Chapter 9

The Music Educator's Unique Sphere of Influence:
Culturally Responsive Approaches for Music Education

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ABSTRACT

Music educators often teach every child in school. This is especially true in elementary settings and often true in K-12 school settings. In addition, they teach students for many years. As a result, they can play a critical role in their students' personal as well as educational development. This chapter provides an overview of culturally responsive practices related to several areas including critical race theory, restorative justice, racism, challenges in music education, pre-service teacher development, changing schools, and data from the author's previously unpublished study on pre-service educator views. In addition, this chapter provides suggested actions that music teacher educators must embrace to help develop the most responsive music educators.

INTRODUCTION

Educators are called to teach. More than that, each is called to a positive, driving force, accepting of all students with their unique strengths and personalities. Music educators have unique challenges. Often, they teach the same students over several

years. If they teach in a traditional elementary school, they teach students every week from pre-kindergarten through grade 5 or 6. In some cases, a music educator will teach all grade levels, every week, sometimes multiple times a week, from pre-kindergarten through grade 12. While some may see this as potentially overwhelming (because of numbers of students), the reality is that most music educators chose their career because they love music, they love teaching, and they want the educational connection with students over several years.

Preparing educators to teach all grade levels means college and university music educator preparation programs are charged with preparing pre-service educators to be (a) competent musicians, often in both voice and on an instrument, (b) competent educators who understand and can apply child and adolescent development, music learning standards, and music learning benchmarks for every grade level, and (c) compassionate and caring individuals who can safely and positively interact with every level of learner while also embracing each child's individuality. This is a daunting task, to be sure. But, each year, students graduate from colleges and universities excited and motivated to fulfill their dreams and desires to teach music. A goal of music teacher preparation is to help support their excitement while helping them become competent and effective music educators for all students.

This purpose of this chapter is to provide relevant background in culturally responsive practices, and to focus on how music educators at all levels (PreK-College) can embrace culturally responsive teaching in ways positively influence their students' lives. While many are called to teach music, educators are also called to be responsive to students' identities, cultures, and backgrounds so they meet educational, acceptance, and personal developmental needs of every student.

BACKGROUND

Before continuing, it is valuable to define a few important concepts. This section defines culturally responsive teaching through culture, responsive teaching and then describes Ladson-Billings' (1990, 1994) view. In addition, important background information on challenges in music education, pre-service teacher development, making changes in schools, and data from the author's previously unpublished study on pre-service educator views.

What is Culture?

The American Psychological Association's (APA) Task Force on Re-envisioning the Multicultural Guidelines for the 21st Century defined several key terms and concepts, including culture. Their definition of culture is: "Belief systems and value

orientations that influence customs, norms, practices, and social institutions, including psychological processes (language, care-taking practices, media, educational systems) and organizations (media, educational systems)" (APA, 2017, p. 165).

While the APA definition is useful, Zaretta Hammond's (2015) view is useful when thinking about being a culturally responsive educator. Hammond (2015), says everyone has a culture and that it guides how one makes sense of the world (p. 22). She uses a tree to show the relationship between the surface, shallow, and deep levels of culture, "It is what grounds the individual and nourishes his mental health. It is the bedrock of self-concept, group identity, approaches to problem solving, and decision making" (Hammond, 2015, p. 24). The surface includes areas that can be easily be observed like food, dress, music, and holidays. The shallow area includes unspoken customs of social verbal and nonverbal interaction, eye contact, and physical touch. This is where our deep cultural beliefs and knowledge come forward in actions, and this is where trust between people occurs. Deep culture reflects automatically and unconsciously understood knowledge that guides a person's worldview, determines ethics, spirituality, health, and group harmony. Finally, deep culture governs how a person learns and at times can be emotionally charged.

What is Responsive Teaching?

In some ways the phrase "responsive teaching" is self-defining. Teachers should differentiate instruction to best suit the needs and learning strengths of all students. Tomlinson (2005) suggested that differentiated instruction includes content, process, and product. In addition, he says that while the content is the same, the learning process must be differentiated, or customized for each student based on individual characteristics. Furthermore, the product may be unique as well so that each student can show learning in his or her on unique way.

Howard Gardner (1983, 1999) wrote that each person has unique and defining ways of learning. He named nine ways of knowing the world (naturalist, musical, logical-mathematical, existential, interpersonal, bodily-kinesthetic, linguistic, intra-personal, spatial). Each person learns most comfortably through (at least) one of the nine intelligences. This does not mean that a musical person cannot learn in the other domains. Rather, he or she might learn more effectively when music is the vehicle for learning.

Combining differentiated instruction (Tomlinson, 2005) and the theory that students have multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1983, 1999) helps define "responsive teaching." A responsive teacher understands the content they will teach, knows, and considers each student's individual strengths, and plans instruction that is customizable based on student backgrounds and strengths. They use creative, student-driven models for learning, and plan teaching that meets the needs of every student in the room. Not an easy task, but surely a rewarding one.

What is Culturally Responsive Teaching?

When educators consider students' culture in combination with their individual learning strengths and styles, they can become culturally responsive educators. Ladson-Billings (1990, 1994) coined the phrase "culturally responsive pedagogy" several decades ago to advocate for teaching African American students. She suggested starting with students' innate assets rather than starting from a deficit model. She identified three primary domains that signify a teacher is successfully teaching using culturally responsive pedagogy. These include academic success, cultural competence, and sociopolitical consciousness (Ladson-Billings 1990; 2014).

