p. 133). These students clearly identified with other members of their sections. They were proud of their accomplishments, and increasingly found such accomplishments to be more desired than those of their classmates in other instrument sections.

While these sixth grade students spoke negatively about members of other sections, some students relayed positive thoughts about some of their peers who I would otherwise have categorized as members of an outgroup. Sophia spoke positively about another instrument section with which she did not associate: the flute section. She told me, "Some of them are really good at the flute. It's a really nice instrument" (Interview, December 11, 2007). This contrast may have been due to the fact that both the flute and the saxophone are members of the woodwind family, while the trumpet is a member of the brass family. Kejah told me that she chose the clarinet because "I liked all the keys and the way it sounds" (Interview, December 21, 2007). If given the opportunity, Kejah told me that she would play the flute as well because she likes the "soft sounds" produced by the flute. Mariam also spoke positively about her peers in another woodwind section. She described the clarinetists as "smart" saying, "'Cause like a lot of smart people that, like, always get A's and everything play the clarinet" (Interview, December 13, 2007). While she then explained that "some trumpets are very smart kids," Mariam qualified her statement by saying "not all of them" deserve the same praise as she gave to the entire group of clarinetists. While some students view all instrument sections as distinct groups, Sophia, Kejah, and Mariam may have grouped all woodwind sections into one large

section, providing a way to speak positively about another instrument section without feeling less positively about themselves.

"Only the People Who Are Really Into It"

Eileen's descriptions of the percussion section also included both positive and negative statements. Unlike some of her peers, Eileen made distinctions between groups of percussionists. For instance, she told me:

> We've been doing percussion skills classes which are really fun. That is awesome because only the people who are, like, really into it show up. Not like, "Oh I'm not really into percussion." They don't show up. So, it's like the people who are really into it. (Interview, March 30, 2008)

Mariam also distinguished between highly skilled peers and those with less experience within the flute section. She stated:

> Some are really good. And some, in my section. And some need, aren't that very... well done. Like, um, a couple girls they don't always get it. They write down the notes and everything and sometimes it's kinda confusing for me because we're in our third year or something. But a couple other girls are really good. (Interview, December 13, 2007)

While some students divided their instrument sections by skill level, these students made clear their overarching desire to positively view the members of their instrument sections. Though Mariam told me about the different skill levels of her peers, she said, "Some of us have a lot of work to, some are excellent, and others are understanding the process and still learning hard. But we are all the same, focusing much to achieve our goals in band" (Journal, November 9, 2007).

While the six participants involved in this study represented three distinct groups of friends and six different instrument sections (further differentiated social subgroups), all six described a feeling of connectedness to the larger group, the Concert Band. As Mariam put it, "I don't hang out with everybody in my band. They're not all my close friends. But I, like, know them" (Interview, December 13, 2007). "Yeah, I think everyone's pretty supportive because they know what it feels like doing a completely new thing. Um, and there aren't really any mean people in band. You just have a good feeling about it" (David, Interview, December 3, 2007).

While social distinctions among band members appeared to be consciously overlooked or ignored, students were quite aware of differing skill levels within the Concert Band. As Mariam stated, "We have a lot of differences. Like some people are really, um, good, and I'm sure could be in the Symphonic Band next year. Some people who struggle a lot. But I like everybody" (Interview, December 13, 2007). According to Mariam, band classes are comprised of "much different kids. Like there's really smart people and then there's the popular kids" (Interview, December 13, 2007).

When prompted to talk about their section, these students described boundaries within the band based on instrument choice. Each instrument section seemed to maintain a distinct personality, embodying a unique social subset within the larger group. However, when asked to describe the entire band, students were quick to point out that the differences between sections were not as pronounced as distinctions made (or perceived) between band students and peers not enrolled in

band. Bakagiannis and Tarrant (2006) state, "that adolescents' perceptions that their own groups and outgroups have similar musical preferences can facilitate development of positive intergroup relations" (p. 134). The participants in this study described a sense of camaraderie within the band, taking the time to make clear to me that social distinctions were of less import among fellow band students than their initial depictions of sections might have led me to think. "Well, Mr. Wray says the low brass is [the most important], but if we didn't have all the other sections, it really wouldn't be a band" (David, Interview, December 3, 2007).

Summary

The sixth grade students involved in this study did not initially speak of relationships with individual people, but rather chose to describe peers in terms of the groups of people around them. They noted similarities in attire among certain students, subcultures within the ethnically diverse population, students who affiliated with school activities or classes, and the school structure itself that seemed to pre-determine peer groups before students ever entered the building. As evident in these students' stories, the large school community encompassed so many individuals that new members in this community (such as these sixth grade students) found themselves slow to form relationships with individual peers. They instead identified themselves by a somewhat superficial labeling of their peers and categorization of social groups. By analyzing the broader generalizations participants made about their peers, I began to identify reoccurring themes that emerged in their narratives.

These themes, which were primarily categorizations of social groups, served as a means to compare and contrast this qualitative data with previous experimental

studies built on the theoretical framework of social identity theory. Similar to previous research on musical identity with students of middle school age, these participants simultaneously favored their ingroups (band, gender, or instrument section) while devaluing outgroups. According to Bakagiannis and Tarrant (2006), "group members who most strongly identified with the ingroup believed that the outgroup would evaluate the ingroup most negatively" (p. 133).

Eileen, a self-described academically successful student and highly skilled percussionist worried that her peers who were not enrolled in intensified classes or band would view her as a "nerd." Lili told me that she enjoyed telling her peers that she played an instrument, yet also stated that students who were did not participate in the band program likely thought of band as "uncool." Just as prior research demonstrated a connection between self-identification and group identification, these participants demonstrated a desire to identify with certain groups to elevate their social status and self-confidence. Distinctions between groups of students within the band (those taking intensified classes versus grade-level coursework, for example) were made clearer as students identified with their instrument sections. However, the participants consciously diminished the importance of these distinctions as they spoke about membership in the larger ingroup, the Concert Band.

Lili regularly challenged her classmates' assertions and my interpretations. When I asked her about her friends, social status, or cliques, she told me that students don't divide into groups. She explained that she had friends both in band and outside of band, preferring not to differentiate between her friends by placing them into

groups. She later told me, "But most of my friends are in band" (Interview, January 14, 2008).

It may seem that the contradictions inherent in Lili's experiences give doubt to her credibility as an informant. However, her experiences are just as valid as any student navigating as complex an environment as Cardinal Middle School. According to Peshkin (1991), the contradictions and confusion inherent in such data "testifies to the fruits of living in a complex social milieu; consistency is sustainable where one's social milieu does not have [a school's] fuguelike interweaving of ethnic themes" (Peshkin, 1991, p. 239). In addition to the ethnic diversity within Cardinal Middle School, the evolving nature of middle school identities and activities, as well as diverse affiliations with regard to socioeconomic status, gender, and languages spoken comprise the recipe for such a social milieu. In this context, Lili's attempts to interpret similarities between peers unlike herself while also searching for similarities between these peers and herself would necessarily warrant sometimes conflicting statements and experiences.

Gay (2000) states, "the whats and whys of narratives are never chance occurrences or mere happenstance. They have deliberate intentionality, 'voice,' positionality, and contestability" (p.3). As the students became more comfortable in the context of Cardinal Middle School, the contradictions and complexities found in their statements became more apparent and numerous. At the same time, the students' positionality became clearer as they began to describe their unique roles within Cardinal Middle School and the Concert Band. They began to describe their identities not as members of larger groups, but as individuals engaged in interpersonal

relationships. Their social groups became the backdrop as their personal worlds became clearer, taking center stage in their narratives. In the next chapter, I present the participants' interpersonal relationships and evolving identities as individuals located within the complex social milieu of the Cardinal Middle School Concert Band.

CHAPTER SIX

ROLES AND RELATIONSHIPS

> Identity from a relational perspective is not just a matter of how I see
> myself in relationship with and to others; more accurately, it is a
> matter of how I have come to see myself through the profound
> influences of meaningful relationships. (Nakkula, 2006, p. 15)

In this chapter I explore the emerging role identities constructed by six

primary participants involved in this study. Through interactions with members of

their middle school community, students formed relationships that appeared to

influence their evolving identities. Hogg, Terry and White (1995) maintain that

individuals create role identities, "through a process of labeling or self-definition as a

member of a particular social category" (p. 256). Students initially searched for their

place in the social life of Cardinal Middle School, moving between social groups and

joining activities in which they had not previously involved themselves. Over the

course of the school year (and period of data collection), they increasingly referenced

in journals and interviews their relationships with teachers as well as their perceptions

of themselves in the roles they either rejected or embraced.

I begin this chapter by providing an account of two participants and each of

their relationships with peers. The participants described these relationships during

interviews that took place after winter break. Their conceptions of their environment

and themselves seemed notably changed from their initial fall interviews. After

reviewing the nature of students' changing perceptions of their peers, I turn to the

relationships between teachers and students, specifically focusing on the differences

and similarities between students' experiences with Mr. Wray and their other

teachers. I conclude by providing data and analysis of these participants' roles within the specific context of the band classroom

Changed Perspectives and Peers

During the course of this study, I rephrased questions that I initially asked participants during the first interviews and asked follow-up questions to gain better understandings of their experiences. By doing so, I came to understand the nature of students' emerging identities and social relationships. Students' descriptions of their relationships in school seemed to contrast their initial renderings of the social context. Peers whom they initially did not like became friends as students appeared to distinguish between individuals, rather than describing characteristics of larger social groups.

In this section, I present Eileen's and Sophia's reflections about their peers and peer relationships. Eileen spoke clearly and consciously about her prior misperceptions of peers. She alluded to connections between school structures and social interactions, seemingly aware of the ways her physical proximity to peers influenced her perceptions of others and her own identity. Sophia also provided an interesting approach for viewing the process by which students may differentiate themselves from peers as she described classmates "I don't really get." I begin with Eileen's reflections about social groups and individuals in the sixth grade context.

Knowing Classmates Individually, Not as Group Members

Eileen initially spoke of her peers as members of social groups, categorizing them based on her first impressions of her new world, Cardinal Middle School. During our second interview, Eileen told me that she no longer thought of her classmates in groups:

> Then I got moved. Like, my whole perspective has changed. Like I got moved to this English class. And now I'm with the people I told you I hated last time, now they are some of my really good friends and stuff. (Interview, February 14, 2008)

Eileen's initial course placement did not allow her to interact regularly with certain peers. Following her course schedule change, Eileen began sharing learning experiences with students whom she did previously see during instructional times. As I described in chapter five, Eileen initially told me about her desire to eat with this particular group of students who she referred to as "the soccer players." Intrigued by her "changed perspective," I asked her to describe her relationship with these students:

> ARH: So would you still refer to them as the soccer players? Is that the group?
>
> Eileen: Not really.
>
> ARH: No? How would you describe... Do they all do something else together?
>
> Eileen: Not really. Um, yeah. It's kinda strange. 'Cause Anna and Carolyn knew one of my friends from elementary school. And my friend was, like, "Oh you guys are gonna be such great friends." And then I got here and I was

like, "They're not really great." And then I just started stereotyping them with, like, soccer people. And then I met two other girls who were... Actually, three other girls. One who was, like, um, She's kinda skater. Like skater dude kind of thing. Um, like she's on the wrestling team but she's awesome. Um… two of them don't, just don't do soccer. And they haven't done soccer ever, so...

ARH: So it's more of a mix?

Eileen: Yeah. (Interview, February 1, 2008)

Once Eileen interacted with these students in classroom settings, her relationship with and understanding of them changed. In the preceding text, Eileen explained that she labeled her peers due to her own feelings of rejection by these peers. In the classroom setting, Eileen began to work alongside the very same students, learning about their unique characteristics as well as sharing aspects about herself. She began to see her peers as individuals, using the term "mix" to characterize differences rather than a grouping of similarities. At the same time that Eileen began to see differences among her peers, Sophia began to differentiate herself from certain classmates.

People "I Don't Really Get"

Sophia repeatedly described her experiences in band as "fun" and "cool." She, and other participants, tended to characterize band as a place in which "everybody" felt comfortable and "supported." In order to better understand her experiences, I opened a dialogue about band from another perspective:

ARH: Do you know of anyone who really doesn't like band?

Sophia: Um, well. Not that I know personally or anything, but I think there's like someone in Cadet [beginning] Band who doesn't like it very much.

ARH: You heard that through the grapevine?

Sophia: yeah.

ARH: Have you heard any reasons why this person doesn't like it?

Sophia: No.

ARH: Just that they don't?

Sophia: No. I don't really get the person. (Interview, January 30, 2008)

Though Sophia described another band student, or member of the larger ingroup, she made a distinction between "everybody" who enjoys being in band and this individual. Instead of trying to understand why another sixth grade band member might not share her feelings about the band program, Sophia put emotional distance between herself and this student.

According to Sophia, "This person, like, doesn't really like school in general." From her shared classroom experiences with this particular student, Sophia "gathered that" her peer did not like school. Sophia told me, "They don't, like, do their homework. And, like, do nothing in class" (Interview, January 30, 2008). Sophia typically earned honor roll grades and described herself as a strong student. Even as her grades fell midway through the school year, she maintained that she could achieve academic success. Her prior school experiences and predictions of future achievement differentiated her from the only band student she knew of who told others that she did not enjoy being part of the band.

Holland et al. (1998) assert, "One can significantly reorient one's own behavior, and can even participate in the creation of new figured worlds and their possibilities for new selves, but one can engage in such play only as part of a collective" (p. 282). Both Eileen and Sophia characterized their evolving selves in relation to their peers. Their experiences with other students influenced their personal identities as members of the larger middle school community. In turn, they more clearly identified with particular roles (such as the honor student or band member) situated within this community. However, the participants' personal identities did not form solely in relation to their peers. Their relationships with teachers also emerged as a prominent theme in this study.

<p style="text-align:center">The Teacher's Influence on Identity Construction</p>

At every stage during the data collection process, the participants discussed their teachers' significance in their lives as sixth grade band students. Eileen told me that the teacher's role is "very important." Lili explained that the teacher influenced her experience learning in the classroom. She told me, "Last year, my favorite subject was social studies. I like social studies a lot, too, now. But the teacher is only okay" (Interview, December 19, 2007). Whether our conversations revolved around course enrollment choices, learning activities, or classroom climate, the students referenced the role of the teacher and their relationships with teachers.

I heard students speak often of Mr. Wray. Unprompted, they praised their band teacher for his "encouragement," "support," and ability to "kinda relate." While some participants also spoke positively about other influential teachers in their lives, I heard a less positive theme throughout the interviews and classroom visits: Students

felt unknown by those holding positions of authority within the greater middle school context. I begin this section by outlining the participants' experiences as students in situations where they lacked a personal connection with teachers and administrators. I then turn to descriptions of positive experiences with "caring" and "good" teachers. Finally, I end this section on the teacher-student relationship by analyzing the influence of music teachers on curricular roles and identity construction.

"You Only Get 42 Minutes:" School Structures and Personal Relationships

Cardinal Middle School housed just under 900 students during the 2007-2008 school year. Admittedly, the administration was greatly outnumbered by students. Their interactions with individual students seemed limited to hallway directives and discipline referrals. Teachers often taught classes of over 20 students. Each class lasted between 42 and 47 minutes, leaving limited time and space for forming personal relationships between teachers and students. The participants in this study noted this about their school lives as a way to explain miscommunications between students and faculty.

"They don't know me."

During a conversation about band concerts, Lili told me that the audience booed when the principal and assistant principals walked onstage to introduce the band. While the band members received positive reactions from the crowd, Lili noted this experience while telling me her story about the concert. I chose to explore this further, but did not wish to steer her in any direction by asking guiding questions. Instead, I simply asked her to tell me about the school administrators. She responded:

Lili: I think we have three... one principal and two assistant principals.

ARH: So what do you think about them?

Lili: I don't know 'cause I don't know them. Well, I know them, but like...

ARH: You know who they are?

Lili: uh huh.

ARH: Do you think they know who you are?

Lili: *No*. There are a lot of kids. They would have to remember a lot of names.

ARH: But all your teachers know who you are?

Lili: Mm-hmm! [Yes, affirmative] (Interview, January 14, 2008)

Lili did not believe that her teachers knew her, even though they might know her name. While she admitted that most teachers might be able to describe "how you act in school," (Interview, March 13, 2008) she expressed doubt that they would be able to describe her as an individual.

Sophia elaborated on Lili's thoughts, saying, "they wouldn't be able to say how you really are. Well, they could kind of. But they couldn't really describe your feelings about stuff or anything" (Interview, March 13, 2008). When I asked Sophia if any of her teachers knew who she was and how she felt, she reiterated that they could describe students' actions in school, but not their feelings. According to Sophia, "nobody would be able to do it except for yourself. You can tell them your feelings" (Interview, March 13, 2008).

Kejah expressed doubt that any middle school teacher could know her because, "in middle school, you only get 42 minutes to teach one class" (Interview, February 13, 2008). I then asked Kejah if she thought middle school could be improved by learning most subject areas with one teacher. She replied:

Yeah. Like, they'll get to know me real well and not like, I'm so strict and stuff like that.

ARH: So middle school teachers tend to be stricter?

Kejah: Mhmm. Like you have to be on task, not late...

ARH: And in middle school you feel like you don't get to know your teachers as well?

Kejah: Yeah. You only go with them for, like, 42 minutes. (Interview, February 13, 2008)

Kejah told me that when "you have more time to hang out with them" than just 42 minutes per day, "you get to know them a little bit more" (Interview, February 13, 2008).

Kejah's interpretations seemed to resonate with her teachers' descriptions of her as a student. She spoke about "discovering" the clarinet. She told me about asking many questions in class and wanting to become a teacher, in part, to help other students "discover" interesting things. I gained more insight into Kejah's perceptions of teachers when I spoke to some of these teachers. They told me that she struggled academically, in part, because she was frequently tardy to school. One teacher stated her belief that Kejah demonstrated leadership abilities, but usually led her peers to misbehave. These teachers used negative language to characterize her extraverted, extremely social behavior that often appeared to distract peers or direct lessons in a way that a teacher had not intended.

Some of Kejah's other teachers described her quite differently. While they viewed her as extremely talkative, they told me that she had "different" strengths:

According to another teacher, Kejah regularly asks numerous questions in

class, perhaps what a different teacher referred to as "calling out." However,

this teacher observes Kejah asking questions about the subject matter studied

in order to understand the material. She speaks in a quieter, warmer tone than

her colleagues, smiling as she describes Kejah's interest in class content.

(Field Notes, February 19, 2008)

I also observed Kejah speaking throughout band classes, though when I sat close

enough to hear her whispering to peers, I understood her questions to revolve around

the music. Kejah's classroom dialogue could be viewed in different ways. Some

teachers perceived Kejah as disruptive, while others found Kejah to be inquisitive.

Peshkin (1991) observes teachers' contrasting interpretations of student behavior

elsewhere:

Two more teachers, two more ways, one particularly negative, the other not so

much positive as understanding. Each looks at the same youngsters and sees

distinctly different personal qualities in them, wicked babies, on the one hand,

and differentially competent persons, on the other. Clearly their perspectives

color their interactions with students; equally clearly, students learn different

things about themselves from each teacher. (p. 121)

Just as Kejah learned about her ability to "discover" in some classes, she learned that

she was an unsuccessful student in others. Gay's (2000) description of cultural

differences in classrooms informs our understanding of these teachers' responses to

Kejah's behavior:

African Americans "gain the floor" or get participatory entry into

conversations through personal assertiveness, the strength of the impulse to be

involved, and the persuasive power of the point they wish to make, rather than

waiting for an "authority" to grant permission. They tend to invest their

participation with personality, power, actions, and emotions. (Gay, 2000, p.

91)

Kejah's behaviors in classrooms support Gay's assertions. She asked questions in

order to "discover" new information. Rather than waiting for her teacher's attention,

she often asked her classmates for assistance or demonstrated a skill in order to help

them. As a result of this verbal assertiveness, "many teachers view them [African

Americans] negatively, as 'rude,' 'inconsiderate,' 'disruptive,' and 'speaking out of

turn,' and they penalize students for them (Gay, 2000, p. 92). While some teachers

described her social interactions negatively, other teachers (as well as I) saw

inquisitiveness and assertiveness.

One teacher told me that Kejah was "not very secure in her abilities" (Field

Notes, February 19, 2008). Though I do not believe Kejah's teachers directly told her

how they felt, they may have behaved differently toward her than toward other

students in class, causing such insecurity. Nieto (2004) writes:

According to Claude Steele, the basic problem that causes low student

achievement is what he terms "stigma vulnerability" based on the constant

devaluation faced by Blacks and other people of color in society and schools.

In schools, this devaluation occurs primarily through the harmful attitudes and

beliefs that teachers communicate, knowingly or not, to their students. (p. 58)

Kejah learned that she was not as capable as her peers in certain classes. On the other hand, she learned to ask questions in other classrooms, such as band. Students appeared to learn how to behave towards certain teachers while learning subject matter. Wortham (2006) states, "Through the same processes that students and teachers used to make sense of academic subject matter, they struggled with and against social identifications of each other" (p. 283). Kejah's experiences support Wortham's claims. As Kejah grappled with subject-specific knowledge, she also learned how her ways of processing such knowledge separated her from her peers and/ or teachers. In the next section, I explore students' positive relationships with middle school teachers. The participants in this study spoke about these relationships and their personal, or role, identities, weaving descriptions of both in interconnected statements.

Favorite Classes and "Caring" Teachers

In order to gain insight into students' perceptions of themselves as learners, I asked them about their "favorite classes." In doing so, I discovered that these participants' particular interests, as well as the content areas in which they felt successful as learners, were heavily influenced by the relationships formed with their teachers. I also felt that asking them to talk about their favorite classes provided opportunities for these students to reveal what mattered most to them.

The classroom structure.

When I asked Eileen about her favorite classes, she told me that American Studies was one of her favorite subjects. Through a long and animated verbal description, she explained:

223

We sing songs during the class. We do plays. 'Cause we have that different

focus, so... We have songs that we sing. And we have an interactive notebook

called Our Life. And we, um, It's a normal notebook, but we have to have

color on every page.... It's just, it's a really, really fun class because… you

can never tell what's going on. Like, we did a simulation on what was the

American Revolution. And instead of explaining it to us first, she took us

down to the auditorium. She had a tug of war. She had everyone a different

colored jersey. There was a red and a blue. And she made different changes.

Like there was a white team. The blue team had less people and if they were

losing, they got to call from the white team to come over and help them. On

the red team, some people had to start farther away and then run up. Because

that was supposed to be like the, um... The white team was supposed to be like

the French. They're like the allies. The blue team was the colonists and red

team was supposed to be Britain. It was fun like that. And we did a play on

the revolution. (Interview, March 30, 2008)

Based on this description, I decided to ask follow-up questions on the teacher's role

and the classroom structure. When I asked her how different her American Studies

class was from other classes, Eileen responded:

I would say very. Like math, my teacher is not the most amazing. Okay. Like

every day, it's not anything surprising. You go in. She hands you notes. You

do your warm-up. She puts notes on the overhead. You write them down. You

have class work. And then you have homework. It's the same thing every day.

