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# Music Teachers As Role Models For Hispanic American Students

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**T**he racial make-up of the United States is undergoing dramatic changes.

American classrooms mirror this cultural mix. By the year 2000 it is estimated that 42 percent of all public school students will be a part of a minority (ACE, 1988). As the cultural mix changes, so will the role and expectations of the teachers in the schools.

One aspect of a teacher's position is that of role model. Research on role model identification has shown it is a powerful agent that influences an individual's social, academic, and personal behavior. For example, Dubin (1992) trained teachers to be role models for students in urban settings and reported improved student achievement and enhanced educational environments. Similar relation-

ships between student achievement and positive role models have been identified by Amuleru-Marshall (1990), Farrell (1990), Franklin (1987), Galbraith (1988), Graham (1987), Hewlett (1981), Mohr (1980), Spicer (1989), Vittenson (1965), and Waters (1989).

There are many characteristics of a successful role model. Two of the most stable characteristics involve the gender and race of both the individual observing the model and the model. Stake (1978) found that same gender teacher/models were more effective at influencing a student to enter a career in science than opposite gender teachers. Likewise, students who had same gender teacher models exhibited higher levels of confidence, motivations, and career orientation (Stake, 1985; Gilbert, 1983).

Race, too, plays an important role in the teacher/student role model relationship. Nonwhite students reported that teacher role models were more important in their lives than did their white counterparts (Vittenson, 1965). This importance can be seen in the finding that Black students' grade point averages increased significantly when exposed to Black role models. Evans (1992) concluded that recruiting minorities into teaching careers would be beneficial because of the large role model effect found for African American students.

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## The Hispanic population in America is the fastest growing sub-group of individuals in the country.

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While it is known that minority students place more emphasis upon role models than do their white counterparts and that same-race, same-gender role models can be more successful at effecting positive social and academic changes, little is known about the extent to which music teachers act as role models for minorities. Research into music teachers as a role models for minority students has been confined to the work of Hamann and Walker. In their first study, they surveyed 115 African American high school students in four states, who indicated that they planned to continue their education in college. They found that 7.8 percent of the African American students surveyed identified a music teacher as a role model (Walker and Hamann, 1993). In their second study, Hamann and Walker (1993) surveyed 811 African American students as to whether they identified a music teacher as role model. In their study, 36 percent of the students identified a music teacher as a role model. Of these, 34 percent of the music teacher role-models were of the subjects' same race, 8 percent of the same sex, over 55 percent were both of the subjects' race and sex, while slightly less than 3 percent were neither of the subjects' race nor sex. Thus, close to 90 percent of the role models identified in music were of the same race as the students (African American). Further, students who identified a music teacher as a role model indicated that they were significantly more likely to: 1) choose music as a career, 2) take music classes in college, or 3) perform in a collegiate ensemble. Clearly, a musical role model is a powerful influence on a student's life.

Less is known about the role of Hispanic American music teachers as role models. While over 9 percent of the student population is Hispanic, less than 2 percent of the teachers are of Hispanic origin (AACTE, 1987). The Hispanic population in America is the fastest growing sub-group of individuals

in the country. Between the years of 1987 and 2000, it is estimated that the Hispanic population will expand by 45.9 percent. This rate of expansion is double that expected for African Americans and over six times the rate estimated for White Americans. (ACE, 1988)

Even less is known about the extent to which music teachers act as role models for Hispanic students. While it seems clear from the studies reviewed that Black music teachers act as role models for Black students and that they are a strong influence on career choice, one can not assume transference from one minority culture to another.

The purpose of this study was to determine what proportion of Hispanic American students, studying music in high school settings, if any, identified ensemble directors and classroom music teachers or other teachers as their role models and to determine whether or not the role models were of the subjects' race and/or sex. Furthermore, the study was designed to determine whether any significant differences existed between subjects who had or those who did not have a music teacher role model as to whether they would consider: (a) making music their major, (b) playing or singing in an ensemble, and/or (c) taking some music classes when they attended college. To limit the parameters of the study to a workable size, this study was directed only toward Hispanic American students who had indicated they were considering attending college.

### Method

Subjects for this study were 722 Hispanic American students involved in high school music ensembles and classes from the states of Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas. Schools were chosen by the willingness of the classroom music teacher (ensemble directors or music appreciation/theory teachers) to participate in the study in response to letters of invitation. The letters did not reveal the intent of the study but asked only that the mu-

Of the 722 subjects, 274 Hispanic American students or 37.95 percent of the sample population indicated they had a music teacher as a role model.