Several years later Ladson-Billings (2014) revisited her philosophy examining the diverse ways groups of people can be enfranchised and disenfranchised. She used the word "fluidity" to describe quick and continuous societal and school climates that affect students. Her words are even more important now as educators teach and navigate the world of instant online media and news, parental over involvement in daily routines, familial political and social beliefs, political effects on classrooms and communities, and increasing administrative responsibilities. However, connecting to each student individually, and helping each student learn is the reason most enter the teaching profession, and it is why they continue teaching. Moreover, for music education, this connection is often why students continue to study or participate in music beyond their K-12 education.

Hammond (2015) suggests that educators can move into culturally responsive teaching through several processes that can lead to meaningful and positive educational relationships between educators and students. Educators should begin first with acknowledging their own implicit biases and being vulnerable to those biases. They must commit to the intention of change and growth and continue even when things are difficult or uncomfortable. Critical self-examination is vital to the process. Educators should work to understand their own cultural identities so they can better understand others' cultural identities. This will help educators see their own cultural reference points and understand how this affects their own learning and worldviews. In addition, educators should "widen their aperture" to see multiple points of view, to see how others' cultures affect their worldviews. In their self-examination, they should rewrite deficit descriptions using alternative approaches. Additionally, educators must pinpoint and learn to control their own "triggers." These are reactions to situations that may be socially or emotionally "dangerous" (i.e. fight or flight). Knowing these may happen and how to employ self-control is vital to the process.

Educators who understand their own culture, who realize and understand that students' have distinct cultures that determine their worldviews, and who approach education through a better understanding of students' cultures and worldviews, will

be better equipped to teach all students. While the process of moving into culturally relevant teaching can be difficult, even painful for some practicing teachers (given the varying backgrounds), the reward is worth the growth. Future educators who begin their education with this approach will be able to respond to constant changes in educational environments by focusing on students and how their cultures determine their ways of learning and knowing the world.

Challenges the Education Profession Must Address

The United States (U.S.) has a rich and yet devastating history. The country has many distinct cultures and people, but also a history of division and separatism, a history of hate that has transcended over time from the country's beginnings to now. This history bleeds into school classrooms and affects students' potential for success. How educators see students and their families connects to how they teach. A deficit view will often result in attitudes and teaching practices that are "less than" resulting in lower expectations and students who will learn less or learn despite the educator's views.

Racism

In *Critical Race Theory*, Delgado and Stefancic (2017) named six important points. First, racism is ordinary, not extraordinary. Societies may remember widely publicized events, but racism is "normal" and happens every day. Next is interest convergence. Specifically, racism advances the interests of those who benefit most from it. Third, racism is socially constructed, not biologically or genetically constructed. It is a series of categories that society can change as needed. Fourth is differential racism. Majority groups change their views about minority groups to best fit their own needs or to meet the needs of capitalist markets. Fifth is that cultural history evolves and changes over time. Each cultural group of people has its own and continually evolving history. Finally, they say that the voice of color is vital. Individual groups of people understand their own histories and experiences and they can and should be able and encouraged to speak about their own experiences. In addition, those who are not part of the culture or group can only conceptualize the same experiences and cannot truly "know" the experiences of another group.

Educators often know only publicized racial inequalities. In addition, some may not understand their own socially constructed prejudices and the benefits they receive because of their own cultures. They may attribute ethnicity and race to color of skin rather than cultural history and may not realize that as an "outsider" to a culture, they may not truly be able to understand students. Schools are full of well-meaning educators who do not realize the importance of understanding their students' cultures

and the unique experiences their students face daily. While all six items in *Critical Race Theory* (Delgado and Stefancic, 2017) are important, educators need to embrace their students' evolving cultural histories and their students' voices.

Mica Pollock wrote that racism "...tolerates, accepts, or reinforces racially unequal opportunities for children to learn and thrive; allows racial inequalities in opportunity as if they are normal or acceptable; or treats people of color as less worthy or less complex than 'white' people. Many such acts taken in educational settings harm children of color, or privilege and value some children or communities over others in racial terms, without educators meaning to do this at all" (Pollock, 2008, Introduction). Rooted in socially accepted stereotypes about people and groups, racism permeates educational policies and other areas like health care, housing, and employment opportunities.

In schools, educators have the opportunity and responsibility to act every day in ways that oppose racism, and which provide students with constructive and restorative ways that shape how they move through and interact in society (Pollock, 2008). That said, Pollock says counteracting racism must occur daily in classrooms and schools and it requires educators to think deeply and honestly about their own prejudices, actions, and choices in complex situations. Specifically, analyzing daily interactions in honest ways to determine positive and/or negative effects. In addition, realizing that "being colorblind" is harmful. Celebrating culture as a stereotypic label for groups of students can also be harmful. Rather, teachers must see students as complex individuals with strengths, challenges, and unique backgrounds is more constructive (Pollock, 2008).

Injustices and Achievement Gaps

According to Stevenson (2014), justice is a necessary element in combatting racism and prejudice. In the introduction to his book *Just Mercy*, he suggests that "We are all implicated when we allow other people to be mistreated" and that it is "... necessary to recognize that we all need mercy, we all need justice, and—perhaps— we all need some measure of unmerited grace" (p. 18). While his book focuses on unjust practices in legal systems, his words ring true for many students in education.