And then occasionally you'll have a quiz or something. Nothing is really

exciting. We did like a project once. (Interview, March 30, 2008)

The distinctions Eileen made between her math and American Studies classes

revolved around the classroom structure. Eileen spoke of the daily routine in her

classes, noting that her teachers provided this routine and therefore set the tone for the

class. In math, students remained seated throughout class, engaging in content

through the same means "every day." There seemed to be little interaction between

the teacher and the students as they engaged in their work. In contrast, American

Studies provided a variety of learning activities, multiple and varied opportunities for

social interaction, and structures that supported students' ability to process

information in distinctive ways. Eileen told me that she enjoyed band for similar

reasons:

That's what band is too. You don't have a set agenda really. And you do

different stuff and it's like, you're not... The teacher's good and it's not so

predictable. Like we mixed up seats. We would never do that in math. Like,

I've had the same seat since the beginning of the year. (Interview, March 30,

2008)

Eileen described positive learning experiences as varied in structure, rather

than a "predictable" curriculum and learning space. As I described in chapter four,

Mr. Wray engaged students through varied means of learning about music. Though

students learned and were assessed primarily through the act of performing,

additional teaching approaches such as open-ended discussions, working with

professional military musicians, and creative writing (Listening Logs) provided

students a variety of ways to grow in their understanding of music. Ms. Z, the American Studies teacher, also engaged students through multiple means and varied opportunities for social interactions. Due to these similarities, Eileen deemed both Mr. Wray and Ms. Z to be "good teachers." The six participants in this study described "good teachers" similarly, using words such as "caring," "supportive," "funny," and "cool."

"A supportive teacher."

David described the characteristics of a good leader as "positive, sort of relaxed, and critical." David gave the following advice to teachers regarding positive attitudes: "If people are screwing around, don't get mad at everyone. Just be happy" (Interview, March, 27, 2008). He told me that he looks for the same qualities in a band teacher, saying, "Yeah, that's pretty much Mr. Wray." David told me, "Mr. Wray helps me a lot. Like I stay after during lunches" (Interview, February 7, 2008). Sophia used the phrase "nice teacher." When I asked her to tell me about a nice teacher, she provided the following description:

> She's, like, doesn't like, yell. Like some teachers I have…. Nice teachers, like... I have a math teacher and she's really nice and it's really funny because we have an assistant teacher who's, like, 24 and he's always making jokes and stuff with her. And they're really funny together. (Interview, December 11, 2007)

Sophia sought a teacher who avoided raising his or her voice and set a positive tone for the classroom. More specifically, Sophia appreciated her teachers' humor and kindness. Sophia also described Mr. Wray as "a really cool teacher." When I asked

her to elaborate, she said, "He's just really cool and really funny. He's a fun teacher. That's all" (Interview, January 30, 2008). Sophia noted her teachers' humor in both descriptions.

A sense of humor seemed to be an important aspect of "good teachers" in many of these participants' experiences. Eileen told the following story when I asked her to characterize a "good teacher:"

> You have to be funny and you have to give some slack, but you can't give a ton of slack. Like in reading, she doesn't even check our homework…. And people get away with not doing their homework and then everybody's behind. We haven't been doing anything in reading lately. Just, like, sitting there reading. During reading. Which kinda makes sense. It's just like reading a book of our choice during class. Like you have to have some slack but not a lot. (Interview, March 30, 2008)

As I described in chapter four, Eileen pictured herself as an honor student. She repeatedly told me about her very high academic achievement and desire to achieve at higher levels than her peers. For Eileen, band seemed to serve many purposes, including perpetuating her self-image as a hard-working student. She told me:

> Just like band, it's not like completely like say... I dunno, like say any other elective you would take. Like, say you took chorus. They have a few performances but it's not as intense as band is because... Well, it's not a serious as... Well, like art. There are no deadlines…. I don't know what to say but a different elective that's not as intense. Because band is... It's not completely like a core subject, but it's not like, uh, P.E. [physical education]

where it doesn't matter. It's in between. It's a good balance. [In band,]You do

get graded on, like, your quizzes and stuff but you don't get, like, nothing

done. (Interview, March 30, 2008)

Again in this description, Eileen spoke about the teacher-determined classroom

structure. Mr. Wray's high expectations, observable through classroom assessments,

played a part in fostering a classroom climate in which students challenged each other

and themselves to achieve higher levels of musical achievement. In this way, Eileen's

description of a "good teacher" resonated with her self-concept as an honor student.

According to Grant and Murray (1999), students want someone who evaluates

their learning and provides constructive feedback in order to help them improve.

They claim:

Students at the bottom of the class may feel teachers are too likely to give up

on them rather than figure out the specific small steps they should work on…

Students at the top believe their reputation often deprives them of tough

criticism they need, and carries over into subjects where they know their

performance is not worth the A they are routinely given. (Grant & Murray,

1999, p. 46)

Eileen's descriptions of her reading and P.E. teachers support Grant and Murray's

statements. She felt that these teachers let her down by providing too much "slack"

and not holding her or her peers accountable. On the other hand, Eileen felt Mr. Wray

provided the feedback she wanted and needed to continue growing as a learner.

David described Mr. Wray as a "good teacher" as well. I therefore asked

David to tell me more about why he described Mr. Wray as "good:"

228

David: Well, he has a really positive attitude.

ARH: Is that different from other teachers in the school?

David: Sometimes. He's, like, always, um sort of more positive than other times. It's not like he's more happy at other times than he is now. And some teachers are like that- have mood swings. He's just really nice. Really supportive. (Interview, March 27, 2008)

I asked David what steps a teacher might take to be supportive. He advised, "Maybe get more involved with your students. Like one on one. And, like, don't yell at them all the time" (Interview, March 27, 2008).

David was not the only student to use the term "supportive." Sophia described a supportive teacher as someone who doesn't "try to push you into stuff. And, I guess, just really supportive of whatever you choose" (Interview, January 30, 2008). Lili's description of a "good teacher" resonated with Sophia's thoughts. Rather than "pushing" a student, as Sophia explained, Lili told me that a good teacher is "patient and understanding." When I asked her to tell me how a teacher acts "patient and understanding," Lili told me, "Like, if you forgot to do something, they'll say 'just try to do it next time'" (Interview, December 19, 2007). Lili explained to me that she felt more comfortable with teachers who did not immediately reprimand students for human error, but instead gave them opportunities to learn from their mistakes and grow as learners.

When I asked Eileen to tell me more about how Mr. Wray supported students, she said:

The elementary school teachers. They did not care how we played.... She was

like, "Okay let's just play. You guys are playing a wrong note" and that would

be what we would work on for the day. And so, I mean, like she... And to just

have Mr. Wray come in and he's like, "We need to do this" and stuff. And it's

really good because people are actually, like, listening and stuff and they're

not just kind of doing whatever. (Interview, February 15, 2008)

Similar to her description of being held accountable through classroom assessments

in band, Eileen clearly portrays her experiences learning with Mr. Wray as "caring"

experiences. Gay (2000) asserts:

Caring teachers are distinguished by their high performance expectations,

advocacy, and empowerment of students as well as by their use of

pedagogical practices that facilitate school success. The reverse is true for

those who are noncaring. Their attitudes and behaviors take the form of low

expectations, personal distance, and disafilliation from students, and

instructional behaviors that limit student achievement. (p. 62)

Eileen's contrasting descriptions of her experiences in elementary and middle school

band were partially based on the school schedule and partially based on the

relationships between students and teachers. Eileen's elementary band teacher

appeared as "noncaring," setting low expectations and distancing herself from Eileen.

Mr. Wray, however, demonstrated "care" for Eileen and her peers by holding them

accountable and helping them gain musical skills that, in turn, empowered students to

achieve higher levels of personal performance.

While I observed numerous instances during which Mr. Wray asked individual students to explain musical vocabulary or perform individually, I also observed Mr. Wray providing encouragement to students as he challenged them to achieve increasingly higher levels of musical learning:

> The students in the Concert Band class sit silently, staring intensely at Mr. Wray. He has just asked them to perform more technically difficult articulations and rhythms than in previous class meetings. Standing in front of this silent group of students, Mr. Wray gives them a pep talk similar to a coach guiding his athletic team. He says, "You're good enough now. You're talented enough now" to perform these complex skills. (Field Notes, February 13, 2008)

On numerous occasions, I observed Mr. Wray telling the Concert Band that they were capable of developing the skills necessary to meet new and greater musical challenges. Students began to make Mr. Wray's spoken beliefs their own and then perform increasingly difficult music literature. According to Nieto (2004), "students perform in ways that teachers expect. Student performance is based on both overt and covert messages from teachers about students' worth, intelligence, and capability" (p. 56). Based on the data I collected, I believe that students' classroom performance is based, in part, on the messages they hear from teachers. Teachers who repeatedly state students' intelligence and capability in positive terms help students to see themselves in those terms. Students then rise to meet their own internalized self-concepts learned through their relationships with these teachers.

Eileen interpreted Mr. Wray's verbal encouragement and accountability measures as "care." Mariam also noted Mr. Wray's sense of "care" for their musical achievement:

> My other teachers.... They sometimes get stressful with all these questions and then wonder like... I need help doing this. I don't know what to do. And I don't understand. And then, um, Mr. Wray... He cares about each person. He'll say, "See me after class or after school" so he can help them with their instrument playing like a trumpet or something. And so, he just cares about everybody. And I'm sure the other teachers do too, but they don't always show it.
>
> ARH: And he shows it how?
>
> Mariam: Well, he shows individual... the teaching thingy by, um... He shows he cares for each student by, like... He makes sure we're understanding the thing. Understanding what they're doing in class. (Interview, April 4, 2008)

Mr. Wray appeared to demonstrate a sense of "care" through three actions. First, he told students that they could and would achieve success. Second, he worked with students individually before and after class times to ensure that they would succeed. Finally, he held students accountable for their work. Mr. Wray provided a structure in which students were both held to high expectations and provided the necessary emotional and social support needed to meet those expectations. Additionally, Mr. Wray formed a personal connection with students. The participants spoke about "knowing" certain teachers and how that personal connection affected their self-concepts as students.

"Knowing" the teacher.

Some of the participants experienced multiple relationships with teachers in which the teachers facilitated a personal, human connection to the students. Eileen described "good teachers" as those who did more than carried out the necessary steps in a lesson plan:

> You can't just, like, be the teacher. It's not just, like, the teacher. Like Ms. Z, it's not like that either. She recently had breast cancer. She shared that with us. She had a party when she was done with radiation. And so she wasn't completely hiding from us. (Interview, March 30, 2008)

According to Grant and Murray (1999), "teachers model caring by hearing and responding to the pain of others, and by creating a sense of security in their classrooms so that children will be unafraid to express their hurts" (p. 43). Ms. Z shared her own pain and personal challenges with her students, modeling a sense of care for them by trusting them to care about her. She provided a place in which sharing a personal hardship was not simply acceptable, but encouraged.

Sophia also noted the importance of the teacher-student relationship when she described Mr. Wray as a "cool teacher." She told me, "He just seems like he can kinda relate" (Interview, December 11, 2007). Lili told me that she knows Mr. Wray better than other teachers "because they just teach and stuff" (Interview, March 13, 2008). Eileen told me:

> All teachers, they seem to have their own, like, separate life. But, like, with Mr. Wray. Most teachers have like an in-school life and an out-of-school life. Which is fine, you know, you understand that. Mr. Wray like let us know

about his kids being born and actually giving us some... Like we know he's

married. I've met his kids. You have to... Teachers can't think of students as

just their students. To Mr. Wray, like, he's also my friend. It's not just a

student teacher thing. You really know the person. It's kinda cool. (Interview,

March 30, 2008)

Instead of "hiding from us," as Eileen described, or "just teaching and stuff," as Lili

said, Mr. Wray shared aspects of his personal life with students. Gay (2000) writes,

"teachers who care hold them accountable for high-quality academic, social, and

personal performance, and ensure that this happens. They are demanding but

facilitative, supportive and accessible, both personally and professionally" (p. 50).

The participants in this study described their band teacher in this way, contrasting his

actions and demeanor with other teachers, including elementary music teachers. He

not only demanded quality learning by being "critical," as David stated, but made

himself available within and outside of instructional time.

The relationships formed between Mr. Wray and the band students extended

beyond the band classroom. I observed him greeting students in the cafeteria,

introducing students to his wife and children after the winter concert, and making

himself approachable outside of the band room. By doing so, students felt

comfortable speaking with him about other aspects of their lives and greeting him in

public. By greeting students outside of the band room, Mr. Wray displayed respect for

them as people, not simply as students playing a particular role in a particular space.

Gay (2000) asserts:

Students feel a need to have a personal connection with teachers. This happens when teachers acknowledge their presence, honor their intellect, respect them as human beings, and make them feel like they are important. In other words, they empower students by legitimizing their 'voice' and visibility. (p. 49)

The students in this study support Gay's statements. They described "nice," "good, "and "caring" teachers as those who made themselves available to students beyond learning the subject matter at hand. Students formed relationships with these teachers and told me that they "knew" them. By knowing their teachers, they felt comfortable sharing aspects about themselves, including their challenges and strengths as learners. By all accounts, these six band students developed their musical skills and achieved success as musical learners during the 2007-2008 school year. This growth was achieved, in part, due to the relationships they formed with Mr. Wray.

Music Teachers Influences On Curricular Choices

At Cardinal Middle School, students have the option to enroll in world language courses, theater arts, visual art, orchestra, chorus, family and consumer sciences, or technology education. With so many options to choose from, I was curious as to the decisions these six students might make. I wondered if in fact their elective choices had some connection to their socially constructed identities, as my former middle school clarinetist had surmised.

Pleasing "my teacher."

When I asked David if he wanted to enroll in band as a seventh grade student, he replied, "Yeah, totally. My old band teacher would be really mad at me if I didn't" (Interview, February 7, 2008). Sophia told me that her desire to please her elementary school music teacher also influenced her co-curricular music involvement during the 2007-2008 school year. When I asked her why she decided to join the county-wide chorus even though she was "shy about singing," she told me, "Ms. K wanted me to join" (Interview, January 30, 2008).

David and Sophia both described the trust they held in their music elementary music teachers. Teachers with whom they previously formed a positive relationship influenced their decisions regarding musical participation long after they were enrolled in those particular teachers' classes. Peshkin (1991) maintains, "It is a truism of identity... that we are not left to define and shape ourselves as we see fit, for there always are others who have their own views of us: their expectations influence our behavior" (p. 172). Sophia and David made choices in middle school based on their elementary school music teachers' expectations. Thus, they began to define themselves in terms of their social activities and groups, specifically as members of the band and instrumentalists. These participants' role identities, or their identities as a tuba player and an alto saxophonist, intersected with social identities, or members of the band group. Their interactions with their teachers depended on their roles as students that, in turn, influenced their membership in the middle school Concert Band. Here we find the overlap between social identity and role identity construction.

This overlap extended to relationships between the participants involved in this study and the middle school band teacher.

"He's the reason we're here."

When I asked Eileen what she liked about band, she listed Mr. Wray as the second most important factor, just after increasing her technical proficiency. Mr. Wray also served as a model for Eileen as she constructed her percussionist identity. In a journal entry she wrote, "I really like percussion, and since Mr. Wray is a percussionist, all of the songs we play as an ensamble are really cool" (Journal, January 27, 2008). Though Eileen was drawn to the musical content itself, the relationship she had with her music teachers figured prominently in her discussion of learning such content. As I previously outlined, Eileen spoke positively about teachers who provided detailed feedback, verbal encouragement, and models of accomplishment. Mr. Wray served in that role of "caring teacher" and a model for Eileen's emerging identity as a percussionist.

Mariam also described Mr. Wray as a model for her own musical learning when she described the interrelated roles of teacher and student. According to Mariam, the band classroom was a unique environment within the Cardinal Middle School context because, "Mr. Wray- he's a different teacher. He's different than the regular core class teacher" (Interview, April 4, 2008). Mariam did not separate the two roles of teacher and student as she explained, "when you have all these people in the band, you're all doing the same thing. I mean, not like playing. But like, you're all going through the same thing, doing the different events and stuff" (Interview, April

4, 2008). She then specifically told me that "everybody" attends these events, including Mr. Wray.

Unlike other teachers, band teachers serve as chaperones outside of their schools and their school days. In addition, band students and teachers interact on weekends and evenings as they perform concerts and adjudicated festivals. Though this additional time that band students and teachers spend together was familiar to me, I wondered if Mr. Wray's relationships with students were unlike other band teachers' relationships with their band students. I asked Mariam to elaborate on her thoughts. She told me:

> He acts more like the student. Like he helps. Like he plays with us… and then
> he directs us. You know, of course, because he's the conductor person. But he
> really helps us and sometimes teachers don't always give, like... Somehow he
> doesn't give an individual attention, but the way he does it is like everybody's
> getting individual attention without doing it one by one person. And with the
> teachers (regular teachers), they don't always um, like do like how Mr. Wray
> teaches. (Interview, April 4, 2008)

I observed Mr. Wray playing the trombone in class numerous times. Typically, Mr. Wray warmed-up with the Concert Band at the beginning of each class meeting. As Mariam described her teacher "doing the same thing" as the students, I began to understand Mariam's experience learning with her band teacher, rather than from her band teacher.

In other classes, the teachers typically assigned work for students to do. In band classes, the teachers and students simultaneously perform the curriculum. This

co-creation of knowledge led to Mariam's description of Mr. Wray acting "more like the student." Eileen and Mariam described specific aspects of Mr. Wray's role as a teacher and percussionist that served as a model for their own musical growth. Other participants spoke about Mr. Wray's general demeanor in class, contrasting their experiences in band with teachers whose classes they did not enjoy.

During David' sixth grade experience, band was different from his other classes because, unlike his other teachers, Mr. Wray did not "have mood swings." According to David, "when a teacher's always depressed and stuff, like no one wants to be in their class. But if a teacher's really fun and stuff, then people want to be in their class and listen" (Interview, March 27, 2008). Lili told me that her knowledge of Mr. Wray from other students influenced her initial choice to enroll in band. She wrote, "i chose band this year because i like playing an instrument and being with my friends.and i heared the band teacher was awesome" (Journal, January 20, 2008).

Eileen explained that a teacher should "think like a student. You have to think, Would I really want to be doing this? 'Cause otherwise it could get really boring" (Interview, March 30, 2008). Mariam wrote in a journal, "Mr. Wray makes everthing more fun and enjoyable by making fun ways of playing like not always playing the song as fast or slow. It's fun when he makes us laugh. He's the main reason why no one quits" (Journal, December 4, 2007). Eileen told me, "Mr. Wray- I just like all the stuff he does." She explained that in band, "it's not *just* play your instrument," (Interview, November 27, 2007) but that Mr. Wray varied the learning activities. By doing so, he maintained student engagement with the content while providing

multiple means by which students may learn the musical material. Sophia also indicated the influence of the teacher on students' curricular choices:

ARH: If you had a not-cool teacher, or somebody else that wasn't Mr. Wray, how do you think that would play out?

Sophia: It would kinda make band less fun, and so [I] probably wouldn't want to do it next year. (Interview, December 11, 2007)

Sophia, Eileen, Mariam, Lili, and David described their personal relationship with Mr. Wray. Each student told me about specific ways in which Mr. Wray created a "fun" learning activity or served as a model for themselves as musicians. They also described the classroom climate created by teacher-directed routines, behaviors, and expectations.

When I asked Mariam during the final interview why she repeatedly told me that she liked her band class, she stated:

Well, it's just like everyone's always supporting each other and helping each other out and like, um... They're all, like, trying to reach a different goal or something. So it's really enjoyable and since we have Mr. Wray... Again, I bring this up. He's just so outgoing and everything that everybody always like gets together. (Interview, April 4, 2008)

Nieto (1999) writes, "Learning emerges from the social, cultural, and political spaces in which it takes place, and through the interactions and relationships that occur among learners and teachers" (p.2). The participants described the nature of their relationship with Mr. Wray, comparing and contrasting it with other teacher-student relationships they experienced. Through their words, these students made

240

evident that the relationships between teachers and students influenced the spaces in which these students learned. Unlike her other classes, Mariam enjoyed "how Mr. Wray works with us and other people work with each other on the pieces of music." Mariam did not experience this sense of collaboration in her non-music classes in which "it's pretty much individual" (Interview, April 4, 2008).

The participants involved in this study spoke about their relationships with teachers from many angles. Students painted positive portraits of certain teachers while they spoke ambivalently or negatively about other teachers. Interestingly, their descriptions of "good" teachers were based, in part, on their relationships with teachers they did not designate as "good." All of the participants positively described teachers who they felt that they "knew." Additionally, when teachers recognized students as people, not only as students or learners in classrooms, the participants seemed to indicate a positive learning relationship in their schooling. Students described themselves as successful in specific subject areas in which their teachers knew more about them than their test scores or technical deficiencies.

Grant and Murray (1999) assert that teachers' knowledge must extend beyond subject matter:

> A poor cellist is unlikely to be a good teacher of the instrument but even a great player will need to attend carefully to each pupil: to observe the placement of fingers, to listen scrupulously to the sounds produced, to know the kinds of errors this pupil is inclined to make, and later to see into the soul of the disciple to understand what will move her or him to the highest levels of interpretation. (pp. 32-33)

Ms. Z and Mr. Wray listened to students classroom performances, corrected mistakes, and created relationships between students and teachers that extended beyond technical proficiencies. In doing so, students learned to trust these teachers, seeking their advice and modeling their behavior after them. The students' loyalties to their peers, often presumed to carry more weight at the middle school level, did not match the fierceness of their loyalty to their beloved teachers. Neither did peers' judgments carry as much weight as teachers' portrayals of who the students might become and what they may accomplish. In the next section, I explore how these participants' musical identities were shaped and influenced by their peers and music teachers.

Being a Band Student

Toward the beginning of this study, the six participants talked about "being in band." Their wording seemed to suggest that their experiences reflected enrollment in band as membership in a social group. Some of the participants referred to the Concert Band as "my band," and later told me about "my section." As the school year progressed, I noticed that their language regarding band reflected another experience. In addition to belonging to the large social group, the Concert Band, they told me about "my band friends" and "being a band student."

Eileen told me she began to find connections with a peer who she previously described as a "soccer player" due to enrollment in the band program. She told me that she had begun to sit with this girl at lunch on occasion. Eileen explained, "But she's cool. She plays flute" (Interview, February 1, 2008). As members of the band, interacting within the specific social context of the band classroom, they embraced the roles of percussionist, clarinetist, oboist, section leader, and band kid, among

242

others. They saw in each other these roles through which they created a social network of friends and band members.

In this portion of the chapter, I first explore the participants' perceptions of themselves with regard to the role of musician, a term I often heard used at Cardinal Middle School to describe students enrolled in music classes. I then turn to the participants' experiences within particular roles situated in the larger social group and physical place of Concert Band class meetings. Lastly, I present and analyze the participants' performance identities as members of the band program.

"Being a Musician"

During our first interview, I asked Sophia to tell me about playing the saxophone. She replied "I wanna get really good at it" (Interview, December 11, 2007). This sentiment, getting "good at it," resonated with other participants' descriptions of themselves and how they assumed the role of "musician." I asked David to tell me to describe someone who is a musician. He said:

David: Someone who's willing to give it their all. Um... They really want to be good. Not just some person who says, "I'm gonna play this" and are really bad at it.

ARH: So somebody who would...

David: Like they care about it.

ARH: So somebody who takes up an instrument and doesn't practice wouldn't be a musician in your eyes?

David: Well, not necessarily. But, if they didn't really want to be good. And if they didn't, um, really, um, feel that they were good, I don't think they'd be

243

very good. Like they want to be good and sort of not forget how to play and

not really care about it. (Interview, December 3, 2007)

I then asked David if he considered himself to be a musician. He responded, "not yet"

because "I haven't really fixed my mind on what I want to be for life, yet." David

seemed to associate the word *musician* with a professional role. Though he did not

want to commit himself to a specific career path, he admitted that becoming a

professional musician was "a possibility" (Interview, December 3, 2007).

During a conversation about her career goals, Kejah mentioned that she would

consider a career as a teacher. I asked her if she might consider teaching music. She

replied, "No, 'cause I don't know a lot about music" (Interview, February 13, 2008).

