Race, ethnicity, and culturally relevant pedagogy

By: Constance L. McKoy

McKoy, C. L. (2019). Race, ethnicity, and culturally relevant pedagogy. In C. Conway, K. Pelligrino, A. M. Stanley, and C. West (Eds.), *Oxford handbook of preservice music teacher education in the United States* (pp. 603 – 623). New York: Oxford.

Pages 603–623, *Oxford Handbook of Preservice Music Teacher Education in the United States*, edited by Colleen Conway, Kristen Pellegrino, Ann Marie Stanley, and Chad West, 2019, reproduced by permission of Oxford University Press.
https://global.oup.com/academic/product/the-oxford-handbook-of-preservice-music-teacher-education-in-the-united-states-9780190671402

Abstract:

Over the last 20 years, researchers have clearly indicated preservice teachers' own racial and cultural backgrounds and experiences influence their development (Bradfield-Kreider, 2001; Gay & Howard, 2000; Kelly, 2003; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Teacher candidates' beliefs and attitudes about students from different racial and ethnic groups may affect their ability to provide meaningful instruction, a concern that has increased at a pace nearly commensurate with the increase in cultural diversity among P-12 student populations (Kumar & Hamer, 2012; Vasquez-Montilla, Just, & Triscari, 2014).

Keywords: music teacher education | cultural diversity | pedagogy | race | ethnicity

Book chapter:

Over the last 20 years, researchers have clearly indicated preservice teachers' own racial and cultural backgrounds and experiences influence their development (Bradfield-Kreider, 2001; Gay & Howard, 2000; Kelly, 2003; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Teacher candidates' beliefs and attitudes about students from different racial and ethnic groups may affect their ability to provide meaningful instruction, a concern that has increased at a pace nearly commensurate with the increase in cultural diversity among P-12 student populations (Kumar & Hamer, 2012; Vasquez-Montilla, Just, & Triscari, 2014).

P-12 music teachers' beliefs and attitudes toward their students are of no less concern. The discussion regarding developing cross-culturally competent music teacher educators leapt to the forefront of the music education profession in the spring of 2016. At that time, the former chief executive officer of the National Association for Music Education (NAfME) suggested that African American and Hispanic students do not have the requisite theory and keyboard skills to be successful in music teacher preparation programs (Cooper, 2016).

This episode brought attention to issues of inclusion, diversity, equity, and access in music education, particularly within the specific areas of race and ethnicity. Thus, engaging future music teachers with principles and concepts of culturally responsive teaching, specifically related

to how race and ethnicity mediate music learning, becomes a critical responsibility and duty for music teacher educators. Before addressing these principles and concepts, however, a discussion of how context shapes and influences the meanings we associate with the terms *race* and *ethnicity* is helpful.

Understanding Race, Ethnicity, and Cultural Identity

The concept of race has been a subject of some debate over the last several decades. Anthropologists and social scientists (Olson, 2002; Palmie, 2007; Perry, 2011; Templeton, 2013) consider race and racial groups to be social constructions. Currently, scientists insist that in terms of genetics, there are more similarities across groups of people from differing racial categories than there are similarities within those racial groups. This finding reiterates the notion of race as a social construct. Lusca (2008) proposed that the existence of race requires that people collectively agree and accept that it does exist:

> Many rightly claim that race is conceptually unstable. However, this should not lead us to skepticism about race, i.e. that we cannot have any objective knowledge about race. We can know what race is and how it works regardless of the various shifts in meaning that have occurred through history and occur geographically. (para. 4)

On the other hand, some biologists contend that racial categories correlate with biological traits and that the varying frequencies of certain genetic markers correspond (to a greater or lesser degree) to traditional racial groups (Bamshad, Wooding, Salisbury, & Stephens, 2004; Risch, 2005).

Regardless of the conceptualization, most scholars agree that race is manifested in institutionalized practices of preference and discrimination in the United States, which have a substantial impact on people's lives. Thus, for the purposes of this discussion, race is defined as "the classification of humans into groups based on physical traits, ancestry, genetics or social relations, or the relations between them" (Anemone, 2011, p. 5).

As for ethnicity, People and Bailey (2010) define it as a "social category of people based on perceptions of shared social experience or one's ancestors' experiences. Members of the ethnic group see themselves as sharing cultural traditions and history that distinguish them from other groups" (p. 389). This definition implies a distinct difference between the concepts of race and ethnicity.

