“Off the Radar”: Reflections of Lesbian and Gay Undergraduates on their Experiences within High School Music Programs

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ABSTRACT

This study was intended to give voice to student musicians regarding the intersections of the rich culture of the high school music classroom and their own developing identity. The purpose of this study is to learn about the experiences of undergraduate lesbian and gay students who participated within their high school music programs. Within a collective instrumental case study design (Creswell, 1998), four undergraduate students from Midwestern universities who self-identified as lesbian or gay were interviewed and asked to reflect upon their experiences within high school music classes. Specifically, we sought to explore dimensions of lesbian and gay identity development (D’Augell, 1994) within the music classroom as related to 1) The domain of musical experience as an instrumentalist or vocalist, both private and shared; 2) The nonmusical, social, and institutional structures of the music classroom; 3) The influence of music educators and other role models; and 4) The experiences of being openly gay or closeted within the context of the music class. Results of cross-case coding show that participants sought out musical experiences as a way of fitting in with their peers, navigated the intersection of multiple identities such as sexuality, gender, race, religion, ethnicity, musicianship, and popular culture, found music to provide a sense of community for themselves as lesbian and gay teens, and found the opportunity for musical expression to be powerful.
“Off the Radar”: Reflections of Lesbian and Gay Undergraduates on their Experiences within High School Music Programs

Within the heteronormative domain of public school music education, the experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered youth have been largely ignored. Due to the work of such groups as The Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network (GLSEN), The Human Rights Campaign (HRC), and leading researchers within the fields of art, physical, and general education (Crisp & Knezek, 2010; Grossman, et al., 2009; Pelton-Sweet & Sherry, 2008), there has been an increase in the amount of literature that documents the experiences of queer youth within schools. However, within the field of music, where often the stereotype is often that “all musicians...are faggots” (Brett, 2006, pp. 17-18), and especially within music education, there is little to no scholarly discourse or study.

Troiden’s (1989) Model of Homosexual Identity posed that such an identity is “emergent: never fully determined in a fixed or absolute sense, but always subject to modification and further change,” (p. 68). Adolescence, in particular, represents a time of internal and external struggle alongside intense negotiation of this identity, as interplay emerges between sexual identity and social support within the high school experience (Mufioz-Plaza, Quinn, & Rounds, 2002). High school youth are coping with multiple influences that may also affect the development of their sexual identity, such as social, cultural, economical, racial, and religious. As one example, Blackburn and McCready (2009) suggest that “to work effectively with queer youth in urban communities, one has to embrace the complexities of their multiple identities and develop the capacity to understand the intersections among them” (p. 228). Due to the complexity of identity development within the culture of schools, research recommends studying student experiences and providing support beyond students’ high school career (Mufioz-Plaza, et al., 2002) as well as developing supportive LGBT policies and continuing education for all school personnel and surrounding community members (Grossman, et al., 2009).

Within the field of music education, no research exists that examines the intersections between lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgendered adolescent development and student experiences within the music classroom. As the stories that students tell about their own experiences can provide powerful insight into the institutional, curricular, and cultural boundaries that can either squelch or empower
these young people (Talburt, 2004), this study was designed to give voice to student musicians regarding the intersections of the rich culture of the high school music classroom and their own developing identity.

The purpose of this study was to learn about the experiences of undergraduate lesbian and gay students who participated within their high school music programs. Specifically, we sought to explore dimensions of lesbian and gay identity development (D'Augell, 1994) within the music classroom as related to 1) The domain of musical experience as an instrumentalist or vocalist, both private and shared; 2) The nonmusical, social, and institutional structures of the music classroom; 3) The influence of music educators and other role models; and 4) The experiences of being openly gay or closeted within the context of the music class.

METHODOLOGY

Because the experiences of four participants were used instrumentally to illustrate the issue of gay identity development and the high school music classroom, this study most resembles a collective instrumental case study (Creswell, 1998).

