The Pedagogical Value of Learning a Musical Work
in an Endangered Language: Ho-Chunk

by

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Abstract

This thesis discusses the rewards and challenges that come from incorporating a cross-cultural musical work featuring an endangered language into the music classroom. Background information is provided about the Ho-Chunk Nation, a Wisconsin First Nation with ancestral lands spanning a wide area of the state including part of Central Wisconsin. The endangered language, Ho-Chunk, was researched and incorporated into an original cross-cultural musical work that was taught to a middle school choral ensemble. Adsit describes the process of incorporating the Ho-Chunk language into a musical work, creating an original musical work in the Ho-Chunk language, and the process of teaching the work to students. Five student participants were interviewed in person using the narrative inquiry method about their experience of learning a musical work in Ho-Chunk. Findings of the research reveal the pedagogical value of learning a musical work in an endangered language and how that knowledge has implications for music educators, composers, music teacher educators, and the field of music education.

Keywords: music education, choral, Ho-Chunk, middle school, endangered language, narrative inquiry.
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I. Introduction

Being a vocal music educator is unique and important. Not only is a teacher able to help students learn the fundamentals of music through teaching basic music theory, ear training, and music literacy, but a choir director is also, able to add the element of spoken language along with the music being learned. The music of each culture is unique, and language is the life blood of culture. When students learn music along with the language, they get a first-hand experience of another culture. There are many languages in the world that have become dead languages, those with no more living native speakers. There are also many languages that are quickly becoming endangered or are already classified as endangered languages. The Ho-Chunk language is one of these endangered languages. The Ho-Chunk Nation is working constantly to keep their language alive. They have established a language division focused solely on helping Ho-Chunk tribe members learn and become proficient Ho-Chunk speakers. The Ho-Chunk have songs for all occasions, and language is an important part of those songs. The Ho-Chunk language is being taught to Ho-Chunk tribal members but it is not a language to which those who are not Ho-Chunk are commonly exposed.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this thesis is to examine what middle school choral students in Central Wisconsin, of non Ho-Chunk ancestry, experience through learning about the Ho-Chunk Nation and language through rehearsing and performing a cross-cultural musical work in Ho-Chunk.

The specific research question of the thesis is: What is the pedagogical value of learning a musical work in an endangered language? Other questions specific to the research are:
1. What are these students learning from the song cycle “The Earth Still Speaks”, an original musical work in the endangered Ho-Chunk language?

2. How is the song cycle developing these students’ musical skills as well as increasing their view of different cultures in their community and around the world?

3. How could this song cycle or similar projects help other music educators, composers, music teacher educators, and students from other schools and communities around the world?

**Importance of the Study**

The information will be of value to other music educators and music research scholars, because although research has been done with endangered languages and music, this specific study is unique. An original musical work has been created incorporating an endangered language and taught to non-Ho-Chunk students who successfully learned to sing 4-part (SATB) music of a four movement song cycle in the endangered Ho-Chunk language.

**Definition of Terms**

**Endangered language**: a language at risk of no longer being used due to speakers dying out or a shift to speaking other languages. Ho-Chunk was the endangered language researched in this project.

**Song Cycle**: a set of related songs that are to be performed together to create a single musical work. *The Earth Still Speaks* was the song cycle all participants rehearsed in this project.

**Movement**: an individual musical composition that could be performed by itself, but which is typically performed in succession as part of a larger musical work. *The Earth Still Speaks* has four movements.
Ho-Chunk: one of eleven federally recognized Wisconsin First Nations. The Ho-Chunk have their own history, culture, and language.

Empathy: the ability to understand and share feelings of another.

Ethnomusicologist: someone who studies music from other cultures, especially non-Western ones.

Multi/Cross Cultural Music: music from two or more diverse cultures that is performed in cooperation of as part of one musical experience.

Wisconsin Act 31: (often referred to as Act 31) refers to the requirement that all public school districts and pre-service education programs provide instruction on the history, culture, and tribal sovereignty of Wisconsin’s eleven federally-recognized First Nations and tribal communities.


The purpose of this project was to build continual understanding, community, and awareness: understanding between people that come from different backgrounds and parts of the world but now live in the same community, community through listening and making music together and sharing a common space in Central Wisconsin, the ancestral lands of the Ho-Chunk people, and awareness and acknowledgment that there is a long history to Central Wisconsin that started before European Settler Colonialism forced the Ho-Chunk and other indigenous people of Wisconsin and the United States onto reservations.

In Chapter One, background information was provided on the status of the endangered Ho-Chunk language. The purpose statement for this project was outlined and the thesis question being examined in this study was stated: What is the pedagogical value of learning a musical work in an endangered language? The importance of this study was stated and important terms
were listed with definitions related to the study. In Chapter Two, a review of related literature pertinent to this project will be presented.

**Chapter II. Literature Review**

In Chapter One, the background, purpose, and thesis statement of this project were outlined, as well as definitions for some important terms related to the study. In this chapter, Chapter Two, literature related to this study will be reviewed according to the following categories: multi/cross-cultural music making in the classroom, Native American music in the curriculum, and the Ho-Chunk. The first section on multi/cross-cultural music making in the classroom, will give a brief history of ethnomusicology, review literature in which music making in the classroom has crossed over cultural boundaries, and provide examples of how people making music together develops empathy and greater acceptance between people from different cultural backgrounds. The second section on Native American music in the curriculum, will discuss the differences between traditional and contemporary Native American music, the challenges and controversy surrounding the inclusion of Native American music in the curriculum, and how this has been done successfully. The third section on the Ho-Chunk, will give a brief history of the Ho-Chunk Nation, the challenges the Ho-Chunk and other Native American tribes have faced to keep their culture alive including their endangered language, and the importance of Wisconsin Act 31 (American Indian Studies in Wisconsin).

**Multi/cross-cultural music making in the classroom**

Each culture around the world has unique traditions, customs, and music. In the classroom, it is the job of the music educator to bring the world to their students by introducing different cultures through the music being learned. By learning about and performing music from different cultures, students begin to see how they fit into something greater than the individual
and begin to gain a broader world view. The role of ethnomusicologists in researching and sharing multi/cross-cultural music should not be underestimated. Ethnomusicology laid the foundation for and still makes great contributions to the study of multi/cross-cultural music.

Patricia Shehan Campbell (2000) discusses the work of John Blacking, a formative ethnomusicologist, and how his research in South Africa applies to integrating multicultural music into the music classroom. Campbell describes how Blacking felt that there was an innate ability for humans to make music that started from the early stages of development. He found this musical ability encompassed all people no matter which culture they were from. Campbell (2000) discusses how throughout his career, Blacking worked to bring multicultural music into the spotlight of music education through advocating performance.

Campbell (2003) also discusses how ethnomusicology is still a relatively new field only having been around for the past 150 years and outlines how it has developed as a discipline. Many of the first ethnomusicologists were trained anthropologists who were studying different cultures and focused their research on the music of those cultures. Campbell said, “Much of the early ethnomusicological fieldwork through the mid-twentieth century, when it was emanating from university departments of anthropology and folklore, was focused on musical cultures of Native American groups and tribal societies in Africa, with little attention to the high-art musical systems of Asia” (Campbell, 2003, p.19). Ethnomusicology today is an active and broad discipline inclusive of all cultures.

As the field of ethnomusicology continued to grow over time, music from different cultures was gaining more momentum being taught in the music classroom. Notated scores of musical examples were becoming available and held educational value, but now even more emphasis was being put on obtaining actual recordings of original artists performing songs
presented to students. Campbell (2003) notes, “More than ever before, attention has been given to the recordings that accompany the notated songs, such that musicians have been consulted in many cases and brought into the studio to be recorded singing and playing traditional instruments” (pp. 20-21). With the growth of ethnomusicology and the way it was increasingly incorporated into the music classroom, the way that many music teachers were being trained also went through a change. An increase in workshops, clinics, and visiting artists helped to share the music and how to teach it (Campbell, 2003).

These experiences are important, because as Francisco Luis Reyes (2018) discussed pre-service music training for most educators does not prepare them to feel comfortable teaching multicultural music. Most pre-service music training has traditionally centered around Western-European music which leaves out many forms of music, from different cultures that can be taught and learned in the classroom. Thus, pre-service music students may not feel as though the mastery of music from a different culture has a high enough value for them to teach it, because they were not trained to explore multicultural music or do not feel properly equipped to present it to their students. When music teachers come to the realization that there is great value in music from other cultures and that they are capable of learning and teaching it, as Reyes (2018) writes, “Multicultural music education can serve as an interdisciplinary approach to education that synthetizes language, historical, and social learning through music.” (p. 13).

One well-known and successful example of multi/cross-cultural music making is the Kathauwamixw music festival. An ongoing study was conducted over the course of thirty years in British Columbia with Tla’amin First Nation members working together cross-culturally with non-indigenous Music Educators that helped to create a positive environment where both populations were able to learn from one another. The annual Kathauwamixw music festival was
created to bring two cultures together. It was shown to have a positive effect on the community and affected positively how people from those two different populations interacted with one another. (Prest, 2019).

As in the Kathauwamixw music festival in British Columbia, making music brings people closer together and helps them develop empathy. When people work together for a common goal of making music, they gain insight and learn about one another. When they can make decisions together, they show empathy for each other. Students can learn empathy easier when they are in an environment where empathy is modeled and taught. Through the act of teaching and performing, music educator Lynda Laird (2015) explains, “We can help our students move beyond the notes on the page to a deeper understanding of the emotions and feelings evoked by music. And if we help them become more empathic, our students can experience a greater musical joy and satisfaction in their lives” (p.60). I have experienced this first-hand as a teacher and musician with my own performance ensembles, comprised of students from diverse backgrounds making music together, and showing empathy towards one another.

Showing empathy as a teacher is also connected to knowing your students’ musical interests and about their lives outside of the music classroom which can open the door for a more inclusive learning environment. Teachers may have students who come from very musical families with strong cultural musical ties. Learning more about my students has allowed for many opportunities to incorporate more multicultural music into the classroom while also being culturally responsive. “To be culturally responsive, it is essential that teachers see and know their students both as individuals and as members of extended social circles.” (Abril, 2013, p. 8). Each student has a unique story that their teacher should strive to learn in order to better help the individual student connect to the music classroom and provide the opportunity for other students
to learn as well. Cross-cultural music experiences are important in the classroom for all students because it fosters an environment of acceptance, inclusion, and understanding.