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sic teachers administer a questionnaire to their students. (See Appendix for a copy of the questionnaire.) The sample included 341 male and 381 female subjects. There were 197 freshman, 248 sophomores, 157 juniors, and 120 seniors. The average length of participation in their school ensembles was as follows: (a) band: 5 1/2 years, (b) choir: 2 years, (c) orchestra: 2 1/2 years, and (d) music appreciation: 5 years.

All students involved in their school music classes were administered a questionnaire based on the questionnaire used by Hamann and Walker (1993). Only students who indicated they planned to attend college and identified themselves as Hispanic American were used for analyses. All music teachers were instructed to direct their students to complete the questionnaire and return it in the self-addressed envelope to the researchers. The music teachers assured their students that their responses would not be seen by anyone but the researchers. Students did not identify themselves in any way on the questionnaire except to indicate their race and gender.

In addition to demographic information students were directed to respond to the following items on the questionnaire:

1. Whether they had a teacher (classroom music teacher) role model in music, and if so, to identify the race and gender of the model and the music subject area he/she taught (band, choir, orchestra, music appreciation or music theory).

2. Whether they had any additional teacher role models (outside of music), and if they did, whether the teacher role models were: (a) of their race but not of their gender, (b) of their gender but not of their race, (c) not of their gender or race, or (d) of their race and of their gender.

3. Whether they were thinking about attending a college/university after graduation and if they would consider: (a) making music their major, (b) playing or singing in an en-

semble, and/or (c) taking some music classes. Descriptive statistics and chi-square tests were used to analyze the data to answer the research questions.

## Results

Frequency distributions were computed to determine what proportion of high school Hispanic American students identified classroom music teachers as their role models. Of the 722 subjects, 274 Hispanic American students or 37.95 percent of the sample population indicated they had a music teacher as a role model. Of these 274 subjects, 58 students (21 percent of the subjects with a music teacher role model) stated the music teacher role model was of their race, but not of the same gender; 77 individuals (28 percent) reported that the model was the same gender, but not of the same race; 72 (26 percent) indicated the model was of the same race and gender; and 67 (24 percent) said their music teacher role model was neither of the same race or gender. Two-hundred and sixteen of the classroom music teacher role models were band directors (79 percent), 30 were choir directors (11 percent), 11 were orchestra directors (4 percent), and 17 were music appreciation teachers (6 percent).

Additional frequency distributions were computed to determine what proportion of high school Hispanic American students identified teachers outside of classroom music teachers as their role models. Of the 722 subjects, 351 Hispanic American students or 48.61 percent of the sample population indicated they had a teacher as a role model other than a classroom music teacher. Of these 351 subjects, 49 students (14 percent of the subjects with a teacher role model other than an classroom music teacher) stated the teacher role model was of their race, 117 individuals (33 percent) reported that the model was the same gender, 111 (32 percent) indicated the model was of the same

**Table 1: Chi-Square Analyses: Subjects' Identification of a Music Teacher Role Model by Subjects' Decision to Major in Music**

Chi-Square(3, N = 722) = 25.02		p = .0001	
Major in Music	Role Model in Music (Yes)	Role Model in Music (No)	Totals
Yes	111	103	214
Column%	40.51%	22.99%	---
Row%	51.87%	48.13%	100%
Total%	15.37%	14.27%	29.64%
No	163	345	508
Column%	59.49%	77.01%	---
Row%	32.09%	67.91%	100%
Total%	22.58%	47.78%	70.36%
Col. Total	274	448	722
Total%	37.95%	62.05%	100%

Teacher role models have been shown to be powerful agents who can influence individuals' social, academic, and personal behavior.