Sampling/Recruitment

To recruit these four participants, we sent e-mails describing the study to student LGBT organizations on our campus, spoke to undergraduate music education classes, sent out e-mails as a follow-up to those classes, and sent e-mails to any undergraduate music majors at our own and other universities with whom we had a personal connection. In addition, we informed local teachers of the study and asked them to make recommendations of university students they know that might be interested in participating. It is important to note that finding participants was a challenge. Eventually, one participant who had a previous working relationship with one of the researchers volunteered for the study. This participant was not in any of the previous groups or classes previously targeted. This participant recruited a friend to also participate in the study. The third participate had a previous working relationship with one researcher and the fourth participate was a student of a friend of one of the researchers. The recruitment period lasted for two months. As a result of these efforts, we were able to schedule interviews with four undergraduate students who self-identified as gay and lesbian.
In our recruiting efforts, we did not specifically recruit students who identified as transgendered as we felt that the intersection of gender and sexuality represented within the transgendered experience deserved separate examination. None of the four participants that we eventually recruited self-identified at the time of their interviews as being bisexual, although it is important to note that all but one participant first came out either to themselves or others as bisexual.

Role of the Researchers

The researchers served as observers (Glesne, 2006), interacting with potential participants only during recruitment, interviews, and follow-up interactions. To maintain interview consistency, the same researcher conducted all interviews with the four participants. Both researchers have a background in public school music teaching and thus brought with them a wealth of experiences within this context that enriched the lens through which they viewed their participants’ experiences.

Data Collection

Each of the participants was asked to participate in a semi-structured interview, where some predesigned interview questions were developed according to our research questions, and other questions emerged in accordance with the progression of the interview. Interviews took anywhere from one hour to one and a half hours of time. All interviews were aurally recorded for purposes of analysis.

Data Analysis

Following the collection of data within the interviews, both researchers independently examined both the interviews and field notes and made note of emergent within-case and cross-case codes and themes. Following this independent coding, the researchers came together to compare and compile these initial codes and to identify cross-case codes and themes that emerged from the joint analysis, taking into account disconfirming evidence. Identification of codes and themes was primarily emergent in nature, although guided also by the framework of the interview and research questions.
Establishing Trustworthiness

To establish trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), this study utilized several techniques to ensure verification of data (Creswell, 1998). Triangulation was accomplished through the use of several forms of data, including interviews, field notes, and the multiple perspectives and separate initial data analysis of both researchers. Rich, thick description of the participants, experiences, and contexts was developed so that the reader can assess to what extent the information is transferable. Finally, we conducted member checks (Merriam, 2009) by presenting our participants with preliminary analysis and providing opportunities for them to remove anything with which they felt uncomfortable and make any additions that would better inform our study.

Introducing the Participants

Participants for the study included four undergraduate students (two men and two women) from two large, Midwestern public universities. See Figure 1 for a chart describing each of the participants at the time of the data collection. At the time of the study, three of the four participants were majoring in music (performance and/or music education) and one was majoring in women’s studies.

Chloe

Chloe is a bright, quick-witted, white female violinist who self-identifies as lesbian or queer. At the time of the study, Chloe was a college sophomore and in the process of coming out about her sexuality: she was out to close friends and her sister, but not her parents for fear of adding stress to their current lives.

During high school, Chloe was very passionate and serious about her music making and future performance career. However, Chloe felt that many people, including her school orchestra director, did not fully understand her enthusiasm for music making within her small, rural community. As a way of “finding her people,” Chloe sought out-of-school musical activities including honors orchestras, summer music camps and festivals, independent chamber ensembles, and performance competitions. She

1 All names of students, teachers, and schools are pseudonyms.
stated, “And I always felt like I was around my own people, you know, when I was at summer programs, I was like ‘ahhh, I'm around people who can understand me!’” (interview, April 16, 2010). For Chloe, music served as a tool for self-expression and for connecting to other people in ways that words could not:

> When you play music with people, it’s like this communication...it’s a collaboration that’s a way to get to know a person on a level that you don’t necessarily get to know somebody when you're just a student with them in a class...I feel that when you play music with somebody, I don’t know, it’s completely different from talking to them...when you’re playing with somebody, it’s like you’re sharing something about yourself. (interview, April 16, 2010)

Chloe described coming to terms with her sexuality as part of an on-going self-identity process: she focused on her musical identity in high school, strove to become more secure with her queerness during freshman and sophomore year of college, and would like to become more secure with her sexuality before dealing with her religious identity and what the church says about homosexuals.