Native American music in the curriculum

Native American music has many differences from Western music. Most traditional Native American music is taught by rote or by ear. There is no notation used, so music typically has to be passed from one person to another. The language choices used in Native American music is deeply meaningful and spiritual. Contemporary Native American music has adopted and uses Western musical devices and is somewhat a cross-over of traditional Native American music and incorporates many different current music genres popular today. Many of the lyrics in Native American music speak about the effects of post-colonialism. Teaching Native American music in the classroom should not be done without taking into consideration the Native American perspective on post-colonialism, all of the hardships that have come from it, and being prepared to discuss it with the students. Burton and Dunbar-Hall (2002) wrote, “Two issues arise here: the topics of songs, and the languages used in lyrics. If expectations that the cultural perspectives of music are studied are to be met, the lyrics of songs automatically require awareness of economic, political, and sociological aspects of indigenous life in America.” (Burton, B., & Dunbar-Hall, P., 2002, p.61). It is good to note that “Native American” is not a language itself but that each individual Native American tribe has its own language, customs, and beliefs. There are currently 573 federally recognized tribes in the United States, each with their own language, customs, and beliefs. In the past there were even more tribes in what is now the United States, but many of these tribes have ceased to exist due to a combination of loss of land, language, enrollment, and/or federal status.
Even though Native American music can be broken into two main categories, traditional and contemporary, it is a constantly changing art form. Contemporary Native American artists combine traditional music, themes, and ideas to create music that is representative of two worlds, the Native American world and American Society. As Boyea (1999) states, “In the curriculum, use of more modern Indian music along with explanations of its origins and notice of Native American elements in theme, instrumentation, or style may provide avenues for study of more traditional selections, styles, purposes, and themes and of the cultural history and contexts which provide both contemporary and traditional Indian music’s significance” (p. 47).

Inclusion of Native American music in the music curriculum is important, although there is controversy about the best approach to take. The controversy lies within the understanding and respect that must be given to Native American music, which some Native Americans believe is not possible for someone who is non-native. Native American music is a revered spiritual entity that encompasses every aspect of life. It has elements of the earth and sky, daily life, and the spirit world. Native American music has healing powers and there is a song for every action an individual or group can take. For Native Americans, music is more than just about ‘the music.’ As Boyea (1999) stated, “For the Original Peoples of the Americas, music was of the earth and the sky, the body and the spirit, the permeating throb of time and being, of feeling and meaning-beyond-feeling, the link between the daily and the eternal, between the self and the community, between the human and the divine-as common as speaking, yet as sacred as the earth, as mysterious as the stars” (p. 107).

Many music teachers would like to include Native American music into their music classroom but may be unsure how to do it appropriately. If the teacher is not mindful to avoid cultural stereotypes, they may unknowingly be reinforcing untrue or stereotypical aspects of a
culture and do more harm than good. Not being mindful of the strong spiritual meaning of Native American music when teaching it could be viewed as disrespectful. Barry and Conlon (2003) write about a bringing Native American music in the form of a Powwow into the classroom and give some excellent guidelines for teaching Native American Music in a culturally appropriate manner:

“Don't propagate the Hollywood Indian stereotype. No tribe that we know of has a drumbeat with a strong, weak, weak, weak accent. Not all Native American groups lived in teepees, nor did they all wear fringed buckskin and eagle-feather war bonnets.

Don't be ethnocentric. Vocal sounds that do not have dictionary definitions are not nonsense syllables. They do have meaning. Similarly, the high sound of Northern Plains style powwow music sung by the men should not be called a falsetto. Many Native singers object to this term. Rather, Native singers refer to the use of a "high voice" in reference to Northern-style singing.

Don't use sacred or ceremonial music out of context. If you are unsure of the context, find another example. However, the solution is not to use the melody from a folk song from another culture or a contrived melody to sing about Native Americans. There is currently an abundance of genuine Native American melodies to choose from.

Do use the term "Native American" to designate the tribes living in the United States. Be aware of the extensive diversity of Native American tribes. There are over five hundred tribes in the United States, each with its own distinctive heritage. Not all tribes participate in powwows, although the powwow is now widespread across North America. Research individual tribal traditions, and encourage your students to look into their own heritage.
Do use the Internet for information. Although Internet articles are not always refereed like scholastic journals or books, many Native American tribes and artists have developed extensive Web sites that are a wealth of good information.

Do bring in Native American artists to speak about their work as your budget permits. Government agencies promote these programs and are often willing to provide co-funding.

Do use Native American music in your classroom. Songs and dances performed at powwows are generally safe territory. Basically if songs and dances are performed where the public is welcome, they are usually appropriate for classroom use.” (Barry, N. H., & Conlon, P., 2003, p.22).

When I incorporated Native American history, culture, and language into my teaching I made sure to have respect in the forefront of all learning. I wanted to have respect present in each aspect of the learning process, and make sure that the students also approached the learning process in a respectful manner. The information that was being taught to students needed to be factual and from trusted sources. This was done by doing my own research before teaching students and also incorporating information previously learned from my interactions with Allen Cloud, a Ho-Chunk Elder and culture bearer. The website wisconsinfirstnations.org has factual information about all Wisconsin First Nations including the Ho-Chunk. Throughout the teaching process communication was continued with cultural informants from the Ho-Chunk Nation to give updates on rehearsal progress in preparation for a future performance, discuss related learning and performance opportunities, and future possible collaborations.

Music teachers should work to include Native American music in the music classroom and should not exclude it due to fear of doing it improperly. To build connections with members of the local tribes in your area, reach out to your local government, university, or search the

**Ho-Chunk history, culture, and keeping an endangered language alive through education**

The Ho-Chunk Nation is one of eleven Federally Recognized Tribes in the state of Wisconsin. Before European Colonization, all land in Wisconsin was occupied by indigenous people. The Ho-Chunk Nation website states, “we have always been here and more than likely, we will always be here. Our history is not told in books but spans back beyond possibly three ice ages. The Ho-Chungra have traditional lands that go from Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri and Illinois.” (ho-chunknation.com). Most people know about the Ho-Chunk today because the Ho-Chunk nation operates gaming facilities in the State of Wisconsin. Money generated from the gaming facilities helps tribal members with income and is also used for Ho-Chunk government programs.

The Ho-Chunk nation has its own set of beliefs, cultural traditions, and language that has survived many attempts to render it obsolete. The Ho-Chunk historically had millions of acres of land that they occupied. Though the history of the Ho-Chunk nation is unique, their history bears many similarities to most other Native American peoples across the United States. With colonization, treaties were made where lands were restricted. Disease was contracted and spread from the newly arrived colonists that killed thousands of Ho-Chunk, and millions of indigenous people across the continent. Signed treaties were broken or amended to reduce land and change laws. Youth were sent off to Indian boarding schools, removed from their family unit and cultural roots, made to cut their hair, and were forbidden to speak their native language. When speaking with Allen Cloud (2019), who participated in this project and is a Ho-Chunk elder from the language division of the Ho-Chunk Nation, he reminisced about how at the boarding schools,
“we would sneak off into the woods so we could keep practicing Ho-Chunk and not forget it.”

Punishment of youth for speaking their native language was frequent and could be so severe as being starved for days or being physically beaten. The goal of the schools was the removal of Native American cultural identity to facilitate complete cultural assimilation to the dominant American culture, language, and society.

The Ho-Chunk language is sacred. Ho-Chunk translates to “People with the big voice” or “People of the sacred language.” Allen Cloud (2019) considers that, “The Ho-Chunk language is a gift from the creator.” There has been a resurgence in reviving the language in recent years as Ho-Chunk Elders who are the last native speakers of the Ho-Chunk language continue to pass away. Many Ho-Chunk youth know very little or none of the language that was spoken by their ancestors. At one time, there were thousands of Native Ho-Chunk speakers. With only around 200 Native Ho-Chunk speakers now living, the language is officially endangered (Stein, 2009).

Stein (2009) writes about Henning Garvin, a Ho-Chunk Elder who felt he was watching the language of his culture disappear in front of his eyes. Instead of allowing the language to be lost, Garvin chose to do something about it and created a program to help others, especially young children, learn the language. Elders who speak the language work with the youngest members of the Ho-Chunk nation in the hope that language will be revived. “One prophecy among Ho-Chunk elders holds that when their language is lost, the world itself will end” (Stein, 2009). The prophecy of the world ending does not necessarily mean the end of the earth literally, but for the Ho-Chunk people a very real end to their culture and way of life. That is why the success and continuation of the language is seen as vital to Ho-Chunk survival. Through working with a Ho-Chunk elder to create and teach students an original musical work written with lyrics in the Ho-Chunk language, the goal of this project is to help spread awareness and knowledge of the Ho-
Chunk language, culture, and history to middle school students in Central Wisconsin who have little or no knowledge of the Ho-Chunk Nation. It is important for these students to learn about the Ho-Chunk nation, because the land their public school is on, the land our next door neighbor University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point sits on, the land beneath the entire city of Stevens Point, along and all of its surrounding communities is all ancestral Ho-Chunk land.

Keeping a language alive requires education about that culture for people to gain an appreciation and understanding of why that language is important. Learning about Wisconsin First Nations is not only something that should be done but is a law. Wisconsin Act 31, American Indian Studies in Wisconsin, is the law that requires all public schools in Wisconsin to teach about Wisconsin First Nations. Information on the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction website [https://dpi.wi.gov/amind/state-statues](https://dpi.wi.gov/amind/state-statues) lists the statutes below:

“§115.28(17)(d), Wis Stats. General duties. The state superintendent shall:

(17) AMERICAN INDIAN LANGUAGE AND CULTURE EDUCATION.

(d) Develop a curriculum for grades 4 to 12 on the Chippewa Indians' treaty-based, off-reservation rights to hunt, fish and gather.

§118.01(2)(c)(7. and 8.), Wis Stats. Educational goals and expectations.

(2) EDUCATIONAL GOALS. . .each school board shall provide an instructional program designed to give pupils:

7. An appreciation and understanding of different value systems and cultures.

8. At all grade levels, an understanding of human relations, particularly with regard to American Indians, Black Americans and Hispanics.

§118.19(8), Wis Stats. Teacher certificates and licenses.

(8) The state superintendent may not grant to any person a license to teach unless the
person has received instruction in the study of minority group relations, including instruction in the history, culture and tribal sovereignty of the federally recognized American Indian tribes and bands located in this state.

§121.02, Wis Stats. School district standards.

(1) Except as provided in §118.40 (2r)(d), each school board shall:

(h) Provide adequate instructional materials, texts and library services which reflect the cultural diversity and pluralistic nature of American society.

(L) 4. Beginning September 1, 1991, as part of the social studies curriculum, include instruction in the history, culture and tribal sovereignty of the federally recognized American Indian tribes and bands located in this state at least twice in the elementary grades and at least once in the high school grades.”

I contacted the social studies teachers in my school building to inquire how they incorporate Act 31 into their curriculum as there are students from the Ho-Chunk Nation that attend our school. The expectation was to hear of a few ways they teach about Wisconsin First Nations to the students in their classes and was surprised and a little disheartened to hear that it is not being taught. One of the social studies teachers mentioned that it is only taught at the high school now. I can only imagine being a student with Ho-Chunk ancestry sitting in the classroom and learning about American or Wisconsin History and asking themselves, “Where is the history about my ancestors in Wisconsin and America, my history? My ancestors were here before European colonialism and are still here. Why are we not learning anything about my culture, language, and people?” Teachers should look to find ways to teach about Wisconsin First Nations, especially those who have students who represent those nations sitting in the classroom. Though it is required by law to learn about Act 31 during teacher training, once placed in a
teaching position, most teachers do not know how to do it or are afraid. Even though Act 31, American Indian Studies in Wisconsin is required by law, there are no checks or balances to make sure schools are actually teaching it.

