Challenges of Access to Post-Secondary Music Education Programs for People of Color

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Abstract

Access to music teacher education programs in U.S. higher education is a growing concern among music educators, scholars, and critical theorists. A variety of factors can play a role in who gains access to a particular institution and program, including but not limited to (a) socioeconomic status, (b) test scores, (c) race, (d) gender, and (e) cultural expectations (i.e., "accepted" music styles). Although each of these issues is important and often related to the others, the issue of race is markedly significant in view of a field that is predominantly white and in a society where racism still plays a role in power and privilege. Using critical race theory (CRT) as a theoretical framework, this paper describes some of the challenges People of Color face in gaining access to predominantly white institutions (PWIs), and to music teacher education programs in particular. In so doing, I also examine the sources of these challenges, concluding with some potential solutions for leaders in higher education to consider.

Access to music teacher education programs in U.S. higher education is a growing concern among music educators, scholars, and critical theorists (Bowman, 2007; Bradley, 2007; Clements, 2009; Koza, 2009). As Clements (2009) notes, "The issue of access has been recognized as central to the successful recruitment of minority students to college music programs" (p. 55). A variety of factors can play a role in who gains access to a particular institution and program, including but not limited to (a) socioeconomic status, (b) test scores, (c) race, (d) gender, and (e) cultural expectations (i.e., "accepted" music styles) (Koza, 2009). Although all of these issues are important and often related to the others, the issue of race is markedly significant in view of a field that is predominantly white (Hewitt & Thompson, 2006; McIntyre & Byrd, 1996) and in a society where racism still plays a role in power and privilege (Chesler, Lewis, Crowfoot, 2005). As Delgado (2001) states, "Racism is a means by which society allocates privilege and status" (p. 17).

In a survey of music teacher educators in higher education (N = 959) in the U.S. and Canada, Hewitt and Thompson (2006) discovered that the vast majority (94.0%) are White. Similarly, the vast majority of PK-12 public school teachers in the United States and Canada are from White, middle-class backgrounds (McIntyre & Byrd, 1996). The 2000 U.S. Census reported 75% of the population identifying as White. It is common knowledge that projections for the future see the populations of People of Color as increasing. Citing the National Center for Educational Statistics, Hewitt and Thompson (2006) point out that the projections of the U.S. population aged 0-24 in 2020 will be 53% White, 15% Black, 23% Hispanic, 4.5% Asian/Pacific Islander, and 5% other. Questions arise concerning these demographic shifts and their impact on general and music

education. How will future music educators in primary, secondary, and collegiate settings be prepared to teach an increasingly diverse populace?

One solution has been to implement diversity and multicultural curricular training in teacher education programs (Standley, 2000). An important first step, such a solution addresses curriculum and teaching strategies in order to develop a better understanding for working with students from diverse cultures and ethnicities. However, this solution solely utilizes the current pre-service teacher population without focusing on attracting more racial and ethnic diversity in teacher education. Teachers of Color can "serve as academic leaders, cultural translators, and role models for students of all ethnic and racial backgrounds" (Jackson, Bolden, & Fenwick, 2001, p. 12). Additionally, Teachers of Color are likely to know and understand the feelings of racism and injustice, and therefore, are valuable assets for teaching understanding and awareness of the social dynamics of race in order to create a more just society (Kohli, 2009).

Hamann and Walker (1993) report that several researchers have demonstrated the influence of role models on minorities' academic performance, particularly African-Americans. In their research, they discovered that in order to be successful, African-Americans need role models of their own race and sex as well as role models not of their own race and sex. The students they surveyed in Cleveland schools (N = 811) reported having fewer African-American music teachers when compared to non-music teachers. In view of the importance of role models from the same culture, these findings support the need for more African-American music teachers.

In spite of this expressed need, the issue of access to higher education for People of Color continues to be an issue in the United States (Yosso, Parker, Solórzano, & Lynn,

2004). In order to address this issue, a critical analysis of access with regard to race is necessary. Considering music education, it is important to note Lamb's (2010) assertion that "music education has been slow to engage in music as a social justice web...antiracism, feminism, and LGBT rights are not in the music education vocabulary in the same way that they are in the general education vocabulary" (p. 33). Perhaps it is time to do so. Without critical analysis of this issue and prudent action on the part of leaders in higher education, the admittance of more People of Color to higher education and music teacher programs will not be realized.