**Jeremiah**

Jeremiah is a poised and articulate man. He described himself as a being “kind of a nerdy kid,” a preppy dresser, as well as a lighter-skinned African American who “happens to like guys.” Jeremiah stressed that his sexual orientation was only one small part of his identity and also saw himself as a Black man, a Christian, and a musician. During high school, Jeremiah struggled with coming to terms with his sexuality and stated, “People were telling me I was gay before I even had any concept of what that really meant...I was never teased for it, necessarily” (interview, April 27, 2010). Jeremiah discussed how difficult it was reconciling the threefold expectations of who he "should be": the person who he felt he really was, the person who he thought he should be, and the person who was expected to fit within the communities of his urban school, the African American community, and his religious home life.

After the end of his freshman year of college, Jeremiah came to terms with his sexual orientation and came out to his mother as bisexual as a means of gently breaking the news, though he identified as gay. Based on recommendations from his family pastor, he waited to tell his father until he was sure of his identity as a gay man: “Because once you hear [you labeling yourself as gay], then it’s like, it’s official” (interview, April 27, 2010). Jeremiah was two weeks away from graduating with a violin
performance degree at the time of the interview. At that time, he seemed quite comfortable with his identity and considered himself out as a gay man: “They know I’m gay just simply because I don’t actually come out and say ‘I’m gay.’ I just kind of, as if I were a straight person, you know if I might see a cute guy walking down the street I might saying ‘oh, he’s cute’ or something like that, which kind of makes it obvious” (interview, April 27, 2010).

Jeremiah spent much of the interview discussing the variety of communities of which he felt a part. He started teaching himself how to play violin in seventh grade after being inspired by the film “Music of the Heart.” Jeremiah stated that violin became a part of him and that playing music brought him:

Joy, separation from the world...initially I started doing it [playing violin] for me...it’s my own personal thing; it makes me happy...I like that physically that I am able to make these gorgeous sounds. So I think that initially, I found some kind of comfort, maybe, in playing the violin.
(interview, April 27, 2010)

Dani

Dani is a thoughtful, easy-going, white female who, at the time of the interview, was finishing her third year in college. She described herself as a leader and told of various campus groups that she directs. While in high school, Dani belonged to several academic and musical groups including marching band, concert band, and pep band. Within her politically conservative, suburban hometown, Dani fit in well until she was outed at school. Dani shared the feelings she held about school on the day after she was outed by a classmate:

And I went to school the next day and people were staring at me. At that point I’d known that it had gotten around school...The day before that, at the same time in the morning, I walked through that school and got smiles and “hellos,” and I was highly respected. I mean, I was part of everything – I was a leader in everything, and everyone knew who I was, and so, it was never a problem. And that next day I walked in and I was no longer that person...If people looked at me, it was out of anger. Most people wouldn’t look me in the eye. I didn’t get “hellos,” I got shouts of “fag” . . . I was just harassed. (interview, May 7, 2010)

For Dani, the music wing was a safe place in school: a place to escape harassment. Band also provided Dani with a tolerant, if not accepting, community, and a place where being gay did not matter to the group: “In the end, it’s the group’s effort that matters and I think that feeling of unity is what gives [band] that safety...You do your job and you respect people and you’ve created the opportunity for the band to be great” (interview, May 7, 2010).
Tom

Tom is a friendly, white male cellist who was quick to laugh. From the beginning, he was eager to participate in this study because music played such an important part in his identifying himself as a gay man. Tom told the story of his personal coming out experience at the end of a school orchestra rehearsal:

I was in an orchestra rehearsal, after school...we were playing Tchaikovsky and some kids were making these jokes in the back of the room. They were talking about Tchaikovsky was like, I think they called him a “fag” or something. And just hearing that made me very upset. I hadn’t talked to anyone about [being gay], um, but I didn’t like hearing that and I got noticeably upset. And my orchestra teacher said something to me, he goes: “Are you all right?” and I said “No, I’m like pretty upset.” “Well, let’s chat after rehearsal.” [After rehearsal] he was like “do you have anything that you want to talk about?” I knew what he was getting at and I was just like “well you know, not really.” Well, then he just asked me “Are you Gay?” I hadn’t told myself the answer to that question, let alone someone else asking me straight up. And I looked at him and I said “Yeah, yeah I am.” Was he over the line in asking me that? As a teacher, was that appropriate? Because, I’m glad he did it... If he wouldn’t of done that, I could still be floundering. (interview, May 18, 2010)

Tom felt a sense of relief about coming to terms with his sexuality. It was some time later before he came out to his parents and before people at school started identifying him as gay. Though he had a sense of belonging to the music community, his closest friends were not in music. Tom, like Chloe, participated in several different orchestras outside of school. Music, for Tom, was an area where he could express himself and excel.