Kejah explained that, "Well, I know some of the fingerings, but I only know them in

letters. 'Cause like on the scale sheet, I know them by that. But, like, them in notes, I

don't know that." She later offered another explanation for her lack of aspiration to be

a music teacher, saying, "Well, it doesn't seem interesting to me" (Interview,

February 13, 2008). By our third interview, Kejah's appeared to have modified her

self-concept. She told me that she did consider herself to be a musician because "a

musician is someone who plays an instrument. Or it doesn't have to be an instrument,

but plays something that involves music" (Interview, March 11, 2008).

When I asked all of the participants to describe a musician in their journals,

Lili wrote:

The way i define a "musician" would be that they live and breath music. I

think they can tell what the music sounds like before playing it and they can

speak music. I would count myself as part musician. I play an instrument and

sing but i don't compose. (Journal, November 30, 2007)

In light of these descriptions provided by David and Lili, Kejah's evolving identity is

notable. According to Kejah, her peers respected "knowing a lot about" music or

"being good at" music. Kejah initially believed that she did not know a great deal

about music, even though she had played the clarinet for over a year. By March,

Kejah described herself as a musician, feeling more confident about her knowledge

and skill as the school year progressed. Beyond incorporating the role of musician

into their emerging identities as middle school students, the six participants involved

in this study described their roles within the Concert Band class, noting their

particular instruments as important aspects of their identities.

"My Part" in the Band

As I outlined in chapter five, these six band students spoke about the many

factors influencing their choice of instruments. When I asked David why he decided

to switch from saxophone to tuba, he replied, "I don't know. I mean... I think it would

be fun. Um, Jonathan already switched to low brass. So I thought, Why not? I'm not

really skilled at the saxophone that much. Um. And we needed a tuba. (Interview,

December 3, 2007). David felt less adept as a saxophonist than his peers, providing

the impetus for instrument change. Although he may have decided to change to

another instrument based on his perceived skill level on the saxophone, his

experiences in the Cardinal Middle School Concert Band led him to believe that his

role as a tuba player was important to the success of the group. David also told me

that he enjoyed being "the base of the band" (Interview, December 3, 2007). He felt

that his choice to play the tuba supported the larger goals of the Concert Band, a group he described as "pretty supportive" and "(for the most part) friends." He saw himself as an important member of this group because he was the only student who played the tuba.

David was not the only participant to choose an instrument because of the group's needs. When I asked Lili why she decided to play the oboe, she replied, "Well, I don't know. Because Mr. Wray said that there's like a lot of, um, clarinets. So I just...I wanted to switch to an instrument before this too. So, I just decided oboe. (Interview, December 19, 2007). Mr. Wray told Lili that she did not play as integral a role as a clarinetist because so many other students also played the clarinet and therefore covered those parts within the larger musical score. At the beginning of the year, no one played the oboe. When Mr. Wray explained to Lili that the oboe parts would be missing from band performances, she agreed to serve the band in this role.

Other participants also spoke about the specific instrumental part they played. Sophia told me that her section "mostly" performed pieces in which all of the alto saxophonists performed the same part. After performing one piece in which her section was divided into two subsections, she told me that she enjoyed "having different parts and stuff" (Interview, January 30, 2008). Eileen's enjoyment as a percussionist also stemmed from the multiple roles she literally played. She told me:

> I like it 'cause you get the rhythm. And the melody. And sometimes, like, with... in, like, Canto, I get to play part, part of the low brass with the timpani. With other stuff, it's just, I think it sounds nice. (Interview, November 27, 2007)

Differentiation within instrument sections appeared to interest these band students. David, Lili, and Eileen spoke about their interest in performing unique parts. Playing distinctive roles within the class provided them opportunities to serve the greater good of the group in ways that other peers did not. Sophia also enjoyed the experience of performing a part within a smaller section of students. Instead of a large alto saxophone section in which all students performed the same part, Sophia preferred smaller subsections in which she was one of two or three students playing a more specialized part.

Feeling like an important member of the ensemble seemed to underlie these students' narratives. However, as sections divided, students attributed greater or lesser importance to the specific parts assigned. When I asked Kejah to tell me more about the different clarinet parts, she responded:

> First clarinet. You play higher notes and harder. And, like, Maria. She plays...
> She's actually second clarinet, but then sometimes she sneaks in Two Russian
> Folksongs and she plays the first part. But she's really good at it though. She
> knows the beginning, up to the Slow March [section of the piece]. (Interview,
> February 13, 2008)

I was intrigued by Kejah's decision to remain playing her assigned second part in light of Maria's choice to play the first clarinet part:

> ARH: Did you ever try the first parts?
>
> Kejah: Well, like the beginning. Like, C, C... and then, and then when it starts
> to say "Second play." And then, like, after that I just stop because I don't
> know the high notes. (Interview, February 13, 2008)

Kejah expressed admiration for her friend and classmate, Maria. Kejah was impressed by Maria's ability to play a part that Kejah found more challenging than her own. While she admired Maria's performance skills, she considered herself less able in comparison.

Performing a challenging or unique instrumental part seemed to be an important aspect of these six participants' experiences in middle school band. The challenge of the part played appeared to be of special significance to Eileen. During an interview, she told me that she felt many of her band pieces lacked complexity:

> I like our new piece, Chesapeake Serenade. I picked it up. I wasn't even playing bells and I sight read it. They were like, "Whoa you played this piece before?" I was like, "No." But the music is like, it's not really hard. And that's the thing with percussion. You never really play. You always have a certain amount of rests and stuff. (Eileen, Interview, February 15, 2008)

Despite Eileen's ability to sight-read some of her parts, she jumped at the chance to work on instrumental technique specific to percussionists while performing as an ensemble. The students voluntarily met with Mr. Wray before their first period class. Eileen told me:

> And we're playing this awesome Japanese piece. And it's got, it involves drumline. It's like Amanda will stand here and we'll have a low tom and a high tom and Luke here and Nick here and low tom and high tom. And a big, like, bass. And Zeke on the bass and someone else on the bass. It's really cool. It was actually written by [a member of the local army band that works with the Cardinal Middle School band students]. So it's a big piece. It's cool 'cause

it starts out Amanda and I tap out this rhythm. Then Brian responds and we do

it again. And then the bass drums, like, go. And then we all grunt and then it

starts over. (Interview, March 30, 2008)

In this setting, Eileen experienced the opportunity to continuously play a unique role

in an ensemble setting while learning new musical challenges. Unlike her larger band

experiences, in which she often rested for long periods of time, she was able to

continuously play as a member of the percussion ensemble.

By performing unique instrumental parts, the students were literally playing

different roles in the ensemble. As they learned to perform more difficult instrumental

skills, Mr. Wray gave them the opportunity to play more complex music. Such music

often required students within one section to divide into multiple parts. As members

of smaller subgroups within the class, these students took on increasingly

individualized responsibility for the group performance, embracing particular roles

through their relationship with their music, their teacher, and each other.

"I really, really want to be… really good."

In January 2008, Mr. Wray announced auditions for all Cardinal Middle

School band students. Based on the students' auditions, Mr. Wray would place them

in either the Concert Band or the advanced Symphonic Band for the 2008-2009

school year. When students auditioned for course placements for the following school

year, they were also competing for more immediate placements as Mr. Wray used the

audition results to rank the Concert Band students within each instrument section.

These rankings would then serve as their seating placement, or chairs, for the

remainder of the 2007-2008 school year. Lastly, the auditions served as a means for

249

Mr. Wray to name section leaders within the Concert Band. Those students who performed best during the auditions would earn the title of first chair and assume the role of section leader for their instrument sections.

Some of the participants seemed uneasy by the idea of rankings within each section. When I asked if she thought the chair placements would change relationships among the flutists, Mariam told me:

> I guess not too much. I think if they're like best friends and one gets first chair and one gets last chair, the last chair will be pretty jealous of the one who's first. But I think they would be still be friends. But I don't think it will change too much. (Interview, February 1, 2008)

Mariam noted the feelings of those placed toward the end of the section, but she also described her thoughts regarding those who earned the role of first chair. She told me that she did not believe the flutists would feel differently about one another based on audition results, though they may feel differently about themselves. "Like if that person thinks they're the best 'cause they're first or something" (Interview, February 1, 2008).

Though they seemed aware of differences between section members in terms of experience and instrumental technique, all of the participants described a sense of collaboration among members of the same instrument section. Mr. Wray attempted to maintain this sense of community when he stated that "everyone is equally important." However, by ranking the Concert Band students, he sent a different message.

Sophia held conflicting feelings about the chair tests. She hesitantly told me, "I think it's kinda good and kinda... I think you can see how you can get better" (Interview, March 13, 2008). Mariam spoke more openly about her emotions regarding the chair placements. She told me, "Those I think are good. Like the chair tests. But sometimes I think, like, you could, like, feel like somebody is better than you because they're like first chair, second chair, or something" (Interview, February 1, 2008). Mariam viewed rankings within sections as a static statement about students' skill levels. Sophia, on the other hand, found a way to view these rankings positively, telling me about the possible purpose of motivation for the band members. By viewing her own skill level in relation to her peers, she might see how far up the rankings she could possibly move through increasing her instrumental technique in relation to her peers.

While she expressed some doubt about her ability to earn the rank of first chair, Mariam said, "I think I'm gonna get third or fourth chair. Not the last I'm not so sure. But, um, I mean I won't get the first, but in the middle kind of." When I asked her how she would feel if she ended up in the last chair, she said:

I would feel, like, even worse than I would feel if I was right in the middle. Because it levels, like best to worst, kind of. Mr. Wray said not to feel bad with the chair tests or anything, but you know, one through five or whatever. But I would feel really bad. But not too, too bad that I would, like, die or anything. (Interview, February 1, 2008)

Mariam's emotions portray a sense of self-doubt and vulnerability that she did not previously experience as a member of an unranked flute section. As I noted

earlier, Mariam described herself as a musician and flutist, among other roles. The possibility of earning a low rank within her section might not only cause Mariam to "feel really bad" about her skill level, but her overall sense of self. Bruner (1996) maintains, "School judges the child's performance, and the child responds by evaluating himself or herself in turn" (Bruner, 1996, p. 37). Mariam's responses support Bruner's assertion. We can interpret these statements to mean that teachers and administrators evaluate skills and proficiencies prompting a student's self-evaluation of his or her emerging identity. In the band classroom, these evaluations are made public though chair placements, or rankings. Each day as students prepare for instructional time, they sit in assigned, ordered seat placements. In these locations, an aspect of their roles as instrumentalists and learners in relation to peers are made visible to those around them.

Symphonic Band: The "highest level people."

In addition to rankings within the Concert Band, the participants in this study noted a ranking of all band students by placement across band courses and their desires to earn acceptance into the advanced Symphonic Band class. Mariam told me, "Well, I think symphonic band is awesome. They play the awesome pieces" (Interview, February 1, 2008). Kejah said that they play, "like, harder songs. But they sound better" (Interview, February 13, 2008). Lili noticed the increased difficulty level of the musical literature studied in the more advanced class. She told me she wanted to successfully audition for the Symphonic Band, "Because they get to play, like, really cool songs. So do we, but theirs are more, like, complex" (Interview,

January 14, 2008). Eileen also noted this increased level of complexity when she wrote in a journal entry:

> Next year, I am definatley going to take band. I really, really, really, really (ect.) want to be in Symphonic Band! They are really good, and since it's audition only for seventh and eighth graders, I can only try my best and practice a lot. I think it would be awesome to take band at that high of a level and with people who are older than I am. (Journal, January 27, 2008)

The band students in this study described both the content and students in the advanced band class simultaneously. They used similar adjectives when speaking about the complexity of the music and "really good" musicians in the Symphonic Band. They also compared and contrasted themselves with the students in that band.

I asked David about his thoughts regarding the upcoming auditions. He replied:

> I don't know that I want to be in the Symphonic Band just yet. 'Cause those are the highest level people. Even if I made it, I think I'd have to, like, play and study at the same time. I'd have to get, get a lot better. (Interview, February 7, 2008)

David felt insecure because, "I think I need a little more experience. And my braces are bugging me" (Interview, February 7, 2008). Mr. Wray accepted David into the Symphonic Band based on his audition, but the acceptance was provisional. David reported, "I made it into symphonic band on like the condition that I get lessons and that I practice all summer and get better." While other previously insecure students expressed happiness at their placement in the advanced ensemble, David said, "I just

don't think I want to go into symphonic band, though. 'Cause I'd be, like, last chair" (Interview, March 27, 2008). This statement was a change in David' self-concept. In the fall, he told me that band was "fun" because "no one ever makes you feel like you suck" (Interview, December 3, 2007). He also told me that he initially felt successful as a tuba player because of the "supportive" classroom climate. Following the announcement of chair placements, David seemed less self-confident. David' feeling about chair placements also changed. Prior to the auditions, he told me, "It doesn't really matter to me 'cause I'm the only tuba [in Concert Band]. I'll get first chair anyways" (Interview, February 7, 2008). Though he earned a place in the most advanced band class, he felt less confident about his ability in comparison to his peers in that group. He suddenly revealed that perhaps in this case, he did care about the chair placements, specifically his chair placement.

David expressed some self-doubt about his technical skills in comparison to other students in the Symphonic Band. David did not know well the seventh grade tuba players likely to enroll in Symphonic Band. Interestingly, the only other tuba student placed in Symphonic Band that David did know was in Cadet Band. Sixth grade marked this student's first experiences both playing the tuba and being in a school band. David compared his musical skill level mainly to peers he did not personally know. His fear that he would not fit in appeared to be based on perceptions regarding older students' achievements in comparison to his own.

Kejah also expressed some doubt in her ability to successfully audition for the Symphonic Band. Similar to David, she compared herself to students in the Symphonic Band. She told me:

Well, I think I'm gonna get in Cadet, I mean, Concert Band again. 'Cause, my friend. Her sister's in the Symphonic Band and I've seen their music and it's really hard. And I can't understand some of the notes. And they play, like, really fast. (Interview, February 13, 2008)

Kejah expressed a desire to become a member of the Symphonic Band, but, like David, she felt unsure about her ability to perform a successful audition. She explained, "Well, I want to be in Symphonic Band, but I think I'll end up in Concert Band." When I asked her why she thought she would not be placed in the advanced class, she said, "'Cause I don't really practice that much" (Interview, February 13, 2008).

Kejah had previously told me that she wasn't "the best" clarinetist in the ensemble. When I asked her why she described herself that way, she said:

'Cause, like, I don't know a lot of the notes. And, like... Like some of the music, I don't understand it. Like, in the clarinet. When they have a D or one of the instruments and then they have a dot under it, I don't understand that. I ask my friends. And when, I don't sometimes... I don't know the notes. Like I don't know none of my notes, so I have to write them in. And I'm trying not to do that, but it's just a habit. (Interview, December 21, 2007)

According to Wehmeyer (2006), students' identities are based, in part, on "the degree to which they perceive themselves as able to act successfully *in* and *upon* their environment" (p. 130). Kejah and David evaluated their abilities to succeed as band students, in part, by comparing themselves to their peers' successful or unsuccessful negotiations of the same social context.

Like her peers, Eileen also expressed some insecurity prior to the auditions. When I asked her about the upcoming symphonic band auditions, she said:

> Yeah, I'm really, really hopeful that I'm gonna be in Symphonic Band next
> year because there are a lot of really good seventh graders in Concert Band.
> It's like one of those things. People have told me, "Oh you're gonna get in
> symphonic band next year." But, it's like it was the same thing with honors
> band. Even though I was in it the first year, I was so nervous. In my second try
> out, I was really nervous because I just, I never knew even though I probably
> was going to get it 'cause yeah. I was hoping, hoping. (Interview, February
> 15, 2008)

By developing a perception of the students enrolled in the larger band program, the Concert Band members saw themselves in relation to other band students. When preparing for an audition that served to separate those who had or had not attained equal skills to students already enrolled in the Symphonic Band, the Concert Band students necessarily compared themselves to others.

Neither Lili or Sophia formally declared band as their elective choices for their seventh grade school year when they met with their guidance counselor. Eileen relayed their thoughts to me:

> 'Cause they were on a, "If I make symphonic band I'll continue" thing.... So
> they put down, 'cause they didn't think they missed if they made symphonic
> band, they wanted to change it. That's kinda of embarassing. Then some of
> the spots are filled up and everything. And they wanted to make sure they
> were guaranteed a spot in the band. They were already guaranteed a spot in a

band next year. And so they could definitely switch from whatever they had written down on the request form. (Interview, March 30, 2008)

In other words, Sophia and Lili wrote down other electives, such as art, on their seventh grade course request forms rather than write down Symphonic Band. They were anxious about the possibility of choosing the advanced band class only to later discover that their audition performances did not qualify them for admission to the course. If however, their auditions proved successful (as was the case), then they could easily change their decisions knowing that Mr. Wray held space for them in the class.

Mr. Wray told me that Kejah also chose to declare another elective instead of band for the subsequent school year. I found this choice interesting as Kejah had expressed a desire to remain in the Concert Band with her friends. If, however, Eileen's experience was similar to other students, Kejah's choice was not surprising. If students who did not earn a place in the Symphonic Band felt embarrassed, then Kejah may have chosen to take another course in order to avoid such embarrassment. The audition process created competition between classmates who had come to see each other as "supportive" and a big group where "everyone is together." This need for comparison made the issue more complex. Eileen told me, "it's so hard to be a clarinet… 'cause there's so many people in that section [to compete against]" (Interview, March 30, 2008).

Eileen told me that she thought most of her peers who chose not to continue in band because they were placed in Concert Band for a second year. She explained:

'Cause no one wants to sit through another year of Concert Band. It's just like
as soon as you make Concert... If you don't make symphonic, you're labeled
as, I'm not good at my instrument. Like most people. Like I did that once.
Like you don't even know you're doing it. And you see seventh graders and
you think they're not good at their instrument just because they didn't make it.
(Interview, March 30, 2008)

Although Eileen did not consciously demean her peers who had not earned a place in
the Symphonic Band, she became aware of her own bias in this regard. She did not
want to be seen as a less skilled musician than some of her peers and also felt
sympathy for those who wished to avoid such perceptions as well. Eileen was not the
only participant to describe such comparisons between the two courses. While
Mariam told me that she planned on enrolling in the Concert Band if she did not earn
a place in the Symphonic Band, she would prefer to enroll in the more advanced
group. She told me that she hoped to successfully audition for the advanced class
because "I don't like feeling left back or anything" (Interview, February 1, 2008).

As I walk towards the band room, I see the majority of the Concert Band
Students clustered in front of the classroom door. They are all facing away
from me, looking and pointing excitedly at two pieces of paper taped to the
wall to the left of the entrance. I hear one student exclaim, "Hey you got first
chair!" as he slaps his classmate and high-five and then pushes his way into
the classroom. Another student loudly asks her friend, "Did you make it in?"
after telling her that she earned a place in the more advanced class. Some
students congratulate each other before shoving their way past peers to set up

their instruments, preparing themselves for class. Others stare silently, then

cautiously walk around their classmates to enter the band room. I see Sophia

quietly approach the papers as the crowd begins to dissipate. Her ever-present

smile fades. As she turns away, I make eye contact with her, smile, and wave.

She turns the corners of her mouth up slightly in acknowledgement, then

enters the band classroom with her eyes pointed towards the floor. I walk up

to the paper, find Sophia's name and read that although she earned a place in

the advanced Symphonic Band, Mr. Wray placed her in the bottom half of her

saxophone section. (Field Notes, March 11, 2008)

According to Bruner (1996), self-evaluation serves as an important aspect of

identity. He states:

We evaluate our efficacy in bringing off what we hoped for or were asked to

do. Self increasingly takes on the flavor of these valuations. I call this mix of

agentive agency and self-evaluation "self-esteem." It combines our sense of

what we believe ourselves to be (or even hope to be) capable of and what we

fear is beyond us. (p. 37)

David feared the possibility that he might be unable to meet Mr. Wray's expectations.

Though he hoped he could improve his tuba performance skills, he expressed some

nervousness regarding his ability to do so. Kejah described her limitations with regard

to reading musical notation. Though she knew how to read most of her music, she did

not believe she could compete with her peers. Eileen expressed her own perceptions

that those placed in Concert Band for a second year were viewed as less admirable

than members of the more advanced band. Mariam feared being "left back" as her

classmates earned membership in the Symphonic Band. Rather than face humiliation in front of their peers and counselor, Kejah, Lili, and Sophia chose to enroll in other classes instead of the uncertain future band placements. Their desires to earn membership in this select group propelled them to practice, even seeking private instruction in David's case. However, their fears regarding course placements weighed heavily on their thoughts and actions, affecting their self-concepts and willingness to further identify with the band.

Socio-economic status and musical achievement.

While these six band students spoke of their individual skills and experiences, they also compared themselves to each other and Mr. Wray's expectations of them. They each strove to grow as musicians and learners, working to improve their instrumental technique and music literacy. However, some of the participants also spoke of mitigating "outside" factors that influenced students' abilities to succeed as band members. More specifically, Eileen, Sophia, Mariam, and Kejah described how socioeconomic status affected band participation and achievement.

After Mr. Wray posted audition results, Eileen described her joy at earning a place in the Symphonic Band. As she had previously spoken about her friends in the percussion section, I asked about their placements as well:

ARH: Did Aliya also make Symphonic Band?

Eileen: Everyone in our section except Edward. Uh, yeah. I don't really know what happened. I think, well, you have to be really good at snare. Well, I'm not really good at snare. You have to be pretty good at snare and good at mallets, too because, like, yeah... And Aliya can kind of sight-read. And like

everyone else. They take piano. Except for Edward. He doesn't. Which kinda

puts him behind everyone else. (Interview, March 30, 2008)

Interested in Eileen's awareness of her peers' skill levels and privately funded music

instruction, I asked her a follow-up question:

ARH: So, wait. Edward? The one kid who didn't make symphonic band? He's

the only kid who doesn't take private piano lessons?

Eileen: Well, Brian doesn't take. Well, I don't know what he takes. But he can

sight-read. I think he started off on another instrument before he started

percussion. So he was kinda able to read it. And then Rimon has learned a lot

from his sister who takes piano. And Aliya- I taught her within five minutes

the first day of school…. And then Bill and I... Yeah, we already knew how to

do it. And piano helps so much. Like, it's kind of scary how much it helps.

(Interview, March 30, 2008)

Eileen and Bill appeared to have benefited from private piano lessons paid for by

their parents. Eileen described her sense that she gained valuable music literacy skills

from these lessons. This additional musical experience provided her with confidence

in her musical skills. At the same time that she was aware of her advantages, she

seemed conscious that one of her peers in particular was placed at a disadvantage

within the classroom setting due to his lack of privately-funded music lessons.

Eileen was not the only participant to bring up the topic of private lessons.

Mariam lamented her third chair placement in the flute section. Even though she

anticipated earning this place, she noted her desire to earn a higher ranking. She told

me, "Well, um, um, I got third chair. And I wish I got second, but since I don't

always have time for private lessons or something" (Interview, April 4, 2008).

Mariam kept herself extremely busy and might not have had extra time for lessons,

but she also told me, "I'm not that wealthy." Mariam believed that the flutist who

earned the second chair seat in the Concert Band deserved it because, "she takes

private lessons, but her mom's a musician. And so, yeah... She bought a flute

recently" (Interview, April 4, 2008). I then asked Mariam if she thought that owning

an instrument was an advantage over renting. She replied, "Not really. I don't think

buying it is. It's just like the fact that when you buy it you know that you're gonna

play it for a long time." Mariam explained that even if she had spent more time

preparing for her audition, "I think that the seats would still be the same. Because

Rachael, the second chair person, um private lessons. And support from her family"

(Mariam, Interview, April 4, 2008). Mariam's father did not play any instruments and

worked part-time as the sole financial supporter of the family. Mariam openly

discussed this disadvantage with me perhaps to help account for why she was not "the

best."