Within a society, the dominant group collectively defines and imposes race and race indicators. However, individuals choose their ethnicity; it is self-identified. To belong to an ethnic group, individuals can learn the language, social norms, and cultural customs associated with that group. For example, an individual of Asian descent who grew up in Germany may be categorized racially as Asian but may self-identify ethnically as German.

The Role of Race and Ethnicity in the Development of Cultural Identity

If we accept the concepts of race as an imposed social construct and ethnicity as having agency and fluidity, then how we see ourselves racially and ethnically becomes important within specific contexts. How we view and identify ourselves culturally and racially may be decidedly different from the ways in which we are categorized for institutional (governmental, educational) and societal purposes, even as these categorizations influence how others may view us.

Race and ethnicity are (and have been) defined by state and federal policies, and public schools operate within their guidelines. These definitions often shift depending on which political parties are in power at any given time, and their policies influence the education process.

Race, Ethnicity, and US Public Education

The Legacy of Racial Segregation in US Schools

The doctrine of "separate but equal" handed down in the Supreme Court case *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) dominated educational policy in 17 of the then 48 US states. Of the 31 remaining states, 16 directly prohibited racial segregation, and 15 had no legislation requiring or limiting segregation. However, many of them allowed the implementation of policies in schools and businesses reflecting the "separate but equal" doctrine (Kluger, 1975; Maruca, 2004). In 1954, the Supreme Court outlawed racial segregation in the public schools (Brown, 1954).

From an anthropological perspective, one purpose of both formal and informal education is to transmit cultural knowledge. The slow but steady process of racial desegregation that followed the decision in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* brought demographic changes in public school classrooms. Those demographic changes foregrounded differences between the cultural knowledge sanctioned and valued by schools and the cultural knowledge valued by students representing the racial and ethnic minority. Thus, schooling previously might have been viewed as a process of *enculturation,* where it served to socialize individuals who were culturally similar in an effort to maintain the norms of the dominant culture (Kim & Abreu, 2001). With the addition of diverse cultural groups in education in the 1960s, enculturation became *acculturation,* where changes occur due to contact with culturally dissimilar people, groups, and social influences (Gibson, 2001). Groups in the ethnic and racial minority adjust and adapt in response to their contact with a majority group (Sam & Berry, 2010).

Cultural Conflicts in Education

Public education institutions have certain sanctioned cultural expectations, yet the extent to which students representing the ethnic and racial minority in schools could adjust successfully to these expectations has varied. Often, the difference between academic success and failure for many students was the extent to which the cultural environment of their home and community corresponded to the cultural environment of the school. Social scientists and educational psychologists in the 1960s observed discrepancies attributed to racial and socioeconomic factors among many students, which eventually resulted in the concept of cultural *deficit, deprivation, or disadvantage.*

The cultural deficit model or the cultural deprivation paradigm presumed that the role of the school was to rectify perceived deficits of poor students and students of color (who were disproportionately poor) (Bereiter & Engelmann, 1966; Bloom, Davis, & Hess, 1965; Crow, Murray, & Smythe, 1966). According to Lind and McKay (2016), "The overarching belief was that students who came from poor financial circumstances had no culture to speak of that would assist them in attaining academic success" (p. 12).

By the 1970s and 1980s, new theories were developed that challenged the cultural deficit paradigm. Paolo Freire's pioneering text, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1971) was influential in this shift in perspective. Freire rejected the cultural deficit paradigm; instead, he suggested the purpose of education was to liberate the oppressed through the application of a critical pedagogy where teachers and learners look for deeper meanings and implications in instructional content and pedagogy. While still recognizing the disparities in academic achievement, the new theories suggested the solution was to recognize the value of students' culturally informed knowledge bases, and to embrace cultural differences to develop stronger links between students' home culture and the school environment.

Emergence of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

Two educational researchers have contributed significantly to our current understanding and implementation of cultural difference theory. Gloria Ladson-Billings developed a theory based on the previous work of anthropologists and sociolinguists. She focused on validating and valuing students' lived cultural experiences, rather than abandoning them for the purpose of assimilation. Ladson-Billings's theoretical model of what she termed *culturally relevant pedagogy* not only addressed the student achievement gap between students of color and their White peers but also helped students to "accept and affirm their cultural identity while developing critical perspectives that challenge inequities that schools (and other institutions) perpetuate" (Ladson-Billings, 1995b, p. 469).