National incarceration trends mirror school expulsion rates. Crego-Emley and Treuhaft-Ali (2017) examined national trends in behavioral expulsions. They found that Black students were expelled from school far more often than Latino and White students; Black students were at 33%, Latino were at 8% and White students nationally were at –2% (a negative amount). To be clear, this shows an alarming national expulsion rate of around *one third of all Black* students. In addition, Crego-Emley and Treuhaft-Ali (2017) addressed standardized tests. There is no realization that while the tests may be statistically standardized, they are not effective tools for measuring all students' learning (Crego-Emley and Treuhaft-Ali, 2017).

They also reported on the consistent achievement gap between diverse groups of students and expressed a need for culturally relevant pedagogy to help change the status quo (Crego-Emley and Treuhaft-Ali, 2017). They wrote that education has not yet approached a level playing field where all students are able to learn effectively. While legislation (like No Child Left Behind) and politicians' color-blind language may try to level the educational playing field, these only serve to remove students' unique cultural identities and extend ineffective practices.

Making Changes in Schools

Educators must understand national trends in expulsion, achievement, and incarceration. It is vital to realize that some groups of students regularly experience injustices, often because of the color of their skin and/or cultural backgrounds. More importantly, understanding that students' behaviors and words reflect their cultural backgrounds and upbringing helps teachers better understand how to teach, how to address certain behaviors, and how to help combat their students' educational injustices. Figure 1 from the Restorative Justice Working Group (2014) shows potential results for students based on teacher and school responses.

Figure 1. A tale of two schools (Restorative Justice Working Group, 2014)
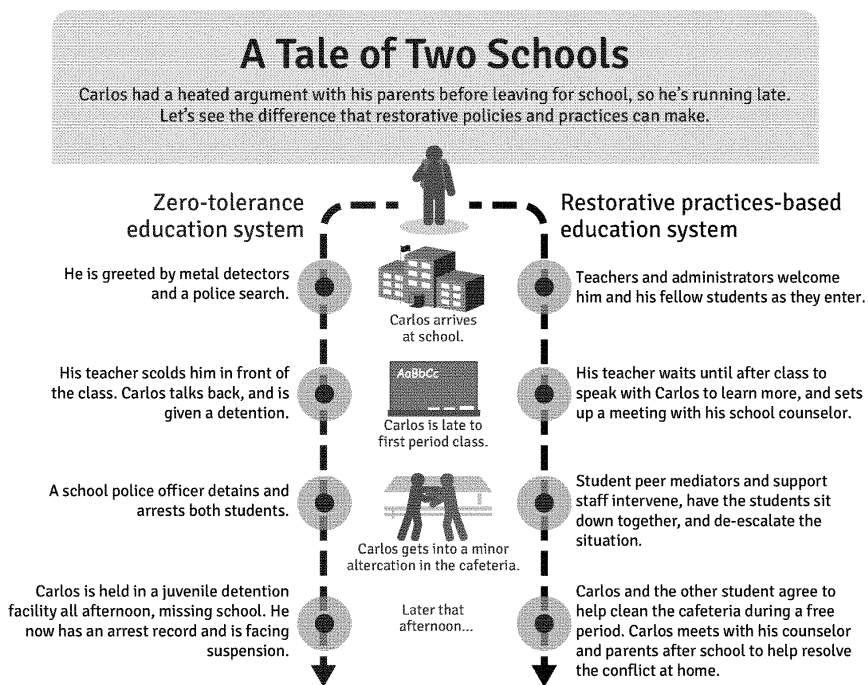
Using restorative justice practices, educators can address consistent student injustices. At the heart of restorative practices is developing and/or repairing relationships between students and their teachers. As Figure 1 shows, how teachers address student behaviors results in either a constructive or destructive result. Using compassion rather than a strict zero-tolerance approach can change student's school experiences. Furthermore, as Pollock (2017) suggests in her book *School Talk*, communication about and with students is action and shapes their lives. More specifically, "Schools are where we shape the next generation and through them, the world" (p. 63).

Pre-Service Teacher Development

Each student is an individual with traits based on his or her background and personal view of the world. Cochrane et al (2017, Introduction) said three areas "... are critical for increasing culturally responsive teaching in primarily white colleges and universities: individual awareness and growth; implications for curriculum and pedagogy, including issues of power and structural racism; and institutional cultural climate." Students' cultures must play an integral part in the ways students effectively receive education and implementing authentic culturally relevant pedagogy that centers on student individual strengths and backgrounds is the only way all students will receive the education they need and deserve.

Jones (2017) reported that pre-service educators struggle with six primary areas: family, materialism, language, cultural capital, cultural schizophrenia, and classroom communication. Some did not understand that living as a family could be any combination of different family members, including care-takers who are not "blood" relatives. In addition, some educators do not understand that in some cases even the least monetarily costly item could be a struggle for some children. Regarding students' spoken languages pre-service educators seemed to accept some as mainstream and common (French and Spanish), while other languages (like Haitian Creole, and non-standard English) were not as accepted. When pre-service educators lived in areas different from where students live, they may not understand their students' social and cultural ways of life and may not see the richness and value of their students' cultural capital. In addition, pre-service educators may be "culturally schizophrenic," generalizing behavioral traits to all students of one culture rather than knowing students as individuals with individual traits. Finally, Jones said that classroom communication in discussion is a challenge for some pre-service educators. They may not understand that allowing students to participate "at will" versus forced participation may result in more authentic and comfortable discussion practices. More specifically, students will participate when they have something to say, and if they do not speak in every discussion, pre-service educators may see this as a cultural deficit.