Sophia also mentioned her awareness of the diversity in socioeconomic status

within the band. When predicting who might earn the role of section leader for the

saxophone section, Sophia stated, "Some other people in the saxophone section. One

in particular. It's not their fault but they can't practice in their apartment" (Interview,

January 30, 2008). Due to the demographic and geographic characteristics of

Northampton County, most families living on limited income rented apartment homes

through the county subsidized housing program. Many of these buildings housed

families with children of all ages, including infants and toddlers who rested during the

day. As such, students like Sophia's fellow saxophonist could not practice in their home for fear of waking sleeping children. Through her research on socioeconomic status and social identity, Brantlinger (2006) found, "social class certainly figured as prominently as gender… in their identity construction" (p. 114). If students' roles in the classroom do, in fact, help define their identities as individuals and learners, then the limiting of access to particular classroom roles based on socioeconomic class might constrain their emerging self-concepts during the middle school years.

Interestingly, Kejah was the only participant in this study to speak about money when describing her experience choosing an instrument. She told me, "So, um, I gave her the check my mom paid for it. And then, um, I picked my instrument. And then she wrote down on the contract form the number of the case" (Interview, 21, 2007). The financial cost to her mother seemed to be an important detail when she recounted the process of choosing to play an instrument. Financial limitations played a role in Kejah's ability to participate in class as well. As Eileen described earlier in this chapter, Kejah had lost her instrument for a period of time. I asked Kejah about this incident:

> ARH: Where did you find it?
>
> Kejah: Oh. This isn't mine. He gave me, like, another one.
>
> ARH: Another one to rent?
>
> Kejah: Yeah. 'Cause, um, someone else has mine. And their real one is over there in front of the door. And it's been there for a couple weeks.
>
> ARH: Is that where yours had gone? Someone else had taken it?
>
> Kejah: Mm-hmm. [yes] (Interview, February 13, 2008)

Although Mr. Wray ensured that Kejah had another instrument to play, her limited

financial means still weighed on her mind and ability to participate fully in class. She

told me:

> When he gave me the instrument, he didn't have any clarinet reeds for me to
>
> use. So, I, um, have to buy some more. I'm gonna buy some. He said to try
>
> and buy it today, but I don't know... (Interview, February 13, 2008)

According to Kejah, her mother was unable to take her to a music store to purchase

reeds because of traffic congestion during the previous evening. I asked if the reeds

were affordable. Kejah's mother told her that, "she was gonna have, like, money" so

she gave Kejah a 20 dollar bill. If her mother could provide transportation to the

music store, Kejah would then be able to purchase clarinet reeds and have a few

dollars left over to see a movie with her friends.

Financial limitations seemed to play a role in Mariam's experiences as a band

student. In chapter five, Mariam described her knowledge of the Cardinal Middle

School population. She described the community as "a person variety school"

because "not everyone" owned luxury sedans. Since she raised the topic, I decided to

ask Mariam about financial assistance offered through the band fellowship program.

She responded:

> Well, my dad, he wanted me to do that. But it's kinda.. Well, it would be
>
> embarassing because people would know you're trying to get, well it's not
>
> like healthcare. Not like insurance or something. But help with payment or
>
> something because to do that you have to work. And so when I'm doing that
>
> people would know that I need some help with paying for it. I mean I

shouldn't really care what other people think of me. But just to help out my

dad with money or something. But, um, he actually talked to Mr. Wray. So

Mr. Wray let my dad pay half and I didn't work or anything, so yeah... 'Cause

I'm definately not wealthy. Not *wealthy*, wealthy. (Interview, April 4, 2008)

Brantlinger (2006) maintains, "adolescents are not passive imitators of class-

distinctive ways of being and knowing; rather they are agents that perform class-

distinctive roles in innovative ways, and thus actively contribute to the reproduction

of class roles in their own social setting" (p. 114). Much of what I learned through the

data I collected related to the individual's navigation of his or her social context. Each

participant enacted a form of agency. Bruner (1996) defines *agency* as an aspect of

selfhood, or identity in which "one can initiate and carry out activities on one's own"

(p. 35). However, Bruner qualifies this definition:

> Since agency implies not only the capacity for initiating, but also for
>
> completing our acts, it also implies *skill* or *know-how*. Success and failure are
>
> principal nutrients in the development of childhood. Yet we may not be the
>
> final arbiters of success and failure, which are often defined from "outside"
>
> according to culturally specified criteria. And school is where the child first
>
> encounters such criteria. (p. 36)

Although Sophia seemed at a loss to help her classmate obtain a position of

leadership, she actively participated in the audition process. She prepared as best she

knew how in order to earn a higher chair placement than her peers and an invitation to

enroll in the Symphonic Band for the following school year. Brantlinger uses the

phrase "actively contribute," rather than "purposefully propagate." I do not think

students are at fault when they perpetuate social stigmas as they are learning to navigate a pre-existing school structure. I do, however, see evidence that children's navigation of such a social structure may lead toward socially constructed class identities that influence students' success in schools.

The participants involved in this study appeared to be aware of how they related to others and what their roles were within the Concert Band and the larger band program. They spoke about fulfilling the needs of the group and balancing a sense of pride in their unique roles with their insecurities about living up to others' expectations. In addition, all of the participants in this study spoke of their desire to reach increasingly higher levels of musical achievement. As members of the larger band program, they compared their musical growth and learning to others. They did not wish to be viewed as less successful than their peers, making choices about their continued involvement in the band program based, in part, on their perceived levels of personal achievement in relation to others.

In this particular setting, band students did not learn solely about music. They also learned about their roles within the music classroom and their success in fulfilling the expectations of such roles. In doing so, these sixth grade band students gained understandings about their identities in a particular school community and classroom. The specific roles that these students played existed as part of a performance-based social group in which students felt varying degrees of comfort. In the next section, I look at the participants' experiences as performers.

Public Performances

Participation in school band programs encompasses two levels of public performance. The first, performing in the classroom in front of peers, takes place on a daily basis as part of the curricular structure. The second, performing on a stage in front of non-band students, parents, family members, and judges, occurs irregularly yet more publicly. The participants involved in this study spoke of their experiences at both levels of musical performance.

"Everyone's staring at me."

Though Lili and David spoke proudly of their unique roles as the only members of the band that played the oboe and tuba, respectively, they felt less comfortable in these roles earlier in the school year. David told me that he "kind of" felt uncomfortable being the only tuba player in the Concert Band. He explained, "I think if maybe I had a second tuba, um, it might make me a little more comfortable 'cause I feel like everyone's staring at me when I'm playing" (Interview, December 3, 2007). Lili also spoke of "being the only" member of the Concert Band playing a particular instrument:

ARH: What is the hardest thing about it?

Lili: About the instrument? or...

ARH: Yeah, or playing oboe in this band.

Lili: Being the only one. (Interview, December 19, 2007)

Performing alone emerged as a theme across these six cases during the 2007-2008 school year. Sophia wrote, "Um if it's like a band performence with the whole band

I'm ok. If it's just our section i get a little nervous, but if it's just me i get sick to my stomach nervous!!!" (Journal, January 21, 2008).

As an assessment measure in the Cardinal Middle School Concert Band class, students regularly performed solo in front of their peers. When I observed this process, I witnessed Mr. Wray ask students to play an excerpt of music studied during instructional time. He then provided each student with both constructive criticism and praise in front of the entire class. David described this experience as a time "where everyone's watching you and there's all that pressure" (Interview, February 7, 2008). Mariam described the experience similarly. She said that she felt:

> uncomfortable in band class when we have playing quizes. I am always
> nervous even though I am pretty prepared. Having to play in front of 50 other
> students when they are looking at you and listening to you is pretty scary!
> (Journal, January 26, 2008).

I observed other instances of students' anxiety regarding solo performance evaluations:

> Mr. Wray explains that all students will be evaluated on their individual
> progress as a formal performance assessment. Eileen raises her hand. Mr.
> Wray calls her name. She asks if it will be "like a quiz… in front of
> everybody." Mr. Wray then explains that each student will play just for him,
> "one-on-one" in a practice room. Eileen smiles and loudly says, "Phew!"
> (Field Notes, January 30, 2008)

Lili told me that she makes every effort to avoid auditions. She told me, "I try not to do them. Unless I'm really, really confident about it. But most of the time, not really."

She equated sports try-outs and music auditions, saying, "Trying out is when everyone looks at you and you're just doing what you're trying out for" (Interview, February 15, 2008). Eileen, Mariam, Sophia, Lili, and David clearly described their insecurities about publicly performing alone. In addition, Lili and Kejah also expressed some discomfort at the thought of performing as members of the larger group. In her journal, Lili wrote:

> But, when I get nervous, I smile and laugh a lot and it's really hard for me to stop, so I try not to look at the audience at all and just look at my music. But, when I just look at my music, I can see around- everyone staring. It's wierd. (Journal, January 14, 2008)

Kejah also felt uncomfortable as the center of attention. In a journal entry about the winter concert she wrote, "i am not nervous tell i get on satge and see millions of people in the aduecience" (Journal, December 13, 2007).

These participants described feeling nervous when people watched them performing. While David, Lili, Mariam, Eileen, and Sophia all spoke about instances of performing alone, Kejah described feeling anxiety because of the possibility that she might stick out among the other band students. When I specifically asked how the participants felt about performing with their peers, I received quite different responses.

"On stage with a bunch of kids."

When I asked Mariam if she was nervous about her upcoming winter band concert, she replied, "I am not that nervous because I will be on stage with a bunch of other kids" (Journal, December 11, 2007). Sophia expressed similar feelings about

269

public performances when she said, "Well, I'm not shy if I'm, like, in a group. But if I were to do it alone, I'd like die of nervousness" (Interview, January 30, 2008). Sophia's thoughts echo the solo performance experiences described in the preceding section. On the other hand, performing alongside their peers gave Sophia and Mariam a sense of comfort not found in other performance situations. Interestingly, both students expressed an increased level of self-confidence when performing as part of the band as opposed to playing quizzes or solos performed in front of their friends and classmates.

During a conversation about an upcoming dance performance, Mariam contrasted her experiences performing in public. While she admitted feeling "nervous" about an upcoming dance solo, she told me:

> Band's less nervousing because, um, there's people next to you. But when I go onstage by myself, the person people are watching me. Not other people besides me. And so I, I get more nervous being all by myself. (Interview, December 13, 2007)

This was not the only instance when Mariam mentioned this lack of self-confidence. One month later, she wrote in a journal entry:

> I feel not very comfortable performing in the public by myself. I enjoy it better when I am with more people like the band. But I would still do it. The problem is just your the only person that everyone is looking at. That's when I get shaky! But I don't not get very nervous performing with a large group of people and we have practiced a lot. (Journal, January 13, 2008)

270

Although large ensemble performance appeared to provide a sense of comfort to these sixth grade students, Lili noted that her self-concept remained at the forefront of her consciousness as an instrumentalist. She told me that while she felt less nervous when performing in a group she stays well "aware of myself" (Interview, January 14, 2008). Lili spoke about hearing herself play among the group. As the only oboist at the beginning of the year, she could hear her distinct sound within the ensemble. She may have been more aware of herself in performance settings as she could hear the oboe timbre above the collective sound of flutes and clarinets around her.

Sophia stated the need for adequate preparation before a group performance as she wrote about her theater arts experiences. She stated, "I love acting so if it's a play i'm in i'm and it's rehersed i'm cool with it, but if i've had no time to practice i get kind of freaked" (Journal, January 21, 2008). Eileen also made statements that suggested that performance preparation contributed to her level of confidence:

> I am excited and a little nervous because at our last concert, we didn't do so
> well. I think we really have Canto and Caprice down, and just need to work on
> the Canto section. I think Furioso is excellent, especially since we only started
> it a few weeks ago! (Journal, December 11, 2007)

Mariam spoke of her personal need for performance preparation as well. She explained that she didn't get "very nervous" when "we have practiced a lot" (Journal, January 13, 2008). Eileen's self-confidence appeared to increase during the two months between their fall concert in October and winter concert in December of 2007. Eileen told me that she felt confident about their first public performance as an

ensemble, but felt doubt regarding her peers' musical progress as they worked to learn more challenging music. She explained:

> After the fall concert, I didn't really think that we were going to get our act together in time for the next one, because we were moving at a slow pace with Canto, but we got ourselves together and mastered a new song! (Journal, December 11, 2007)

As the students in the Concert Band learned their new piece, Canto and Caprice, they became more confident in their musical performance skills. Due to their efforts and daily rehearsal, their confidence about their upcoming concert increased.

The location of the performance also seemed to affect students' self-confidence as performers. Eileen wrote in her journal:

> My feelings about performing in public are pretty simple. I sometimes get nervous. If I'm performing just at Cardinal, then I don't really get that nervous, but if I'm performing somewhere else, I get pretty scared. In 4th grade, my band teacher wanted to have me play with the advanced band for Neighborhood Day [parade], and that got my stomach churning. There were TV and reporters there, interviewing a lot of people that I knew. Mostly, I am okay about performing. At the Jr. Honors band concert last year, I was also really nervous. I tend to bite my nails when I get nervous, and after that concert, they were gone! (Journal, January 22, 2008)

These six band students' emerging identities seemed to be based in part on their self-confidence as performers. This self-confidence, in turn, appeared to stem from many contributing factors. Among them, students spoke of their role as a solo or

ensemble performer. All of these participants felt more comfortable and confident performing alongside their peers. Even though Lili and David began studying the oboe and tuba in order to fill a need (or play a unique role), neither felt entirely comfortable performing their parts on their own during the first two band concerts of the school year.

As a teacher, I have heard many parents lament their children's lack of desire to practice or do homework in the evenings. While many parents and teachers must often encourage students to practice, the participants involved in this study spoke openly about their increased self-confidence as a result of practice and rehearsal preparation. In addition to these aspects of performance identity, Eileen also noted the importance of the performance location in her self-confidence as a performer. Performing in a space where she spends a great deal of time, such as Cardinal Middle School, provided Eileen a sense of comfort. Performances outdoors for unknown audience members or in schools that she did not attend caused Eileen discomfort, resulting in anxious habits such as biting her nails and "messing up" a bongo solo. Issues regarding students' self-confidence pervaded their interviews and journals throughout the course of this study.

Their self-confidence appeared to limit or expand their capacities to take on individual leadership roles in the band classroom. Mr. Wray provided these students multiple parts to play, or roles to fill, within the Cardinal Middle School band program. Based on their personal achievements in the band classroom, Mr. Wray offered students additional opportunities to demonstrate success beyond musical roles.

Leadership

As previously stated, the Cardinal Middle School band auditions served multiple purposes, including a means for Mr. Wray to name section leaders within the Concert Band. Each instrument section would not only have chair placements that made public each student's ranking in comparison to his or her peers, but would also have a section leader. This section leader, according to Mr. Wray, would be responsible for serving as a role model for the other students. They might organize sectionals (section rehearsals) before or after school, assist their classmates when they faced challenges learning new musical material, and generally assist Mr. Wray in daily classroom functions.

Characteristics of a Section Leader

I asked the participants who they felt would be strong choices for the role of section leader. Mariam told me that the flute section leader should be "somebody who's like, a great flute player" (Interview, February 1, 2008). David named a fellow low brass player as his personal choice for section leader. When I asked him why he named this classmate, David responded, "Well, 'cause he usually gets all the stuff right the first time and he doesn't have to practice it to get stuff perfect. He's sort of a natural" (Interview, February 7, 2008). David and I continued our conversation about leadership:

ARH: What do you think would make a good section leader?

David: Someone who's not afraid to stand out.

ARH: And stand out in what ways?

David: Well, like, sort of... Take the harder parts and like lead the other

people.

ARH: So it's playing skills, mainly?

David: [nods] And sort of your attitude also.

ARH: What would be a good attitude for a leader to have?

David: Positive. Sort of relaxed. Critical. (Interview, February 7, 2008)

Eileen also mentioned a leader's disposition and behavior. She told me that while

Bill, another percussionist, had strong percussion skills, she did not believe that Mr.

Wray would choose him. She explained, "I'm not sure he'd be a section leader

because he just talks back and I'm not sure Mr. Wray wants that kind of person"

(Interview, February 15, 2008).

When I asked Eileen who she thought would earn the role of section leader for

other sections, she told me that certain classmates had better chances than others

because they had participated in honors bands and jazz ensembles. While she clearly

felt that these students had more experience than their peers, Eileen reiterated that

both disposition and performance are important aspects of leadership. I asked her how

she might choose section leaders if she were a band teacher. She said:

I would do it a little bit on playing ability because you don't want someone

who knows nothing about the instrument but knows how to be a good

leader… because that would make no sense. A little bit on playing ability. But

also on the person themselves, like if they are really bossy and mean to

people, you don't want them to be section leader because that's gonna make

the section fall apart. (Interview, February 15, 2008)

275

Kejah held similar opinions, saying that she felt Bae, one of her fellow clarinetists, should earn the role of section leader because "he can play good. But he sits in the second row so nobody really notices him" (Interview, February 13, 2008). She explained that, "it's better than him showing off." Kejah described a section leader as someone with strong performance skills as well as the ability to be "nice to other people" rather than "showing off" (Interview, February 13, 2008).

While David, Eileen and Kejah described leadership as a combination of technical skill and demeanor, Mariam alluded to a different characteristic. She told me that she expected a certain clarinetist to earn the role of clarinet section leader. Mariam said, "I think she would do because she's really smart like advanced math. I'm not sure of her ability on their clarinet, but I'm pretty sure she's good" (Interview, February 1, 2008). Mariam's statement resonates, in part, with her peers' descriptions of leadership. Like David, Eileen, and Kejah, Mariam thought that a section leader should be a strong instrumentalist. However, Mariam also pointed out a connection between intelligence, course placement, and musical skill.

Mariam was not the only participant to make this connection between musicianship and intelligence. During a conversation in which Kejah described "smart kids," I asked her who were the smartest kids in band. She responded that a fellow clarinetist who sat in the front row was the smartest band student. Kejah perceived him to be "smart" based on his clarinet performance. Kejah was specifically impressed by a particular instance in which her classmate had the opportunity to demonstrate individual instrumental technique:

He's like really, really smart. He played, like in the back of our Standard of

Excellence [method book], we have, like, from the lowest to the highest. And

in one of our quiz, we had to play the B-flat scale. So he played from the

lowest of the clarinet to the highest of the clarinet. (Interview, December 21,

2007)

Kejah equated her classmate's clarinet performance with intelligence.

According to Kejah, a strong instrumentalist was "smart." Mariam did not know if

her classmate did in fact posses strong musical skills but she assumed that she did

because "she's really smart." Mariam based this assumption on her classmate's math

placement. Assumptions such as these are telling. If students, like Mariam and Kejah,

perceive intelligence to be an overarching static aspect of identity, then they may

perceive their own successes and failures as constant across school subject areas. This

connection certainly appeared to be the case for Eileen, a student who described

herself as academically successful in all areas. Mariam appeared to think of her friend

similarly.

Mariam expected that Eileen would earn the role of percussion section leader.

She explained:

She's really good and in the honors band and everything. And she always has

the big parts and telling people what to do when they don't know what to do.

Um, telling them what they are supposed to do and everything. So I think she

would be really good at it. And some of them aren't always doing their jobs.

And she, like, helps out and everything. And she's a really good percussion

player. (Interview, February 1, 2008)

Mariam's description of Eileen resonated with my classroom observations. Eileen regularly gave directives to her peers in the percussion section, often demonstrating individual parts or reminding them to pay attention to Mr. Wray. Just as these six band students described, Eileen appeared to posses the necessary characteristics for a section leader. She demonstrated strong musical skills (evident in her participation in honors band), assisted Mr. Wray, and provided assistance to her classmates. After determining these students' perceptions of leadership, I wanted to find out if they saw themselves in that role.

Leadership and Identity

Eileen told me that she really wanted to serve as the percussion section leader. She explained:

> At the start of the year I was really, like, I was really quiet. People referred to me as really quiet and stuff… People thought I was quiet, but then, all the percussion players- none of them knew how to do mallets, so I had to show them all how to play mallets. And Aliya was really excited because she had never played mallets and this year she made it to honors band and she was really excited. On mallets. So that was really neat. (Interview, February 15, 2008)

I also asked Sophia if she could see herself in the section leader role. She replied, "Maybe. It would be cool. Yeah" (Interview, January 30, 2008). Eileen and Sophia aspired to be the type of person they saw as a leader. Eileen's experiences within her section gave her increased self-confidence in this role and provided her additional motivation to achieve the position. Sophia spoke in less specific terms about her

possible leadership role in the Concert Band. She said almost dreamily, "it would be cool." Sophia's confidence seemed to hinge on Mr. Wray's evaluation of her performance.

While some students expressed desire to serve in this newly created leadership role, David did not share this desire. He told me that he and his friends in the low brass section had not spoken about it because "no one really cares. It's more of, like, a whatever thing. No one's fighting for a position" (Interview, February 7, 2008). Kejah also said, "It's just that I don't think about it a lot" (Interview, February 13, 2008). When I asked Mariam if she had spoken about the upcoming auditions with the other flutists, she responded, "We haven't really, But, I figure, like I know them and everything that I thought like they would care but they wouldn't, like, as I said, die from it or anything" (Interview, February 1, 2008).

In contrast to David' apathy regarding the chair placements and Kejah's preference to think about other aspects of school life, Eileen told me, "I'm really worried about the symphonic band tryouts. Those are coming up in March. And chair tests, also, to see who is the leader in the section" (Interview, February 15, 2008). Eileen's desire to maintain her identity as a successful student and skilled percussionist caused her some anxiety when preparing for the auditions. Eileen never expressed any self-doubt regarding technical skills, but rather how Mr. Wray and her fellow band classmates might evaluate her. Eileen's concerns revolved around the outcomes. Other students spoke more directly about the audition process.

Sophia expressed concern when she told me, "I'm excited, but um, a little nervous." When I asked her what part of the auditions made her nervous, she said,

"The sight-reading. I'm not very good at that" (Interview, January 30, 2008). During

the audition, Kejah realized some of her weaknesses as a clarinetist:

> Well, I think I did good. But, I think I messed up, 'cause like on some of my
>
> scales. Like, I kept on stopping on the high notes when I had to do, like, do
>
> the little notes. When I had to do, like, *all* the fingers. I had to, like, stop.
>
> (Interview, February 13, 2008)

While she felt confident about her prepared piece, the sight-reading selection included

"a lot of ties and, like, kind of, like, highs that I had to go on like I really didn't

know" (Interview, February 13, 2008). Both Sophia and Kejah described specific

aspects of the audition process that caused them apprehension. They felt less

confident in certain areas. For Kejah, performing notes she had not yet learned to read

through musical notation raised her awareness of weaknesses. Sophia expressed some

self-doubt when speaking about the sight-reading portion of the audition.

Following the audition process, students compared their ability to perform

such specific skills with their peers' performances. Mr. Wray placed Mariam toward

the middle of the flute section, as she had predicted. In the new seating arrangement,

Mariam sat in the second row of flutes whereas she had previously sat in the first row.

Mariam told me:

> I kinda want to be back in the front [row of the section]. Yeah, so I thought
>
> maybe within a few days, um, I could play all my twelve scales for Mr. Wray.
>
> And we've only learned six. And maybe he might let me get extra credit or
>
> something for that. (Interview, February 1, 2008)

Mariam wanted to improve her physical location in the flute section by improving her own skills. More specifically, she wanted to learn skills that many of her peers could not yet demonstrate. During the first few weeks after Mr. Wray posted the audition results, I witnessed the students reacting to these results in varied ways. Both Eileen and Kejah earned the title of section leader.