Geneva Gay's research, which culminated in the first edition of her book *Culturally Responsive Teaching: Theory, Research, and Practice* (2000), broadened the conventional view of culture beyond race and ethnicity. She described culturally responsive teaching as "using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them" (Gay, 2010, p. 31). In contrast to Ladson-Billings's focus on influencing teachers' attitudes and dispositions about working with culturally diverse student populations, Gay prioritized the development of competencies and methods that illustrate what culturally responsive teaching looks like in the classroom (Aronson & Laughter, 2016).

The work of these two educational researchers established a foundation for the work of others in the field of education. Indeed, Aronson and Laughter (2016) contend that Ladson-Billings's and Gay's work form two strands in educational research that contribute to what they identify as *culturally relevant education*. They distinguish culturally relevant education from multicultural education in that it strongly embraces issues of social justice in education. This corresponds to distinctions I have proposed between culturally responsive teaching in music and multicultural music education.

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy in the Context of Music Teacher Education

Examining Music Education Through a Cultural Lens

General teacher education has acknowledged that teachers must be sensitive to and knowledgeable about the influence of race, ethnicity, and culture on learning. This need is no less important for music teachers, specifically because of the relationship between music and culture. Among its many functions, music can serve as a means of cultural expression for groups and individuals (McKoy, 2013). Consequently, an important question in this regard is, has our approach to music education and music teacher preparation sufficiently recognized music as a signifier of cultural identity for music learners?

Delving into this question requires that we consider the influence of Bennett Reimer's (1970) aesthetic philosophy on approaches to music education over the last 40 years or more. Reimer maintained that an appropriate focus of music education should be to help learners develop the capacity to have a feelingful response to the interaction of musical elements. For Reimer, this was the essence of the aesthetic experience in music, and it required that learners attend to music's inherent meaning. In contrast, Elliott's (1995) praxial philosophy emphasized that "music ought to be understood in relation to the meanings and values evidenced in actual music making and music listening *in specific cultural contexts*" (p. 14; emphasis added). Elliott insisted that one of the problems with the aesthetic philosophy was that it tended to overlook the connections between music and culture. In his view, the aesthetic approach to music study is an objective process divorced from social or cultural contexts (except for purposes of providing insight into the structure of the music), not typically to help learners make meaningful cultural connections to music. To his credit, Reimer (2003) later acknowledged that both inherent and delineated meanings (such as those associated with culture) significantly contribute to our understanding of music. The question remains, however: How does our approach to music education truly honor the significance of music as a cultural signifier? The development of culturally responsive teachers provides one starting point.

What Makes a Culturally Responsive Music Teacher?

Characteristics of culturally responsive teachers and elements of culturally responsive teaching have been variously described in general education research literature, including works by Delpit (2006), Gay (2002), Hale (2001), Ladson-Billings (1995a), and Villegas and Lucas (2002). Vicki Lind and I (Lind & McKay, 2016) synthesized information from the general and music education literature as well as from interviews we conducted with music teachers. We identified four principles that are critical to the development of culturally responsive music teachers: (a) Know yourself, (b) know your students, (c) create a supportive classroom environment, and (d) make program and curricular choices and decisions that are culturally responsive.

Knowing yourself.

Parker Palmer (1997) has observed, "When I do not know myself, I cannot know who my students are" (p. 2). Palmer's statement implies that before teacher candidates can hope to

develop the cultural competencies that will dispose them to culturally responsive approaches to teaching, they need to engage in critical self-reflection and self-assessment. This requires them to examine their own cultural conditioning and how that conditioning influences personal beliefs, attitudes, and values, especially regarding members of racial, ethnic, and cultural groups. In addition, preservice teachers must assess the extent to which they may harbor conscious or unconscious biases toward mainstream ways of learning and instruction, which influence their perceptions of students in their classes. Such biases can cause teachers to view students whose behaviors and ways of learning correspond to mainstream classroom practices as more highly motivated and more highly achieving than students exhibiting more ethnocultural ways of behaving and learning (Boykin, Tyler, Watkins-Lewis, & Kizzie, 2006; Gay, 2010; Tyler, Boykin, & Walton, 2006; Villegas & Lucas, 2002).

A key focus of self-reflection for preservice teachers is the extent to which they may harbor beliefs founded on deficit-based assumptions about the intellectual capacities of certain cultural groups. As Lind and McKay (2016) explain, "In order to change the practices that have led to the disenfranchisement of certain populations, we must begin to understand the nuances of our teaching and determine how our decisions are rooted in our own experiences and how these decisions affect our students" (p. 29).

Knowing your students.