In this paper, I wish to answer the following questions: (a) What are the challenges People of Color face in gaining access to predominantly white institutions (PWIs), specifically music teacher education programs?; (b) What are some reasons for these challenges?; and (c) What are some possible solutions for leaders in higher education to consider? In view of the specific nature of racial identity in higher education and the marginalization of People of Color in society, I will use critical race theory (CRT), a branch of critical theory, as a framework to explore these challenges and their sources.

Critical Race Theory

Although there are multiple definitions for CRT, critical race theorists Yosso, Parker, Solórzano, and Lynn (2004) point out five fundamental elements: (a) "Intercentricity of race and racism with other forms of subordination," (b) "challenge to dominant ideology," (c) "commitment to social justice," (d) "centrality of experiential knowledge," and (e) a "transdisciplinary perspective" (pp. 3-4). The "intercentricity of race" focuses on how race is a fundamental construct in U.S. society and recognizes the

subordination of social groups based on race, class, gender, and sexual orientation. The "challenge to dominant ideology" is the challenge to White privilege and, in this case, the university policies that are said to be objective, colorblind, race neutral, and provide equal opportunity. The "commitment to social justice" recognizes civil rights gains in education and continues to seek the elimination of racism, sexism, and poverty while empowering People of Color and other subordinated groups. "Centrality of experiential knowledge" recognizes and validates the experiences of People of Color in order to understand, learn, and teach about racial insubordination. The "transdisciplinary perspective" provides the analysis of race in all periods, historical and contemporary, and across all disciplines. Ultimately, CRT seeks to understand society and change it by transforming the intersections of race, racism, and power (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). For the purpose of this paper, I wish to focus on "challenge to dominant ideology" and the "commitment to social justice" found in CRT.

Access to Higher Education for People of Color

Many of the issues surrounding access to music teacher education are the same issues found in general access to higher education. This section will address these common issues. People of Color face a number of challenges when it comes to gaining access to higher education. As a number of researchers have pointed out (Astin & Oseguera, 2004; Jacobowitz, DeLorenzo, & Adirim, 2000; Koza, 2009; Torres, Santos, Peck, & Cortes, 2004; Yosso et al., 2004; Zwick, 2007), disparities in standardized test scores, grade point average, school curriculum, educational experience, and socio-economic status between Students of Color and White students have played a significant

role in who gains access. As Astin & Oseguera (2004) state, "…The principal obstacle to access to highly ranked institutions among poor and underrepresented students is the system of selective admissions which favors students who perform well on standardized admissions tests and who have high grade point averages (GPAs) from secondary school" (p. 323). Complicating matters, recent changes limiting or eradicating affirmative action policies have taken away the only "race-based" criterion for admission (Yosso et al., 2004). Admission policies now claim to reflect objective, colorblind, and race neutral standards. Yosso et al. (2004) state, "Indeed, the color-blind rationale advocated by the forces primed against affirmative action silences the history of racism in the United States and dismisses the contemporary experiences of people of color" (p. 13). In other words, such action mutes the third tenet of CRT, the "centrality of experiential knowledge," by silencing the narratives of People of Color. It also promotes the false assumption that all students apply to schools from a level-playing field (Yosso et al., 2004). That is, any qualified student has a chance to be admitted to a given university, yet the qualification standard is based on White, middle class norms that are systematically applied to all people.

Consider the use of standardized test scores in admissions decisions. The use of the SAT and ACT in admissions decisions has been a topic of serious debate in recent years. Both achievement tests attempt to measure a student's aptitude or potential for success in college. Statistical research has demonstrated that these tests do significantly correlate with a student's success in college (Zwick, 2007); yet, research has also indicated that students, particularly Students of Color, out-perform their standardized test scores in college (Hoover, 2007). Thus, questions arise regarding their importance in admissions

decisions in view of socioeconomic status and test preparation, test score disparities (Zwick, 2007), and even the tests' narrow scope of assessment (i.e., linguistic and mathematical competency) in considering theories of multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1983).