"I Got First Chair"

Following the auditions, Eileen told me, "Well, we just finished up our chair tests. It was awesome. I got principal. And I'm going into symphonic band. So, that was, like, the best turnout. I was really excited about that" (Interview, March 30, 2008). Eileen spoke confidently, expressing no concerns about her new role. Kejah did not posses the same self-confidence in her new role. I spoke with Kejah after Mr. Wray announced her new role as section leader for the second clarinets. She told me, "I think it's gonna kind of be, like, nervous. 'Cause, like, a lot of people look up to me and stuff like that in my group. And I, like, kinda play around, kind of" (Interview, March 11, 2008). She was concerned about her new leadership position, noting the fact that she now served as a role model for her peers. Echoing her prior thoughts on leadership qualities, she stated, "I don't want to be, like, a bad principal. Or like a strict, mean principal. I want to be just right" (Interview, March 11, 2008). She aimed to serve as a positive role model by practicing regularly and complying with Mr. Wray's behavior expectations.

> Mr. Wray asks the clarinetists to play a soli section in which some students
> repeatedly play an incorrect pitch. As they play, Mr. Wray says loudly, "B-
> flat, not B-natural!" After he counts a full measure aloud, the clarinets repeat

the same excerpt of music. Some students slouch in their seats as they play.

Mr. Wray, noticing this slouched posture, loudly and firmly says, "Kejah! Sit

up!" Kejah lifts her head, sits taller in her chair, raises her eyebrows, and

smiles knowingly at Mr. Wray. (Field Notes, February 26, 2008)

Through her behavior, she seemed to want to encourage her peers to reach higher

levels of musical achievement without scolding them or drawing negative attention to

herself. When she sat in the back row of clarinets, she Mr. Wray rarely noticed her.

She now appeared to feel pride at being noticed and expected to behave as a role

model.

After he posted the audition results and identifying section leaders, Eileen told

me that the class structure changed:

He started running the class differently. Like, he'll be, like, "Okay we have

one minute until the bell rings." We have one minute and he gets all the

principals up front and he hands out little notes and he tells us what we're

doing today. And he has, like, Mondays, like I don't know. Tuesday is

teamwork Tuesday. Wednesday is mix-up Wednesday. It's, like, weird. And

then Friday's like recording day or whatever. And then he talks to the

principals and then we'll go back to our seats and explain everything to our

section. (Interview, March 30, 2008)

Eileen told me that as a section leader, she took on more responsibility in the band

classroom. She told me, "I started to get to assign people parts for each piece which is

fun. And I get to make, like, Bill do the bad parts" (Interview, March 30, 2008). I

asked Eileen to tell me more about assigning different parts to the other

percussionists:

> ARH: So what are those bad parts that you give to Bill?
>
> Eileen: Oh, well... I kinda didn't give him the good parts for a while. For the
> overture, I wasn't trying to... I was just giving out parts. I kinda gave everyone
> the part they normally get, which was kinda smart on my part. I gave him
> mallets.
>
> ARH: He doesn't like the mallet parts?
>
> Eileen: Well, he and I are the only people who can really play mallets well
> without having to…. And everyone else wants to write notes in and look at it.
> Like, it took Rimon 30 minutes to learn one piece and fill in all the notes. I
> gave him the mallet part once. I was like, "It's gonna make you better!" Then
> I kinda was, like, this isn't good. It's okay. Yeah, it's been going pretty well.
>
> (Interview, March 30, 2008)

Eileen viewed her new role as a place of power. What she described as increased

responsibility might also be interpreted as an abuse of power. As she told me many

times throughout the course of the study, she and Bill did not get along well. When I

asked Eileen's team teachers about their relationship, one responded "It's not her

fault." According to Eileen, Mr. Wray, and the Gliders team faculty, Bill drew

negative attention to himself by acting in ways deemed "inappropriate" by school

administrators. Bill often cursed at other students, refused to participate in class, and

forgot his drumsticks and music necessary for participation in band class. While Bill

may have drawn this negative attention, Eileen used her new role to seek revenge.

Her choice to assign Bill "the bad parts" may also be interpreted as Eileen's personal struggle to find balance between functioning both as an authority figure and also as peer among the percussion students. As she stated, Eileen, "gave everyone the part they normally get." She felt that this was a "smart" decision in light of some of her peers' struggles to learn parts that they may not have been prepared to successfully perform. Eileen stated that she tried to help Rimon, a less experienced member of her section, learn a more difficult part, but felt that she was unable to achieve this goal. Eileen also struggled to understand her classmates as percussionists. She defined herself as a self-motivated, successful percussionist, partially because of her successful auditions for honors bands in fifth and sixth grades. She seemed uncertain as to the reason her classmates did not act similarly to her:

> Eileen: They're having a lot of problems. Like I had to bribe them to come to
>
> a sectional to practice. But I also want to be in Symphonic Band. So we have
>
> to do section practices. So I had to bribe them.
>
> ARH: How did you bribe them?
>
> Eileen: Baked them cupcakes. (Interview, February 15, 2008)

While Eileen appeared confident in her musical skills and experience, she, like Kejah, felt some uncertainty as a leader or role model for her classmates.

The role of section leader appeared to both excite and trouble students who received this title. Some participants wished for that title, but none appeared completely secure in this position. These students, interestingly, seemed to experience this role (either as the leader or as a section member) as a combination of their other

284

multiple roles. They felt that the section leader should be a strong musician, particularly skilled or experienced on the specific instrument played in class. Students also felt that section leaders supported the larger goals of the group by specifically having a strong rapport with their teacher, Mr. Wray. This relationship appeared to include compliance on the part of the student (a particular role within the middle school context) and authority on the part of the teacher (another role specific to this context). Some participants embraced aspects of these roles, while rejecting others. Some participants seemed unsure about their role identities, while some based their entire self-concept on their whether they achieved a role such as the section leader. The roles and relationships that I presented in this chapter did not exist as separate entities from the social groups depicted in chapter five. There appeared more overlap between the two as the participants constructed their identities as sixth grade band students.

<center>Blending In and Sticking Out: Recapitulation</center>

In chapter five, I explored students' experiences as members of social groups as well as their impressions of other groups they viewed from the outside. All six participants in this study seemed conspicuously aware of their social place within the Cardinal Middle School community. They spoke of searching for subgroups where they felt comfortable and forming friendships with peers who shared interests and other commonalities such as physical appearances. As they grew more socially comfortable in middle school, they no longer searched for friends to sit with at lunch and activities in which they could become involved. They instead searched for unique roles to occupy within their established social groups. Some felt comfortable

<center>285</center>

"sticking out" (as the only oboist) while belonging to a large group such as the Concert Band. Others continued to seek ways to "blend in" and remain with friends.

Kejah was drawn to the idea of being part of the more advanced Symphonic Band as she chose her seventh grade courses. When I asked her what might stop her from enrolling, she said that her greatest fear was the possibility of "being the only sixth grader if I got into it" (Interview, March 11, 2008). Kejah's initial fear of "sticking out" (particularly when it was not "on purpose") resurfaced during this March interview. Earlier in the year, Kejah told me that she planned to enroll in the Concert Band again for the 2008-2009 school year. When I asked why, she replied, "I think some of my friends from Cadet Band will go in Concert Band, too" (Interview, February 13, 2008). Though Kejah felt comfortable eating lunch with a table of friends, found a social group with whom she felt comfortable, and formed close individual relationships with certain peers, she continued to seek classroom places to "blend in" as late as February and March during a school year that began in September. Her personal identity and self-esteem became intertwined with her role as a clarinetist within the larger social group.

Mariam also mentioned the overlap between social group identity and role identity. She wrote:

> I admire David for switching to his new instrument the tuba. He is quite brave to switch to a new instrument knowing he has to catch up with everyone else. He is also the only one so it is probably kind of nervousing. (Journal, November 19, 2007)

286

As "the only one," David filled a particular, unique role in the band classroom while concurrently "blending in" within the social group context. While Lili felt comfortable performing as a member of a group, her experiences as the only oboist in the class sometimes made her feel like she "stuck out" within the group. She told me, "'Cause, like, since I guess since I'm part of the flutes, if we're just like playing together, I just like stand out. [in a whisper] I don't like doing that" (Interview, December 19, 2007). David and Lili filled particular roles that they willingly embraced. Yet both participants spoke about their aversion to "standing out" within the group context. As I previously stated, the particular instrumental part performed in the classroom was also a role literally played in the social context of middle school band. David, for instance, did not simply play the tuba part, he became known as "the tuba player" in the group and therefore defined himself accordingly.

Instrumental parts were not the only roles about which participants noted their specific place within the social group. During a discussion about the audition results, Mariam told me, "I used to not practice as much. Now I am. I'm trying to fit it in. And yeah. I hope, I hope I can, maybe, get a little better" (Interview, April 4, 2008). Though she remained in the same Concert Band class and flute section, her role had changed from simply "flutist" to "third chair flutist." She therefore felt as though she suddenly no longer "fit in," possibly due to her new physical location away from her best friend. While her motivation to practice seemed to stem from her desire to "fit in," Mariam also told me her rationale for participating in band, saying, "But I really do love band and I just love playing all this music and everything" (Interview, April 4, 2008). Mariam, like the other participants, formed relationships as members of a

287

group in which she occupied a particular role. Often, these roles overlapped, just as the roles existed only within the nested social contexts of the section, Concert Band, and Cardinal Middle School. The participants appeared to construct multi-faceted identities through their roles, or relationships with other individuals, as well as their places within these social worlds.

CHAPTER SEVEN

FINDINGS, ASSERTIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

> While identity construction might appear to be a profoundly personal
> matter, it is also a social and political matter, precisely because it is
> deeply implicated in the struggle to develop a sense of self within a
> social sphere. Thus, these are not just individual issues; rather, they
> have implications for educational practice, as well as for the social and
> cultural climate created in schools. (Raible & Nieto, 2006, p. 156)

Bridging Research and Practice

In this final chapter, I summarize my findings and explore their implications. The themes that emerged during data collection and analysis were complex in the ways they overlapped, connected, or in some cases appeared unrelated to my original research questions. As Bruner (1996) asserts:

> Without specification of resources and settings required, a theory of mind is
>
> all "inside-out" and of limited applicability to education. It becomes
>
> interesting only when it becomes more "outside-in," indicating the kind of
>
> world needed to make it possible to use mind (or heart!) effectively. (p. 9)

Moreover, theoretical constructs and concepts might make unclear the relevance of this study to K-12 education policy and the practitioners working directly with students. In the following pages, I intend to show how these research findings link to educational practice.

I begin this chapter by revisiting the research methodology I chose for the purpose of exploring socially constructed identity in the middle school band classroom. Following this, I re-examine my research questions and review this study's findings in the context of the band classroom. Next, I review the limitations of this study and identify additional questions that arose during the course of data

collection and the writing process. Finally, I suggest implications for education policy and practice.

The research methodology that guided this study served to help me address my primary research question, *How does the middle school band classroom as a social context influence students' identity constructions?* The secondary research questions were:

1. *What types of social interactions occur within the band classroom?*

2. *How do peer networks form and function within (and outside of) the band classroom?*

3. *How do middle school band students make decisions regarding music course enrollment and participation?*

4. *In what ways do social learning and musical learning intersect?*

In order to answer these questions, I designed a collective case study that drew on the qualitative research traditions of ethnography and narrative inquiry. Ethnographic observations and secondary participant interviews allowed me to explore the classroom as a social context, coming to know the unique culture and curricular model in a particular school and classroom setting. Narrative inquiry provided the tools necessary to uncover individual students' experiences, perceptions, and identity constructions as they navigated this social context. In the next section, I revisit the ways in which narrative, or story, evokes rich, contextualized understandings of the enacted music curriculum and the student experience.

Narrative Inquiry and Socially Constructed Identity

I informed the participants early in the process that my overarching goal for the final written report was to "tell their stories." McCarthy (2004) states:

> Story… in the context of music education, can be a form of inquiry to help make sense out of the complexity of classroom events, create connections between teachers' actions and students' responses, mediate between the various landscapes that a teacher navigates, and generate theory from the bottom up. (p. 36)

As I observed and interviewed participants, I collected students' stories about their school experiences. For the purposes of triangulation, I also collected teachers' stories about students and used multiple sources of narrative, such as journals, interviews, and field notes. Through this process, I attempted to "make sense" of classroom interactions and student learning, as McCarthy suggests. Instead of mediating "between the various landscapes" navigated by teachers, I aimed to explore the social contexts of the middle school and middle school band classroom in which students and teachers interacted. I did so in order to gain understandings about the ways in which students come to see themselves in these worlds.

I chose narrative as the medium best suited to this study of social relationships and identity construction in the context of a specific middle school and middle school band classroom. Stories served as an advantageous means of evoking rich, contextualized details regarding social groups, intergroup relationships, peer networks, and interpersonal relationships. These categories, identified in prior studies on musical identity and student identity, informed my follow-up questions, journal

prompts, and observations. By collecting and constructing narratives, I gained new insights (that had not been explored through qualitative means) on young adolescent musical identity construction.

For over five months, six individuals shared with me their perceptions, relationships, personal struggles, successes, and goals while they learned to navigate the world of middle school for the first time. These six middle school band students told me about their daily lives and social worlds. Their narratives, verbally shared during interviews and electronically written in response to my journal prompts, served as a way to express each student's personal experience situated in the culture of the middle school band classroom. As these students were enrolled in the same band class at the same middle school, their stories shared more similarities than differences. Therefore, I presented their stories as a collective experience of the middle school and band classroom. The students' stories and texts served as a way of understanding the relationship between the implicit (hidden) and the explicit (stated or written) curriculum (Goodlad, 2004).

Giroux (2005) asserts that curriculum must be defined "as representative of a set of underlying interests that structure how a particular story is told through the organization of knowledge, social relations, values, and forms of assessment" (p. 165). Exploring six participants' experiences as middle school band students made clearer the interconnectedness of such formal knowledge, social relationships, assessment models, and cultural values to these students' emerging and evolving identities. The Cardinal Middle School daily schedule, policies regarding co-curricular and extra-curricular activities, and elective course offerings represented a

set of adult expectations that impacted students' choices and evolving identities as learners and members of a community. Bruner (1996) states, "it is through our narratives that we principally construct a version of ourselves in the world, and… that a culture provides models of identity and agency to its members" (Bruner, 1996, p. xiv). In other words, the participants' stories revealed how they viewed themselves in school as well as how the middle school band culture modeled unique roles, relationships, and actions inside of the larger middle school context.

By using narrative inquiry as a research methodology, I was able to explore the enacted curriculum in the social context of the band classroom. In addition, narrative inquiry served as a key methodological basis for exploring sixth grade students' identities as it encompassed temporality, or the way in which participants described identities in past, present, and future narratives (Connelly and Clandinin, 2006). I used narrative to bring to light students' accounts of who they were as elementary school students, who they felt they were becoming as they entered the social context of the middle school, and who they wanted to become as they progressed through school. For some, like David, curricular decisions felt as important as long-term goals of studying at an Ivy League institution, possibly studying music, and earning a Ph.D. For others, such as Kejah, curricular choices presented opportunities to "discover" new ways of learning, ways that may or may not affect her current career goals of becoming a teacher or an attorney.

Analysis of the accumulated data, or texts, allowed me to discover important insights into social interactions. Although these social interactions took place in a specific context bounded by physical space and time, they uncovered struggles in

identity construction that may be experienced by students in schools and music learning environments elsewhere.

<center>Research Questions and Responses</center>

I conducted this study in order to gain new understandings of how a band classroom as a social context might influence middle school students' emerging and evolving identities. Before responding to my primary research question, I first revisit the secondary research questions that helped me to deconstruct the elements of this study. These questions provide multiple ways to view identity as a social construct by presenting different facets of this inquiry. As Urrietta (2003) notes, "All identities have a set of ideas attached, explicitly or implicitly stated, that constitute what that identity is about. These coordinated bodies of ideas or concepts function as the ideological basis of identities" (p. 238). Each secondary research question alludes to a different "set of ideas" that comprises students' socially constructed identities. In the following paragraphs, I respond to each question individually and subsequently respond to the primary research question.

Question 1: What types of social interactions occur within the band classroom?

Based on observations and interviews, I identified four categories of social interactions in the band classroom. First, the students' primary interactions with the teacher were through responses to teacher directives. For instance, students verbally responded to their teacher when he asked for their thoughts following a listening exercise and performed on their instruments when he directed them to do so. Rarely did they initiate dialogue with the teacher during instructional time. Second, the

<center>294</center>

students interacted with each other non-verbally in the band classroom. I typically interpreted such non-verbal interaction as an evaluative means of communicating among peers, such as members of a particular instrument section smiling at each other after receiving a compliment from the teacher. I also observed students expressing their disapproval of other band members' behavior by shaking their heads or rolling their eyes when peers did not demonstrate compliance with the teacher's directives. The third category of social interaction took place during non-instructional time in the classroom. As students entered and exited the classroom, they often clustered together to discuss non-music related concerns, such as "what's happened in their day and who's going out with who" and ask each other for assistance as they struggled to reach instruments located in lockers well above their heads. Fourth, students verbally communicated to each other during instructional time as inconspicuously as possible. I often heard murmurings in the form of questions, such as "How do you finger a B?" and "Can you help me tune the timpani?"

Band teacher directives as well as verbal and non-verbal communication during instructional time all appeared to contribute to the participants' descriptions of themselves. These students used their teacher's words to describe themselves and their peers' evaluations of instrument categories to define their choices. The last category, non-music related interactions, served to connect their actions and relationships inside of the band room with their lives outside of the band room. For example, students who were perceived to be "smart," as Kejah and Mariam reported, often saw themselves as honor students and successful learners. The brass players perceived playing the flute as a "girly" activity. Mariam's teachers also described her

as "girly." Behaviors that portrayed aspects of identity in the band classroom appeared to emerge in other contexts as well. In this way, social interactions among band students and the teacher influenced their emerging identities (broadly defined) as middle school students.

Question 2: How do peer networks form and function within (and outside of) the band classroom?

Over the course of the first semester, the students enrolled in the Concert Band began to view the class as a social group in which they were members, or as an ingroup. They often sat together at lunch, spent time together outside of school, and made decisions to join other school activities based on their band friends' decisions. Inside of this larger group, these six participants felt "closest to" members of their instrument sections. Physical proximity to other students who played similar instruments presented additional opportunities for students to interact with each other in the classroom. Those who were seated closest to participants often became their network of support and encouragement. While this is often the case in many classrooms, a musical instrument served these participants as an outward representation of their emerging identities. For instance, when walking into the band room one would often notice students grouped by instruments. Girls seated in the front row holding small, silver flutes presented a stark visual contrast to the male-dominated group of students standing in the back of the room striking large percussion instruments with carefully crafted sticks and mallets. The section of boys loudly playing large low brass instruments often demanded my attention as an observer in the classroom. Both the size and decibel levels of their instruments drew

my attention towards them. Students' instruments (played during instructional time and carried to and from school) became an outward portrayal of their identity constructions, both as they formed peer networks within the larger social group and the ways in which they expressed themselves through specific instrument timbres.

In addition, gender appeared to play a role in students' formation of peer networks, even though many instrument sections included both boys and girls. Eileen, for instance, sat with female classmates during lunch and primarily interacted with Aliya, the only other female percussionist, during class. Lili, Sophia, and Mariam also chose to sit with female band students in the cafeteria. I observed students seated primarily by tables segregated by gender. According to Crosnoe (2000), gender segregation probably "arises from a growing awareness of the salience of gender as a social category. By separating into same-sex groups, children develop and protect their gender identities" (p. 382). Students' decisions to play particular instruments, and, conversely, not to play others, may have been a means to reinforce or challenge their emerging gender identities within the context of the band classroom.

Question 3: How do middle school band students make decisions regarding music course enrollment and participation?

Peer networks and adult validation of musical achievement appeared to strongly influence these six students' decisions to enroll in band. When I asked them about their choices to enroll in Concert Band as sixth grade students, all six participants referenced friends from elementary school who had decided to enroll in the Cardinal Middle School band. In addition, elementary teachers' praise and

encouragement to continue participating in music gave Lili, Sophia, Eileen, and David additional motivation to participate in middle school musical ensembles.

These six students' decisions to continue participating in the Cardinal Middle school band program hinged on a complex array of themes that emerged during and after the audition process. All of the six participants spoke of their desires to "blend in," "fit in," and avoid "sticking out." Participation in the band program gave these students a large social group where they could "fit in." Yet they weighed this sense of belonging against perceptions of how other students in the school viewed them. This desire to "blend in," noted by David, Kejah, and Lili earlier in the data collection process, reemerged as these students began to decide if they would continue in the band program.

The announcement of formal auditions for chair and ensemble placements emerged as a turning point in this study. Prior to this announcement, the participants referenced the non-competitive environment, telling me that none of their peers "makes you feel like you suck." After the band teacher introduced competition into the classroom, they expressed feelings of self-doubt and insecurity. The possibility that they were unlike the "high level people" who belonged to the advanced Symphonic Band signified a shift in their identities. Earlier in the school year, all of the participants described their membership in band as a choice that they already made. After they began to prepare for auditions, they reevaluated this decision. Three of the participants even enrolled in another course, though they changed their minds after they heard the audition results. Their internal interests in music and musical performance (like Sophia's interest in "not regular" saxophone and electric guitar

literature) were overshadowed by their need for external validation by their band teacher.

Question 4: In what ways do social learning and musical learning intersect?

By social learning, I refer to the non-curricular processes that take place in social contexts, such as classrooms. Social interactions, identity construction, friendship formation, and many other aspects of this inquiry fall under this very broad heading. Musical learning, on the other hand, refers to the stated curricular goals of the music classroom, such as the development of instrumental technique, identification and performance of musical concepts, as well as the development of music notation literacy. After conducting this study and analyzing the data, I conclude that these two categories are not separate. Instead, I suggest that in the middle school band classroom, social and musical learning are interconnected, codependent processes.

In this study, gender, social class status, and intelligence emerged as prominent themes at the intersection of identity construction and musical learning. I will begin by discussing the way in which students simultaneously constructed gender identities and musical identities. They learned about instrument preferences with regard to gender and the expectations of musicians as gendered persons. Following this discussion, I turn to the nature of social class status and intelligence as they connect to the music classroom. I then provide an overview of emergent themes across these categories. Finally, I present my assertions regarding the influence of the middle school band classroom on sixth grade student identity construction.

Gender and musical identity.

McCarthy (1999) asserts, "Students build up over their school years a gendered perception of music that influences their participation in music both in school and throughout their lives" (p. 117). The data in this study support McCarthy's assertion. The participants noted similarities between timbre, range, and the human speaking voice. Assuming that girls would not want to play "manly" sounding instruments, such as low brass, the female participants in this study spoke of the "sweet sounding," "soft" qualities of the high woodwind and mallet instruments. David's membership in an all-male low brass section reinforced his perception that flutists were feminine and physically weak, unable to sustain their breath as long as he and his fellow low brass players could.

Mariam and Eileen noted that female musicians acted in compliance with the band teacher's directives. Mariam described the flute and oboe sections, comprised of all girls, as more musically skilled than the other sections due to such compliance. Eileen, Mariam, and Mr. Wray reported that the female percussionists outperformed the male percussionists. When I asked why, they all described the non-compliant, or off-task, behavior of the male students. As these participants continued to learn about their own instrumental performance and membership in a large ensemble, they learned about the gendered composition of certain instrument sections and their evolving identities as members of such sections.