The At-Risk Label

Educators and educational systems often employ labels for different students, student groups, schools, and school systems. These might include labels such as Title I, socioeconomic level (SES), special needs, and others. One term often used in education and in mainstream media is *at risk* (Bernard et al, 2008; Goss-Shields, 1997; Johnson, 2014; Robinson, 2004; Walker and Graham, 2019). McWhirter et al (2017, p. 8) suggests that the language surrounding the term *at risk* involve significant deficit thinking, and that this is the inherent problem with the term. Using this term may automatically influence educators to view students and families starting from a deficit view.

According to Anderson (2006) and McWhirter et al (2017) the problem with using *at risk* is that there is no one clearly understood and universal definition. Anderson (2006, p.3) and McWhirter et al (2017, p.10) define *at risk* as a potential or possible (negative) result due to a situation or event, rather than a definite descriptor for any group.

Instead, *at risk* describes a cause-effect situation where someone may be susceptible to future negative situations. It defines a situation, not a person, and that the situation may continue without the presence of intervention (McWhirter et al, 2017, p.9). Furthermore, at one point or another everyone may be *at risk* for negative situations with varying degrees of seriousness. McWhirter at al (2017, p. 10) suggests there is an at-risk continuum for everyone that begins with minimal risk, and continues through remote risk, high risk, imminent risk, and finally at-risk. Minimal risk includes minimal stressors that are psychological or in the person's environment at home, work, school, etc. Remote risk adds familial and demographic and/or home stressors. High risk includes specifically negative familial situations, and many psychological or environmental stressors. Additionally, the person may exhibit negative attitudes, emotions, and skill deficiencies. Imminent risk includes further includes the development of gateway type behaviors and activities like experimenting with substances and/or behaviors such as sex or violence. Finally, they suggest being fully at-risk requires all these situations are present, and the person is actively participating in negative behaviors, has negative verbal and nonverbal behaviors, and they are exhibiting these in consistent and intense ways.

In a commonly used text in early music education university courses, *Introduction to Music Education,* Hoffer (2017) begins his section "Students At Risk" with this sentence: "Almost every social problem affects school students today—drugs, teenage pregnancies, broken families, morally questionable movies and television shows, and so on" (p. 144) and then describes "at-risk students" using only deficit language while also generalizing specific musical knowledge and preferences to all students that fit under his single deficit view of who at-risk students are. This

presents a real problem for helping pre-service music educators to see the bigger picture in education, that students should not be defined by singular generalized labels, and especially not by labels that influence deficit thinking about students, families, and schools.

At Risk: A Study Pre-Service Music Educator Views

Kuehne (2015) conducted a study to better understand pre-service music educator views about students, families, and schools when the term *at risk* was used as a label. Over a thousand ($N = 1044$) preservice music educators completed an online questionnaire about their views regarding the term *at risk*. Invitations to complete the questionnaire were sent to 11,635 pre-service music educators through the National Association for Music Education (NAfME) Research Assistance Program. After removing 213 invalid participants, the total number of potential participants was 11,422. A minimum number of 372 participants were needed for the study to be considered valid (Parker and Rea, 2014, p. 173).

Pre-service educators answered questions in two parts. In part one of the questionnaire, they were asked if they had heard the term *at risk*, and if so where, and then they were asked to define the term *at risk* in their own words. In the second part of the questionnaire pre-service educators received three lists of characteristics and were asked to select the characteristics they thought described *at risk* students, families, and schools. The lists included randomly ordered positive and negative characteristics. For example, in one list they received "rich" and "dislike school" and in a different list they saw "poor" and "like school." All characteristics are in the results in Table 1 and Table 2.

A high majority of respondents (94.6%) had knew the term *at risk*. When asked where they had heard or seen the term, 70% said in classes for their major. In addition, 52-57% said they had read it in textbooks, books, on social media, and heard it on television, 47% saw it online news sites, newspapers, and in their general education classes, 35% saw it in news magazines (like *Time*) and *YouTube*-type videos, 12% said they had seen it in popular magazines (like *People*), 5% said educators, family, or work, and 2% said they themselves were considered *at risk*.

When asked to define *at risk* in their own words, a clear majority of definitions included detrimental activities or situations. Many said it referred to students who will drop out of school. Others said the students and their families would be financially insecure. In addition, common answers were that students would become pregnant or have children during their school years, would abuse drugs and/or alcohol, or their parents would abuse these, would have poor home lives (no running water, no electricity), would have parents who abused them in some way, and/or their parents would have mental illness, or the student would have a mental illness.

As seen in Table 1 and Table 2, respondents overwhelmingly selected negatively slanted characteristics as descriptors for at risk students, families, and schools. Items in Table 1 and Table 2 are sorted from highest frequency to lowest frequency. Looking at the characteristics selected by 500 or more participants in each table, all point to viewing this term from a deficit point of view. When the term *at risk* was applied to a school, again descriptors that were selected by 500 or more participants were deficit descriptors.

The most interesting result for this chapter was that over 700 respondents marked that *at risk* schools have "bad administration," "uncaring teachers," and "bad teaching," and 506 participants marked "apathetic personnel." Conversely, an exceedingly small number of participants selected positive descriptors for at risk students, families and schools which is encouraging.