Reasons attributed to disparities in test scores also relate to and explain the other challenges Students of Color face in gaining access to higher education (i.e., grade point average, educational background, and socioeconomic status). Many People of Color reside in urban areas where many students attend underserved and underperforming schools. These schools lack important resources such as highly qualified teachers, a dynamic curriculum containing honor and advanced placement courses, elective courses such as music, helpful and effective guidance counselors, adequate familial support, and knowledge of the expectations about attending college (Hoover, 2007). Additionally, many of these students come from low socioeconomic backgrounds and do not have the financial resources to take SAT preparation courses like many wealthier, predominantly White students in neighboring suburban districts. It would follow that the much more limited academic preparation of many Students of Color in urban settings could result in lower test scores and grade point averages (Hoover, 2007; Torres et al., 2004).

Some proponents of the colorblind policy focus on the racial disparities in SAT scores and grade point averages between Students of Color and Whites/Asians, suggesting an intellectual superiority of the latter groups (Yosso et al., 2004). Yet, one must consider construct validity in making such claims. Construct validity is the extent to which an instrument (e.g., the SAT) measures what is known or has been studied. Due to the inequality in the education program between urban and suburban schools, construct

validity of standardized tests is called into question (Rubin, 2008). Is it fair to use the

same test, based on a particular normative standard, on populations with vastly different

educational experiences? Is the SAT more a test of educational opportunity rather than

intellectual ability? Although this topic can yield serious debate, a critical dialogue is

necessary in view of the number of talented musicians who may have great potential as

teachers who are simply rejected from college due to a low test score. Zwick (2007) thus

concludes:

> …Because ethnic and socioeconomic groups vary widely in average test performance at
> present, heavy reliance on tests in admissions (without the counterbalancing effects of
> affirmative action) is currently incompatible with the goal of increasing the
> representation of people of color or poor people [in higher education]. (p. 442)

Accounting for the inequities in academic preparation and to remedy past and

current discrimination against People of Color, many predominantly White academic

institutions formulated affirmative action policies in their admissions process (Yosso et.

al, 2004). Yet, over the past two decades, a series of legal challenges (*Bakke vs. University

of California, Grutter vs. Bollinger*) have severely limited the use of race in admissions

decisions, while many states have eliminated its use altogether. Admissions decisions are

now largely color-blind, race-neutral, meritocratic, and assume a level-playing field for all

applicants (Yosso et al., 2004). From the CRT perspective, this movement is a step

backwards in two respects: (a) it reverses positive momentum and gains in access to

higher education for People of Color since the Civil Rights era, and (b) the affirmative

action policy implementation and its subsequent diminishment and/or removal from

admission and hiring practices has been controlled by the predominantly White majority

or those in power. "With its macro and micro, interpersonal and institutional, and overt

and subtle forms, racism is about institutional power, and communities of color in the

United States have never possessed this form of power" (Yosso et al., 2004, p. 7). Without

the emancipatory aim of affirmative action in providing access to higher education for

Students of Color, this population continues to be marginalized.

The conservative forces opposed to affirmative action and thereby promoting

color-blind admissions policies are, in fact, ignoring race, a fundamental social construct

in our society. In doing so, they are sweeping long-standing social tensions and identities

under the rug and denying the first tenet of CRT, the intercentricity of race and racism.

According to Omi and Winant (2005), the social construction of race is neither ideological

nor objective, but a concept that has greatly influenced ways of thinking and acting, and

will continue to do so "despite its lack of intrinsic or scientific merit (in the biological

sense)" (p. 6). Thus, acknowledging race in the United States is necessary, otherwise

resulting in a person's loss of identity. "To be raceless is akin to being genderless" (Omi

& Winant, 2005, p. 6). In order to improve social relations and discourse, society needs to

be more inclusive, which means talking about race (Bradley, 2007). By doing so, people

learn to "identify patterns of projection, exploitation, persecution and discrimination that

have had enormous effects on various populations" (Gustafson, 2009, p. xiv). By not

talking about race, society simply maintains the status quo. In this case, the status quo is

accepting and agreeing with the admission polices currently in place, which are based on

White, middle class norms and tend to exclude People of Color from admission to PWIs.