Much preservice teacher preparation has traditionally included a concentrated emphasis on educational psychology, which focuses on the cognitive, emotional, and social processes involved in how people learn. The discipline of psychology certainly has much to offer in terms of illuminating specific aspects of the learning process as related to individuals. However, it is not the only lens through which we might understand how learning occurs. Ladson-Billings (2006) suggested that viewing the learning process anthropologically (through a cultural lens) can shed light on how social and cultural dimensions of belonging mediate learning. In other words, learners' identification with specific social and cultural groups is as important to the learning process as individual psychological dimensions.

The extent to which preservice music teachers can develop learners' musical knowledge and performance skill is not merely a consequence of understanding their individual cognitive, social, and emotional development. It is also a result of understanding how learners' cultural experiences with music shape and inform both their understanding of it, and the ways in which they may approach musical performances. Among other things, this suggests that preservice music teachers should become familiar with their students' musical goals and aspirations, and how they engage with music outside of school. Moreover, they should realize that their students come to the music classroom with musical knowledge, much of which is culturally specific.

Creating a supportive learning environment.

Creating an environment that is conducive to learning is critical for culturally responsive teaching, and the relationship between and among teachers and students is a critical factor in establishing such an environment. Thus, preservice music teachers need to develop skills that will foster positive interactions with students and create an affirming classroom climate. These

skills include (a) culturally responsive caring, (b) effective cross-cultural communication, (c) having high expectations for students, and (d) understanding how to design learning environments for diverse learners (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Villegas & Lucas, 2002).

The idea of culturally responsive caring is derived from Gay (2010), who stated, "Teachers who genuinely care for students generate higher levels of all kinds of success than those who do not" (p. 49). Culturally responsive caring involves holding affirming views of students from diverse backgrounds and seeing racial and ethnic diversity as instructional assets as opposed to problems that must be solved or inconveniences that must be tolerated. Teachers who demonstrate culturally responsive caring are concerned about the whole child and see the nurturing of academic success and psychological well-being as equally important. They are persistent, continuously looking for ways to connect to students.

Because culture informs "what we talk about; how we talk about it; what we see, attend to, or ignore; how we think; and what we think about" (Porter & Samovar, 1991, p. 21), effective cross-cultural communication is another critical aspect of creating a supportive classroom environment for diverse student populations. Recognizing that differences in both verbal and nonverbal forms of communication are often culturally based allows teachers to better understand their students' abilities and to design instruction to meet diverse needs. In addition, valuing and respecting learners' culturally situated styles of communication need not conflict with meeting instructional obligations to teach the types and styles of discourse specific to an academic discipline; both can be achieved.

Having high expectations for students means believing that they have a deep capacity to learn. Sometimes, the terms used to describe certain students establish implicit negative expectations. For example, students who are struggling academically are conventionally described as being "at risk;' meaning that they are on the verge of failure. How significant might it be if these same students were viewed as being "at promise"? In both cases, the descriptors reference a potential result for students. However, the second descriptor reorients teachers' expectations toward the success students can experience with appropriate interventions rather than toward an expectation of inevitable failure without them: "Having high expectations for all students means that teachers must be able to see the bigger picture of future possibilities that their students may not yet be able to envision" (Lind & McKoy, 2016, p. 68).

Learners thrive in an environment that supports a variety of learning styles and enables them to see themselves as knowledgeable contributors to the learning process. Teachers who are committed to culturally responsive approaches to teaching strive to develop a community of learners in which the knowledge, experiences, and skills of all students are valued. Learning becomes a collaborative and reciprocal process between and among teachers and learners. It offers students an opportunity to be invested in their own learning.

Making program and curricular choices that are culturally responsive.

Many students exit music teacher preparation programs only with skills that will allow them to propagate a traditional model of music education for K-12 students. This is despite efforts over the last two decades to broaden the types of music students listen to and the musical experiences

they engage in during undergraduate study in music education. With a few variations and still more exceptions, the traditional model allows for general music experiences for all students at the elementary level, followed by options to perform in choral or instrumental ensembles in middle and high school. While this model may work exceedingly well in some instances, in others, it fails to meet the needs of most students.

Elpus and Abril (2011) found significant associations between high school ensemble participation and several variables, including race and ethnicity. Less than one quarter of high school seniors in the United States participated in school music programs in 2004. In terms of the racial and ethnic breakdown of the subset, White students were overrepresented when compared with their peers who were English language learners and Hispanic. While the researchers noted many possible reasons for the lack of representation among Hispanic students and English language learners, they suggested that music educators should consider how students of ethnic and racial minorities perceive the relevancy of their programs, ensembles, and curricula.