According to McCarthy (1999), students:

… bring to the classroom a complex set of gendered perceptions and

assumptions rooted in Western cultural and musical heritage and manifest in

300

lived experiences in their homes, in their play, in their cultural communities, and not the least in the mass media. These perceptions can be confirmed and reproduced through their lived experiences in music classrooms, or they can be contested, reassessed, and transformed in the same setting. (McCarthy, 1999, p. 118)

As I observed in this particular middle school band classroom, students' perceptions of "manly" sounds, gendered instrument choices, and compliant behaviors were propagated within the classroom environment. Rather than finding exceptions to the generalizations made regarding gender, instrument choice, and physical capabilities, the students and teacher in this study remained complicit in the transmission of these hidden curricular messages. Statements regarding the "girly" flutists, "manly" low brass players, and comparisons between male and female percussionists reinforced gender stereotypes.

Social class, intelligence, and musical identity.

Traditional band classrooms can be characterized by a number of features. Most school bands have a pre-determined concert band orchestration comprised of woodwinds, brass, and percussion. Typically, one or two band teachers direct the ensemble, and students are seated first by section, then by ranking. Although the Cardinal Middle School Concert Band students did not sit in assigned seats within their instrument sections, the teacher used the audition process to assign seats and make course placements for the following year. At the beginning of the second semester, as the classroom climate became more competitive, rather than

301

collaborative, both social class structures and intelligence stood out in all six of these participants' narratives.

As I indicated in the previous subsection, Mariam referred to members of the advanced Symphonic Band as "higher level people." Her classmates, Kejah, Eileen, David, Lili, and Sophia, questioned their abilities to perform at that level and earn a place among them. Mariam's classification of the students in this advanced group revealed her perception of a social class structure within the band program. This perceived class structure became more apparent to me as I heard the participants' accounts of who did and did not earn places in this group.

All but one of the six Concert Band percussionists successfully auditioned for the Symphonic Band. According to Eileen, the only student who did not earn a place in this group was the only percussionist without the advantage of private lessons or individual tutoring. Mariam also noted the advantages gained by those who could afford private lessons, explaining that she could not have earned the title of section leader because she did not take private lessons. The flutists who earned first and second chair placements both benefited from such private instruction. Sophia told me about the saxophonist who would not "make a good section leader" when she stated, "it's not her fault" that she lived in subsidized housing where she was unable to practice her instrument. David told me that he aimed to improve his skills and prepare for enrollment in the advanced Symphonic Band class by taking private tuba lessons over the summer break.

While these students learned that financial wealth benefited students in the music program, they also internalized perceptions regarding intelligence. As Kejah

told me, students who enrolled in advanced math courses were "smart," and therefore perceived as "good" instrumentalists. Kejah's connection between intelligence and musicianship uncovered her assumption that if a student demonstrates academic success in one content area, he or she is likely to do so in another content area.

When I met with Mr. Vega, the sixth grade counselor, to discuss the six primary participants in this study, he first remarked "To be honest, I don't have much to tell you. They are band kids, so they don't come up on my radar" (Field Notes, January 3, 2008). According to this counselor, as well as the minority achievement coordinator, the majority of band students were academically successful in many content areas. Sophia's teachers told me that her grades "slipped" during the year and she struggled. Kejah's teachers described her academic ability as "low." Lili told me that it took her a "long time" to learn music. Despite this, the assumption that band students were smart pervaded the school culture. Conversely, Kejah did not describe herself as smart and subsequently felt confident that she would not earn the title of section leader, nor earn a place in the advanced Symphonic Band.

By examining these two themes (social class and intelligence) alongside each other, I noticed a disconcerting trend as reported by the participants: Students who benefited from financial wealth often earned places in the pre-existing class structure of the band program. These same students saw themselves as successful and often earned high academic grades and were known as honor students, or "smart" kids, among peers and educators. Students whose families had limited financial resources were often not placed in advanced band or non-music coursework. Therefore, students who successfully navigated their way through the band program, earning

places in the advanced course and the highest chair placements, often earned the same success elsewhere in the school. Those who did not earn places in the advanced band appeared to drop out of band altogether. This trend may have influenced counselors' and teachers' perceptions (however flawed) of band students as "smart" students.

Emergent Themes

Three broad primary themes emerged during the course of this study: (a) *awareness of others*, (b) *opportunity and musical success*, and (c), *"shifting" identities*. The first, an *awareness of others*, initially came to light when the participants told me about their first impressions of middle school. Knowing few peers as they entered their new, large community, most individuals with whom they came into contact were viewed as others. The second theme, *opportunity and musical success*, emerged as students discussed their instrument sections. David, Eileen, and Lili sought less competitive opportunities for success by joining smaller instrument sections, while other students were drawn to the collaborative climates within their sections. Lastly, I discuss *"shifting" identities*. Eileen initially noted this theme when she discussed her evolving identity and search for a social group where she "fit in." All three of these themes emerged and reemerged throughout the course of the study, influencing and encompassing smaller themes. I present an overview of these themes here in order to provide a richer context for the more direct responses to my primary research question later in the chapter.

Awareness of Others.

Discussions of ingroups, outgroups, and interpersonal relationships included describing the self in relation to influential *others,* or peers and teachers who impacted their evolving identities. As I wrote this research report, I intentionally used the term *others* to describe this relationship between persons. At times, the students involved in this study spoke of "us and them" as well as "other people" and subsequently evaluated themselves in relation to these others. According to Urrietta (2003), "the self is therefore not autonomous of the other, for there would not be a 'self' if there were no 'other'" (p. 60). For example, Eileen initially described herself as an athlete and soccer player (among other roles). When she felt rejected by the group of "soccer players" (as a distinct group of others) at Cardinal Middle School, she often opted to describe herself as a band student or "percussionist." It seemed that she identified more clearly with one social group, the band, after she felt rejected by a different group, the "soccer players."

The way these students talked about their relationships with teachers also signified an awareness of *other*. In their words, participants sought opportunities to "relate to" their teachers, wanting to know "more about them" as well as the subjects being taught. Bruner (1996) claims:

> The agentive mind is not only active in nature, but it seeks out dialogue and
> discourse with other active minds. And it is through this dialogic, discursive
> process that we come to know the Other and his points of view, his stories.
> We learn an enormous amount not only about the world but about ourselves
> by discourse with Others. (p. 93)

Kejah unknowingly attested to this need for discourse when she relayed that she felt her teachers did not really know her as a unique individual because "you only get 42 minutes" in which to interact with an individual teacher. For Kejah, middle school teachers existed as people she did not have time to get to know. On the other hand, David and Eileen described Mr. Wray as a teacher who did "relate," because of the way he participated in learning activities with the students and the ongoing dialogue he shared with students within, and outside of, the classroom. It appears that this relationship influenced how students came to construct unique identities in the band classroom. The participants in this study did not describe themselves similarly in places where they did not engage in collaborative exchanges with their teachers.

Opportunity and musical success.

Not surprisingly, all of the participants involved in this study relayed stories about moments of success, situations in which they felt unprepared, and times during which they felt anxious about the possibility of failure. They all initially described the Concert Band as a place in which everyone felt successful. This seemed to be a result of the "supportive" climate established by Mr. Wray and reinforced by peers. Sophia said, "it's the environment" that helped her to feel self-confident. As time progressed, I found the theme of success, and conversely the possibility of failure, emerging as a strong aspect of students' identities.

Students' perceptions that they were not successful at specific activities led them to disassociate with certain social groups or reject specific roles. For instance, David said that he "wasn't really good" at the saxophone, and therefore decided to change his instrumental role in the band. By changing sections, David also changed

his proximity to friends in his new low brass section as well as physically distancing himself from the alto saxophonists. Kejah, Lili, and Sophia provided another interesting example when they told me about their desire to continue to enroll in, and therefore maintain their association with, band. Each of these three students identified with the band group, began to describe themselves as musicians, then waited for external affirmation (from their teacher) that their efforts were worthwhile and their self-concepts might be accurate. They indicated that if their teacher had not viewed them as they wanted to be seen, they would not have continued to study music. Knowing this incongruity, they would have preferred to enroll in another class.

"Shifting" identities and multiple selves.

Throughout this study, students described ever-changing perceptions of their social worlds and shifting conceptions of themselves as they navigated new social contexts and roles. While conducting this study, I did not sense that students constructed one overarching identity. Instead I came to view identity as a fluid process in which multiple roles and social networks contribute to various projections of self. These multiple identities depend upon the context in which students situate themselves and their interpretations of others' behaviors. More specifically, students' perceptions of how others view them influence their evolving identities.

Students' initial comparisons of their middle school and elementary school experiences included descriptions of their roles in each context. For instance, Eileen said, "You can't be involved in everything," suggesting that a middle school curricular structure required students to make choices (Interview, November 27, 2007). When speaking about herself in terms of her elementary school activities,

307

Eileen initially told me that she thought of herself as a soccer player, leader in the student council, honor student, percussionist, and popular. As she entered middle school for the first time, she found herself involved in fewer activities, compounding her sense of loneliness from knowing, and being known by, fewer peers than she had in elementary school.

Additionally, her previous self-concept encompassed a fairly high level of self-esteem. This self-concept resulted from her role as an honor student, a respected role emulated by many of her peers at an elementary school that boasted high levels of academic achievement. In her new school, this role did not evoke the same peer support and sense of security. Eileen told me that some of her peers viewed her as a "nerd" since she was in advanced courses such as math. She sheepishly admitted, "Yeah that didn't work out so well" (Interview, November 27, 2007). The positive self-concept she held at the beginning of the school year was based, in part, on her role as an honor student. This same role caused her increasing unease and a decreased level of self-esteem as she learned to equate the title of "honor student" with being a "nerd." As she began to identify with the band, she learned about peers who shared similar interests and that band students were perceived as "smart kids." She began to again take pride in her role as an honor student and leader, identifying with a specific group in which she felt that those roles were of value.

Like Eileen, Sophia modified her identity as the school year progressed. Based on her new roles in school and music, she constructed multiple identities to accommodate various situations. Toward the beginning of the year, she told me that she was "shy about singing," (Interview, December 11, 2007) and therefore not a

member of choral music ensembles. Due to encouragement from her elementary school teacher and her friend Lili's decision to enroll in a countywide chorus, Sophia chose to join that choral group as well. After she had participated in this ensemble for a few weeks, I asked Sophia if anything had changed about her self-concept as a singer. She told me that she felt comfortable with the other members of the chorus, felt as though she could sing, and that she felt "okay" participating in chorus.

Summary of Themes

Interactions with influential others (primarily the music teacher), success and failure, as well as evolving identities, were all prominent themes throughout these six participants' narratives. Though each of these themes informs our understanding of socially constructed identities, the students' individual interactions with the social contexts of the middle school illuminated a larger theme: the theme of choice. It is through the individual participants' choices regarding their interactions with the social context that they constructed identities. Indeed, sixth grade is the first time in their schooling that students have the opportunity to identify with particular subject areas and co-curricular social groups through guided choices.

Students initially chose to enroll in the band, thereby identifying themselves with a particular social group within the middle school. Though influential others impacted their choices, they made the final decisions. They also chose to comply or not to comply with particular teachers' requests and directions, in many ways identifying themselves as either academically successful or unsuccessful students based on their behaviors. As Lili and Sophia pointed out, the middle school teachers identified external student characteristics, such as "how you act," not internal

309

emotions or feelings. Therefore, students portrayed themselves in particular ways through behaviors, clothing, and instrument choices. Playing particular instruments contributed to their identities as "wallflowers" in a large group, as Sophia's teachers described her, or as leaders who took risks, such as Eileen, David, and Lili.

These participants also chose to embrace or reject stereotypes regarding musical instrument preferences. Mariam chose to play the flute because of the "sweet," "feminine" tone quality, while Sophia searched for a group in which she could learn "not regular music." Sophia also connected her classroom music learning to her decisions outside of school, taking up the electric guitar in order to learn "different" music and explore a unique musical identity. The participants' choices regarding their schooling and musicianship reflected their own search for ways to belong to the large group as well as ways to find distinctive qualities about themselves. Lastly, the participants reflected on how their choices impacted others. As Mariam noted, if "one [student] gets first chair and one gets last chair, the last chair will be pretty jealous of the one who's first" (Interview, February 1, 2008).

The Influence of the Band Classroom on Identity Construction

The primary research question directing this study was, *How does the middle school band classroom as a social context influence students' identity constructions?* As the narratives in chapters four through six suggest, young adolescents construct identities through their interactions with the social context. Such interactions are impacted by the influences of other people in their lives. Moreover, the band classroom exists inside the larger middle school community. Consequently, the influence of the band classroom is mediated by the influence of the larger peer group,

as well as the individual student's social interactions within and outside of the band classroom. This study is therefore bounded by the physical location of the research site, band class enrollment, and the composition of the larger Cardinal Middle School community. However, the six participants' stories present new ways of understanding the relationship between identity, middle school, and musical learning.

Identity and Schooling

Toward the beginning of this document, I referred to Dewey's (1928/ 1959) claim that students construct identity by interacting with subject matter as well as the environments in which they learn such subject matter. Although Dewey spoke of all areas of schooling, his concepts hold important meaning in the context of the middle school band classroom. Beyond learning that they were capable of understanding abstract musical concepts, performing difficult technical skills, and interpreting musical works in imaginative ways, these six participants learned how other facets of their identities intersected with such musical learning.

They learned that girls primarily played the flute, while boys preferred instruments with lower ranges. They learned that musicianship and intelligence were related and, consequently, students who struggled in other subject areas would probably struggle in band class as well. They also learned that being a part of a large, successful social group meant that they were important contributors to such success, and therefore to be commended. Additionally, these band students learned that participating in the band presented opportunities to create peer support networks and form friendships with classmates who would otherwise have remained strangers. Such friendships extended beyond the classroom context and shed new light on the

roles students embraced as they navigated the middle school context. I suggest

throughout this document that in order to glean new ways of understanding how an

individual band classroom influences students' identity constructions and evolutions,

we must study the ways in which students view themselves as musical learners and

listen to what they have to say about their schooling experiences.

Model of Middle School Band Student Identity Construction

I drew on Urrietta's (2003) study of Chicana/o identity in education and

Froehlich's (2007) model of music teacher identity as models for visually

representing socially constructed identity in the middle school band classroom.

Froehlich represented identity as a circular "web of interactions" (p. 113). Like

Froehlich, I view identity construction as a circular path by which students move

between interactions with individuals, belonging to a social group, and finding social

roles within that group. Supporting prior findings by social identity theorists, the data

in this study indicate that students experience varying degrees of belonging to a social

group. As these students more strongly identified with the band, they articulated more

clearly their diminished evaluations of other groups, such as chorus and orchestra.

The data in this study also support prior findings by identity theorists, as students

constructed personal identities through their interactions with others in particular

roles, such as section leader to peers and student to teacher.

Unlike Froehlich, I attempt to depict the instability that appears to exist in the

data I collected. Froehlich centrally locates the identity in the circle, while I illustrate

an identity that moves around, between, and through the nested circles of social

groups and roles highlighted by social identity theory and identity theory,

respectively. I suggest that this movement occurs due to the influences of others and the participants' internalized perceptions of how others view them.

Urrietta used clouds as a metaphor for this social construct as identities are "mobile and shifting in real life experiences" (p. 270). Based on the data I present in this document, I agree that identities are fluid constructions based on social experiences. Therefore, I represent the band student identity in the form of clouds. I do not separate previously studied types of identities (social group identities and role identities). Instead, I portray the band student identity as a shifting and evolving construction that encompasses roles situated within a particular social context.

While these participants' identities emerged throughout their sixth grade school year, they consciously modified their identities. They struggled to find a social group in which to belong, even though this may have outwardly appeared as rotating cafeteria tables during lunch. They told me about their fears performing alone and wanting to "blend in" with a larger group of people. They struggled not to feel "shy" and to take risks by auditioning for roles they felt unsure they could assume. Accordingly, clouds do not only serve to represent a shifting, mobile construct, but also a struggle to belong in the social context of the middle school and, more specifically, the band. In this metaphor, the clouds may quickly appear or dissipate, cause friction at other times, or reinforce each other's existence at still other points.

The participants in this study constructed and modified their identities in unique ways, but all six shared a similar path by which they came to view themselves and portray themselves to those around them. At each step in this study, students evaluated and modified their emerging identities based on influential others'

evaluations of them, particularly their band teacher's evaluation of their musical

behavior and performance. Students initially chose to join the band due to the

influence of others. Once members of the group, they identified characteristics of the

group and evaluated their abilities to "blend in." If they felt as though they belonged,

they moved further towards the center of the diagram, identifying more strongly with

the group by taking on social roles particular to the context. They then reevaluated

their decisions to belong to the group based on how they believed others viewed

them. If students felt affirmed or validated in their roles, they chose to continue

belonging to the band. If they felt rejected by others in the group (or the possibility of

rejection), they disassociated themselves, moving back toward the outside of the

circles (see figure 7.1).

At each step in this study, students evaluated and modified their emerging

identities through the lenses of influential others. In this model, the double-sided

arrow represents these others' evaluations, rejections, or affirmations of students'

identities as they move through and between the social contexts of the middle school

and middle school band. Students initially choose to join the band due to the

influence of others. Once members of the group, they identify characteristics of the

group and evaluate their abilities to "blend in." If they feel accepted as members of

the group, sharing similar characteristics with their peers, they search for unique roles

particular to the group context. Some of these roles, such as gender identity or learner

identity, may overlap other content areas, but are partially constructed or maintained

due to their participation in the musical ensemble. Students again wait for external

validation of their new role identities situated within the band. They then reevaluate

their decisions to belong to the group based on influential others' evaluations. If students feel affirmed or validated in their roles, they decide to continue belonging to the band. If they feel rejected by others in the group, they disassociate themselves and search for another social group or class with which they might identify.
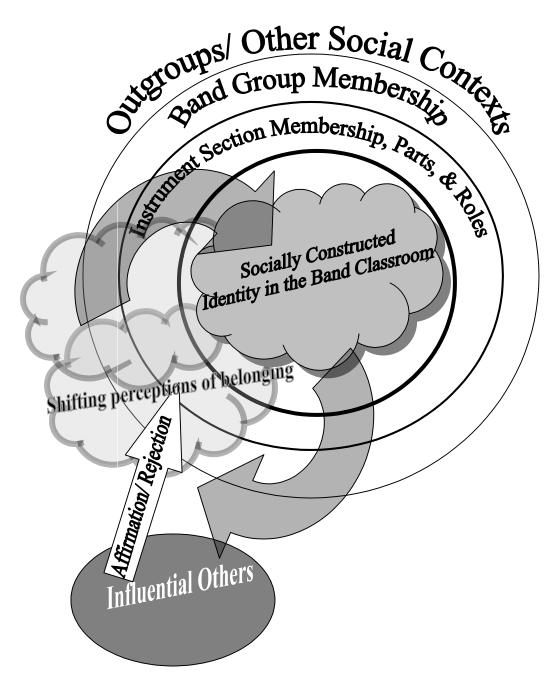
Figure 7.1. Model of middle school band student identity

Limitations

According to Peshkin (1991), "To give focus to one's investigation is, of necessity, to sharpen the image of one thing, to diminish the image of some others, and to omit altogether still others. A way of seeing is also a way of not seeing" (p.9). By examining the influence of the band classroom as a social context, I could not equally attend to other contexts within the school that may have played an important role in these students' experiences as middle school students and, therefore, their emerging identities. I also acknowledge that my insider viewpoint, as a band teacher and former band student, may have influenced my observations and interviews in ways that limited my ability to portray the band culture as an outsider might have. I may have overlooked aspects of the classroom that seemed obvious to me, but less apparent to someone else.

I also feel as though the relatively short span of time (5.5 months) during which I collected data limited the possibility of following up with the participants. Perhaps as these participants age and become seventh or eighth grade students, they may be able to reflect on these experiences and offer new interpretations of the data. They may also reconsider past choices and modify their identities yet again as they move through the middle school.

Additionally, a few issues related to participant selection limited the opportunity to hear more diverse student voices. For example, the use of narrative writing, or journaling, as a means of data collection limited the participant selection process to those students willing and able to express their thoughts through writing. Students who may have felt less comfortable using electronic submission or

expressing their thoughts in English (as opposed to their first language) might have simply chosen not to volunteer for this study.

As I chose participants for this study, I became aware of other limitations with regard to the Cardinal Middle School student population. Although many Latino/ a students expressed interest in participating in the study and answered portions of the questionnaire, they told me that their parents would not provide consent. Recent local political debates over immigration policies may have played a role in these parents' decisions. If they had not yet received citizenship or did not possess documentation regarding immigration status, parents may have been fearful and apprehensive about allowing their children to participate in this study. Additionally, many students' parents had not received formal education and therefore were unable to read the consent forms, even when it was translated into their home languages. The only recent immigrant student who completed and returned the entire consent packet and questionnaire could not participate. Her mother agreed to everything in the study except for the audio recording of interviews. I was therefore unable to include her as a primary participant, because I would have missed a great deal of data by taking notes, rather than recording and transcribing interviews. Unfortunately, all of these factors meant that I was unable to bring to light the experiences of many Cardinal Middle School students. The populations excluded from this study, specifically immigrants and Latino/ a students, represent an important group of children whose voices might inform our understandings of music education and help us to better meet their needs.

Future Research Directions

I believe the fields of music education and middle level education would benefit from longitudinal, qualitative studies in which researchers follow students through the middle school experience. Through such work, educators may discover particular points in time at which students modify their identities, construct new identities, or make choices that affect their participation in music and school achievement. By understanding the intersections of identity construction, school policies, and pedagogical practice, educators may better meet the needs of young adolescents during their middle school years.

I also suggest future research designs with broader scopes. In other words, future studies that include all aspects of the middle school curriculum can offer the opportunity to better compare and contrast students' experiences across content areas. This type of examination will help music educators to better align curriculum to the broader middle school goal. Designing research with broader scopes may also help middle level educators find the hidden, unintended messages students learn from the larger middle school experience.

The use of narrative as a means to learn from students about the curriculum learned in schools is an important aspect of this study. Based on the participants' responses and requests to receive copies of "their stories," I believe that narrative is well suited to research at the middle school level. Young adolescents want to share their feelings and thoughts with caring adults, but often don't know how to go about doing this. Narrative inquiry both empowers the middle school student by giving him or her a voice and a pen (or computer) and serves as an entry point for researchers.

Middle school students understand and take ownership of story writing. For these reasons, I recommend narrative inquiry as a strong methodological choice for researchers interested in the middle school student and identity.

In addition to these methodological choices, this study brought to light injustices in music and middle level education. Specifically, themes regarding socioeconomic status, prior musical experience, and ethnicity emerged during the course of this study. The achievement gap in music education appeared to exist prior to middle school as students who did not face additional language or learning challenges had greater opportunities to participate in elementary music instruction. Students from wealthier families enjoyed greater success in the public school band program due to private music instruction and personally owned instruments. The differences between socioeconomic classes and language proficiency appeared related to ethnicity, as the large Latino/ a population comprised a greater percentage of the beginning band as opposed to the more experienced band. Based on these findings, I suggest that scholars in the field of music education pursue lines of inquiry related to equity, access, and social justice with regard to the school music curriculum.