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race and gender, and 74 (21 percent) said their teacher role model was neither of the same race or gender. The following teacher role models were identified: (a) English ( $n = 86$ ; 24.5 percent), (b) math ( $n = 67$ ; 19 percent), (c) history/social studies ( $n = 61$ ; 17 percent), (d) sciences ( $n = 54$ ; 15 percent), (e) physical education ( $n = 14$ ; 4 percent), (f) theater/drama/arts ( $n = 13$ ; 4 percent), (g) elementary classroom ( $n = 30$ ; 8.5 percent), (h) foreign language ( $n = 9$ ; 2.5 percent), (i) private music ( $n = 15$ ; 4 percent), and (j) physics ( $n = 2$ ; .57 percent),

Three chi-square analyses were computed to determine whether any significant differences existed between subjects who had or those who did not have a music teacher role model as to whether they would consider: (a) making music their major, (b) playing or singing in an ensemble, and/or (c) taking some music classes when they attended college. A significant ( $p < .05$ ) difference was found between subjects who indicated they had a music teacher role model and would major in music in college as compared to subjects who did not have a music teacher role model (see Table 1). Of the 274 subjects who had a music teacher role model, 111 or nearly 41 percent of the subjects said they would consider music as a major in college, while 103 or approximately 23 percent of the 448 students with no music teacher role model indicated they would choose music as a major. Of the 111 subjects who said they would consider music as a major in college, 27 (24.32 percent) subjects said the music teacher role model was of their race, 37 (33.33 percent) said the model was of their gender, 27 (24.32 percent) indicated the model was of both their race and gender, and 20 (18.01 percent) reported the role model was neither of their race or gender.

A significant ( $p \leq .05$ ) difference was also found between subjects who had a classroom music teacher role model and would

play or sing in a college music ensemble as compared to subjects who did not have a music teacher role model (see Table 2). Of the 274 subjects who had a music role model, 236 or over 86 percent of the subjects said they would consider playing or singing in a college music ensemble, while 328 or approximately 73 percent of the 448 students with no music role model said they would consider participating in a college music ensemble. Of the 236 subjects who said they would participate in a college music ensemble, 44 (18.64 percent) subjects had a music teacher role model of their race, 62 (26.27 percent) had a music role model of their gender, 66 (27.97 percent) had a model of both their race and gender, and 64 (27.12 percent) had a music teacher role model who was neither of their race or gender.

No significant difference was found between subjects who had a classroom music teacher role model and those who did not when looking at interest in participating in college music classes. Of the 212 subjects who had a music teacher role model, over 77 percent said they would consider participating in college music classes while 354 or approximately 79 percent of the 448 students with no music role model said they would consider participating in college music classes.

### Discussion and Conclusions

Role models are individuals who are admired by others. They are individuals whom others wish to emulate with their actions and lives. Role models can inspire and motivate individuals through their deeds and actions. In an ever changing society, teachers can become the guides that help shape student thought and action. Teacher role models can be the "model" to which students look for guidance and help. Teacher role models have been shown to be powerful agents who can influence individuals' social, academic, and personal behavior. Because of the im-

**Table 2: Chi-Square Analyses: Subjects' Identification of a Music Teacher Role Model by Subjects' Decision to Perform in a College Music Ensemble**

Chi-Square(1, N = 722) = 16.59

p = .0001

Play in College Music Ensemble	Role Model in Music (Yes)	Role Model in Music (No)	Totals
Yes	236	328	564
Column%	86.13%	73.21%	---
Row%	41.84%	58.16%	100%
Total%	32.697%	45.43%	78.12%
No	38	120	158
Column%	13.87%	26.79%	---
Row%	24.05%	75.95%	100%
Total%	5.26%	16.62%	21.88%
Col. Total	274	448	722
Total%	37.95%	62.05%	100%



Music teacher role models appear to influence students' decision to consider majors in music at the college level or to participate in college music ensembles and become the guides that help shape student thought and action.

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mense impact teacher role models can have on the lives of students, this study was designed to determine the extent to which Hispanic American students perceived teachers in general, and more specifically, classroom music teachers, as role models.

From data analysis, it was found that Hispanic American students, participating in high school music programs, proportionally, identified classroom music teachers as role models more than teachers in any other single discipline. Nearly 38 percent of the students in the sample had music teachers as role models, while the highest percentage of teacher role models outside of music in any single discipline, that being English, was 24.5 percent. Results from this study tend to support those of Hamann and Walker (1993), who found that 36 percent of the African American students in their sample identified a music teacher as a role model.

When looking at the race or gender of the teacher role models, it was found that nearly 76 percent of the teacher role models in music were either of the students' race, gender, or both. A similar overall proportion of teacher role models by race and gender was found in the other discipline areas (English, history, etc.). Hamann and Walker (1993) reported that nearly 90 percent of African American students identified their music teacher role models as being the same race, the same gender, or the same race and gender.