Our preservice music teachers must learn how to be flexible in their approach to music programs and curricular offerings so that they meet the needs as well as the individual musical goals and aspirations of their students. This does not mean that music teachers are absolved of the responsibility to engage students with unfamiliar musical genres, but it does mean that those who wish to become P-12 music educators should be willing and able to craft a music program that offers variety and values the many ways in which students make and think about music.

Engaging with Culturally Relevant Pedagogy in Music Teacher Preparation Programs

The instructional strategies included in this section are designed to help preservice teachers develop dispositions toward employing culturally responsive approaches to teaching. Thus, the strategies are focused on helping preservice teachers become more self-aware; to understand how components of culture, including race and ethnicity, mediate students' music learning; to create a supportive classroom environment; and to make curricular and program decisions that are responsive to culture. Establishing ground rules for discussion and interaction, such as those suggested by Brenda J. Allen (2014) of the University of Colorado, Denver, can help to provide an atmosphere of respect that can facilitate the types of conversations that the activities and assignments in this section are designed to generate.

Privilege Walk

The purpose of the privilege walk is to help students become aware of how they are privileged or marginalized by societal systems.[1] The walk activity is based on content from Peggy McIntosh's essay "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack;' in *White Privilege and Male Privilege: A Personal Account of Coming to See Correspondences Through Work in Womens Studies* (1988). In the essay, McIntosh lists statements that reflect the ways in which she benefits from White privilege in her life. There are many versions of the privilege walk (also known as the culture walk) available online. One that I have found useful was developed by Rebecca Layne and Ryan Chiu, two students enrolled in a course on conflict resolution pedagogy at

---

[1] If space is limited, a version of the privilege walk that uses cups and beads is available from http://www.differencematters.info/uploads/pdf/privilege-beads-exercise.pdf.

George Mason University. Detailed instructions for the activity are available at https://peacelearner.org/2016/o3/14/privilege-walk-lesson-plan/.

The privilege walk activity requires a space large enough for participants to be able to stand side by side and to move forward or backward for several feet. Because the activity will require participants to reveal information about themselves that they may consider to be personal, an atmosphere of trust must be established among the participants and between the participants and the instructor. Fortunately, the fact that music education majors typically progress through their undergraduate program with the same cohort, a level of familiarity and comfort with each other will have already developed, which can be helpful.

The activity begins with participants standing side by side in a straight line, holding hands or touching the shoulder of the person on either side of them. Participants may elect not to be touched by or hold the hands of individuals if that is their preference. The instructor tells the participants that a list of statements will be read, followed by a direction to step forward or backward. If the statement applies to participants, they are to move in whatever direction is specified. Participants always have the choice not to move in response to a specific statement.

At the end of the activity, participants will be standing at various points in front of and behind their starting point. The next step involves "unpacking" participants' responses to the activity. This debriefing is a critical component of the activity because it allows participants to explore how the activity made them feel, to interrogate and relieve possible negative emotions associated with the activity and have a better understanding of how both privilege and marginalization have influenced participants' lived experiences.

Music Privilege Walk

The following statements are used in an activity I developed to focus on how undergraduate music curricula privilege certain genres of music, ways of musical knowing, and performance practices over others. The setup and procedure are similar to those used in the privilege walk.

1. If you listened to classical recordings in your home, step forward.
2. If you studied the music that you associate with your cultural background in K-12 public school, step forward.
3. If you have ever felt that the music that you grew up with was not valued as much by other musicians as classical music, step back.
4. If you have ever attended a symphony concert that wasn't part of a school activity, step forward.
5. If you have ever been told that performing certain genres of music would ruin your instrumental or vocal technique, step back.
6. If most of the composers of Western classical music that you're aware of are (to your knowledge) the same sex as you and look like you, step forward.
7. If you feel that your aural skills are stronger than your music reading skills, step back.
8. If most of the people in your high school honors ensembles looked like you, step forward.
9. If most of the conductors of Western classical music that you're aware of are (to your knowledge) the same sex as you and look like you, step forward.

10. If your high school band's marching style was a show style or "high step" style, step back.

The music privilege walk may be used on its own; however, I have found that it can be very effective if used after participants have experienced the privilege walk.

Mapping the Matrix of Domination/Oppression

Another activity engages preservice music teachers in reflecting on the various cultural components that intersect to form their individual identities and often determine positions of privilege or marginalization (or both). This theory of intersectionality was first proposed by Collins (1990), who asserted that individuals are rarely privileged or marginalized based on only one factor, such as race or gender. Rather, the intersection of multiple social identity categories can result in an individual's being privileged, marginalized, or experiencing both privilege and marginalization, depending on the context.