<center>Implications</center>

Through this inquiry, I learned about the band student experience in a way I could not have otherwise learned in my role as a middle school band teacher. I suggest that the student experience encompasses both explicit learning outcomes as well as unintended messages from teachers, peers, and the curricular structure of the middle school. Giroux (2005) states that student experiences are of utmost import in the school curriculum:

<center>319</center>

Learning how to understand, affirm, and analyze such experience means not

only understanding the cultural and social forms through which students learn

how to define themselves, but also learning how to engage student experience

in a way that neither unqualifiedly endorses nor delegitimates it. (Giroux,

2005, p. 197)

A student's choice to continue enrollment in band signifies his or her desire to

identify with a particular social group, embrace roles within that group, and to

continue musical learning. Conversely, the choice to disassociate with particular

subject areas is a choice not to identify with a particular social group, as well as a

choice not to learn in that context. If these six participants' experiences resemble

other students' experiences in similar social contexts, then educators might critique

the ways in which curriculum policy and pedagogical practice might serve as barriers

to student engagement instead of affirmation of student achievement and potential. As

Froehlich (2007) states:

The hidden curriculum in music therefore has to do with accepting existing

economic and sociocultural conditions as inevitable rather than understanding

that they are socially constructed realities, changeable once we embark on

rethinking the purpose of schooling and education in general. (p. 109)

Teachers and Pedagogical Practices

Context matters because the social context of schooling can both support and

hinder learning. Pedagogical practices must be grounded in the sociocultural context

of the school, classroom, and students' homes. Examining such sociocultural contexts

and pedagogical practices through the lens of identity construction presents unique

opportunities to understand the importance of the teacher-student relationship with regard to social context and classroom culture.

Teachers' expectations of students appeared to influence students' expectations of themselves. Such expectations, in turn, were fulfilled in student performance- both academic performance and social behaviors. The ways in which students behaved and performed were viewed as an outward portrayal of self, internalized by the individual person and interpreted by those around him or her. Noddings (1993) states:

> Good teachers do not reject what students see and feel but, rather, work with what is presently seen and felt to build and stronger position for each student. To do this effectively requires the creation and maintenance of a trusting relationship. (Noddings, 1993, p. 107)

The participants described such a relationship between themselves and the band teacher, most notably during the first half of the school year. However, this relationship, and their sense of belonging to the band as a group, changed in January 2008.

The band classroom climate, earlier described by the participants as "supportive" and a place where "no one makes you feel like you suck," changed dramatically following the announcement of auditions and chair placements in January 2008. Although the teacher told all of the students that they contributed to the success of the group, rankings implied a different message. I suggest that middle school music teachers avoid using this type of ranking system. Those placed at the bottom no longer view themselves as successful. This may contribute to the decrease

in student enrollment in instrumental music programs between grades 6 and 12. Collaboration, rather than competition, would greatly impact the classroom climate, student identities, and the possibility for long-term musical learning.

Curriculum Policy and School Structures

   Teachers as advisors.

A tenet of current middle school structure in the United States is the teacher advisory class period. Teacher advisory classes permit teachers to meet daily with small groups of students in small groups or individually (Bishop & Pflaum, 2005). The goal of such a class time is for teachers to know students on a personal level, assist them in the social, emotional, and academic aspects of schooling, as well as provide a grounded source of mentorship as students move from one class to the next throughout the rest of their school day.

The findings in this study challenge the idea that small classes are the best means to provide mentorship for middle school students. Although the Concert Band class was one of the largest classes in the school, twice as large as most non-music classes, the students felt closest to their band director. Instead of class size, I recommend that middle level educators examine the structures through which students and teachers interact. The band teacher in this study participated in classroom activities with the students, performing along with them during class and thereby co-creating knowledge learned. Secondly, he worked with students individually and in small groups outside of instructional time. Thirdly, the students and teacher regularly performed together outside of the school day and traveled to off-site performances together. Through these activities, the students indicated that

their teacher served as mentor. He, like them, worked collaboratively to achieve success and modeled this collaboration through the process.

Curricular boundaries.

Although policies that prohibited students from participating in both athletic teams and music ensembles (forcing them to choose one or the other) were specific to Cardinal Middle School, many middle schools and school districts across the country have policies that restrict student enrollment in music courses. Students associated a sense of belonging, becoming an integral member of a school community, developing musical and social skills, as well as sharpening interpretive musical capabilities with their band class. The short-term benefits of such restrictions may not outweigh possible long-term drawbacks from disallowing students to enroll in a particular subject area.

Specifically, the band provides a unique learning space within the middle school. Students may find a social group with which to belong, forming peer support networks and friendships as they navigate the new social landscape of the middle school. Students also have the opportunity to "stick out on purpose" by learning to play a less common instrument or performing solos, all the while maintaining their social circle and therefore "blending in" with a large group of peers. In addition, the band presents opportunities to feel successful and intelligent, aspects of identity that might transfer to other subject areas. The large enrollment of many secondary band classes also makes for a unique learning situation in which many students experience such success at once.

Additionally, band is one of few content areas at the middle school level that is co-curricular. In other words, middle school band encompasses structured learning experiences both during and outside of the school day. Students connect classroom knowledge to their communities through evening and weekend performances. Band serves students by connecting their academic school day to their after-school and community-centered activities. The choice to participate in band is concurrently a choice to belong to a group and a choice to participate in a particular activity. According to Noddings (1992), "students should learn that it is wonderful to be occupied- to be fully engaged in whatever they have chosen to do" (p. 89). Band is a unique means by which students become engaged, connecting their classroom learning to social and communal life.

For all of these reasons, middle school administrators and educators should make every effort to provide the opportunity for every student to join a music ensemble, especially those students who have not yet achieved academic success or formed strong peer networks. To deny them this opportunity might cause students to believe "that their own inferiority has led to their lack of choices" (Noddings, 1993, p. 89). Being a member of the school band is itself a choice that encompasses many other choices (such as instrument preference, preferred musical genres, and leadership choices) that enable students to find unique aspects of their selves within the safety net of a large social group and peer network.

Coda

Giroux puts forth the following challenge for educators:

> It is crucial, therefore, that educators address the question of how aspects of
> the social world are experienced, mediated, and produced by students in often
> contradictory ways and how the forms of meaning that arise out of these
> contradictions collectively disable or enable the possibilities open to students
> within the existing society. Failure to do so not only will prevent teachers
> from tapping into the drives, emotions, and interests that give students their
> own unique voice, but also will make it equally difficult to provide the
> momentum for learning itself. (p. 198)

This is not a simple, or easy, challenge. As a middle school teacher, I personally know the demands on time, physical strength, and emotional capabilities that teaching over a hundred students per day presents. Often, we may feel that developing such awareness regarding student learning is beyond our reach. However, educators might begin to make this awareness more reachable. Peshkin (1991) asserts, "Waking up, in the sense of becoming knowingly aware, is a complex matter. It occurs unpredictably, over time, and the enlightenment it brings is not linear" (p. 73). However, asking difficult questions regarding students' interpretation of schooling and becoming aware that educators' interpretations of the same social contexts may be contradictory is crucial. To ignore students' voices by thinking that adults alone know what is best for students could result in boundaries, rather than opportunities, for continued learning.

The findings I presented in this document indicate that students' identities abruptly change when teachers introduce competitive pedagogical methods common to secondary instrumental music education settings. Music teachers use such methods, such as auditions, to rank students. By observing audition processes, students learn that a pre-existing learning context exists in which they must conform or they might find themselves placed at the bottom of a section or music program. Fearing the possibility of being defined as an unskilled or "low level" musician, a student may choose not to further identify as a band member, closing the possibility for future musical learning. If we hope to meet the challenge of creating emotionally safe spaces for students to learn, we must begin to wake up to pedagogical practices that silence students' voices and curricular structures that serve as boundaries for otherwise unlimited learning potential. We cannot simply demand that students adjust to our structures; we must create more malleable structures that adjust to our students' needs.

Appendix A

Student Assent Form

Dear Band Student:

My name is Adria Hoffman and I am a middle school music teacher and doctoral student in music education at the University of Maryland at College Park. As a middle school music teacher, I am interested in better understanding the experiences of 6th grade band students (like you!).

In order to understand band students' experiences, I will interview students, read journal entries that students post on your school's Blackboard site each week, and observe your band class. In the beginning, I will invite 10-15 students to consider volunteering for this study, but I will eventually choose only 6 students to continue based on their willingness to write weekly journals. All interviews will take place during lunch and last between 30 and 45 minutes.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you agree to participate but later change your mind, you are free to stop participating at any time. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your class grade. None of your journal entries or interviews will be shared with any teachers or staff at Cardinal Middle School.

 If you have questions about this study, please feel free to email me at AdriaH@umd.edu. Your parent or guardian may also call Dr. Philip Silvey at (301) 405-5537.

Sincerely,
Adria Hoffman, M.Ed.

I have read and understand the above information. By writing my name below, I agree to volunteer as a participant in this study. I understand that all information about me will be kept strictly confidential and that my participation will not affect my grade.

_____
Student Name   **Date**

Appendix B

Primary Participant Consent Form

Dear Band Parent/ Guardian,

My name is Adria Hoffman and I am a doctoral student in music education at the University of Maryland at College Park. I am planning to do a study of students in your child's band class under the supervision of Dr. Philip Silvey, Assistant Professor of Music Education. I am conducting this study in the middle school band class in order to understand how students experience school as they enter the middle school band program. This form will answer a number of questions. If your child is willing to participate, you will have the opportunity to agree by initialing each page and signing your name at the end of this form.

What will my child be asked to do?
The procedures involve six student volunteers as the primary participants, but all members of the band class will be aware of the study. Participant involvement will last for the duration of the study (through February 2008). Attached to this letter you will find a short questionnaire. If your child is interested in participating, he/ she must complete the questionnaire and return it to your band director with the signed parent and student permission forms. On the questionnaire your child will answer questions about his/ her experiences in band as well as other musical experiences and non-musical activities. I will initially invite 10-15 students to participate, based on a diverse range of musical experiences and other activities. I would like to hear from all kinds of students: experienced music students, students just trying band for the first time, and everyone in between.

The invited 10-15 students will then write a weekly journal entry (or more if they want to) about their experiences in band. The journals will be kept on the school Blackboard site in a course restricted only to participants involved in the study. I will post a journal prompt such as "Tell me about your [flute] section." The students will drop their journal responses in the Blackboard digital dropbox so only the individual student and I can read them. Based on their ability to maintain this weekly journal during a three-week trial period, as well as their willingness to write about their experiences, I will choose six students to continue as primary participants in this study. This group of six will ideally represent a variety of musical experience levels, social groups in school (outside of band), and family backgrounds.

If your child is chosen, he or she will continue to write the weekly entries for the duration of the study (through February 2008). In addition to the journals, I will interview each participant individually three times. All interviews will take place during lunch periods in the band room and last no longer than 45 minutes. Another adult from the school faculty will be present at all times. The first interview will be soon after I choose the six primary participants. The second interview will take place after the winter concert. The third (and last)

interview will take place toward the end of the first semester, just as students begin to decide whether or not to continue taking band. The interviews may include questions such as:

- Tell me about your band class.
- Describe your friends in the class.
- Why did you sign up to take band?

In addition to the interviews, all six primary participants will continue writing weekly reflective journals and sending them electronically through the school Blackboard site. I will also observe your child's band class once a week over the first semester so I can observe the classroom interactions and understand the context of the journals. My main focus in the observations will be general interactions between students in the class and how members of the group interact and work together.

What about confidentiality?
I will do everything I can to keep your child's personal information confidential. To help protect your child's confidentiality, I will keep all data stored on my password-protected computer. I will keep all data files in password-protected accounts. I will delete all submitted journal entries after I save them on my computer. In my written report or article about this research project, I will protect your child's identity to the maximum extent possible. I will do this by replacing all names with pseudonyms in the written report. I will delete all data following my final research report. Your child's information may be shared with representatives of the University of Maryland, College Park or governmental authorities if he/ she or someone else is in danger or if I am required to do so by law.

This research project involves making digital audio recordings of your child. These recordings will help to document your child's experiences in band. I will personally transcribe all interviews. I will save all recordings on my password-protected personal computer. Please check the appropriate line below.

___ I permit my child to be audiotaped during my participation in this study.
___ I do not permit my child to be audiotaped during my participation in this study.

What are the risks of this research?
There are no foreseeable risks involved in this study, as the students are free to express only what they wish to share.

What are the benefits of this research?
This research may benefit the students as they will be prompted to think about their classroom and school experiences and given the opportunity to express these thoughts. This awareness may enhance their learning experiences, and the results may help me learn more about what is important and meaningful to them as they learn to perform in the band program. Other music educators might benefit from this

study through deeper understanding of the ways band students experience the band classroom.

Is participation required? May my child stop participating at any time?
Participation in this research is completely voluntary. Students may choose not to take part at all. If students decide to participate in this research, they may stop participating at any time. Parents may also decide to stop their children from participating in the study at any time. If for any reason I determine that it is not necessary for your child to continue as a primary participant in the study, he or she may not need to continue participation in written reflections and interviews.

What if I have questions?
You may feel free to contact me, Adria Hoffman, at anytime by emailing adriah@umd.edu.

This research is being supervised by Philip Silvey, Ed. D., assistant professor of music education at The University of Maryland, College Park. If you have any questions about the research study itself, please contact him at (301) 405-5537 or psilvey@umd.edu.

If you have questions about your child's rights as a research subject or wish to report a research-related injury, please contact:

Institutional Review Board Office
University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland, 20742
(e-mail) irb@deans.umd.edu
(telephone) 301-405-0678

This research has been reviewed according to the University of Maryland, College Park IRB procedures for research involving human subjects.

Statement of Consent
Your signature indicates that:
- the research has been explained to you
- your questions have been fully answered
- you freely and voluntarily permit your child to participate in this research project

Signature

STUDENT
NAME_____

NAME OF PARENT/ GUARDIAN

_____

SIGNATURE OF PARENT/ GUARDIAN

_____

Appendix C

Preliminary Questionnaire for Student Participants

Name_____   Birth Date_____

Band Instrument_____

Tell me about choosing electives. Did anyone help you make the decision? Was it

hard to choose which class to take?_____

_____

_____

_____

Did you take band in elementary school? If so, what do you think help you decide to

do this? Were you excited to start? Did any of your friends decide to start playing an

instrument when you did?

_____

_____

_____

If so, what instrument did you play?_____

Do you play any other instruments or sing in a chorus?_____

Years of private lessons (if any)

      Instrument (or voice)_____ Years of Lessons _____

      Instrument (or voice)_____ Years of Lessons _____

List any sports you play and how many years you have played them.

_____

Are you involved in any other school clubs or organizations? Which ones?

_____

_____

Do you have any other family members who play instruments? Who? What

instruments? Do you ever play or sing together as a family?

_____

_____

_____

Do you get together with friends to play music outside of school? Can you describe

the music (if any) that you perform outside of school?

_____

_____

_____

What are some interesting things about your band class?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Think of three of your closest friends. What electives do they take? Why do you think

they decided to take those

electives?_____

_____

What class do you look most forward to during the school day? Why?

_____

_____

_____

Are there any classes that you don't look forward to? Why do you think that is?

_____

_____

_____

Tell me about other kids in your band class and how well you know them.

_____

_____

_____

What are some of your hopes or goals in band this year? Do you think you will be

successful in achieving these goals in band? Why?

_____

_____

_____

What kind of grades do you usually earn? Why do you think you get these grades?

_____

_____

_____

Appendix D

Journal Prompts and Questions

1. Tell me about your section.

2. Tell me about someone in band who you really admire or like and why.

3. Are students who take band different or alike from students who take
   orchestra or chorus? Describe the differences and/ or similarities.

4. Based on your own experience and thoughts, how would you describe or
   define a "musician?" Do you consider yourself to be a musician?

5. You have your winter concert this coming week. Tell me your thoughts about
   the upcoming performance. Are you nervous? Excited? Do you care? What
   are you thinking about going into this concert?

6. Congratulations on your concert! Tell me all about the concert.

7. Tell me about yourself. Pretend you are writing to a pen pal to introduce
   yourself or writing an letter to a close friend. Describe your strengths,
   weaknesses, hopes, dreams, frustrations, etc... Tell me WHO you are. Are you
   a guitarist? Dancer? Daughter? Brother? Are you a leader or do you try to
   blend in? What do you love to do in your free time? What makes you who you
   are?

8. Tell me your feelings about performing in public.

9. Tell me why you chose to take band this year and your thoughts about
   possibly taking band next year.

10. Tell me about any time you may have felt nervous or uncomfortable in band. Why do you think you felt that way? OR If you can't remember ever feeling nervous or uncomfortable, tell me why you feel comfortable in band.

11. Have you started doing any extra-curricular activity since I met you in November? A club or a chorus or private lessons or a step team? Tell me about it!

12. What do you think playing your instrument says about you? Do you think people perceive you in a certain way because you play a band instrument? Or specifically your instrument?

Appendix E

Data Collection Calendar

Month	Date	Day	Week	Visit/	Data Collection
October	19	Friday	3		Fall Concert: Observation
October	26	Friday	4	1	Observation
October	29	Monday	5	2	Observation
November	14	Wednesday	2	3	Observation
November	20	Tuesday	3	4	Observation
November	27	Tuesday	4	5	Observation; Interview (Eileen)
December	3	Monday	1	6	Observation; Interview (David)
December	11	Tuesday	2	7	Observation; Interview (Sophia)
December	13	Thursday	2	8	Observation; Interview(Mariam)
December	14	Friday	2		Winter Concert: Observation
December	19	Wednesday	3	9	Observation; Interview(Lili)
December	21	Friday	3	10	Observation; Interview (Kejah)
January	3	Thursday	1	11	Observation
January	11	Friday	2	12	Observation
January	14	Monday	3	13	Observation; Interview(Lili)
January	30	Wednesday	5	14	Observation; Interview (Sophia)
February	1	Friday	1	15	Observation; Interview (Mariam)
February	7	Thursday	2	16	Observation; Interview (David)
February	13	Wednesday	3	17	Observation; (Kejah)
February	15	Friday	3	18	Observation; Interview (Eileen)
February	19	Tuesday	4	19	Observation; Gliders Meeting
February	21	Thursday	4	20	Observation
February	26	Tuesday	5	21	Observation; Jets Meeting
February	27	Wednesday	5		Pre-festival Concert: Observation
March	11	Tuesday	2	22	Observation; Interview (Kejah)
March	13	Thursday	2	23	Observation; Interview (Lili & Sophia)
March	14	Friday	2		District Band Festival: Observation
March	27	Thursday	4	24	Observation; Interview (David)
March	30	Sunday	4		Interview (Eileen)
April	4	Friday	1	25	Observation; Interview(Mariam)

Appendix F
AN ESSAY ON SUBJECTIVITY

Introduction

In qualitative research, the researcher and research instrument are one and the same (Barrett, 2007). Qualitative researchers situate themselves in unfamiliar and familiar contexts, interpret observations of social interactions, make inferences about cultural meanings, and personally interact with participants in order to collect data. Through conducting this research, and troubling the familiar, qualitative researchers contribute to both broad and specific knowledge about social worlds and personal understandings, informing such understandings through rich and contextualized data less likely to be collected through quantitative means.

Knowledge gained through qualitative research methods is meaningful, important, and yet always tinted by researcher subjectivity. According to Peshkin (1991), subjectivity "is an amalgam of the persuasions that stem from the circumstances of one's class, status, and values interacting with the particulars of one's object of investigation" (p. 285). Researchers base their interpretations on professional and personal experiences that are bounded by socioeconomic class, educational status, religious background, gender, sexual preference, and a variety of other factors. This positionality is not necessarily a drawback to qualitative research. In fact, many argue that subjectivity is actually an advantage, as researchers might reflect upon data in a way others might not because of their unique places in the world. I do not claim that subjectivity or positionality takes away from the strength of a study, rather that the qualitative researcher may unknowingly limit the depth and

breadth of their research if they do not question the ways in which their subjectivity interacts with their research. Peshkin (1991) says of qualitative researchers:

When their subjectivity remains unconscious, they insinuate rather than knowingly clarify their personal stakes. If in the spirit of confession researchers acknowledge their subjectivity, they may benefit their souls, but they do not thereby attend to that subjectivity in any meaningful way. (p. 285)

Berg (2007) agrees with Peshkin, stating, "subjective disclosures by researchers allow the reader to better understand why a research area has been selected, how it was studied, and by whom" (p. 181). Knowledge of the researcher's background and biases, according to Berg, "does not diminish the quality of the research.… It may even provide the reader with greater understanding about why certain types of questions were investigated, while others were not" (p. 181). Therefore, I present this essay as a way of clarifying my apparent subjectivity apparent to both the reader and me. I aim to make clear the ways in which my personal bias and experience affected my interpretations of the research data and circumstances.

<div align="center">Becoming Aware</div>

According to Hurston (1942), "Research is a formalized curiosity. It is poking and prying with a purpose. It is a seeking that he who wishes may know the cosmic secrets of the world and they that dwell therein" (p. 143). I began my doctoral studies because I was curious. I wanted to better understand the student experience in middle school, specifically the informal lessons learned through social interactions and daily navigation of school structures. Coming to the point at which I could frame this study within theories of identity and the school curriculum was both exciting and

overwhelming for me. Though faculty and friends provided me with the support and encouragement I needed to undertake such a study, I felt a tremendous responsibility toward the participants involved as well as my prior and current middle school students. These students disclosed thoughts and emotions to me that they did not share with others in their lives, the "cosmic secrets" of which Hurston speaks.

Students' experiences in school are often shared with peers, but less commonly shared with adults. Educators and students often appear to move side-by-side in the same spaces, yet separated by an invisible wall that makes the goal of knowing and understanding each other unattainable. Gaining and maintaining students' trust was of utmost importance to me, not simply for the purposes of this study, but because I felt a moral obligation to these children. In order to gain insights into such a personal matter as identity, interview procedures necessitated open and honest dialogue. However, this trust was inevitably based on a personal connection between the students and myself. As I built relationships with the participants, I found myself writing increasingly emotional memos and field notes. In one instance, I decided to end a meeting politely, yet quickly, after hearing a teacher speak negatively about a participant. My initial reaction was to advocate for this student. As this reactive thought passed, I realized that consciously separating my emotional reactions from my distanced observations and data became a necessary function of my research process. By doing so, I refrained from causing undue change in the social system I studied. According to Berg (2007), ethnographic research necessitates "a reflective concern on the part of the researcher…. This reflexive characteristic implies that the researcher understands that he or she is part of the social world(s) that he or

she investigates" (p. 178). I then separated my "subjective reflections" (Berg, 2007, p. 199) from my observations, transcripts, and analytic notes by bracketing them and labeling them as such.

My Subjective Selves

Throughout my five and a half months of fieldwork at Cardinal Middle School, I became increasingly aware of my subjectivity. I made this awareness a daily goal for myself by reading my field notes carefully for emotionally charged passages or evaluative descriptions in which I used conspicuously positive or negative terms. At times, my subjectivity became immediately apparent during observations as my eyes watered remembering pieces learned in my former place of employment with other middle school students. This nostalgia affected my ability to observe the familiar context of a middle school band classroom even knowing that this classroom was previously unfamiliar to me.

I became aware of my multiple subjective selves as I navigated both a new teaching assignment and a new research context. This did not surprise me as I conducted a study on socially constructed identity, yet this framing of subjectivity served as a way of categorizing and compartmentalizing my emotional reactions to fieldwork. My multiple researcher identities that emerged during the course of this study are listed as follows: (1) the social justice/ advocate self, (2) the band teacher self, (3) the flutist self, and (4) the "ethnic" self. Some of these identities might also emerge in future research contexts, but some unique identity characteristics emerged in this school at this time due to changes in my professional and personal location during the 2007-2008 school year.

Prior to my doctoral studies, I taught middle school band in a public school located in a large metropolitan area. Though many of Cardinal Middle School's characteristics were unique to that school, the school where I previously worked shared a remarkable number of similarities. Both the school and middle school band classroom seemed quite familiar to me, especially as I contrasted it with my new part-time teaching position. I took this position in order to financially support myself while conducting this study. Additionally, my teaching schedule provided me the flexibility to conduct research in the field.