While respondents' definitions included valid reasons for being *at risk*, their definitions included the same or similar language that is cause for concern as future educators who will teach and influence many students over time. As their stated definitions of *at risk* and selected descriptors show, overall, most pre-service music educators viewed at-risk students, families, and schools in negative ways. However, there were a few participants in this study who marked positively-slanted characteristics. While it is unclear why approximately 50 respondents marked positive characteristics, this may indicate they have had positive experiences in a variety of school settings, or with students and families who are labeled *at risk*. Or, perhaps they understand that, as McWhirter et al (2017) suggest, being *at risk* is situational rather than a defining personal label.

Table 1. Respondents' descriptor selections for at risk students and families

Descriptors**	f	%*	Descriptors**	f	%*
Unsafe Home Life	971	93.0	Not Creative	197	18.9
Poor Home Lives	935	89.6	White Students	190	18.2
Often in trouble with Authorities	927	88.8	Live with Two/Both Parents	190	18.2
Often Use/Abuse Drugs	900	86.2	Self-sufficient	187	17.9
High Teen Pregnancy Rate	864	82.8	Creative	183	17.5
Parents Often Use/Abuse Drugs	859	82.3	Bad at Sports	182	17.4
Often Use/Abuse Alcohol	850	81.4	Live on a Farm	177	17.0
High Suicide Rate	832	79.7	Live in a House in a Neighborhood	173	16.6
Often Skip School	831	79.6	Parents are Gay	168	16.1
Poor Test Scores	821	78.6	Not Musical	164	15.7
Dislike School	817	78.3	Live in a House in the Country	156	14.9

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Table 1. Continued

Descriptors**	*f*	*%**	Descriptors**	*f*	*%**
Badly Behaved Parent(s)	817	78.3	"Straight" Students (not Gay)	149	14.3
Uncaring Parents	816	78.2	Loving	144	13.8
Parents Often Drink Alcohol	803	76.9	Hardworking	143	13.7
Badly Behaved	802	76.8	Parents are Married	138	13.2
Homeless	761	72.9	Religious	136	13.0
Live in "the Projects"	760	72.8	Caring Parents	128	12.3
Academically Unsuccessful	759	72.7	Like School	124	11.9
Live in a Shelter	744	71.3	Parents are "Straight"	123	11.8
Disrespectful	727	69.6	Rarely Use/Abuse Drugs	122	11.7
Poor	698	66.9	Rarely Use/Abuse Alcohol	120	11.5
Poor Nutrition	687	65.8	Parents Do Not Use/Abuse Drugs	120	11.5
Live with One Parent	673	64.5	Parents Rarely Drink Alcohol	119	11.4
Unclean (do not bathe)	629	60.2	Well-behaved Parent(s)	114	10.9
Unmotivated	615	58.9	Intelligent Parents	110	10.5
Lazy Parent(s)	599	57.4	Rich	103	9.9
Needy	545	52.2	Respectful	100	9.6
Hateful	545	52.2	Rarely Skip School	100	9.6
Live in a Trailer Park	533	51.1	Motivated	99	9.5
Parents are Not Married	494	47.3	Academically Successful	93	8.9
Live in the Country in a Mobile Home	479	45.9	Well Behaved	90	8.6
Unintelligent Parents	444	42.5	Clean	89	8.5
Students of Color	420	40.2	Rarely in trouble with Authorities	88	8.4
Lazy	418	40.0	Low Teen Pregnancy Rate	82	7.9
Unsophisticated	392	37.5	Safe Home Life	77	7.4
Live in an Apartment	318	30.5	Good Test Scores	77	7.4
Gay Students	276	26.4	Good Home Lives	72	6.9
Hardworking Parent(s)	238	22.8	Low Suicide Rate	68	6.5
Not Religious	219	21.0	Good Nutrition	64	6.1
Musical	214	20.5	Sophisticated	64	6.1
Good at Sports	204	19.5			

Note. *Percent of Total (*N* = 1044). **Descriptors were presented in three randomly ordered lists.

Table 2. Respondents' descriptor selections for at-risk schools

Descriptors**	f	%*	Descriptors**	f	%*
High Dropout Rates	840	80.5	Administration is Primarily of Color	166	15.9
Schools are Dirty/Unkempt	835	80.0	Administration is Primarily White	159	15.2
Unsafe Place to Be	826	79.1	Most Teachers are White	157	15.0
Financially Poor Schools	818	78.4	Most Teachers are of Color	138	13.2
Low Test Scores	796	76.2	Caring Teachers	134	12.8
Located in Areas with lots of Crime	789	75.6	Few Minority Students Attend	123	11.8
No one wants to go there	761	72.9	Low Truancy Rates	104	10.0
No Parental Involvement	758	72.6	Located in a Suburb	98	9.4
Lots of Prejudice Exists	749	71.7	Most Students Are White	89	8.5
Bad Administration	733	70.2	Good Teaching	81	7.8
Uncaring Teachers	708	67.8	Engaged Personnel	80	7.7
Bad Teaching	703	67.3	Hub of the Community	72	6.9
Uncaring Administration	699	67.0	Caring Administration	68	6.5
Few Programs for Students	696	66.7	Lots of Creative Student Work	63	6.0
Very Little Technology Available	677	64.8	Lots of Technology Available	62	5.9
Located in the Inner City	623	59.7	Everyone is treated equally	61	5.8
Old Buildings	614	58.8	Safe Place to Be	59	5.7
High Truancy Rates	575	55.1	Adequately Funded Schools	58	5.6
Few Musical Opportunities	563	53.9	Good at Sports	57	5.5
Apathetic Personnel	506	48.5	Located in Areas with Little Crime	57	5.5
Located in a Large City	479	45.9	Good Administration	54	5.2
No Creative Student Work	473	45.3	Schools are Clean	54	5.2
Many Minority Students Attend	470	45.0	Low Dropout Rates	52	5.0
Most Students are of Color	372	35.6	Many Musical Opportunities	47	4.5
Located in a Small Town	211	20.2	Many Programs for Students	45	4.3
Located in a Moderately Size Town	190	18.2	Lots of Parental Involvement	43	4.1
Bad at Sports	182	17.4	New Buildings	42	4.0
Located in the Country (Rural)	171	16.4	High Test Scores	37	3.5

Note. *Percent of Total ($N = 1044$). **Descriptors were presented in three randomly ordered lists.