SOCIAL IDENTITY CATEGORIES	PRIVILEGED SOCIAL GROUPS	BORDER SOCIAL GROUPS	MARGINALIZED SOCIAL GROUPS	"ISMS"
RACE	White	Biracial (White/Latino, Black, Asian)	Asian, Black, Latino, American Indian	Racism
SEX	Bio Men	Transsexual, Intersex	Bio Women	Sexism
GENDER	Bio Men & Women, Cisgender	Gender Bending/Bio Men & Women	Transgender, Genderqueer, Intersex	Transgender Oppression
SEXUAL ORIENTATION	Heterosexual	Bisexual	Lesbian, Gay Men	Heterosexism
CLASS	Rich/Upper Class	Middle Class	Poor/Working Class	Classism
RELIGION	Protestant	Roman Catholic (Historically)	Jewish, Muslim, Hindu	Religious Oppression
ABILITY/ DISABILITY	Temporarily Abled-Bodied	Temporary Disabled	Disabled	Ableism
AGE	Adults	Young Adults	Elders, Children/Youth	Ageism
EDUCATION	Highly Educated	College Educated	Un/Under Educated	Educationalism
GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION	Metropolitan	Suburban	Rural/ Unincorporated	Regional Discrimination

Figure 1. Matrix of domination/oppression.

Robinson (2017) adapted a visual representation of the matrix based on the work of Hardiman, Jackson, and Griffin (2007) (Figure 1), demonstrating how social identity categories such as race, sex, gender, attractional orientation,[2] religion, ability/disability, age, education, and

[2] Although Nicole Robinson used the term *sexual orientation* in the matrix, in my own teaching, I prefer to use the term *attractional orientation,* a concept originated by Amorie Robinson in "'Homosexual' or 'Homoattractional'? Re-evaluating Our Terminology;' *National Association of Social Workers-Michigan Chapter Newsletter,* February 2007.

geographic location function interdependently rather than independently and reinforce one another. As Robinson (2017) explained it, "Each social category has an embedded hierarchical system that refers to the overall organization of power within a society based on a particular arrangement of intersecting systems of domination" (p. 7).

Social identity categories in the matrix fall on a continuum from marginalized to privileged populations. Social identities that do not fit neatly into either category are considered border identities composed of individuals who experience both privilege and marginalization or oppression. Students map their intersectionality on the matrix of domination/oppression to understand that identity (how one experiences the world) is complex and that it is a social and historically constructed concept linked to power, value systems, and ideology. Instructors may choose to map their own intersectionality on the matrix first as an example, as suggested by Robinson (2017), whose mapped intersectionality is shown in Figure 2.