In Chapter Two, a review of literature pertinent to the study was provided in the following categories: multi/cross-cultural music making in the classroom, Native American music in the curriculum, and the Ho-Chunk. Chapter Three, will detail the methodology of incorporating the endangered language: Ho-Chunk into a musical work, creating a musical work in the endangered Ho-Chunk language, and teaching the musical work to students.

III. Methodology of *The Earth Still Speaks*

Previously, in Chapter One, the thesis question was stated, *What is the pedagogical value of learning a musical work in an endangered language?*, along with other questions related to the study. Chapter Two, reviewed literature pertinent to the study in the categories of: multi/cross-cultural music making in the classroom, Native American music in the curriculum, and the Ho-Chunk. Chapter Three, will present the methodology of this project detailing the process of incorporating the endangered language: Ho-Chunk into an original musical work, the creation of an original musical work featuring the Ho-Chunk language, and the process of teaching *The Earth Still Speaks*, which will lead to research findings.

The process of incorporating the endangered language: Ho-Chunk into an original musical work.

In the Fall 2019 school year, I spoke with singers in my 8th and 9th grade Concert Choir ensemble and explained the project *The Earth Still Speaks*. I explained to them that it had not yet been written and was going to be an original composition with four movements that had text in
English and Ho-Chunk. This would be a huge learning process not only for them but also for me as the composer, as I had no knowledge of the Ho-Chunk language at the start of this project. I would first need to find a culture bearer and informant, that is, someone who knew how to speak Ho-Chunk. Second, after finding someone who had knowledge of the Ho-Chunk language and was able to speak it, I needed to ask if they would be willing to teach and collaborate with someone who was non Ho-Chunk wanting to feature the Ho-Chunk language in an original composition that would be taught and performed in concert by mostly non Ho-Chunk students.

To find someone to help with the Ho-Chunk aspect of the project I reached out to the Native American Center (NAC) at the University of Wisconsin Stevens Point, and spoke with Iris Carufel, the NAC coordinator. I have known Iris since my first music teaching position when she was a student in the Concert Choir at Wittenberg-Birnamwood High School in Wittenberg, WI. I spoke with her over the phone and explained the idea for my cross-cultural music education project of composing an original composition using a native language from one of the Native Nations of Wisconsin. Out of respect, I asked her if she thought it would be alright to do a project like that. She told me that she did not think there would be anything wrong with doing that kind of a project. I asked which Native Nation of Wisconsin had ancestral lands in Steven Point, because at that time, I was not sure which of the 11 nations it was and I wanted to honor the Native Nation through utilizing their unique language. She told me the location where the City of Stevens Point lies, and the surrounding areas are all the ancestral lands of the Ho-Chunk Nation. I asked her if she would be willing to share contact information of anyone who knew how to speak Ho-Chunk and would possibly be willing to work with me. She gave me contact information for Allen Cloud, a Ho-Chunk elder who lives in Steven Point, WI.
I contacted Allen and left a message on his answering machine giving my name, explaining the project I would like to work on, asking permission to do the project, and I asked him if he would be willing to work with me. I then spoke over the phone with Allen’s wife, Sharon and learned from speaking with her that she was the past University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, Native American Center Coordinator. They had received my voice message, spoken together about my idea for the project and she told me that Allen was willing to work on the project with me. I scheduled a meeting with Allen to explain the project more deeply, listen, and begin working with him on a Ho-Chunk translation. I knew that an exact translation would not be possible, but I hoped to get a translation as close as possible to the English text I had created to be used in the song cycle.

The first time I met with Allen and Sharon was the afternoon of November 20th, 2019. We met in my choral rehearsal room at P.J. Jacobs for two hours. I wanted to record our conversation but Allen said that I should not record but instead listen. He wanted me to listen to what he said and then after our meeting think about what he said. This was a different strategy than I was familiar with but I agreed to not record the conversation. Suring our first meeting I did not talk much at all but only listened to Allen. Allen is someone who likes to share by speaking. He orally shared some history of the Ho-Chunk people saying that at one time the area occupied by the Ho-Chunk covered a very large portion of Wisconsin. He shared of growing up in Wisconsin Dells and what that was like when the tourism industry was starting to expand. He said that he “made a lot of white people a lot of money.” He didn’t go into detail but it was understood that he had shared knowledge he had and someone else ended up exploiting that knowledge for their own personal gain. He gave some examples of atrocities endured by people from his nation. He told me about different places in Wisconsin where his ancestors were buried
that had been desecrated because of road, bridge, and building construction. He said the same thing would not have been done to the graves of the white people who did it. As he spoke, I felt a great sense of empathy and could not help but feel pain and sadness for things that the Ho-Chunk had experienced and continue to experience all stemming back to colonialism. I continued listening as he shared stories of growing up Ho-Chunk and having the language spoken in the home but not being allowed to speak it at school. He said that in the past, Ho-Chunk would have been the language heard first by a Ho-Chunk baby. As that child would grow, they would continue to learn in the Ho-Chunk language. He also spoke about how the Ho-Chunk language was almost lost due to the Indian Boarding Schools and the widespread prohibition of Native American Religions and sacred ceremonies until the enactment of the American Indian Religious Freedoms Act (AIRFA), on August 11th, 1978. Before that time Native Americans across the United States were not allowed to have freedom of religious expression and often their access to sacred sites was denied or interfered with.

He explained the sacredness of the Ho-Chunk language. For the Ho-Chunk, language is more than just a way to communicate from one person to another. It does serve that purpose, but it also has a much deeper and spiritual meaning. The world of the Ho-Chunk is tied to the natural environment that they share with all things in creation as well as the spirit world. The Ho-Chunk language is tied to the world of the Ho-Chunk. The Ho-Chunk language is also a connection to their ancestors, and by continuing to speak the language, they are able to stay connected to their ancestors in the present. Working with Allen on the translation from English to Ho-Chunk was challenging. “Mother Earth” is an English word creation where in Ho-Chunk he explained that the closest word was Ma na gra (mah nah gray). In Ho-Chunk it meant the earth but in a deeper sense. Ma na gra is the earth but also everything that has come before that has been laid to rest:
all the rocks, trees, water, and the ground that we put our feet down and walk upon. For the Ho-Chunk, *Ma na gra* is a spiritual understanding in the deepest sense. Another challenge with a Ho-Chunk translation of text from English is that there are some words in English where no word exists in the Ho-Chunk language. When I first wrote the English text one phrase I penned was, “Time spent sharing is never lost.” I was asked by Allen if I would be able to change the text from “never” to “not” as there is no word in the Ho-Chunk language for the word never so it would not be possible for a translation. I was prepared for this and was fine changing the word in my English text to “not”. Yet another challenge with the Ho-Chunk translation is the fact that there is more than one way to say something, depending on the intended meaning. Allen was always mindful of the age group (13-15 years old) I would be teaching the text to as well. He worked to find the easiest way to say phrases in Ho-Chunk while still conveying the intended meaning. He had a Ho-Chunk language intern he was mentoring named Julia Goodbear, who helped come up with some of the translation as well. Allen could have just told her the translation, but by allowing or rather giving her the “assignment” of coming up with a portion of the translation herself, it allowed her to progress with her own learning of the language as well. There were also three other female Ho-Chunk elders who helped with the translation, who Allen only ever referred to in my presence as “the girls.”

About 90% of our first meeting was used listening to Allen share stories. His wife Sharon was a great help in trying to get Allen back to the translation because he would really get into sharing stories and move from one story right into the next. I thoroughly enjoyed listening to Allen share stories and was just a little concerned because after our first meeting, I had only acquired the translation for the first of four movements. With Allen’s tight schedule and obligations (often coming up at a moment’s notice) he needed to attend to, setting a meeting time
and keeping it was quite challenging. There were numerous times where meetings were set and had to be cancelled. We met for the second time on December 11th, 2019. I again listened to Allen speak about the Ho-Chunk, but this meeting was more driven on working to complete the Ho-Chunk language translation. Sharon was able to keep Allen moving through the remaining translation. Allen worked through speaking and modifying phrases for meaning and ease of learning. He would say a phrase one way, and then say no, it should be said this way, and would work through the Ho-Chunk. Throughout the process I would make sure to describe the meaning I had intended for the English text so he would be able to get the meaning of the Ho-Chunk to match as close as possible. One of the phrases, “Knowledge is Power” I had to explain because he linked the English word “power” as being something negative. I intended the meaning of “power” to be positive meaning strength where having knowledge makes you stronger. This collaboration went on for a solid hour and a half in the meeting. After the collaboration of each phrase and Allen had the Ho-Chunk ready, I would record him on my phone speaking the phrase for me to later work with. Through this reciprocal relationship of working through text, the Ho-Chunk language translation was complete. Now that text translation was finished, the real work for me was about to begin with setting the Ho-Chunk language to musical material in the song cycle, most of which was already completed.

**Creating an original musical work in an endangered language: Ho-Chunk**

When I was thinking of the idea for the song cycle, I wanted the underlying foundational theme to be built from respect: Respect for the earth, the water, all people, especially the Ho-Chunk and their sacred language. I researched themes that are part of the Ho-Chunk Culture from wisconsinfirstnations.org and also learned more about Ho-Chunk culture from Allen and wanted to incorporate that into the composition. Community is a very strong part of Ho-Chunk
culture and caring for those in your community especially your elders is important. The composition was something that continued to grow as the writing process progressed. Everything wasn’t apparent all at once but became clear as time went on.

There are many different First Nations throughout North America. Though each First Nation is individual and unique, many share a common theme or idea that every living thing is related or connected. Though the idea is shared amongst First Nations and each have their own language, there is a well-known phrase that comes from the Lakota Sioux, one of the First Nations of the American Plains and neighbors to the Ho-Chunk before European contact. The phrase *Mitakuye Oyasin (mee tah koo yay oh yah sin)*, which means “all my relatives” encompasses the idea that all are related. Though there are many different people on the earth, all belong to the human race and therefore are connected to each other. This may be easily overlooked and forgotten as each person has their own individual goals, beliefs, and ideas. When people are able to come together and unite, focusing on things that are commonly shared instead of differences, true progress can be made. Through my own research, communication with culture bearers and constant reflection and revision, those ideas were incorporated into the text and music of the composition. I created an original English text related to themes I researched of the Ho-Chunk culture that was then translated into the Ho-Chunk language.