Cross-Case Themes

Four broad themes emerged from data analysis: “Fitting In,” “Developing Multiple Identities,” “Music as Community,” and “Music as Expression.” These themes were not intended to correspond directly to the initial researcher-developed research questions, but instead to provide a useful means for organizing our findings. Figure 2 displays the four cross-case themes and their corresponding codes.

Fitting In
All of our participants referred to feeling safe or accepted within their high school music classes. Most of the participants also sought out extracurricular musical activities with other “serious” musicians in order to find a community to which they could belong. Chloe explains: “And I always felt like I was around my own people, you know, when I was at summer programs, I was like "ahhh", I'm around people who can understand me!” (interview, April 16, 2010). This is supported by Grossman et al. (2009) and Payne’s (2007) finding that queer teens often participate in extra-curricular activities (e.g. music, sports, art) as a means to supplement missing queer and queer-friendly communities.

Music also provided our participants with a hiding place or a safe place within school. For example, her peers referred to Chloe as “the music girl”. Jeremiah’s musical peers looked up to him for his musicality, supporting him as a leader. After being publicallyouted, Dani literally hid out in the band room. She found ways to spend most unmonitored periods (e.g. before school, lunch, passing hour) in the music wing by offering assistance to her band director. For Tom, who felt that orchestra members already earned the title of being “different” by virtue of their membership in this musical organization, his sexual differences from the broader school population were masked by these greater musical differences.

While seeking out accepting communities and safe spaces, queer youth often look for clues from their school colleagues and teachers (Ellis & High, 2004; Mufioz-Plaza, et al., 2002). Dani found an ally in her Spanish teacher due to the teacher’s reaction to the school participation in “Day of Silence”:

It was “Day of Silence” and I handed her the card and she knew exactly what the card was and she always read that off whenever I walked in there doing “Day of Silence” and then she did her own bit about how it's important to respect people and I found it impressive. She’s Catholic, she’s conservative, but she understands what the importance of respect is. It certainly wasn’t the worst town on the planet, I mean, God knows there are a lot worse places and I had to deal with a lot of crap, but it had its own little champions in it that made it possible for students like myself to make it through without completely losing it, who we knew that we could be safe around, not specifically to talk about queer stuff, it’s just we could be in that room and nothing would happen to us. (interview, May 7, 2010)

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2 "Day of Silence" is a nationally organized event during which many LGBT students take a vow of silence to bring attention to anti-LGBT name-calling, bullying and harassment in their schools.
It could be that the music classroom provides a space at school where LGBT students feel as if they “fit in.” As stated by Payne (2007): “Finding a group lends protection to developing adolescents as they try out different aspects of the personalities and explore their own potential” (p. 70).

**Developing Multiple Identities**

Rather than being a specific aspect of their identity that they could separate and examine apart from the rest of their life, participants described their development as a gay or lesbian as being intertwined with multiple other identities that they held, such as their race, religion, gender, musicianship, and popular culture. At times, participants discussed their growing identity as a gay teenager as being congruent with other aspects of their lives. At other times, they found great conflict between their multiple identities. Jeremiah, for instance, found a complicated relationship between his identity as an African-American and a gay man, which he attributed to the less accepting nature of the African American culture towards gays, which, in his words, is probably “the worst there is, aside from maybe the Middle East” (interview, April 27, 2010). This also intertwined with his identity as a male, and proved to establish incongruities of identity with which he had to struggle:

I feel like you know I don’t even fit into what society says a Black man should be. Even though, I am well aware, you know, my mother raised me very well to know, that, you know, I am not what other people say I am, necessarily, you know, I don’t have to be in hip hop and all of that to be a true Black man. But you know, that’s what society kind of says. So, I think with being gay, I feel a little more sense of belonging, especially because, you know, as I said African Americans aren’t the most accepting group. So that even further pushes me into the idea of kind of identifying more with being gay than necessarily being Black, well that’s wrong, let me reword that, being more comfortable with being gay than necessarily knowing how to deal with being Black. (interview, April 27, 2010)