Describing students as *at risk* in a one-sided negative view promotes single-sided deficit views of certain groups of students. As a profession, music education needs to examine how future teachers are trained and carefully consider the how and when labels like *at risk* are used to describe children, families, and schools. Moving away from deficit language and into asset language is needed in many areas in education,

and especially in music education. Finally, teacher educators must help pre-service educators see value and individuality in all students taking into careful account each student's unique and personal qualities, their cultural backgrounds, and their learning strengths.

CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PEDAGOGY AND MUSIC EDUCATION

While culturally responsive pedagogy seems to be merging into mainstream Pk-12 education preparation programs, this does not seem to be the case in music education. In music, the term "multicultural education" was emphasized in the 1990s (Robinson, 1996; Teicher, 1997; Volk, 1998) and referred to addressing many different cultures through authentic music and materials selection (i.e. ensuring language pronunciation is correct, using authentic recordings, etc.) rather than specifically addressing pedagogical practices with students. It was not until more recent years that some in the music education profession began to think and write about how students would benefit from culturally responsive education (Abril, 2012; Bond, 2017; Boon, 2014; Kelly-McHale, 2019; Lind and McKoy, 2016).

Kelly-McHale (2019) said there is no single set way to be culturally responsive. Rather because of the required responsiveness, being culturally responsive is situational because it requires educators to know their students and the community in which they teach. In addition, Gay (2018) says there are five ways to affirm students' identities in the classroom. First, educators must acknowledge and accept that student backgrounds and cultural heritages are significant, important, and as legitimate as the formal curriculum. Second, building connections between home and school experiences is vital. Third, educators must use a wide range of teaching strategies based on different learning styles. Fourth, it is vital to teach students to understand and appreciate their own and others' backgrounds. Finally, culturally responsive pedagogy includes multicultural information within all subjects and skills that are already taught in schools.

In their text, *Culturally Responsive Teaching in Music Education*, Lind and McKoy (2016) called for a change in how educators currently teach music in schools. They suggest that educators should approach music education in terms of lifelong participation and learning, versus the restrictive academic model that is currently used. Like educators in other fields, music educators teach based on state and nationally accepted standards of learning (NAfME, 2014). While these have broadened to include 21st century concepts, they still fail to recognize and support that music learning happens both inside and outside of the classroom, and

that students begin learning music at birth, and arrive in preschool and kindergarten classrooms with an already extensive background in music which often comes from familial, societal, and media immersion.

Change in Music Teacher Education

Kuehne's data is valuable in moving forward in music teacher education. For those who viewed *at risk* as primarily a negative label, teacher educators need to help them see *at risk* as situational rather than a permanent defining label for children, their families, and/or their schools. One way to help pre-service educators move from deficit to asset thinking is through early-degree, direct, long-term experiences in a variety of different classrooms with students of varying ages.

Most traditional collegiate music education degree programs focus on music-skill development, with the first half of the degree focused solely on music skill development, while others employ a model with music and education development occurring side-by-side (Moore, 2017). In a typical 128-hour degree, 40 hours are general education (typically courses that all university majors take), 60 hours focus on music content, skill, and performance classes, with the remaining 28 hours divided between music-specific pedagogy, general pedagogy classes and a full-semester internship. Table 3 shows the typical music education curriculum.

Table 3. Typical undergraduate music education curriculum

Year	General	Music Development	Music Performance	Education & Teaching
1	2-4 courses (9-12 hrs)	Music Theory & Skills I - II Piano Skills I – II Instrument Skills* Performance Attendance	Solo Private Lessons I & II** 2-4 Ensembles	None
2	2-4 courses (9-12 hrs)	Music Theory & Skills III - IV Piano Skills III-IV Instrument Skills* Performance Attendance	Solo Private Lessons III & IV** 2-4 Ensembles	None
3	2-4 courses (9-12 hrs)	Music History I & II Music Conducting I & II Instrument Skills* Music Rehearsal Tech I Performance Attendance	Solo Private Lessons V & VI** 2-4 Ensembles	Elementary Methods Secondary Methods Special Education Educational Foundations I
4	2-4 courses (9-12 hrs)	Primary-focus Pedagogy** Music Rehearsal Tech II Performance Attendance	Solo Private Lessons VII** Solo Recital** 2-4 Ensembles	Educational Foundations II In-school Practica Full-time Internship

Note. *brass, woodwind, percussion, strings **in the student's primary performance area: brass, woodwind, percussion, strings, voice, piano, etc.