The composition tells a story about how to learn from listening to nature. The first movement tells the audience that Mother Earth is Speaking, listen. If you listen to nature, you can hear a story, but you need to take the time to try and hear it. In movement two you learn by listening to elders, each other, and from nature and then you know. With this knowledge you have gained, you have power and strength. Movement three is about sharing. This knowledge you hold you must share. Share knowledge with others and share other items such as food with
those who are in need. Time you spend sharing with others, is not wasted time. The lyrics in the song are time spent sharing is not lost. Movement four is about uniting people who are different and coming together as one to realize they are stronger together than when they are divided.

There is a reason for four movements in the song cycle. Four is a sacred number for many First Nations. There are four directions, four seasons, four parts of the medicine wheel all of which make a complete cycle. In the music the end of the fourth movement brings back material from the first movement completing and connecting the four movements together as once song cycle.

The creation of the composition was to build bridges and connections for students to the Ho-Chunk culture, history, and language, and also to challenge them musically. Sounds of the natural world in the form of “wind” made by the mouths of the singers, and some voice sliding to imitate what someone would hear while out in nature in our area, are also incorporated into the song.

Stacy Berk, professor of oboe and applied composition at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point worked with me throughout the Fall Semester of 2019 guiding me through the musical composition of my song cycle. She helped me grow as a composer by expanding my compositional toolbox and thinking of, as she called it, the “soundscape” I wanted to use for the composition. Professor Berk sent me two video links from a musician named Rick Beato. One link, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DlML3adH9yQ was very helpful and taught me about stacking intervals of fourths and fifths. With information I learned from that video I was able to incorporate the use of quartal and quintal harmonies into the song cycle. Professor Berk has very strong musical notation editing skills and was able to help make me aware of my notational errors and give me options for making the composition the most clearly readable it could be. She also helped me find correct rhythms for one of the more challenging phrases of the Ho-Chunk
translation and was very supportive throughout the whole composition process by allowing me to compose while giving me musical examples and things to think about that I could incorporate into the composition. I feel that with the compositional guidance I received from her, I successfully created my most monumental compositional undertaking to date. Please see score excerpts in Appendix D.

The song cycle is broken into four contrasting movements that are to be performed straight through. The music is written for four-part (SATB) voices with piano accompaniment. The English and Ho-Chunk languages are each used in each movement of the song cycle.

* See Appendix C. for the entire text in English and the Ho-Chunk language, Appendix D. for excerpts from the musical score of *The Earth Still Speaks*, and Appendix E. for the entire Ho-Chunk language text including IPA.

### I. Hanaxgu we day: Listen

**Mah nax ˈgoo wee day (Listen you all)**

4/4 time signature with a tempo of 128 BPM. Incorporates the B-flat minor pentatonic scale, wind sounds, spoken/sung Ho-Chunk, and sung English.

### II. Hiperes: Learn

**Hee ˈped iss (To Know)**

5/4 and 3/4 time signatures with a tempo of 78 BPM. Key of B-flat minor and B-flat major. Quintal harmonies are featured throughout.
III. Kiduce : Share

*Key doo chay (Share)*

12/8 time signature with a dotted quarter note getting 66 BPM. Key of B-flat major. Quartal harmonies are featured ending with two successive rolled chords of five stacked fifths.

IV. He sto he na zhink scha wete : Unite

*Hee stow hee nah ‘zhink scha weet (people coming together)*

6/8 time signature with a dotted quarter note getting 60 BPM. It utilizes the B flat minor pentatonic scale, a mini fugue, one synchronized clap and a meter change to 4/4 with the quarter note getting 128 BPM, ending the song cycle with similar musical material used at the end of the first movement to unite the four movements together.

**Teaching an original musical work in the endangered language: Ho-Chunk**

**Participants**

Students who learned *The Earth Still Speaks*, an original musical work in Ho-Chunk, an endangered language, were all 8th and 9th grade members of the Concert Choir at P.J. Jacobs Junior High School. There are thirty-six (36) members in the performing ensemble. The students come from diverse backgrounds, socioeconomic statuses, and are a good representation of the community of Stevens Point, Wisconsin. Students are all genders, junior high school aged (ranging from 13-15 years), predominately Caucasian with a small percentage of students who have Asian, African American, or Latinx backgrounds. It should be noted that although there are members from the Ho-Chunk nation in the community and school, none happened to be in the ensemble learning the song cycle.
Concert Choir meets each day for forty-six (46) minutes. School days are set up on a two-day rotation alternating between Day 1 and Day 2. Twenty-two (22) of the members are present each day (Day 1 and Day 2) with nine additional members added on Day 1 and five additional members added on Day 2. This poses a challenge as the entire ensemble does not rehearse together until the dress rehearsal before the concert. Although it is not ideal, it does work, as the “core” students who are present each day were able to be leaders and help the students who can only attend every other day learn the song cycle. Concert Choir rehearses in the choir room each school day until the dress rehearsal for the Spring Choir Concert when they will rehearse in the high school auditorium, which is the performance space where the concert will be held. PJ Jacobs is a public junior high school in the Stevens Point Area Public School District with an enrollment of 711 students in, grades seven through nine.

**Teaching process**

The timeline of teaching of the song cycle from the inception of the project to the present, at the time of this writing, has spanned approximately six months. In the first month, I wrote half of the first movement and got a working copy out to the students so they could start to get a feel for the song. As I continued to work on the first movement, I would give the choir members updated editions and they could keep progressing. Once I had met with Allen Cloud, by the end of November 2019, and had the Ho-Chunk language for the first movement, I set the language to the music and got a final copy out to students. Because the Ho-Chunk language is very different than English, a lot of time throughout the entire teaching process was spent going over the pronunciation of the Ho-Chunk and reinforcing the meaning of it in English so students were able to understand what they were saying and singing. Ho-Chunk language does have specific spelling, syllabic stresses, and pronunciations that are unique to the language. The language also
is very rhythmic, and phrases have a certain feel. Allen told me to write out the language to the best of my ability, how it sounded (phonetically), which he said would be easier for the students to learn.

As students learned the musical material from each of the four different movements (I. Hanaxgu we day: Listen, II. Hiperes: Learn, III. Kiruce: Share, IV. He sto he nah zhink scha wete: Unite), Ho-Chunk language pronunciation and diction was constantly revisited. The English meaning of the Ho-Chunk phrases was also reviewed frequently, so students knew the meaning behind what they were singing. I learned the pronunciation of the Ho-Chunk phrases from recordings of Allen speaking and spent a lot of time listening to the recording to make sure I had learned the pronunciation properly before teaching it to the students. I would have played the recording for the students but there were challenges. Allen would sometimes change the phrase slightly while searching for the best meaning in Ho-Chunk. He would also change the stress of words within a phrase as well as the rhythm of the phrases. This was a challenge Professor Berk and I encountered and worked through with while setting some of the Ho-Chunk phrases. Due to the challenges in the audio recordings of the Ho-Chunk, I decided that it would be best if I learned the proper pronunciation of the phrases and teach it to the students after setting them to the music. There were a number of different strategies used to learn the Ho-Chunk pronunciation. I would often model and have the students echo or respond by breaking down a long phrase into learning a few syllables at a time and then adding on more until the phrase was learned. We would speak the language in rhythm as it was set in the music almost like a chant. I would ask the students to take out the music to rehearse *The Earth Still Speaks*, while they were getting ready, I would start speaking text in Ho-Chunk and they would repeat me. As future rehearsals progressed, students would start to join in with me while I was saying
the text and some students even expressed that they enjoyed speaking the Ho-Chunk phrases alone without the music as well. I wrote the Ho-Chunk out phonetically in the music so someone with no knowledge of IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet) would be able to read the different syllables of Ho-Chunk and pronounce them properly. I also created a document of the Ho-Chunk text with IPA below. This information would be for a music educator with current IPA knowledge. If a music educator did not know IPA, they would most likely be able to find resources online or contact a music colleague to gain a basic understanding. The IPA pronunciation will help reinforce the pronunciation of the phonetically spelled Ho-Chunk language.

I explained to the students why the Ho-Chunk language in the song must have excellent diction. Diction is one performance element of vocal music I set very high expectations for, no matter the language. The audience must be able to hear the words sung clearly. When the song cycle is performed, the vast majority of the audience will not understand the meaning of the Ho-Chunk language, because they do not speak it. And there will be people from the Ho-Chunk Nation in attendance at the performance who do speak and understand Ho-Chunk. The singers must do their best to have excellent diction with the Ho-Chunk language in all movements of the song cycle so that everyone can understand and that respect for the language is conveyed.

Throughout the learning process, there have been multiple layers of growing student excitement and keeping their interest in learning the song cycle. The material in the project must be taught in a way where the students buy into what they are doing. I feel that one of the first things that must be established between student and teacher is trust. The students must trust the teacher as their musical guide to show them the way through the song and bring it to a level for the performance that they are able to experience success. Trust is established over time with
consistency and continuing to provide quality musical learning experiences. For some of the students, the fact that they were learning a song in a different language did not pique their interest initially, because they have learned songs in languages other than English before. Sharing history about the Ho-Chunk culture and language with students, brought some of them on board. By explaining that they are the very first singers to ever perform this song cycle really helped generate excitement. Also, explaining that a song cycle where a non-Ho-Chunk composer has created an original work with the endangered Ho-Chunk language as text has not been done before which makes the experience unique to them. All of these things must be supported by actual musical material that allowed the students to feel something while they are performing. The lyrical text should have value alone. The musical material should have value alone. When the two are combined, the goal is a powerful musical composition that should connect singers, text, and music to the audience for a greater understanding and appreciation of the endangered Ho-Chunk language through music. The Spring Choir Concert where the song cycle *The Earth Still Speaks* is to be premiered has not been performed at the time of this writing.

**Qualitative Research**

In this project, qualitative research methods were used to gain information from human subjects about their experience of learning a musical work in an endangered language. Qualitative research focuses on how students experienced the learning process and what they took away from it. This project was also informed by the narrative inquiry method where I interviewed five of the choir students and then used thematic coding to look for common themes within the student answers, allowing the data to emerge from the participants’ contributions. The narrative inquiry method was my reasoning for only interviewing five students instead of the
entire ensemble. By interviewing a small number of participants I was able to increase the depth of information obtained from each of the participants.

**Procedure**

All students in the Concert Choir who were learning the song cycle were offered an opportunity to share their experience. Students volunteered of their own free will to answer a set of questions related to their experience of learning a musical work in an endangered language.

The data collection procedure was an oral interview with students. Oral interviews were held in the choir room. I am a non-Ho-Chunk music educator who worked directly with the students both guiding them through the process of learning the song cycle, and also, acting as the investigative researcher for student interviews. To increase trustworthiness, I employed multiple interview subjects, peer review, and member checking by emailing students after all interviews were complete to ascertain that I had collected their perceptions accurately. Ethical considerations were always used to maintain respectful attitudes to all involved and to make sure the Ho-Chunk Nation and Ho-Chunk members were supportive of the project. Because I, myself, am not Ho-Chunk, I wanted to make sure the utmost respect was conveyed to and felt by the Ho-Chunk Nation and its members throughout the entire project.