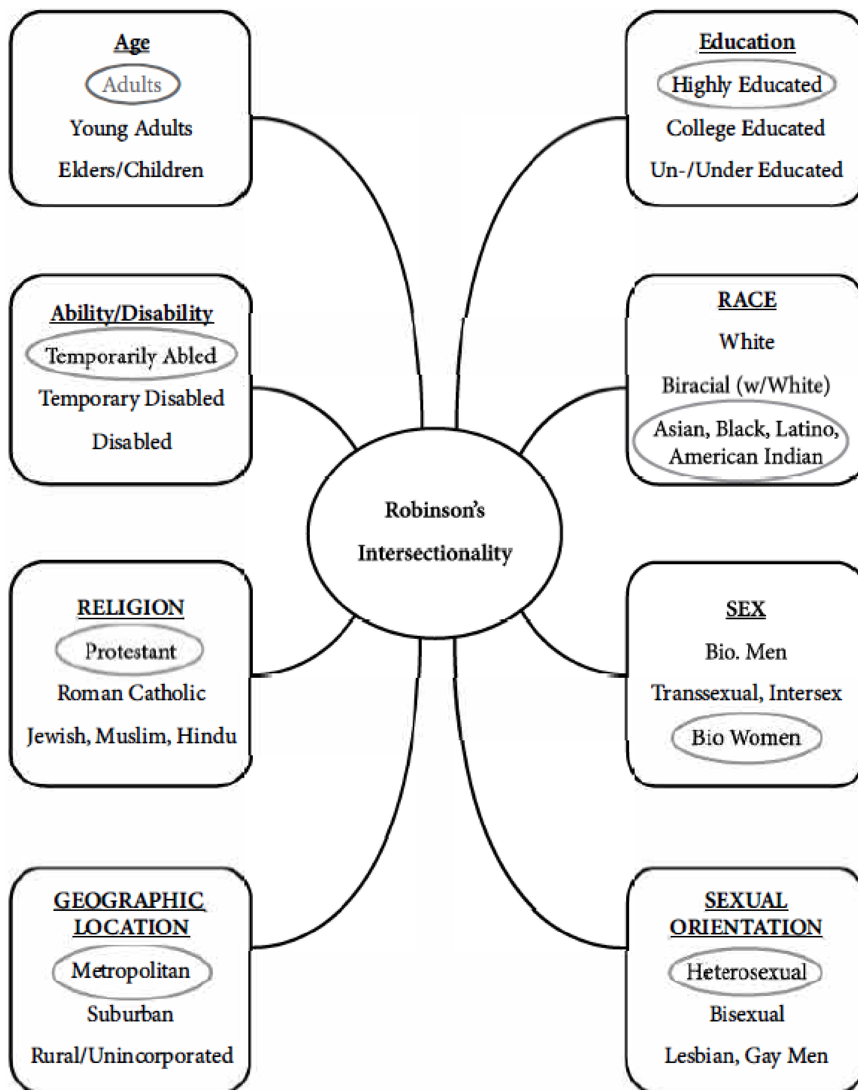

Figure 2. Robinson's intersectionality map, with each category ordered from privileged to marginalized social groups.

In addition to helping preservice teachers become more aware of how power and privilege (or the lack thereof) influence various points of access in their own lives, the matrix can also help them have a better understanding of how power and privilege may function to support or inhibit equity and access in the lives of P-12 students.

Interrogating Culture and Musical Hegemony

Although it is slowly changing, undergraduate curricula in music continue to privilege (a) Western European classical music over other musical genres and cultures, (b) male composers over female composers, (c) hetero-attractional musicians over homo- or pan-attractional musicians, and (d) musicians of Western European heritage over musicians of other ethnic backgrounds. Thus, our music education majors often have limited content knowledge regarding how cultural issues are (or are not) addressed in their own preparation as music teachers. This class activity can help music education majors critically examine the hegemony of their own undergraduate curriculum and to question how that hegemony can bias their perceptions. The activity focuses on various facets of diversity, including race and ethnicity.

1. Have participants form groups of three to five people and ask one person to be the recorder.
2. Give participants 30 seconds to make a list of as many composers as they can. Afterward, the recorder compiles the names. If a name comes up more than once, the recorder should place parentheses next to the name with the number of times it was listed.
3. The recorder from each group provides the instructor with their list, which the instructor will project via computer onto a screen, overhead, or on a large chart. If a name appears in more than one group, the instructor will add another number to the name for each occurrence.
4. Discuss why participants think some names were listed more than other names (e.g., more familiarity; perceived importance of composer).
5. Ask the participants to identify the category of musical genre represented by the names on the list (5 minutes). Ask the participants what genre is most represented in the list and to think about why.
6. Calculate the percentage of apparent female versus apparent male composers on the list, European American or European versus other ethnic backgrounds, and whether participants are aware of whether any of the composers named are/were gay, lesbian, bi-attractional, transgender, gender-neutral or gender-fluid.
7. Ask the participants if they think the list might be different if performers were listed instead of composers. If so, why might that be? How might the list be different if they were asked to list songwriters instead of composers?

In most cases, the responses in this activity will allow some conclusions to be drawn:

1. When we think of composers, we typically think of White males who compose in the Western European classical tradition.
2. Regardless of genre, we don't typically think of women when we think of composers.
3. We don't know many women or composers of color in any genre, but we may know more in some genres than others.

4. We don't consider the attractional orientation of composers as being particularly relevant, although when we choose to discuss information about composers' personal relationships for contextual purposes, we are more likely to focus on those relationships that would be characterized as hetero-attractional.

This activity can help students understand why it is important that we are aware of genres and musicians (whether composers, performers, conductors, arrangers, historians, educators) that are representative of a variety of cultures and backgrounds. How we teach needs to reflect the fact that teachers and students think about music in different ways depending on the kind of music we have performed and are familiar with.

Aural Music Learning

Including more demonstrations of aural music learning activities in our methods courses not only is good educational practice but also helps our preservice music teachers to honor the skills that their future students bring to the classroom and rehearsal space. Even though "rote before note" and "sound before symbol" suggest an important sequential consideration for music teaching, many music teachers unfortunately tend to focus on music reading too early in music education (Bamberger, 1996; Woody, 2012). Consequently, students whose ways of learning music and whose musical skills stem from an aurally based instructional model often find themselves at odds with formal instruction in music, and they feel they have no place in "school music."