Access to Music Teacher Education

In the field of music education, the issues of racism, social justice, and access are

emerging as areas of concern among those who seek to challenge the status quo (Bowman,

2007; Bradley, 2007; Clements, 2009; Koza, 2009). Koza (2009) writes, "Race has rarely been mentioned in past discussions of undergraduate school music; this silence needs to come to an end" (p. 92). In an increasingly pluralistic society, there is a need for music teachers to teach in a variety of cultural styles and musical traditions in order to connect with various cultural groups. This requires recognition of music as a socio-cultural activity, rather than merely one that is aesthetic and contemplative. As Bowman (2007) notes, we need to view music "as actions and events that are always and intimately and constitutively connected to the lives and identities of people. Our musical exclusions, then, are always also exclusions of people" (p. 118).

In a field dominated by White teachers (Hewitt & Thompson, 2006), one solution to education in a culturally pluralistic society has been to provide diversity training and multicultural music courses (Standley, 2000) in teacher education programs. As important as this may be in educating Whites, the group in the societal center, a more sensible solution is to increase the number of teachers from a variety of cultures by increasing access to teacher education for People of Color. Not only will students in PK-12 schools benefit from a diverse faculty, a common view among liberal supporters of diversity state that PWIs will benefit from the perspectives, views, and various experiences of Students of Color on their campuses (Yosso et. al, 2004).

Supporting the latter claim, Luo and Jamieson-Drake (2009) assessed the educational benefits of a diverse student population in higher education. The authors analyzed alumni survey data according to the following questions: a) To what extent does increasing student diversity influence students' interaction across racial lines and their questioning of beliefs and values during the course of their undergraduate studies?; (b) To

what extent does interracial interaction benefit students in their skill development and career achievements in comparison to other potential factors?; and (c) What factors are likely to promote interaction across racial lines? (Luo & Jamieson-Drake, 2009, p. 69). They surveyed alumni (N = 6,049) from four private, highly selective universities from years 1985, 1995, and 2000. The percentages of non-white students in each cohort were: 1985 – 15%, 1995 – 28%, and 2000 – 32%.

The findings suggest that students who had substantial interaction across racial groups reported significant levels of development in the following areas: (a) developing an awareness of social problems; (b) relating well to people of different races, nations, or religions; (c) acquiring new skills and knowledge independently; (d) formulating creative or original ideas or solutions; (e) understanding the role of science and technology in society; (f) using computers; and (g) gaining in-depth knowledge of a field (Luo & Jamieson-Drake, 2009, p. 78). Among two cohorts, interaction led to increased appreciation for the arts and the identification of moral and ethical issues. Luo and Jamieson-Drake recommend more faculty interaction with undergraduates; institutional support for interracial interaction; institutional organization of living and social spaces to encourage interaction; institutional adoption of inclusion, including Greek system; and reevaluation of support for diversity initiatives.

From the CRT perspective, increasing the diversity of a campus community for the benefit of the majority population continues to state the value of such an arrangement from the dominant group's perspective. As such, the role of racial diversity on college campuses can be seen as a matter of advancing the goals of the dominant group thereby promoting a covert form of hegemony. As Yosso et al. (2004) state:

> The unquestioned marjoritarian story within this rationale is that students of color are
> admitted so that they can help White students become more racially tolerant, liven up
> class dialogue, and prepare White students for getting a job in a multicultural, global
> economy. How this scenario enriches the education of students of color remains unclear.
> (p. 8)

With this statement, the authors are not being critical of diversity itself, but rather the rationale driving the diversity issue in higher education. Diversifying college campuses in this form targets individuals rather than structures in society that promote power and privilege. A more egalitarian approach would be to welcome diversity on account of the simple desire to educate a diverse populace in accordance with democratic principles. CRT would intensify this approach by recognizing the unjust practices of the past that have led to institutionalized racism and would begin addressing oppression through validation of narrative and storytelling by those in the margin. The ideal result would be an act of social justice, namely the emancipation and empowerment of marginalized groups.