Tom also explores the connection between his identity as a musician, and more specifically an orchestral musician within the social context of the high school, and his identity as a gay student. As someone struggling with his own sexual identity, Tom was consistently mocked as a young man due to his short stature, and was called names such as “sissy” or “fag.” Although Tom maintained close relationships with a group of friends outside of the music classroom, he still felt ostracized from the
broader school community due to his sexuality. This was further compounded by the ostracizing nature of his identity as a string player:

Did I ever relate that to me being gay, though, at the time? I’m not sure. And I always felt like, quote-unquote "different," in that sense, musically and then socially, so they kind of did mirror each other. At the same time though, we were all orchestra musicians, so we were all quote-unquote different from the norm, so we were all, so in a sense that kind of contradicted what was normal, because usually I wasn’t like part of this social network of ... high school, and then in the orchestra I was, I felt definitely both...I definitely felt more comfortable there than in any other, um maybe not any other class, but most classes, definitely like the hallway, or any social event like a football game or anything like that, definitely. (interview, May 18, 2010)

This aligns with Blackburn and McCready’s (2009) findings regarding their work with queer youth in urban settings, who negotiated multiple identities in terms of social, cultural, economic, religious, and racial culture: “To work effectively with queer youth in urban communities, one has to embrace the complexities of their multiple identities and develop the capacity to understand the intersections among them” (p. 228). Sexual identity, then, is but one aspect of our participants’ overall identity, and becomes entwined in important ways with other aspects of themselves within the context of both personal identity development, which the participants see as a process, and their broader social identity within the context of the high school.

Music as Expression

All of our participants were quite elegant when talking about the capacity for expression that music provides them. They each agreed that music allowed them to express themselves and to communicate with other musicians, which they found to be quite important to their development as LGBT youth. As stated by Jeremiah:

The thing is I don’t really think I could ever stop doing it, even if I did some other career I would always be playing because it kind of allows me to express myself in a way that I think words really can't. You know, music has no, in terms of orchestra music in general, it has no words, and so it’s kind of, you make of it what you will. It’s also the idea of being a part of it, being able to create that beauty that I think kind of compels me to keep doing it. (interview, April 27, 2010)

Oftentimes, participants compared music making to speaking and expressed that, in their minds, language is more concrete and definitive, often inaccurately so.
Participants also revealed that by making music, they share a part of themselves. Chloe, in particular, discussed how one could feel vulnerable when performing music:

And like when you’re putting yourself into this, it’s a very vulnerable place to be when you’re performing for people, when you’re playing, it’s like you’re putting your person, even though it’s not you that people are supposed to be judging, like, they are in some degree, even though it’s just your music, it’s very scary. There’s a universal acknowledgment of that, everybody knows how scary that is and they’re with you and they’re performing with you and so like you’re vulnerable with them already in that way, and, I don’t know, at least for me that’s probably part of why it feels more accepting, because you have that. (interview, April 16, 2010)

As each of our participants negotiated their sexual identity, it could be that this opportunity for self-expression provided a much-needed outlet. Pelton-Sweet & Sherry (2008) describe similar impressions with regard to students exploring art therapy in their article “Coming Out Through Art: A Review of Art Therapy with LGBT clients.” The intersections between musical expression and LGBT identity development hold much potential for further exploration.

Music as Community:

A strong theme emerged from participant interviews concerning music being a community. This theme related not to the musical experience, which is represented in the “Music as Expression” theme, but to the social and cultural environment of the music class and other venues for music making and their relationship to gay culture. Participants consistently made remarks such as that the musical culture is more accepting of gay people, that more gay people are involved in music making, and that music is a more liberal environment than others. Chloe, for example, discusses the musical community of her high school music class, and offers some potential reasons why musicians might be more accepting of others:

Chloe: It’s absolutely a more accepting, it was a more accepting environment, I feel like, than like…

Interviewer: Of everything, or just sexual orientation, or…?