Moore (2017) called for a change in music-focused degree programs stating that collegiate music programs should move into the 21st century. Collegiate music programs have been training teachers and musicians in the same way since at least the 1900s (Bradley, 2017) though the music education profession has been calling for change since the 1960s with the *Tanglewood Symposium* (Choate, 1967), later in the *Housewright Symposium* and *Vision 2020* (Madsen, 2000), and more recently in the College Music Society's manifesto *Transforming Music Study from Its Foundations* (Campbell, Myers, and Sarath, 2016). Still, the profession is slow to change. While the profession may internally advocate for curricular diversity (Moore, 2017), however in many cases it has not embraced change.

A Balanced Music Education Curriculum

Because of the administrative nature of higher education, when change happens, it comes either through progressive, strong leadership, and a team-like program or departmental environment, and a consistent effort to move change forward through the administrative approval processes, which often take years to complete. It often also includes politically savvy negotiation between faculty and/or leaders who carry most of the responsibility for creating curricular change. Advocates must see and effectively envision positive results for all involved in the curricular change.

In 2012, the music education program at the author's institution worked to change the curriculum from the traditional model (see Table 3) to a more balanced model (see Table 4). It went beyond adding courses. The design and purpose of all courses were analyzed, and courses were redesigned, or new courses were designed to provide a more balanced degree program so that pre-service educators had impactful learning experiences in both teaching and music performance.

Program faculty consciously chose and developed curricular materials that encouraged pre-service music educators to learn about students, to consider their own thoughts about students, as well as their own existing biases and cultures. The focus of the degree redesign was to center future music educators' views on their own future students. As Figure 2 shows, the balanced approach puts music skills and knowledge, educational skills and knowledge and strategic educational courses on equal plains with the future learner at the center.

The current curriculum is not the most progressive of models, but it has moved to a more balanced approach to educating future music educators and has resulted in music educators who teach everywhere and who are successfully synthesizing and integrating what they have learned. The focus on the learner allows a stronger emphasis on developing inclusive classroom environments that underscore learner strengths, cultures, and backgrounds.

Table 4. Balanced approach music education curriculum

Year	General	Music Development	Music Performance	Education & Teaching
1	2-4 courses (9-12 hrs)	Music Theory & Skills I-II Piano Skills I – II Instrument Skills* Performance Attendance	Solo Private Lessons I & II** 2-4 Ensembles	Intro to Music Education Music Education Lab I±
2	2-4 courses (9-12 hrs)	Music Theory & Skills III-IV Piano Skills III-IV Instrument Skills* Performance Attendance	Solo Private Lessons III & IV** 2-4 Ensembles	Music Education Lab II ± Music Teaching Methods I ±
3	2-4 courses (9-12 hrs)	Music History I & II Music Conducting I & II Instrument Skills* Performance Attendance OPTIONAL: Music Literature Courses	Solo Private Lessons V & VI** Solo Recital** 2-4 Ensembles	Music Teaching Methods II ± Music Teaching Methods III ± Educational Foundations I ± Special Education
4	2-4 courses (9-12 hrs)	Performance Attendance OPTIONAL: Music Literature Courses	2-4 Ensembles OPTIONAL: Private Lesson VII Senior-Level Recital**	Music Teaching Methods IV ± Educational Foundations II Full-time Internship ±

Note. *brass, woodwind, percussion, strings **in the student's primary performance area: brass, woodwind, percussion, strings, voice, piano, etc. ± Includes in-school field-teaching experiences in elementary, secondary general, secondary choral, and secondary instrumental settings.

Figure 2. Learner-focused collegiate curricula balance
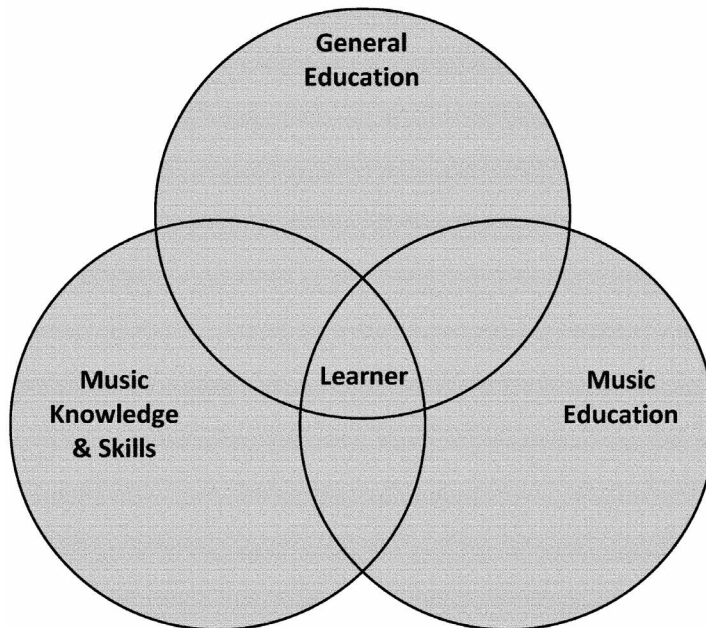
Through carefully planned curriculum aligned with in-school field experiences with in-service educators, teacher educators can align with Hammond's (2015) suggestions. They can help pre-service educators break down their own implicit biases and stereotypic thinking, commit to learning ways to teach that are culturally responsive, can safely help them address their own "triggers," and help them begin implementing culturally responsive teaching strategies that embrace different students' unique cultures as part of the educational process. Doing these things may help ensure future educators think critically about their teaching long term.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Educators with significant years of teaching experience can still be shocked when they hear a teacher use deficit language to describe his or her students. Moreover, it is disappointing to hear future educators parrot back deficit view language they have heard throughout their own K-12 education careers, in the media and texts, and in teacher-training courses they have taken. The music education profession has an obligation to train effective educators, and to train compassionate and knowledgeable educators who care about their students in ways that help them avoid deficit language. This can happen in degree programs for pre-service educators, but also during in-service teacher training.