The connection to music education occurs when diverse groups of people are able to share their various styles and genres of music in order to promote socio-cultural values, ideas, and experiences. Music is a powerful form of expression that is capable of bringing people together from all walks of life. Beyond instituting multicultural music courses, a diverse student body would be able to interact, as Luo and Jamieson-Drake (2009) suggested, and promote a greater form of understanding for music from other cultures. Lamb (2010) writes, "By emphasizing the interaction and the meanings of these interactions to the individuals, groups, social structures, and institutions, we gain much richer and deeper knowledge that subsequently demonstrates music as a meaningful and

relevant educational endeavor" (p. 25). As future music educators, these students would not only be prepared to teach various styles of music, they would also be accustomed to working with people from diverse cultures in a variety of contexts. However, such an exchange of experiences cannot occur without the presence of diversity in music teacher education programs.

Students of Color aspiring to become music teachers face access challenges to general higher education as well as challenges unique to the music admission process. Those challenges include the audition, music style preference and experience, as well as curriculum. One of the most heavily weighted admission criteria in music is the audition. This is the opportunity for students to demonstrate their performance abilities in order to determine if she or he is musically qualified for admission. The competition for admission to music schools in the United States is extremely high resulting in the rejection of many competent student musicians due to space limitations. For Students of Color, the stakes are even higher in view of the aforementioned challenges and the importance placed on the audition as an additional, yet alternative form of assessment. Students who have tremendous musical ability, but low standardized test scores, rely heavily on their performance audition as the criterion that may help them gain admittance. Yet, in many cases, academic institutions must admit students based on their academic abilities prior to offering them an audition. Many Students of Color with the musical ability and potential for teaching are denied access due to this procedure.

If Students of Color are given the opportunity to audition, the requirements and assumptions surrounding the audition process may also play a factor in limiting access. Specifically, music schools in the United States focus primarily on the study of Euro-

American forms of music (Bowman, 2007). Since few schools offer the study of popular

styles of music, a number of excellent musicians are denied access to music programs.

They do not fit the mold of what is expected by music schools when they may have

incredible potential as music teachers. As Bradley (2007) notes:

> Our music education curricula continue to validate and recognize particular (white)
> bodies, to give passing nods to a token few "others," and to invalidate many more
> through omission. The western musical canon predominates our curricula, while we
> continue to argue whether popular music should have a place in what our students learn,
> and which styles of popular music are "appropriate." Musical practices from around the
> world remain marginalized as curricular add-ons, if acknowledged at all. (p. 134)

Students who audition at most music schools are expected to perform music from Euro-

American traditions. That means a Gospel singer from Detroit who has a beautiful voice

and the desire to teach music to children may be denied access because of his or her

limited knowledge of classical singing. Alternatively, consider a Mexican-American who

is a passionate, masterful Mariachi guitarist eager to learn other styles of music and

hoping to teach music at the college level. He, too, would be denied access because his

music is not recognized as a legitimate form of music to be studied and taught by most

music schools. Although such a discussion addresses limitations to access and can, in this

case, include people of any race or ethnicity, it also points to the narrow scope of music

education's curriculum within an increasingly diverse society. Koza (2009) states:

> Stringent and restrictive notions of what constitutes musical competence, together with
> narrow definitions of legitimate musical knowledge, shut out potential teachers from
> already underrepresented culture groups and are tying the hands of teacher educators at a
> time when greater diversity, both perspectival and corporeal, is needed in the music
> teaching pool. (p. 85)

From the CRT perspective, the curriculum and audition requirements of many

music schools are discriminatory by not allowing other styles of music and experience to

be recognized, let alone heard. Many music teachers pursue music careers because of their

childhood music experiences. Dismissing the "other" musical experiences outside the

mainstream Western musical canon taught in schools of aspiring music educators essentially silences, restricts, and marginalizes their existence.