Stake (1978) reported that same gender teacher role models were more effective at influencing students to enter a particular career. In this study, of the 111 students who said they had a music teacher role model and were considering majoring in music at the college level, 64 subjects (57.65 percent) said their music teacher role model was of the same gender or of the same race and gender. When looking at the race of the music teacher role models of the 111 students with

a music teacher role model who were considering a college music major, 54 subjects (48.64 percent) said the role model was of the same race or of the same race and gender. Similarly, of the 236 students who had a music role model and said they would participate in an college music ensemble, 128 or 54.24 percent said their music teacher role model was of the same gender and/or gender and race, and 110 subjects or 46.61 percent said their music teacher role model was of the same race and/or gender and race.

Results of this study tend to support those of Stake (1978) and Vittenson (1965), who reported that same gender and same race teacher role models appear to play important roles in the lives of students. In two of the three analyses a significantly higher proportion of subjects with a music teacher role-model said they would consider making music their major or performing in a college music ensemble. High school music teacher role models do seem to positively influence students' decisions to major in music at the college level or to participate in college music ensembles or classes.

Hamann and Walker (1993) reported that while African American students preferred role models of their own race and sex, they also selected teachers not of their race or sex as role models. Such were the findings in this sample of Hispanic American students. While a diverse and concerned teaching force is needed in the schools, results from this study point to an additional need among the teaching force: a teaching force that allows students to choose role-models of their own race and sex. As the racial make-up of the United States continues its dramatic change, so too does change need to occur among our teaching force. The need for diverse teaching forces in our school systems that represent all individuals and disciplines equally must keep pace with the ever changing make up of the student body.



While caution must be used when interpreting data from a descriptive study such as this one, and while additional studies are needed to support results in this area of research, it does appear that music teachers are important role models among Hispanic American students participating in high school music programs. Music teacher role models appear to influence students' decisions to consider majors in music at the college level or to participate in college music ensembles and become the guides that help shape student thought and action.

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APPENDIX

Demographic/Information Sheet

Your Sex: ☐ Male ☐ Female

Your Race: ☐ Black/African American  
☐ Hispanic American  
☐ Asian/Asian American  
☐ Native American  
☐ White

Your Grade in School: ☐ 9th  
☐ 10th  
☐ 11th  
☐ 12th

1. In which of these groups and/or classes have you been in or are in at the present? (Check all that apply and indicate how long you have been in the group or class.)

☐ Band - How long? \_\_\_\_\_ (years)  
☐ Choir - How long? \_\_\_\_\_ (years)  
☐ Orchestra - How long? \_\_\_\_\_ (years)  
☐ Music Appreciation - How long? \_\_\_\_\_ (years)

2. Do you consider, or have you ever considered, any of your music teachers to be one of your role models (someone you want to be like)? Are they of your race or sex?: (Check all that apply.)

☐ Yes, I have a music teacher who is my role model. This person is/was:

☐ My band teacher-who is: ☐ Of my race and/or ☐ Of my sex

☐ My choir teacher-who is: ☐ Of my race and/or ☐ Of my sex

☐ My orchestra teacher-who is: ☐ Of my race and/or  
☐ Of my sex

☐ My music appreciation or music theory teacher-who is:  
☐ Of my race and/or ☐ Of my sex

☐ No, I have no music teacher role model

### Appendix - Demographic/Information Sheet (Con't)

3. Do you have or have you had any other teacher role models outside of music? If so, please list the teacher's subject area and indicate if the teacher is of your race and/or sex.

Use a separate response item for each teacher role model outside of music, if any.

Yes, I have a teacher role model who teaches \_\_\_\_\_ and is:

\_\_\_ Of my race and/or \_\_\_ Of my sex

Yes, I have another teacher role model who teaches \_\_\_\_\_ and is:

\_\_\_ Of my race and/or \_\_\_ Of my sex

Yes, I have yet another teacher role model who teaches \_\_\_\_\_ and is:

\_\_\_ Of my race and/or \_\_\_ Of my sex

4. Are you thinking about attending a College or University after graduation? (If you answer yes to this question please answer questions 5 and 6. If you answer no to this question, you are finished. Thank you. Please wait to turn in your questionnaire.)

\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No

5. Given that you are going to a college or university, would you be interested in making music your major area of study?

\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No

6. Given that you are going to a college or university, regardless of your major, would you be interested in:

a. taking some college/university music classes?

\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No

b. playing or singing in a college/university ensemble?

\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No

Thank You