Practicing Teachers

As the title of this chapter suggests, music educators have a unique sphere of influence because they teach students over many years, sometimes over students' entire time in K-12 education. That influence can be positive, or it can be negative based on how they approach teaching each day. Music teacher educators must shift from the "how to teach *music*" focus to a "how to teach *children*" model, moving away from content-focus and moving toward a student-centered teaching and learning environment. Using Hammond's (2015) model for developing culturally responsive teaching, would be a great first step. This approach helps future educators see children as they are, with their individual learning strengths, their deep cultural backgrounds, with each student's assets, recognized, valued, and included in the teaching process. Some may view this is placing the music content in an ancillary or less prominent place. However, in this approach the educator focuses on both the child and how to structure or scaffold content specifically for the students they are teaching.

Sloboda (2005) said that positive experiences in music in childhood usually occur at times when assessment and achievement were not a concern and when the student was in a positive social environment and increased the likelihood of continued

participation in music. In addition, several authors suggest that music education could lead to better social adjustment and more positive attitudes in low-achieving labeled schools (Rinta et al, 2011; Spychiger et al, 1993). In addition, Hallam (2015) found that students engaged in music making activities had better social inclusion. For students to be socially included, the educator must ensure inclusion, and this is best done through culturally responsive teaching that considers students' backgrounds as a central part of their experiences.

Another approach that could help in-service teachers is more training in this area either in schools or at teacher-driven conferences would be valuable. The 2019 NAfME national conference schedule (NAfME, 2019) currently shows three sessions over the three-day conference that are focused on engaging students in ways that may be culturally responsive (based on session descriptions). Increasing the presence of sessions focused on culturally responsive teaching may help practicing educators (1) realize this is important, and (2) learn how to begin on the path to implementing culturally responsive teaching practices.

Moving from teacher-centered to culturally responsive student-centered teaching may be difficult for some teachers. But the change is worth it. The joy of teaching music can be celebrated and reaffirmed as students' unique personalities and achievements can lead to joyful and affirming educational experiences for both students and teachers.

Music Teacher Education and Pre-Service Teachers

If music teacher educators visited music classrooms around the country, they might see one-size-fits-all, teacher-driven instruction in elementary, middle, and high school setting. Or, they might see student-driven culturally responsive teaching. Changes in music education are slow, but they are happening in fits and starts. Some music teacher education programs are making necessary changes that put K-12 learners at the center using an active learning model where pre-service take part in many long-term (several weeks to a semester-long) teaching experiences in varying school types and locations throughout the degree program.

While change is happening, it may not be widespread enough to see changes in new music educators coming into the classroom. Often music education programs are in institutions that have less value for teaching effectiveness and more value for research and creative performance faculty output. While music teacher educators advocate for the necessary time allotment (and credit) for high quality teacher preparation, this often falls to the wayside as increased pressure to meet non-educational goals is pushed to the forefront.

To effectively help pre-service educators develop, teacher educators need to be in in schools, alongside their students helping and guiding their learning through experiences with K-12 students. Furthermore, if the goal is to develop educators

who are sensitive to students' backgrounds, who treat each student as important and valued individuals, teacher educators must be there during the developmental periods to serve as models for effective teaching strategies, attitudes, and communication with and about students that honor their identities, strengths, and cultures. In short, teacher educators must be allowed to practice what they preach and receive credit for it in their higher education institutions. When music teacher educators are in schools with their students, teaching and observing, they can help future music educators develop culturally relevant, asset-focused teaching practices, guiding knowledge about students and how to teach them, while also breaking down existing and newly developing stereotypes. Furthermore, Pollock (2008) suggested teacher educators must critically analyze their own thoughts, attitudes, words, and actions to break free of prejudice. Without this crucial step, it would be difficult to help train future educators to do the same. With it, teacher educators can help future educators positively affect their students' learning and their lives.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR MUSIC EDUCATION RESEARCH

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy is not a new concept, though it has not been heavily explored in music education research. There are anecdotal accounts of how music as a learning domain can affect students' lives in schools, and there are philosophical papers suggesting change. However, very little empirical research exists to support *how* to implement culturally responsive teaching practices in the music classroom. As mentioned, in many schools, there is a single music educator. To proactively advocate for culturally responsive pedagogy, research on how current and new music educators teach and how they continue to develop professionally, specifically regarding culturally responsive teaching practices, is needed to help bring this to the forefront in music education.

CONCLUSION

Practicing music educators must realize that music's innate power of connection can be used as a catalyst for change in their own classroom. When teaching students over several years, they can be a positive force and a change agent for students whose cultures may not be celebrated, or even recognized in other places in schools. Being a constant accepting and compassionate presence coupled with student-centered music teaching makes their classrooms one so the most powerful and impactful places in schools.

The ownness for pre-service teacher development is on both the teacher educator and the pre-service educator. Both must assess their own views about children and schools and must work to implement effective and culturally responsive teaching practices, and while also increasing their abilities to see children as unique individuals with unique lived experiences. Teacher educators must be acquainted with teaching K-12 students and must embrace modeling teaching and teaching alongside their pre-service educators. They must also remember why they themselves became teachers in the first place, and celebrate their own students' successes, development, and progression into the teaching profession.

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