While interviewing the five student participants chosen as a sample of convenience for this project from those who volunteered, I used a microphone connected to a speech-to-text setting in a word processing program to record their answers verbatim, as I asked each question. One student participant was unable to do an oral interview and answered the interview questions in writing through email. Students will be referred to in the following pseudonyms in this paper as: Andi, Toni, Cody, Ted, and Jessica.
Chapter Three, spoke about the process of incorporating an endangered language, Ho-Chunk, into an original, cross-cultural musical work and then the pedagogical process of rehearsing it for performance with middle school students. Chapter Three then described the creation process from first getting permission to do the project from the Ho-Chunk, to finding someone who was willing to collaborate with me and share their Ho-Chunk language expertise, and then through the actual process of creating the musical work. Also described were the participants (middle school students who are members of a choir) involved in learning the four-part (SATB) song cycle as well as the teaching and learning processes that were used to help students learn The Earth Still Speaks, an original musical work in Ho-Chunk that I composed for the participants to perform. I also described the methodology that informed this study including how I analyzed the data from student interviews, and how I ensured a high degree of ethical considerations were maintained throughout the creation, teaching, and preparation for performance of this original musical work in an endangered language. In the next chapter, Chapter Four, I will convey my findings from the student interviews, and also present the themes that emerged from the data.

IV. Findings from student interviews

The three previous chapters included an introduction of the thesis question, What is the pedagogical value of learning a musical work in an endangered language, a review of literature related to the study, and a description of the research methodology used. Chapter four will feature the report of the findings from student interviews, in the form of quotations to capture the voices of the participants themselves. Then, the themes that emerged from the participant interviews as the result of analysis will be outlined. As described in Chapter Three, the following research questions were asked of five student participants from the choir who volunteered to
participate, and whose parent or guardians consented to their participation. Students answered questions I asked in person and through written email. The questions (below) are followed directly by what the students answered in their own words.

1) *I spoke to the class giving some information about the Ho-Chunk before starting to learn the song cycle, The Earth Still Speaks. What did you know about the Ho-Chunk before this project started?*

Andi: “I didn’t know about the Ho-Chunk at all and so it was like a really cool experience like one where you would learn a little bit of a new language.”

Cody: “I didn’t know anything about it so all new.”

Ted: “Before we started learning I didn’t know a lot about Ho-Chunk but I kind of knew that it was there and I knew that it was a thing beforehand. I was excited to learn it because I never heard anybody speak it before but I knew it was like a language or culture.”

Toni: “I really didn’t know much about it. The first thing that came to mind was Ho-Chunk gaming Nekoosa.”

Jessica: “I knew very little. Obviously, I knew they’re a Native American tribe in Wisconsin, and I see the ads for their casino, but I know next to nothing about the culture.”

**Question 1 Summary:** It was clear from student answers that they had little or no previous knowledge of the Ho-Chunk culture or language before starting to learn the song cycle. Some students did make a connection of the Ho-Chunk Nation with Ho-Chunk Gaming, a nearby casino business owned and operated by the Ho-Chunk Nation. Some students also knew that Ho-
Chunk was a Wisconsin First Nation that has its own language. Although students did have recognition to the name Ho-Chunk, beyond that their knowledge was very limited.

2) What have you learned about the Ho-Chunk culture that you did not know before?

Andi: “I mean I guess they are super down-to-earth they just feel very ‘Zen’ and calm and they feel super positive just from how we say the words that we learned and everything.”

Cody: “Well I mean that they were like here and that this is like all their ancestral grounds and stuff and kind of their language and like how they say things different than how English is.”

Ted: “Just focusing on the language and how different the pronunciations are and how they pronounce the different syllables is interesting for language you know.”

Toni: “The language is like a little more complicated than ours but it’s still fun to learn.”

Jessica: “I learned some things about them through how they use language. First of all, they really value nature and place a priority on respecting it. They also value community. The phrases we sing all involve multiple people, and I picture it almost as if we are telling the audience and the others in choir, ‘Hey, you’re part of our tribe now. Listen, all of you, we’re going to sing.’ They’re very decisive in their language, as well. they didn’t have a word for ‘learn’, it’s either you know it, or you don’t. I also did a bit of my own casual research, since I wanted to know. The tribe people value the voice, and they call themselves what translates to ‘People of the Parent Speech’ or ‘People of the Big Voice’. They had large gardens and valued hunting skill. They were divided into around twelve different clans, each with a different animal and a different role in their society, while everyone had extremely strong family bonds.”
Question 2 Summary: All student participants learned about Ho-Chunk spirituality with comments like, “they are super down-to-earth they just feel very ‘Zen’ and calm and they feel super positive”. Students learned that the Ho-Chunk have ancestral ties to Central Wisconsin which is part of the Ho-Chunk history culture, “they were like here and that this is like all their ancestral grounds”. It was also clear that students learned about different aspects of the Ho-Chunk language, “how different the pronunciations are” and nature, “they really value nature and place a priority on respecting it.” All of the things they learned were directly through the process of learning a musical work in the endangered Ho-Chunk language. At least one participant reported doing more research to expand their own knowledge of the Ho-Chunk and learned that the Ho-Chunk were also skilled farmers and hunters and divided into, “twelve different clans, each with their own animal and a different role in the society.”

3) I have told you in class what an endangered language is. What would you say an endangered language is and why do you think it is important to learn about it?

Andi: “Well and endangered language for me is that like a specific language is slowly being depopulated and I think we should learn from it so we can communicate with others in the same area because we have a lot of native people so I think it would be nice to be able to communicate with them and understand what they mean.”

Cody: “Probably a language that it’s kind of not as popular or something and as time goes on it’s just not being used as much. To keep it going there is history to those kinds of languages and it is interesting to know that kind of stuff.”

Ted: “That there is a language out there and that we should like you know like know the other things are out there.”
Toni: “An endangered language is something that people still speak and then like not many people know of. I think it’s important because other people like don’t know about it and it’s cool to learn about other people like how they speak and think.”

Jessica: “An endangered language, just like an endangered species, is in danger of going extinct, dying out. Endangered languages have very few living native speakers. It’s important to learn about these languages and encourage their survival because each language contains so much knowledge and culture of the society that spoke it. Most of what I learned in class about the Ho-Chunk tribe I learned through the different aspects of their language, and if that language was lost a part of the culture would be lost too.”

Question 3 Summary: All participants spoke of an endangered language having importance and holding lasting value, “It’s important to learn about these languages and encourage their survival because each language contains so much knowledge and culture of the society that spoke it.” Participants were aware that even though a language may be endangered, “An endangered language is something that people still speak.” Students made connections with language tied to culture and “if that language was lost a part of the culture would be lost too.” Language was talked about like a glimpse into a person’s mindset, “it’s cool to learn about other people like how they speak and think.”

4) What do you think is the importance of learning about the Ho-Chunk Nation through learning some of the language?

Andi: “I think the importance of learning it is, so you learn through the languages to better understand their circumstances and just like I guess learning someone else’s point of view and understanding theirs.”
Cody: “Cuz I mean you’re a kid of like learning about the Ho-Chunk as you’re going through this and yeah.”

Ted: “How you said beforehand we had to say something different than like it was when we first learned it because you had to change it because they didn’t have a word for never or like something like that. It was really cool to me because it was like oh it’s different but it’s super-duper cool and it has like a meaning behind it like where you know that I really like that and enjoyed that about the language.”

Toni: “I think it’s important because people don’t know anything about this language but also because people think it’s not important because people think it’s endangered so it’s not important anymore. So, I think it’s really important that people hear the song or through their language or anything that we know of the language.”

Jessica: “It’s important to save the language and the culture because every different viewpoint and mindset has something to teach us, something irreplaceable developed through generations, living a very different life than modern society. It also teaches us respect for the tribe as well as for any culture different from our own, so that hopefully we won’t repeat the mistakes of the past. If we forget that respect, humanity can’t improve.”

Question 4 summary: All participants felt that by learning about the language they were learning about the Ho-Chunk culture. The participants not only learned about the Ho-Chunk culture but also learned to have greater respect for the Ho-Chunk Nation, “as well as for any culture different from our own.” One participant referred to a change I had to make in the composition regarding the Ho-Chunk language. The original text used the word “never” which I was not aware there is no word for “never” in Ho-Chunk so I was asked if it could be changed from
“never” to “not” for a specific reason. Participants also again referenced language as a way to gain a greater understanding by, “learning someone else’s point of view and understanding theirs.”

5)  What do you think it means to people from the Ho-Chunk Nation to have someone who is non-Ho-Chunk learn and perform a song that is in the Ho-Chunk language?

Andi: “I think that maybe hopefully happy because they'd like more people to learn the language probably and say that they'd like to just hear people talking their language and having fun singing it.”

Cody: “I think that’s kind of cool cuz you know it is kind of an endangered language to know just like people are recognizing it and wanting to sing and perform that is kind of cool.”

Ted: “If it was me, I’d feel special. I’d feel like glad that we're getting recognition from other cultures and or like that other cultures are getting more recognition than just because you're on one language and focusing on one thing to let me get to learn something about it and like learning new words.”

Toni: “It is important because not only that I know that people don't know that there's a language out there named Ho-Chunk or something like that and then there's you who like language is so cool and then like you learn it.”

Jessica: “I think it shows that we value their society and culture, which probably means a lot to people who have faced so much systemic hardship in the past. Also, hopefully we can encourage the young people of the Ho-Chunk nation to continue their tribe’s traditions. It takes this endangered language and makes it a bit less endangered, a bit more in the spotlight. Even if we
can’t actually hold a conversation, we’ve still learned so much, especially in terms of valuing the culture, and hopefully we can pass that on to an audience and make the future a bit better for the Ho-Chunk.”

Question 5 summary: Participants all had positive envisioned outcomes of the impact of singing and performing a song in Ho-Chunk by non-Ho-Chunk. They are seeing the effect that learning an endangered language may have on the Ho-Chunk. Where it may have the possibility of something as big as, “encourage the young people of the Ho-Chunk nation to continue their tribe’s traditions” while also continuing to show respect for the Ho-Chunk culture. Participants also understand the importance and value in the simplicity of making another person happy just by hearing the Ho-Chunk language. Participants also stated that by doing this musical work the Ho-Chunk language would be getting more recognition, especially among non-Ho-Chunk.

6) Why do you think it is important to learn about Native Tribes of Wisconsin specifically the Ho-Chunk Nation?

Andi: “I think it's important to learn like background information of it so you are like to be one and like it is super accepting of each other like they're like I just think like so you can be like somewhat connected to them.”

Cody: “So that you can kind of learn the history of Wisconsin and who's been here and how they kind of were here and yeah.”