Many audition committees assume the student's experience with the "accepted" style of music. In many cases, one must have experience playing in school and community music ensembles as well as experience studying privately with a qualified music teacher in order to gain access to an audition. Students of Color from urban areas, who may or may not have a music program in their school, typically do not have the financial resources for private lessons and are therefore seriously disadvantaged. Koza (2009) writes: "Because the affluence gap has a racial pattern, this access conundrum has racial implications, too. Under these circumstances, the current admissions process becomes a racially discriminatory practice that exacerbates persistent race-equity problems" (p. 87).

Clements (2009) also notes that many music programs in urban areas have been eliminated. Quoting Funes (1991), he writes: "Chief among the real ugly [reasons for few minority students pursuing music education] is the pervasive racism that still plagues our society….If part of our student pool is going to be drawn from an ever-increasing percentage of minority students, and there are fewer and fewer music programs in minority schools, how are we going to attract these students into our programs?" (Clements, 2009, p. 32). People of Color undoubtedly struggle to gain access to music education at all levels of elementary, secondary, and post-secondary education due to the reduction of music programs in minority schools. Those who do gain access to higher education often have the necessary resources in their schools and family to gain the necessary experience to apply and audition successfully into a music teacher education program at a PWI.

In view of these disparities and general audition expectations, Bowman (2007) and others are critical of the admissions policies found in most music schools. "Admissions criteria…and a very narrow definition of music education…assure that social justice remains a marginal consideration" (Bowman, 2007, p. 126). Those who discount the social justice discourse in music education as secondary or unworthy of consideration are essentially complicit in promoting privilege and power for those in the societal center. Maintaining the status quo by ignoring issues of social justice and equity in music education continues the marginalization of certain racial and ethnic groups that are growing in size as projected by demographics. Alternatively, addressing social justice issues and promoting inclusion of diverse cultures and viewpoints will not only be more equitable within the profession, it will improve understanding of different cultures.

Recognizing the need for more diversity in the field, Mitchell Robinson, Associate Professor of Music Education and former Academic Editor of the *Music Educators Journal* said, "We need to do a better job of finding, recruiting, and mentoring more persons of color into our profession, and encouraging them to consider music education as a potential career choice" (Wilcox, 2009). A related aspect to the discussion on access involves the challenges of recruitment of Students of Color into teacher education programs. As previously noted, all students benefit from a diverse teacher population; however, Students of Color may benefit even more so (Hamann & Walker, 1993). In view of current and future demographic shifts, there will be greater need for Teachers of Color in our schools. Yet, there is currently a shortage of Teachers of Color. A brief exploration of recent history, specifically the history of African-Americans, can help illuminate the causes of this issue.

According to Torres, Santos, Peck, and Cortes (2004), prior to the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the majority of college-educated African-Americans were teachers. Following *Brown vs. Board of Education*, many African-American students were bussed to White schools, but African-American teachers were left behind. With the increased student populations in some schools, administrators hired primarily White teachers to meet demand while letting African-American teachers go. Schools in both the North and South did not hire African-American teachers in proportion to the growing African-American student population. Other factors, such as teacher testing and certification processes had an adverse impact on the population of African-American teachers. As a result, the population of African-American teachers decreased significantly. From the CRT perspective, an overt form of racism (i.e. segregation) was eradicated, but a covert form still existed. This covert form of racism is a fundamental reason for these events and our society continues to experience the aftermath of this decimation of the African-American teaching force.

As previously noted, many Students of Color attend urban schools. Urban and rural schools struggle with hiring and retaining qualified teachers because teaching in an urban setting is incredibly challenging due to high drop-out rates, high discipline problems, a lack of resources, and less teacher control of the curriculum. The lack of cultural and support groups for minority pre-service and entry-year teachers discourages many from continuing. Increased teaching standards and more challenging achievement tests are limiting many from becoming teachers (Torres et al., 2004); although these tests assess content knowledge, they do not assess teaching effectiveness. Finally, Students of Color are also less interested in pursuing teaching careers today because of the lucrative

opportunities in business and other fields (Torres et al., 2004).