Though my teaching experience was primarily in band classrooms, I accepted a position as a part-time choral and general music teacher in a school system where I had never previously taught. This particular school system encompassed far less diversity than that of my previous school district and research site. Additionally, the move to choral music presented a host of previously unknown challenges. As a qualitative researcher, I noticed that I felt an emic perspective more often at my research site than an etic perspective where I worked and lived.

My social justice self appeared in light of this interesting paradox. The school where I taught housed many students who qualified for free or reduced meal plans, though significantly (approximately twenty percent) less than at Cardinal Middle School. However, I had fewer resources to provide my students than my participants received on a regular basis as part of their instruction. On one classroom visit to my research site, I found myself looking carefully at the percussion equipment to see if there were any unusable pieces of equipment that I might repair and bring back to my students. I also consciously refrained from acting on feelings that I later categorized

under this social justice/ advocate identity while visiting my research site. During the faculty meetings, I heard teachers negatively portray students who I had come to know and admire for their courage and honesty throughout the interview and journaling processes. I felt physically shaken after hearing Kejah's and Sophia's teachers describe them negatively. Due to the research guidelines established by the school district, as well as my own ethical code during the research process, I refrained from advocating for these students. However, I felt that, in some way, I might not done these students justice by remaining quiet, knowing things about them which they had not chosen to share with their teachers.

My band teacher self also seemed to surprise me in light of my part-time choral music position. I felt prepared to draw on my prior experiences as a band student and band teacher. In my research context, however, I did not anticipate the ways in which my experience as a band teacher would cause my emotional reactions nor the ways in which balancing the role of teacher every other day with researcher in between would weigh on my conscience. Dobbs (2005) describes well this seesaw of emotions when she writes:

> Managing the simultaneous roles of music teacher and researcher was a daunting task, requiring equal parts curiosity, stubbornness, *chutzpah,* and an ability to dispassionately observe and analyze one's own practice. This continual study of self was often painful and sometimes necessitated my taking steps to re-think my words and actions, especially in building and sustaining the all-important social relationships with my adolescent students. (p. 677)

342

Unlike Dobbs, I did not formally study my own classroom or actions, but in balancing my roles as researcher and teacher, I began to reflect on my role and the social context that my words and actions influenced on my off-days from collecting data. I do not know how a teacher-researcher, even one who steps outside of his or her classroom as I did, could function otherwise.

As the Cardinal Middle School Concert Band rehearsed a piece of music I had chosen as a middle school band teacher, I reflected on the ways in which my former students related to the music, each other, and me during that time. Regularly, I felt sad during these classroom visits because I simply missed being in the role of band teacher. I felt guilt for leaving my former school and the families with whom I had built relationships, teaching multiple siblings and living in the same community where I taught. I had not yet forged those relationships in my new job and felt more comfortable teaching band than chorus. Hearing the same music literature performed by the participants involved in this study brought many conflicting emotions to the surface. Fortunately, my inquisitiveness and *chutzpah* won out over other feelings, and I was able to separate my reactions to the music and setting from my desire to question and gain new insights into the more familiar context of the middle school band classroom.

My flutist self gave me a unique perspective on the student experience at Cardinal Middle School. Mr. Wray initially told me, "it was cool" having me in the classroom. He had introduced me to the students as a former middle band teacher and believed that the students' awareness of my presence caused them to participate differently than they had prior to my arrival. When I asked him to clarify, he told me

343

that they were more engaged, sat taller, and appeared more "focused" to him because they knew that I knew what I "was talking about." I perceived their interactions with me as less open than what was necessary for me to understand their honest perspectives about school and band. Once I began bringing my flute to class, my interactions with the students changed. They approached me to ask me about my flute, told me that I play the flute well, and asked for assistance regarding aspects of technical performance. When I sat amongst the flute section, they shared jokes with me, compared their instruments with mine, and seemed to interact with me the way they generally interacted with one another.

I also came to understand the way in which non-flute students' opinions of them became apparent:

> As I left the classroom one day, a student in another band class was also leaving the room. She had stopped by to see Mr. Wray and happened to leave around the same time. She asked me what I was doing there and I told her that I was working with some of the Concert Band students. She then asked what instrument I play. When I told her that I play the flute, she responded, "Oh, how girly of you!" (Field Notes, February 13, 2008)

During interviews with David, he would consciously negotiate between his relationship with me as a caring educator-adult and a fellow band member and flutist. For instance, he openly and honestly told me that he enjoyed making fun of the flutists with his friends in the low brass section. He then quickly raised his eyebrows, blushed slightly, and said "I mean, um, no offense!" (Interview, December 3, 2007). My flutist identity served as an advantage for me in the setting of the research site.

344

However, I grew increasingly aware of my own desire to analyze my decisions regarding instrument choices and gender. I also consciously told students, such as David and the girl in the hallway, simply that I was not offended, rather than defend my role as a flutist or speak up for the flutists in the Concert Band.

My "ethnic" self refers to the way I am perceived in different contexts. I put the word ethnic in quotes because that is typically the word people use to describe me. I often pass for different ethnicities based on my physical appearance and personal comfort in ethnically diverse communities. This was certainly the case at Cardinal Middle School. Some of the Latina students in the Concert Band assumed that I was also Latina and therefore spoke to me partially in Spanish, partially in English. They appeared to feel more comfortable around me than other adults in the building and often would simply look at me to smile across the classroom. Walking down the hallway, some of the African American faculty would sometimes casually and openly joke with me about race and ethnic concerns, feeling comfortable around me because of my dark curly hair and olive skin. I unconsciously sought out faculty and staff who represented ethnic minorities and discovered that much of my triangulation appeared to come from interactions with such faculty and staff. When I heard some of them speaking about various interpretations of students' behaviors and the role of race in the school, I identified with their experiences. I heard their questions and frustrations and valued their honesty with me.

Self-Awareness and the Research

Just as I feel that I have become a better middle school educator by conducting this research, I feel that I have grown as a person by becoming aware of my own biases and emotions. Just as Eileen told me about her developing self-awareness of stereotypes and social groups, I learned that I sought relationships within the school building based on how I perceived others viewed me. I developed honest and trusting relationships with particular groups of faculty and staff members, those who I initially thought to have shared personal characteristics or backgrounds. Though I carefully triangulated my data by meeting with all of the primary participants' teachers and speaking with all school administrators, this careful planning took place as I considered my physical place within the school building, along with noticing where I had and had not socialized.

I also learned to reflect on my own choices and decisions as a musician and music educator. Though I initially played percussion, I decided to switch to the flute in eighth grade. I began to rethink my own choices and how, as a flutist, I influence the choices my students make. Additionally, I began to think about the roles I embrace and the characteristics I attribute to myself. I also reflected on the titles I do not tend to use to describe myself and how, by omission, I might impact students' self-concepts as they learn in my classroom. In the same vein, I thought about the ways in which my use of language and personal assumptions may have limited my interactions with students involved in this study. Might I have, for instance, limited possibilities for students to raise their concerns about band? Did the participants feel

as though I wanted to hear mainly positive renderings of their school and band experiences because they knew my background?

Though I attempted to account for my assumptions and background, I know that another researcher may elicit different data from the same students. According to Peshkin (1991), "untamed subjectivity mutes the emic voice" (p. 294). Through this written account, I hope to have given voice not only to the middle school students who participated in this study, but to the emic voice in which I wrote as the researcher. I took on the role of participant-observer in the field in order to gain such an emic voice. By doing so, I elicited data that would have otherwise remained locked, kept secret to those who lived in the world of students. I hope that this essay served as a way to understand some of my viewpoints, including that which was undoubtedly left unsaid. I also hope my narrative provided the reader with a sense of how I came to view student narratives and co-constructed their stories with their assistance.

References

Abeles, H. F. & Porter, S. Y. (1978). The sex-stereotyping of musical instruments. *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 26(2), 65-75.

Adderley, C., Kennedy, M., & Berz, W. (2003). "A home away from home:" The world of the high school music classroom. *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 51(3), 190-205.

Adler, A. H. W. (2002). *A case study of boys' experiences of singing in school*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Toronto, Canada.

Anderson-Levitt, K. M. (2006). Ethnography. In Green, J. L., Camilli, G., & Elmore, P. B. (Eds.), *Handbook of complimentary methods in education research* (pp. 279-295). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Bakagiannis, S. & Tarrant, M. (2006). Can music bring people together?: Effects of shared musical preference on intergroup bias in adolescence. *Scandinavian Journal of Psychology,* 47(1), 129-136.

Barrett, J. R. (2007). The researcher as instrument: Learning to conduct qualitative research through analyzing and interpreting a choral rehearsal. *Music Education Research,* 9(3), 417-433.

Berg, B. L. (2007). *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences, sixth edition.* Boston: Pearson.

Berg, M. H. (1997). *Social construction of musical experience in two high school chamber music ensembles.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Northwestern University.

Bishop, P. A. & Pflaum, S. W. (2005). Middle school students' perceptions of social

    dimensions as influencers of academic engagement. *Research in Middle Level*

    Education, 29(2), 1-14.

Boal-Palheiros, G. M. & Hargreaves, D. J. (2001). Listening to music at home and at

    school. *British Journal of Music Education,* 18(2), 103-118.

Brantlinger, E. (2006). Who wins and who loses?: Social class and student identities.

    In Sadowski, M. (Ed.), *Adolescents at school: Perspectives on youth, identity,*

    and education (pp. 107-121). Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.

Brenner, M. E. (2006). Interviewing in educational research. In Green, J. L., Camilli,

    G., & Elmore, P. B. (Eds.), *Handbook of* c*omplimentary methods in education*

    research (pp. 357-370). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Bresler, L. (1993). The social organization of achievement: A case-study of a music

    theory class. *Curriculum Journal*, 4(1), 37-58.

Bruner, J. (1996). *The culture of education.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University

    Press.

Carlow, R. (2004). *Hearing others' voices: An exploration of the musical experiences*

    of immigrant students who sing in high school choir. Unpublished doctoral

    dissertation, University of Maryland, College Park.

Chase, S. E. (2005). Narrative inquiry: Multiple Lenses, approaches, voices. In

    Denzin, N. K. & Lincoln, Y.S. (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative*

    research, 3rd ed. (pp. 651-679). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Clandinin, D. J. (2006). Narrative inquiry: A methodology for studying lived

    experience. *Research Studies in Music Education, 27(1),* 44-54.

Clandinin, D. J. & Connelly, F. M. (2000). *Narrative inquiry: Experience and story in qualitative research.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Coles, R. (1989). *The call of stories: Teaching and the moral imagination.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Connelly, F. M. & Clandinin, D. J. (2006). Narrative inquiry. In Green, J. L., Camilli, G., & Elmore, P. B. (Eds.), *Handbook of* c*omplimentary methods in education research* (pp. 477-488). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Conway, C. (2000). Gender and musical instrument choice: A phenomenological investigation. *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education,* 146, 1-17.

Corenblum, B. & Marshall, E. (1998). The band played on: Predicting students' intentions to continue studying music. *Journal of Research in Music Education,* 46(1), 128-140.

Cousins, L. H. (1999). "Playing between classes:" America's troubles with class, race, and gender in a black high school and community. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly,* 30(3), 294-316.

Creswell, J. W. (1998). *Qualitative research and design: Choosing among five traditions.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Crosnoe, R. (2000). Friendships in childhood and adolescence: The life course and new directions. *Social Psychology Quarterly,* 63(4), 377-391.

Cutietta, R. A. & McAllister, P. A. (1997). Student personality and instrumental participation, continuation, and choice. *Journal of Research in Music Education,* 45(2), 282-294.

Deaux, K. & Martin, D. (2003). Interpersonal networks and social categories: Specifying levels of context in identity processes. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 66(2), 101-117.

Delzell, J. K. & Leppla, D. A. (1992). Gender association of musical instruments and preference of fourth-grade students for selected instruments. *Journal of Research in Music Education,* 40(2), 93-103.

Dewey, J. (1959). Progressive education and the science of education. In Dworkin, M. S. (Ed.), *Dewey on education: Selections* (pp. 113-126)*.* New York: Teachers College Press. (Original work published 1928).

Dobbs, T. L. (2005). *Discourse in the band room: How talk shapes teaching, learning, and community in a middle school instrumental music classroom.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Northwestern University.

Eisner, E. W. (1998). *The enlightened eye: Qualitative inquiry and the enhancement of educational practice.* Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Erikson, E. H. (1963). *Childhood and society, 2nd ed.* New York: W. W. Norton & Company.

Fodor, B. D. (1998). *Critical moments of change: A study of the social and musical interactions of precollegiate jazz combos.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Northwestern University.

Froehlich, H. C. (2007). *Sociology for music teachers: Perspectives for practice.* Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education.

Galley, M. (2006). "Who am I as a learner:" Would girls and boys tend to answer

      differently? In Sadowski, M. (Ed.), *Adolescents at school: Perspectives on*

      youth, identity, and education (pp. 55-63). Cambridge, MA: Harvard

      Education Press.

Gay, G. (2000). *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research, and practice.* New

      York: Teachers College Press.

Giordano, P. C. (1995). The wider circle of friends in adolescence. *The American*

      Journal of Sociology, 101(3), 661-697.

Giroux, H. A (2005). *Schooling and the struggle for public life: Democracy's*

      promise and education's challenge, 2nd ed. Boulder, CO: Paradigm

      Publishers.

Goodlad, J. I. (2004). *A place called school, Anniversary Ed.* New York: McGraw-

      Hill.

Grant, G. & Murray, C. E. (1999). *Teaching in America: The slow revolution.*

      Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Green, L. (1997). *Music, gender, education.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Griswold, P. A. & Chroback, D. A. (1981). Sex-role associations of music

      instruments and occupations by gender and major. *Journal of Research in*

      Music Education, 29(1), 57-62.

Henley, P. T. (2001). Effects of modeling patterns as practice techniques on the

      performance of high school instrumentalists. *Journal of Research in Music*

      Education, 49(2), 169-180.

Hewitt, M. P. (2001). The effects of modeling, self-evaluation, and self-listening on junior high instrumentalists music performance and practice attitude. *Journal of Research in Music Education, 49*(4), 307-322.

Hewitt, M. P. (2002). Self-evaluation tendencies of junior high instrumentalists. *Journal of Research in Music Education, 50*(3), 215-226.

Hewitt, M. P. (2005). Self-evaluation accuracy among high school and middle school instrumentalists. *Journal of Research in Music Education, 53*(2), 148-161.

Hogg, M. A., Terry, D. J., & White, K. M. (1995). A tale of two theories: A critical comparison of identity theory with social identity theory. *Social Psychology Quarterly, 58*(4), 255-269.

Holland, D. & Lachicotte Jr., W. (2007). Vygotsky, Mead, and new sociocultural studies of identity. In Daniels, H., Cole, M., & Wertsch, J. V. (Eds.), *The Cambridge companion to Vygotsky* (pp. 101-135). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Holland, D., Lachicotte, Jr., W., Skinner, D., & Cain, C. (1998). *Identity and agency in cultural worlds.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Horvat, E. M. & Antonio, A. L. (1999). "Hey, those shoes are out of uniform:" African American girls in an elite high school and the importance of habitus. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly, 30*(3), 317-342.

Howard, J. A. (2000). Social psychology of identities. *Annual Review of Sociology, 26*(1), 367-393.

Hurston, Z. N. (1942). *Dust tracks on a road.* New York: Harper Collins Publishers.

Kennedy, M. C. (2004). "It's a metamorphosis": Guiding the voice change at the
American Boychoir School. *Journal of Research in Music Education,* 52(3),
264-280.

Kinney, D. A. (1993). From nerds to normals: The recovery of identity among
adolescents from middle school to high school. *Sociology of Education,* 66(1),
21-40.

Kvale, S. (1996). *InterViews: An introduction to qualitative research interviewing.*
Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Lamont, A., Hargreaves, D. J., Marshall, N. A., & Tarrant, M. (2003). Young
people's music in and out of school. *British Journal of Music Education,*
20(3), 229-241.

Litowitz, B. E. (1993). Deconstruction in the zone of proximal development. In
Forman, E. A., Minick, N., & Stone, C. A. (Eds.), *Contexts for learning:*
Sociocultural dynamics in children's development (pp.184-196). New York:
Oxford University Press.

McCarthy, M. (1999). Gendered discourse and the construction of identity: Toward a
liberated pedagogy in music education. *Journal of Aesthetic Education,* 33(4),
109-125.

McCarthy, M. (2004). Using story to capture the scholarship of practice: Framing and
grounding our stories. *The Mountain Lake Reader*: *Conversations on the*
Study and Practice of Music Teaching. Project of a consortium of universities,
published by the University of Tennessee, 2004, pp. 34-42.

McCarthy, M. (July 2007). Personal communication.

McKeage, K. M. (2004). Gender and participation in high school and college

   instrumental jazz ensembles. *Journal of Research in Music Education,* 52(4),

   343-356.

Mead, G. H. (1956). *On social psychology*. Chicago: The University of Chicago

   Press.

Mills, M. M. (2008). *The effects of participation in a community children's choir on

   participants' identity: An ethnographic case study.* Unpublished doctoral

   dissertation, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI.

Minick, N., Stone, C. A., & Forman, E. A. (1993). Integration of individual, social,

   and institutional processes. In Forman, E. A., Minick, N., & Stone, C. A.

   (Eds.), *Contexts for learning: Sociocultural dynamics in children's*

   development (pp. 3-16). New York: Oxford University Press.

Miles, M. B. & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded*

   sourcebook, second edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Monks, S. (2003). Adolescent singers and perceptions of vocal identity. *British*

   Journal of Music Education, 20(3), 243-256.

Morrison, S. J., Montemeyer, M. & Wiltshire, E. S. (2004). The effect of a recorded

   model on band students' performance, self-evaluations, achievement, and

   attitude. *Journal of Research in Music Education, 52(2), 116-129.*

Nakkula, M. (2006). Identity and possibility: Adolescent development and the

   potential of schools. In Sadowski, M. (Ed.), *Adolescents at school:*

   Perspectives on youth, identity, and education (pp. 7-18). Cambridge, MA:

   Harvard Education Press.

Nieto, S. (1999). *The light in their eyes: Creating multicultural learning communities.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Nieto, S. (2004). Racism, discrimination, and expectations of students' achievement. In Canestrari, A. S. & Marlow, B. A. (Eds.), *Educational foundations: An anthology of critical readings* (pp.44-63). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Noddings, N. (1993). *The challenge to care in schools: An alternative approach to education.* New York: Teachers College Press.

North, A.C. & Hargreaves, D.J. (1999). Music and adolescent identity. *Music education research, 1(1),* 75-92.

North, A. C., Hargreaves, D. J., & O'Neill, S. A. (2000). The importance of music to adolescents. *British Journal of Educational Psychology,* 70(2), 255-272.

Olsson, B. (2007). Social issues in music education. In Bresler, L. (Ed.), *International handbook of research in arts education* (pp. 989-1002). Dordecht, The Netherlands: Springer.

O'Neill, S. A. & Boulton, M. J. (1996). Boys' and girls' preferences for musical instruments: A function of gender? *Psychology of Music,* 24(2), 171-183.

Peshkin, A. (1991). *The color of strangers the color of friends: The play of ethnicity in school and community.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Pope, D. C. (1999). *Doing school: Successful students' experiences of the high school curriculum.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Stanford University, California.

Raible, J. & Nieto, S. (2006). Beyond categories: The complex identities of

   adolescents. In Sadowski, M. (Ed.), *Adolescents at school: Perspectives on*

   youth, identity, and education (pp. 145-161). Cambridge, MA: Harvard

   Education Press.

Rex, L.A., Steadman, S. C. & Graciano, M. K. (2006). Researching the complexity of

   classroom interaction. In Green, J. L., Camilli, G., & Elmore, P. B. (Eds.),

   Handbook of complimentary methods in education research (pp. 727-772).

   Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Roberts, B. (2004). Newcomers in psychology discover identity. *Action, criticism and*

   theory for music education, 3(1), 2-5.

Sadowski, M. (2006). Why identity matters at school. In Sadowski, M. (Ed.)

   Adolescents at school: Perspectives on youth, identity, and education. (pp. 1-

   5). Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.

Schlanger, D. J. (1998). *An exploration of school belongingness: Ethnicity, mediating*

   factors, and fostering activities in a multicultural, middle-class, suburban

   middle school. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Columbia University

   Teachers College, New York.

Schmidt, C. P. (2005). Relationships among motivation, performance, achievement,

   and music experience variables in secondary instrumental music students.

   Journal of Research in Music Education, 53(2), 134-147.

Shank, G. D. (2006). *Qualitative research: A personal skills approach, 2nd ed.* Upper

   Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

Silvey, P. E. (2002). *Learning music from the inside: The process of coming to know musical works as experienced by four high school choral singers.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Silvey, P. E. (2004). Acquaintance knowledge of musical works in the secondary choral music classroom. *Arts and Learning Research Journal,* 20(1), 111-134.

Silvey, P. E. (2005). Learning to perform Benjamin Britten's "Rejoice in the Lamb": The perspectives of three high school choral singers. *Journal of Research in Music Education,* 53(3), 102-119.

Sizer, T. R. (1984). *Horace's compromise: The dilemma of the American high school.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Small, C. (1998). *Musicking: The meanings of performing and listening.* Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press.

Stake, R. E. (2005). Qualitative case studies. In Denzin, N. K. & Lincoln, Y.S. (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research, 3rd ed.* (pp. 443-466). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Stake, R. E. (2006). *Multiple case study analysis.* New York: The Guilford Press.

Stets, J. E., & Burke, P. J. (2000). Identity theory and social identity theory. *Social Psychology Quarterly,* 63(3), 224-237.

Tajfel, H. & Turner, J.C. (1979). An integrative theory of intergroup conflict. In W. G. Austin & S. Worchel (Eds.), *The Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations* (pp. 33-47). Monterey, CA: Brooks-Cole.

Tarrant, M. (2002). Adolescent peer groups and social identity. *Social Development,* 11(1), 110-123).

Tarrant, M., MacKenzie, L., & Hewitt, L. A. (2006). Friendship group identification, multidimensional self-concept, and experience of developmental tasks in adolescence. *Journal of Adolescence,* 29(4), 627-640.

Tarrant, M., North, A. C., Eldridge, M. D., Kirk, L. E., Smith, E. A., & Turner, R. E. (2001). Social identity in adolescence. *Journal of Adolescence,* 24(5), 597-609.

Tarrant, M., North, A. C., and Hargreaves, D. J. (2004). Adolescents' intergroup attributions: A comparison of two social identities. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence,* 33(3), 177-185.

Tarrant, M., North, A. C., and Hargreaves, D. J. (2001). Social categorization, self-esteem, and the estimated musical preferences of male adolescents. *The Journal of Social Psychology, 141(5),* 565-581.

Urrietta, Jr., L. (2003). *Orchestrating the selves: Chicano and Chicana negotiations of identity, ideology, and activism in education.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

Van Maanen, J. (1988). *Tales of the field: On writing ethnography.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Van Manen, M. (1990). *Researching lived experience: Human science for an action sensitive pedagogy.* London, Ontario, Canada: State University of New York Press.

Wehmeyer, M. L. (2006). The impact of disability on adolescent identity. In

  Sadowski, M. (Ed.), *Adolescents at school: Perspectives on youth, identity,*

  and education (pp. 127-139). Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.

Wood, G. H. (1992). *Schools that work: America's most innovative public education*

  programs. New York: Penguin Books.

Wortham, S. (2006). *Learning identity: The joint emergence of social identification*

  and academic learning. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Zhukov, K. (2006). Gender issues in instrumental music teaching in Australian

  conservatoriums. *Research Studies in Music Education,* 26(1), 22-36.