Ted: “It is more of the Native American culture so that's where it all started so it wasn't originally Wisconsin it was like just a bunch of other cultures that's cool about our state.”
Toni: “Because there's a lot of people that are native and don't speak it and they don't know about it.”

Jessica: “This is a part of our state’s heritage. This tribe used to live and work right where we do today, even if the world is a bit different. If we only learn about Western history in school, it only gives us one set of values and one possible mindset and also shows that we don’t respect other cultures. We need to learn about the history right under our footsteps, and for us in Stevens Point, that’s the Ho-Chunk history.”

Question 6 summary: Participants all stated the importance of learning about Wisconsin First Nations as there were tribes already here before Wisconsin was a state and are still here today. Participants are gaining a deeper understanding of the importance of learning about history that is in Stevens Point, Ho-Chunk history. Learning history helps a person connect with different parts of the community and be more accepting of one another.

7) What do you think has been the most challenging thing you have encountered while working through the musical work in an endangered language?

Andi: “I'd say so personally getting the right word pronounced because sometimes I accidentally said the word wrong and then put it in my head like five times I’s just say it throughout the day and until I feel I got it right”

Cody: “Probably pronunciation and memorizing all of it.”

Ted: “Definitely pronunciation and how we're supposed to like how to change that change some parts of it after you talked with more people that was hard to like yeah switch from singing one
thing and then memorize again because of super-duper high the first time and then having to change it but it was it was a good thing.”

Toni: “To learn how to pronounce the language and then like singing it at the same time but I catch on easily.”

Jessica: “Memorizing is definitely harder, because without knowing the language it turns into memorizing the sound of the syllables. Mr. Adsit definitely didn’t make the music easy, either. I think the biggest challenge overall is in the middle of the last movement, where the music is building to a climax and the choir is divided in both time, notes, and words. We’re used to listening around to the rest of the choir and working as a whole, so combining difficulty with a small section makes it extremely challenging. It proves the point of the last movement, though, that life (and music) is easier when we’re united with those around us.”

Question 7 summary: It was unanimous among the participants that the single most challenging aspect of learning the musical work was the process of properly pronouncing the Ho-Chunk language. It seemed to help participants to go over the words in their head throughout the day to work on and correctly pronounce the language especially words that may be more complicated to pronounce. Musical challenges presented in the work were also a common feeling within the participants. Putting the correct pronunciation of Ho-Chunk and the correct pitches within the correct voice part at the correct time along with memorization of it all was another monumental challenge for all singers to meet and overcome.

8) What do you think is the most important thing you have learned from working through musical work in an endangered language?
Andi: “I think the most important thing I learned from working with this language is that you just have to be super understanding and helping and just super loving to any culture and it is just a really fun experience of life.”

Cody: “Um the different culture and uh like how they and the different language that's kind of like with their culture and how it kinda works and yeah.”

Ted: “Learning about the lessons and how they see how they're about what their values are. I liked that part.”

Toni: “It is like not heard so I think it's important that people should hear it and it's important because I'm Native American a little bit and I've never heard of it so I thought It was so cool for learning something and singing in class.”

Jessica: “I think the most important thing I’ve learned is to value different cultures and especially different languages. It’s definitely made me realize how ignorant I am of the native cultures and their history, but also how much we would lose if any part of them was lost.”

Question 8 summary: Having an open mindset when learning something new allowed participants to view the big picture of the project of learning about a different culture. Participants learned greater understanding between different cultures and enjoyed the experience of learning a new language. Learning about ignorance toward native cultures and learning how important all different cultures truly are with each different set of values.

9) What do you think is the most memorable thing you will take with you from learning and performing a musical work in an endangered language?
Andi: “Probably just the whole experience of this because it was a really fun experience and just I feel like we got it at the beginning of the year like the whole choir was excited and like a super fun time. My friends are really super happy with it. We'd like to goof off sometimes but it was really fun just learning it but I think the whole experience.”

Cody: “Um probably kind of the fact that we learned an endangered language not a lot of people know and that it's kind of cool to learn that kind of a culture and that kind of history.”

Ted: “How you taught us was really fun and it was really easy to catch on to how to say it because we would do it all together and then we just dive in which was a good thing for me because then I can get an idea of what I should be doing and then work through it.”

Toni: “That there's languages out there and this language is going scarce, and I'll think of it every time I hear something about native language.”

Jessica: “I’m still stuck on the Yoda similarity, that there is no learn, only know or not know. Also, hopefully I can take the knowledge I’ve gained about the Ho-Chunk nation and other cultures in general through the rest of my life.”

Question 9 summary: In Ho-Chunk there is no word for “learn” there is only a word for the idea “to know.” That specific lesson about the Ho-Chunk language really seemed to make an impression on the participants. Participants liked the process of learning the language pronunciation through the model and repeat method. The fact that they learned part of an endangered language and they are now aware that there are languages “out there” that are endangered was memorable to participants. They also have learned the importance of keeping language and history alive.
10) Is there anything else you would like to say or tell me related to your experience of learning a musical work in an endangered language?

Andi: “I think it is a special person that you got like the Ho-Chunk language from they were a really good resource so I'm excited to hopefully have them in the audience to watch. It has been really fun and like taken us the whole year to learn it and I'm glad it was this year.”

Cody: “It was fun.”

Ted: “I kind of understand it like a lot that it was fun to learn Spanish, so you'd be a good language teacher, I think. But it was fun, and I will definitely remember it for the rest of my life how I got to sing the song as it's really beautiful too. I like it a lot how like the other different pieces like contrast each other like in minor like that's it.”

Toni: “I think that the song that goes really cool because it's cool for one that we're speaking a different language in like choir and my mom was like well what's Ho-Chunk? and I had to explain to her it's a native language so yeah that was pretty cool awesome.”

Jessica: “It’s been an amazing experience!”

Question 10 summary: All participants described having fun and enjoyment with the learning experience even with the many different challenges that were presented. Participants broadened their knowledge base of Wisconsin First Nations, especially the Ho-Chunk Nation. One participant expressed appreciation for the Ho-Chunk elder who shared part of the Ho-Chunk language and the value of having someone like that as a resource. Participants shared knowledge with their parents. They were not only learning in the classroom but taking that information they
learned home and teaching parents about Ho-Chunk, endangered languages, and the History of Wisconsin First Nations.

**Themes**

After interviewing all participants, thematic coding was used to analyze the resulting data. The following themes emerged from the participant interviews: Knowledge of history and culture of Native Tribes of WI, endangered language, and learning challenges and lasting impressions. From the three main themes, the following subthemes emerged. Subthemes included in Knowledge of history and culture of Native Tribes of WI are: History of the Ho-Chunk Nation, spirituality, previous knowledge of the Ho-Chunk language, Ho-Chunk language, and Ho-Chunk culture. Subthemes for Endangered language are: What an endangered language is, the value of an endangered language, challenges pronouncing the endangered Ho-Chunk language, and differences in meaning/vocabulary from English to Ho-Chunk. The following subthemes were included in Learning challenges and lasting impressions: pronunciation of Ho-Chunk, musical challenges, the value of other cultures and language, and positive learning experience.

**Table 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme 1: Knowledge of history and Culture of Native Tribes of WI</th>
<th>Participant responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Previous knowledge of Ho-Chunk</td>
<td>Participants had little to no knowledge of the Ho-Chunk Nation before starting to learn the musical work. Participants related Ho-Chunk Gaming Casinos to the Ho-Chunk Nation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History of the Ho-Chunk Nation</td>
<td>Participants mentioned awareness that Ho-Chunk was a Wisconsin First Nation and that Central Wisconsin are the ancestral lands of the Ho-Chunk Nation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Participants mentioned Ho-Chunk spirituality being Zen-like and down-to-earth, also having a strong connection to nature.

Only one participant was previously aware that Ho-Chunk was a language.

All participants gained knowledge of the Ho-Chunk language through the process.

All participants gained knowledge of the Ho-Chunk Culture through the process.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme 2: Endangered language</th>
<th>Participant responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is an endangered language?</td>
<td>All participants gained knowledge about endangered languages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The value of an endangered language</td>
<td>All participants spoke of the value and importance of keeping endangered languages alive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenges pronouncing the endangered language Ho-Chunk language.</td>
<td>Participants talked about how different the pronunciation of English is compared to Ho-Chunk.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differences in meaning/vocabulary from English to Ho-Chunk</td>
<td>Participants mentioned that there are differences in meaning and vocabulary between English and Ho-Chunk.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme 3: Learning Challenges and lasting impressions</th>
<th>Participant responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pronunciation of Ho-Chunk language</td>
<td>All participants said pronunciation was the single most challenge to overcome.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memorization - language and music</td>
<td>Participants discussed memorizing the language as a challenge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musical Challenges</td>
<td>Participants mentioned musical challenges that were presented in the musical work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The value of other cultures and languages</td>
<td>Participants gained a deeper understanding and greater empathy of valuing other cultures and languages.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Positive learning experience | Participants expressed the positiveness of the learning experience, overcoming challenges presented, and that it will be something they will take with them as a life experience.

In Chapter Four, research findings were presented from the participant interviews including participant responses in their own words, which is crucial to narrative inquiry research. Themes which emerged from the data were presented. First, the specific set of questions asked to each participant during the interview was given including participant responses. Participant responses were summarized for each question, using pseudonyms for students’ first names. Themes that emerged from the findings after thematic coding analysis were also shown in tables centered around themes and listing subthemes with participant responses given. All participants expressed that they experienced growth in terms of knowledge of Ho-Chunk history, language, and culture as well as an increased understanding of endangered languages and the value they hold. Chapter Five, will discuss the findings of this study, including both a discussion of the themes that emerged from the data and implications for future research for music educators, composers, and music teacher educators.

V. Discussion

Chapter One, provided background information about the study and stated the thesis question: *What is the pedagogical value of learning a musical work in an endangered language?* In Chapter Two, literature pertinent to the study was reviewed in the areas of: Multi/cross-cultural music making in the classroom, Native American music in the curriculum, and Ho-Chunk history, culture, and keeping an endangered language alive through education. Chapter Three, spoke about the process of incorporating an endangered language, Ho-Chunk, into an original, cross-cultural musical work and then the pedagogical process of rehearsing it for
performance with middle school students. Chapter Four, presented research data from participant interviews, tables displaying data as it related to the three themes which emerged from analysis: knowledge and history of culture of Wisconsin First Nations, endangered language, and learning challenges and lasting impressions. Chapter Five, will discuss the relevance and significance of the data findings. The discussion will also include implications related to future learning and research in the field of music and endangered languages for music educators, composers, and music teacher educators.