This analysis suggests a cycle leading to a severe pipeline issue for People of Color in education that will continue without prudent action and attention to a host of issues, including access to higher education. This final section explores potential solutions to the access challenges and offers suggestions to encourage continued discussion of this topic.

It is important to consider existing research on Students of Color in higher education music programs. In one of the few studies on the subject, Wilson (1990) studied access and retention of African-American music students in higher education. Her study surveyed 22 music administrators in music units (i.e., department/division/ school/conservatory) of selected colleges and universities by means of a survey questionnaire used "to determine the degree of access, admissions, persistence and achievement, support services and non-academic predictors" in the surveyed institutions (Wilson, 1990, p. 60). Results suggested that less than half of the schools surveyed have admission policies that consider cultural differences of African-Americans based on the interview, letters of recommendation, class rank, and GPA. In other words, they did not adhere to a colorblind policy. Additionally, few institutions exercised flexibility in considering standardized test scores, music auditions, and music theory examinations. Beyond admission procedures, however, Wilson found that active involvement and visibility of African-American music faculty was effective for African-American students' access and enrollment as well as in-state recruiting efforts. This finding raises a question of how this can be accomplished with so few in the field. Through her analysis, she recommended that in order to increase the number of African-Americans in higher

education music programs, more flexible admission criteria should be used to "encourage, motivate, attract and ensure access" (Wilson, 1990, p. 114).

It is clear from examining the inequitable standards of colorblind admissions' policies and standardized test scores that we need to re-visit admissions policies in higher education. One consideration, documented by Zwick (2007), was the focus on different criteria at some small liberal arts schools, such as letters of reference, interview, college essay, school grades, and extra-curricular activities. By not focusing on test scores, these schools have been successful in promoting a diverse student body without adversely affecting the overall academic quality or reputation of the school. According to Jacobwitz, DeLorenzo, and Adirim (2000), Montclair State University's music education program goes "beyond traditional admissions criteria to include dispositions towards issues of equity, diversity, and social justice" (p. 4). In re-orienting their admissions process, they asked the following:

> Is using one set of standards for all students fair or do these standards arbitrarily advantage members of one group over another? What steps can we take to shape our teacher education population so that it reflects the diversity of the student population in the public schools as well as provides a diversity of voices in our teacher education classes?" (Jacobwitz, DeLorenzo, & Adirim, 2000, p. 4)

The authors recognize that a one-size-fits-all approach to admissions is not equitable and it is necessary to be conscientious about the admissions process through alternative approaches. This does not imply lowering of standards, but rather aligning the admissions standards to reflect the mission of the program, which includes a diverse population committed to equity and social justice (Jacobowitz et al., 2000).

Another possibility for increasing access is to broaden the acceptable forms of music expertise within the music education program. If a Gospel singer, a Mariachi musician, or a rock guitarist demonstrates excellent musicianship and a willingness to

learn Euro-American styles of music (i.e., band, orchestra, and choral music), there is no reason to exclude them from an education program. They would be diversifying the program through their musical backgrounds. The focus of the admissions process into education programs thus becomes one that values diversity in multiple ways. It also focuses more on character, disposition, and the potential to teach. As Kohli (2009) noted, People of Color are assets to education because of their experiences and ability to share a unique worldview with their students in order to create a socially just and equitable society.

In order to meet the demand for Teachers of Color in view of changing demographics, we must increase access to higher education for People of Color. This paper has primarily considered the policies and barriers in predominantly white institutions that favor colorblind admission policies, standardized test scores, and a narrow concept of audition and admission procedures for music education students. Using the perspective of critical race theory, I connected many problems with the current admissions policies to covert racism and systemic promotion of power and privilege. By challenging assumptions, viewing policies through multiple lenses, and critically analyzing the issues surrounding access, we can create equitable opportunities for People of Color in accessing higher education. The long-term result will be an increase in diversity in teacher education programs leading to a more diverse teaching force that will reflect the racial demography of the United States.

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