Chloe: Of sexual orientation in particular, but like, also, I feel like it’s just more compassionate. I don’t really necessarily know why, but it’s a community where people know each other and are...umm... I guess it’s like when you play music with people, it’s like this communication and it’s a collaboration that’s a way to get to know a person, too, on a level that you don’t usually get to know someone when you’re just a student with them in class. (interview, April 16, 2010)
Participants also referred to the music classroom as being a “safe place” for them as gay teenagers, and discussed the strong connection between music culture and their own individual comfort with others as a gay teen. Tom, for example, who came out first to his high school music teacher, feels that the musical community of his high school was an extremely powerful force in his development:

I don’t know how I would have dealt with things if it wasn’t for my musical experience, and I definitely attribute that mostly to my teacher, to Mr. Smith, because he was the first person to ever ask me that. And I often think about, you know, if it wasn’t for that community, for that group of people that we had, you know, would I be where I am today? Because I’m so comfortable with myself now, I’m so happy, that I don’t know if I would be in the same place. (interview, May 18, 2010)

For all of our participants, the domain of socialized musical experiences, whether within the high school music classroom, in honor groups, or summer music camps, served as an opportunity to feel safe, to be supported, and to be part of a larger culture that they felt was more accepting of them as individuals. Such a finding is important, especially when considered in light of Grossman et al.’s (2009) conclusion that LGBT students find a lack of community in their schools, leading them to feel on their own and on the “outside” of the school social community. Though our study participants also mention struggling with negotiating the cultural and social dimensions of their schools, it appears that the music classroom became a place of refuge for them during a time of identity development and negotiation.

Curricular Implications

From this study and related literature, we suggest several curricular suggestions for high schools, music programs, and music teachers in supporting their queer youth. Although our study focused on the experiences of gay and lesbian students, we feel that these recommendations should be expanded to include all members of the queer community. First, all staff members need to be aware of, and actively address, any harassment or slurs towards queer youth. However, many adults may not know how to address such matters. Therefore, educational literature and training need to be made available for all faculty as well as parents within the community (Ellis & High, 2004; Grossman, et al., 2009; Horowitz & Hansen, 2008). This recommendation can also serve to provide a safe space for queer teachers so that they feel comfortable in being out and being a role model to LGBT youth. It is important
to note that research has shown that positive changes in school environment do not occur without policy change and support from administrators (Grossman, et al., 2009).

For those who work with queer youth, it is important to remember that sexual identity development is not a linear process and that student’ identities may go through several transformations (Troiden, 1989). Music instructors need to be cognizant of the roles their classrooms and ensembles may play in the development of LGBT youth. From the participants in this study, we have learned that musical spaces and experiences can serve as a place to hide or escape from school harassment, as an outlet for self-expression, as a supportive and nurturing community, and as a place to positively connect with other students. It is also important for educators to recognize their roles in their queer students’ lives: to support and acknowledge queer students, composers, and musicians; to openly stand up for students when they face discrimination or harassment; and to just be available, or as Dani mentioned, to be a “champion”:

...[The school district] had its own little champions in it that made it possible for students like myself to make it through without completely losing it, who we knew that we could be safe around, not specifically to talk about queer stuff, it’s just we could be in that room and nothing would happen to us. (interview, May 7, 2010)

**Recommendations for Future Research**

The results of this study suggest several areas where future research may be most valuable. First, increased attention needs to be paid to the intersection between music and sexuality. As many of our participants found their musical voice to be important to the expression of both aesthetic and social development, future research should examine how the special domain of musical expression intersects with identity development, especially with regard to sexuality. Secondly, beyond the immediate nature of the musical experience, research needs to continue to examine the musical and social domain of the music classroom, since our study suggests that gay and lesbian students seem to find a natural home and safe haven within the bounds of the music classroom. Accordingly, the role of music teacher with regard to gay identity development needs to be further considered, as several of our participants described their relationship with their music teacher as powerful, though not all explicitly discussed their sexual identity with this important role model. Finally, this study examined the experiences of gay
and lesbian students. We feel it important that further research examines the intersections of school music classes and sexual identity development with bisexual and transgendered students as well, as their experiences might differ in important ways from those participants of our study.

Conclusion

This study allowed us insight into the experiences of gay and lesbian student musicians, and the role that music and participation in music class played in their lives during adolescence. Such a study leaves far more questions than it answers, but we feel that listening to the voices of Chloe, Jeremiah, Dani, and Tom helps in some way to bring them closer to being “on the radar” of our professional consciousness.

References


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<th>Current School (Large, Midwest, Public)</th>
<th>Chloe</th>
<th>Jeremiah</th>
<th>Dani</th>
<th>Tom</th>
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<td>Commitment to the ensemble/ Ensemble as community</td>
<td>Self-realization</td>
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Figure 1. Description of participant characteristics.
Figure 2. Cross-case coding framework.