**Knowledge of History and Culture of Native Tribes of WI**

Before interviewing the students, I had a reasonable idea that student knowledge about First Nations in Wisconsin would be limited. After conducting the interviews, it was clear that students indeed had limited prior knowledge of the History of Wisconsin related to the First Nations of Wisconsin. I think it is unlikely that this is an isolated case at this school, and that it is likely, many students in the state of Wisconsin have little or no knowledge about Wisconsin First Nations. In future research, I plan to examine data from other communities in Wisconsin to see if indeed students in those communities also have limited knowledge of Wisconsin First Nations. This is a significant area of concern among educators, and part of the reason for students’ knowledge gap concerning Wisconsin First Nations is perhaps related to a lack of in-class learning opportunities. One of the most beneficial aspects of this project that the students and I experienced together was that we greatly increased our knowledge of the history of Wisconsin and the First Nations, learning more about people who live in Wisconsin and have inhabited this area since long before European settlers came to colonize it.

As I mentioned in Chapter Two, it is also a law in the State of Wisconsin that public education is responsible for teaching all students about Wisconsin First Nations through Act 31. I
was surprised that the curriculum at the school where I teach had not yet been updated to include this important component. It is critical that students who reside in the state of Wisconsin are afforded their right to learn about the complete history of the state, and this includes the fact that the European immigrant colonists many of them descended from were not the first people to inhabit and make impacts on the place where we all now live. The students learned more about the history of Wisconsin and the Ho-Chunk culture during this project. As the student participant responses show it is likely that middle school students will be open to learning First Nations History if opportunities for learning are presented and experienced in culturally inclusive and engaging ways. If this important historical context is currently not included in the history offerings or could benefit from cross-curricular engagement, maybe music courses are the perfect place for it to be taught and to expand upon the existing curriculum.

Going beyond even those that participated in this study, there was not one student in the entire music program who engaged in this learning experience who expressed disinterest in learning about the Ho-Chunk. Through engaging in a cross-cultural music learning experience, students gained information about another culture, increased their own musical knowledge, and grew in their empathetic capacity. As Abril (2013) noted, when students and teachers learn about each other’s differences they are able to understand and respect those differences. Engaging in culturally responsive cross-cultural music education practices reinforces for students the value of and connection to people and cultures other than their own.

**Endangered language**

Every student should experience the beauty of engaging with an endangered language through song. The data in this project bore out that before this project the students involved could make an educated guess about what an endangered language was, but in a nonspecific
manner. By working with an informant who speaks an endangered language, students were able to learn some elements of the Ho-Chunk language, gain first-hand experience about what an endangered language is, and could express what would be lost when a language becomes extinct. This gave many participants a unique perspective into the Ho-Chunk culture that permeated our process of learning a musical work. After the project, all student participants expressed a deeper understanding about endangered languages.

I could have chosen from any number of endangered languages for the composition I created as a part of this project. As I stated earlier, the reason for choosing the Ho-Chunk language was the connection to the geographic location where the students participating in the project reside. Choosing to work with the Ho-Chunk language provided an opportunity to learn about a local Wisconsin First Nation which was something that already interested me and which the students gravitated towards. I was also eager to learn more about endangered languages, especially the Ho-Chunk language, because I was aware of Ho-Chunk neighbors in my community. I was fortunate to be able to seek out a culture bearer for the Ho-Chunk who shared the language and cultural history with both me and my students throughout this project. The opportunity to work cooperatively with a Ho-Chunk elder is an experience that I will always cherish.

The demographics of Central Wisconsin present challenges to multicultural learning. As stated earlier, the demographics of the area are predominately Caucasian with a small percentage of students who have Asian, African American, or Latinx backgrounds. The data showed that all participants in this project expanded their cultural view of the community they live in. The student participants learned about a culture that is part of the community, a culture that has been here long before any Europeans arrived. It is good for the students to learn and know that they do
not live in a monoculture. They also learned how to connect with others in the community who are community leaders, which gave them a greater sense of community awareness. With the world becoming increasingly digital, it is important and meaningful for students to have real-life educational experiences learning about people, language, and culture through personal engagement.

The students all expressed that they felt that what they were learning was unique and special. They were aware that they would be the first to perform *The Earth Still Speaks*. Student participants expressed a collective feeling that it was something not everyone was learning, and I heard from them how excited they were to share the musical performance with an audience wherein many members from the Ho-Chunk Nation would be present. The students were not only excited to share the music, but they also expressed how they were eager to share the new knowledge they now have gained from their interactions with the Ho-Chunk language.

**Learning Challenges and lasting impressions**

Authentic learning is made possible when there are struggles and challenges to overcome. The project presented many challenges for all members of the learning community on many different levels. Learning how to pronounce the Ho-Chunk language correctly was unanimously stated as the single most challenging aspect of the project for both the students and for me! It was something that everyone put a lot of energy into learning and doing correctly while still having fun with it. There were many mistakes made before the students were able to pronounce the Ho-Chunk correctly. Review of the Ho-Chunk pronunciation alone, without pitch or rhythm involved, before singing through each of the movements was an instructional strategy that was ultimately very successful. By making the process of learning the pronunciation of the Ho-Chunk
fun, students wanted to keep learning more and began to work on their own to refine what they had learned.

The challenge of learning the music was another obstacle to overcome. With the music being a 4-part (SATB) arrangement with piano accompaniment, it presented many rhythmic and pitch challenges within individual voice parts and as a whole that were perhaps not typical of most middle school choral arrangements in our repertoire to date. There were uncommon music meters, tempo changes, and different major and minor keys present. Many of the singers’ voices were still changing and maturing which made it challenging for some tenors and basses to reach all of the pitches and maintain good intonation. The sopranos and altos also had pitches that challenged their vocal ranges. Another challenge for the singers was breath control, having to hold out and sustain notes without breathing in the middle of a musical phrase. The fourth movement that one participant spoke of as being very musically challenging was where counterpoint was employed. This was a great obstacle to work through for the teacher and students, and we did achieve success. I plan to keep the arrangement of the song cycle the same in future instruction/performances due to the challenges it presented all members of the learning community.

There were also major challenges related to memorization of the language and music together for the singers, although they did it achieve success with it. I designated enough rehearsal time working with the students on the song cycle that they were able to attain a high level of performance success without experiencing “burning out” and losing interest in the music, always a risk with middle school singers. I think this is partly because I continually reflected on my instructional delivery to make the learning process rewarding and enjoyable enough to challenge the learners, but also rigorous enough to have them achieve successes
throughout. Working through challenges together that were presented by learning a musical work in an endangered language, I know that I would participate in the process again, and the students expressed that they felt that way as well. This is a learning experience where everyone in the learning community has grown and will carry this with them wherever they go, helping to foster an ethos of lifelong learning.

**Implications**

In my discussion of these three themes that arose from the data: Knowledge of history and culture of Native Tribes of WI, endangered language, and learning challenges and lasting impressions, I realized that there are implications for music educators, composers, and music teacher educators interested in learning more about or working with a musical work in an endangered language.

I encourage music educators to incorporate multi/cross-cultural music into the classroom but in a way that includes bringing in learning experiences related to the culture(s) from which the music was born, not just teaching one song in a different language and thinking the task is complete. There are so many learning opportunities that can be presented when we as music teachers get past the surface and learn about a language and how it is tied to culture. As teachers, we must decide how much and what we want our students to learn because time is always so precious in the classroom. In this project, I have described in detail one possible and successful way to go about the process of creating, teaching, and preparing an ensemble for performance of an original musical work in an endangered language. I would challenge all music educators to teach a musical work to students that is in an endangered language. Fostering an environment of respect is something that all music educators should be well-disposed to help create when teaching and learning about different cultures.
I also encourage composers to explore composing a work in an endangered language. It is a wonderful opportunity to step outside of your comfort zone and really learn while cooperatively creating a work of art that is unique and serves a greater good. It is possible for composers to adopt a writing formula when creating compositions which may result in musical works sounding very similar to one another or predictable. Expanding the compositional toolbox through learning about and composing in an endangered language may benefit all composers and help avoid this common fate. Incorporating endangered languages into musical compositions also allows for more people to experience a language they may have not even known to exist. Composers should ask permission when possible and always be mindful about showing the utmost respect to the culture, language, and members from the culture they are featuring in a musical work.

Music teacher educators should likewise find ways to introduce future music educators to multicultural music making in a way that teaches holistic, culturally respectful learning and teaching, fighting the tendency to learn one song in a language and then be done. By giving future music educators the tools and resources to help them feel comfortable finding and teaching songs in endangered languages or from minority cultural traditions is key to widening our collective music curriculum to be more inclusive. Guiding future music educators through such a process of learning an endangered language through a musical work so they know it can be done and how to do it would be an excellent way to do this, and something I am planning to do to extend this project in the near future. By teaching pre-service music teachers how to create culturally responsive cross-cultural musical learning experiences, their future students will benefit because they will be able to follow their lead and be willing to learn challenging things, making it worth the effort and energy required by the teacher for such projects to work.
In addition, the field of music education can benefit from cross-cultural musical projects such as this one because even though there are musical works published for educational use and performance, not all works are directly connected to the community like *The Earth Still Speaks* is connected to Central Wisconsin and the Ho-Chunk culture that calls it home. By incorporating Ho-Chunk into a song, you help the singers of that music think of sounds in terms of the worldview of the Ho-Chunk. Singers can imagine what the world looks like through the eyes of another, in this case, the Ho-Chunk.

In this project on the pedagogical value of learning a musical work in an endangered language a short introduction was given in Chapter One, stating the thesis question and other questions that would be addressed in the research. In Chapter Two, a literature review was shared focusing on the areas of multi- and cross-cultural music making in the classroom, Native American music in the curriculum, and the Ho-Chunk, including their history, culture, and efforts at keeping an endangered language alive through education.

In Chapter Three, the methodology of the project was outlined and the process of writing and rehearsing *The Earth Still Speaks*, a 4-part (SATB), 4 movement song cycle. Including, the process involved in incorporating the endangered language Ho-Chunk into an original musical work in collaboration with a Ho-Chunk culture bearer. The process of teaching this original musical work in Ho-Chunk to a middle school choir, and the participants involved was also described.

Chapter Four, reported the research findings from participant interviews. This included the ten questions asked to the participants, along with participant answers in their own words. The participant responses to each question were summarized and grouped into three main themes which emerged from the data. These included a knowledge of the history and culture of Native
Tribes of Wisconsin, endangered language, learning challenges and lasting impressions. These three themes were each shown in tables with summarized findings for each question or subtheme related to the three larger themes. Chapter Five, began with a discussion related to the findings of research in the three themes which emerged from the data in this project, and the implications of this study. These included the pedagogical value of learning a musical work in an endangered language and the contributions of this project to the field of music in general, and music education specifically. With the completion of this project, there is now one more new musical work in the endangered Ho-Chunk language available for use, which is also another option for choral directors wanting to teach a challenging and rewarding song cycle. I plan to make this song cycle available to choral directors and educators in the near future. See Appendix for excerpts or contact Luke Adsit at adsitluke@gmail.com to acquire a full copy.

To learn about people who are different from yourself is to see what makes us human. Seeing differences as strengths that make each culture unique and part of the whole is something that will help promote empathy, community, and togetherness both locally and around the world.

“The wind tells a story you can hear it if you try. It brings the rain and thunder, the life giving water. Open your heart, open your mind. You will find, that if you just listen you will go further than before, and share what is given without ever taking more. You’re bound to learn some lessons if you just open up the door and listen, just listen.”


“We are all different, we’re all the same. Stronger together than when we divide. Unite.”

Works Cited


Cloud, A. (2019) - Role - Advisor of Ho-Chunk language and Culture 11/21/19, 12/11/19


Appendices

Appendix A

Publicity: 2/13/20 a journalist from the Portage County Gazette attended a Concert Choir rehearsal to take photos of the choir rehearsing the song cycle “The Earth Still Speaks”. Students were randomly chosen by the journalist and asked questions about their experience of learning the song cycle. Two of the students interviewed were quoted in the article. The story appeared in the 2/18/20 online edition of Stevenspoint.news (Portage County Gazette and Stevens Point City Times) and in the physical newspaper 2/21/20 edition. Below is the link to the full article photo taken by the journalist.

PJ Jacobs students learn Native American language through song

Link to article: https://stevenspoint.news/2020/02/18/pj-jacobs-students-learn-native-american-language-through-song/
PJ Jacobs students learn Native American language through song

Lucio; and Luke Adsit at the piano. Katelyn Voorhies photo.

By Katelyn Voorhies

Intern

STEVENS POINT – Eighth and ninth-grade students at PJ Jacobs Junior High School are practicing a composition created by music teacher, Luke Adsit.

However, the fact that it is composed by Adsit is not the only thing about the performance that makes it unique. The piece is Native American inspired and uses the original Ho-Chunk Nation language.

Allen Cloud of Ho-Chunk aided in the preparation for the composition.

“I chose the theme of the composition about the Ho-Chunk Nation and language because Stevens Point and the surrounding areas are the ancestral lands of the Ho-Chunk,” said Adsit. After writing it in English and then having it translated to the native language, Adsit taught the class the proper pronunciation of each word.

The piece consists of four movements translated from English to Ho-Chunk: No. 1- Listen: Hanxgu we day (Listen all you); No. 2 – Learn: Hiperes (to know); No. 3 – Share: Kiruce (to share); and No. 4 – Unite: He sto he nah zhink scha wete (people coming together as one).

Luke Adsit said, “The text has to do with opening your heart and minds and actually listening to nature and one another. By listening to one another we are able to learn from one another.”

The composition is about connecting the people together through emotions and understanding that we are all the same though we
may look different.

“My goal is that this song cycle will continue to build bridges and connections between different cultures, and strengthen the community of Stevens Point, WI.” Adsit continued.

There are many different tones of the piece that are meant to send listeners into a calm and consistent trance.

The students started working on the music soon after Adsit finished the piece in January and will be performing it on May 5 at 7:30 p.m., in the SPASH auditorium.

Leslie Lucio, who has been singing in the choir for two years said, “Learning a different language was what I enjoyed learning about this piece. It is an amazing project. The hardest part was learning all of the voice parts and being able to focus on your own part.”

Ana Wilson said, “It is fun and challenging and not like anything else I have ever done.”

Luke Adsit is completing his education through the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point this spring. He is a composer and music educator and has been conducting choirs for over 10 years. “I love teaching music and it is very rewarding to compose and have my students able to perform the music and learn something new in the process,” Adsit said.

Last school year, Adsit did a similar project with the Hmong language.
Appendix B. Email communication sent to wisconsinfirstnations.org

Hello,

My name is Luke Adsit and I teach vocal music at PJ Jacobs Junior High in Stevens Point, WI. My Concert Choir, made up of thirty-six 8th and 9th grade boys and girls is learning a song cycle that I wrote titled "The Earth Still Speaks". It has four movements (songs) with each movement using English and the endangered Ho-Chunk language. I started composing in the Fall of 2019 and have written all the music and an English text to be sung. Allen Cloud, a Ho-Chunk elder living in Stevens Point worked with me to share the Ho-Chunk language translation as close as possible. I set the Ho-Chunk language to the music I had written for the singers. Through this project, students in my choir who are all non Ho-Chunk are learning about the Ho-Chunk history, culture, and language through a musical work. They are singing in the Ho-Chunk language. The musical work will be performed at the Spring Choir Concert on Tuesday, May 5th 2020 in the SPASH (Stevens Point Area Senior High) Auditorium. There will be members from the Ho-Chunk nation present at the performance. I feel this musical work is a great way for others to learn about the Ho-Chunk. I am not aware of this type of musical work having been done before and taught to students. I feel that the combination of the music, voices, and singing of the Ho-Chunk language that my students are doing is just awesome! This is a very exciting project and I wanted to share the information with anyone who would be interested. A journalist from the Portage County Gazette attended the rehearsal today to take pictures, interview students, and will be running a story on the project. Please contact me by email at ladsit@pointschools.net or cell phone 715-252-1209 if you would like to talk more! I hope to hear from you.

-Luke Adsit
Appendix C. English and Ho-Chunk Lyrics for *The Earth Still Speaks*

*The Earth Still Speaks.* English text and music by Luke Adsit
Ho-Chunk language with guidance from Allen Cloud, Ho-Chunk Elder, Julia Goodbear, language intern, and the language division of the Ho-Chunk Nation

1. Listen. **Hanaxgu we day** (Hah nax goo wee day)
   English: Listen (All You)
   **Ho-Chunk:** *Hah nax goo wee day*
   English: The wind tells a story you can hear it if you try. It brings the rain and thunder. The life giving water. Open your heart. Open your mind. You will find that if you just listen you will go further than before. And share what is given without ever taking more. You’re bound to learn some lessons if you just open up the door and listen, just listen.
   English: Mother Earth is Speaking. Listen.
   **Ho-Chunk:** *Mah nah gray | Het et e | nunk sha-na*  *Hah nax goo wee day*

2. Learn. **Hiperes** (Hee-ped-iss)
   English: Learn from elders
   **Ho-Chunk:** *Wonk shiek xha-tay-ra jagoo eye dee shu-nu-ra*  *Hee-ya ’kee sha-na | heepediss*
   English: Learn from nature
   **Ho-Chunk:** *Mah-nah-gray hee-ped-iss ja-woo skate hee-ped-issra | mah schu wah oo nunk sha-na*

3. Share. **Kiruce** (Key-doo-chay)
   English: Share lessons with others
   **Ho-Chunk:** *Kee doo chay ha oo wee*
   English: Share with those in need
   **Ho-Chunk:** *Wah doo geezra woh-goo*
   English: Time spent sharing is not lost
   **Ho-Chunk:** *Woke oo nah kay ha nixjate (jate like skate)*

4. Unite. **Hee stow hee nah zhink scha weet**
   English: We are all different
   **Ho-Chunk:** *Ha nach hee jah wah oo nug weet*
   English: We’re all the same
   **Ho-Chunk:** *Ha-nach hee-skeh wah oo nug weet*
   English: Stronger together than when we divide
   **Ho-Chunk:** *Hee stow he mice-schunk scha weet*
   English: Unite (people coming together)
   **Ho-Chunk:** *Hee ‘stow hee nah zhink scha weet*
4/4 time signature with a tempo of 128 BPM. Incorporates the B-flat minor pentatonic scale, wind sounds, spoken/sung Ho-Chunk, and sung English. Hanaxgu we day – Listen you all, is the call for the audience.
Tenor and Bass start in unison. On the repeat the Tenors harmonize a minor 3rd above basses. With each successive repeat of the phrase *hey-oh ah* a vocal part enters and creates a new harmony until the Sopranos enter in 8va unison with the Basses. The last phrase of this page shows the Soprano part utilizing vocal sliding while the other three vocal parts sustain their pitches.
LH piano sets the steady rhythmic pulse. After the opening call of Hanaxgu we day –
Listen you all, the lyrics begin to tell a story inviting the listener to open their heart and mind. By
listening you will open yourself up to learning.
pedagogical value of endangered language: ho-chunk
5/4 and 3/4 time signatures with a tempo of 78 BPM. Key of B-flat minor and B-flat major. Quintal harmonies are featured throughout.
m. 14 the meter changes to 3/4
m. 15 Quintal harmonies are featured in RH piano as well as in the Alto and Tenor vocal parts.
m. 30 meter changes back to 5/4
The Earth Still Speaks

III. Kiruce : Share

Luke Adsit

12/8 time signature with a dotted quarter note getting 66 BPM. Key of B-flat major. Quartal harmonies are featured ending with two successive rolled chords of five stacked fifths.
Mm. 19-20 place where text changed from never to not because the word never is not part of the Ho-Chunk language.
Final measure displays two rolled stacked open 5th chords in succession.
All vocal parts start in unison together repeating the Ho-Chunk language for *We are all different, we’re all the same. Stronger together than when we divide. Unite.*
m. 45 is the beginning of the mini fugue. Tenors start with the melody as before. Altos enter six beats after Tenors with a variation of the melody. Sopranos enter third with another variation of the melody and Basses have the final entrance which is descending where all other parts have ascending melodic lines.
m. 57 all parts come back together rhythmically and the mini fugue is finished.
Pickup to m. 59 begins at subito p and crescendos building intensity through m. 65 as vocal parts are together rhythmically and lyrically until the sffs clap by everyone in unison.
Appendix E.

Ho-Chunk language pronunciation with IPA

I. Hanaxgu we day : Listen (You all)
Hanaxgu we day Ma na gra Het et e nunk sha na
[ha nax gu wi dei] [ma na gre hi te te nuŋk ja na]

II. Heperes : Learn (to know)

Heperes Wonk shiek xha tay ra jagoo eye dee shu nu ra
[hi pɛ dis] [wonk fik xa te ra dʒagu ai di ju nu ra]

Heeya ‘kee sha na Heepediss
[hi ja 'ki ja na hi pɛ dis]

Ma na gra Heepediss ja-wee skate
[ma na gre hi pɛ dis dʒa wi sket]

Heepedissra ma schu wa u nunk sha na
[hi pɛ dis ra ma fʃu wa u nənk ja na]

III. Kiruce : Share

Kiruce Kiduce ha oo wee wah doo geezra woh-goo
[ki du tʃe] [ki du tʃe ha u wi wa du gizra wo gu]

Woke-oo nah kay ha nixjate
[wok u na ke na niksʃet]

IV. He sto he na zhink scha wete : Unite (people coming together)

Hanach he jah wah oo nug wete Hanach hee kee-skeh wah oo nug weet
[hanatʃ hi dʒa wa u nəɡ wit ha natʃ hi ki skɛ wa u nəɡ wit]

Hee stow he nice-schunk scha weet Hee stow he na zhink scha weet
[hi sto hi maɪs sdʒənk stʃa wit hi sto hi na ʒink fʃa wit]