Regardless of the instructional setting of a methods course, we can model lessons for our preservice music teachers that require learners to use their ears in performing while simultaneously building their capacity to read notation. While this is frequently done in methods courses for teaching music in early childhood, in elementary general music, and to some extent in choral methods, it is less frequently incorporated in instrumental methods courses. Considering that the development of musical skills such as improvisation is dependent on achieving a level of aural acuity, our preservice music teachers need opportunities to build on this capacity and see how it can bring students into the school music program who have traditionally looked elsewhere to achieve their musical goals.

Musical Auto-ethnography

This assignment provides preservice teachers with an opportunity to explore and reflect on the racial/ethnic/cultural factors that have influenced them musically. Participants are asked to respond to the following questions:

1. What kind of music do you feel is most closely associated with the ethnic and/or cultural background with which you identify, and why?
2. Was music important to your family? If so, why do you think it was? If not, why do you think it wasn't? In what ways (if any) were you and/or your family involved in music? Were there ways in which the ethnic and/or cultural community with which you identify expressed itself musically? If so, how were you involved in that expression?

3. What are the aesthetic values associated with the music of your ethnic and/or cultural background? (What musical elements, structural characteristics, style of performance, and performance practice are considered important or are valued?)
4. What music do you remember hearing first as a child? Would you consider this music to be specifically associated with the ethnic and/or cultural background with which you identify? Why or why not?
5. Did your musical education reflect ethnic and/ or cultural diversity? Do you believe that the music you associate with your own ethnic and cultural heritage was reflected in the music curriculum you studied at any educational level? If so, how? If not, describe when you became aware of the omission (if you did become aware of it).
6. What do you remember as your first exposure to music that was culturally different from what you were accustomed to hearing/performing? What qualities of that music were different from the music you were accustomed to hearing/performing?
7. If you could choose an example of music that you feel is representative of the music of your ethnic and/or cultural background, what would it be? What are the musical characteristics of this example that you believe demonstrate what is valued aesthetically in the music of your cultural background? Are you aware of ways in which the music of your cultural background is presented that are stereotypical and/or do not truly represent these aesthetic values?

Although this is an individual assignment, I have often asked participants to do a class presentation based on their response to item 7, including sharing the music they selected for that item. In addition to promoting preservice teachers' awareness of themselves, it is a fascinating way for them to learn about each other. I find this assignment particularly gratifying when I share my own responses to the items and music with the class members.

Community Inquiry Projects

There are many examples in music teacher education research literature of projects and activities that are intended to provide preservice music teachers with experiences in communities with which they are not familiar, and to assist them in developing their cross-cultural/intercultural competence (Barry, 1996; Emmanuel, 2005; Henry & Emmanuel, 2010). Some of these projects involve long-term immersion in school sites and communities that are unfamiliar to music teacher candidates. Although not every music teacher education program has the resources to engage their students in these types of projects on a continuing basis, there are other types of projects that can address the negative preconceptions that preservice music teachers sometimes have about communities and schools where the ethnic backgrounds of the populations are different from the backgrounds of the preservice music teachers.

One such project involves students taking a "community walk." This project works well both for early field experience practicum and for student teaching. Students explore the neighborhood surrounding a school, mapping its resources and services, talking to community residents, and developing relationships with community members. In addition, they are encouraged to attend religious and cultural events in the community and analyze media documents for the extent of cultural representation or omission. The use of field notes, free-writes, and interview data can provide rich sources for discussion and self-reflection.

Some Final Thoughts

The extent to which effective discussions can occur in music education methods courses regarding how issues of race and ethnicity (among other facets of social categorization and identity) mediate music teaching and learning depends on several factors. First, because of the legacy of marginalization of ethnic groups by institutions in the United States, we are not comfortable having discussions related to race. Attempts at such discussions tend to make some people feel either defensive, guilty, or overly solicitous, and they tend to force members of ethnic minority groups into the (tiresome and persistent) role of educating members of the ethnic majority. So, we find avoiding the conversations altogether an easier and safer option. Because we avoid having these conversations, we do not learn how to engage in them effectively. Thus, the avoidance behavior results in a self-perpetuating cycle of noncommunication.

Some music teacher educators may disagree philosophically with the notion that there is a need to engage preservice teachers in discussions focused on how facets of diversity can serve as barriers to or supports for music learning for P-12 students. They may believe that such discussions fall beyond the scope of their responsibilities as music teacher educators or are best handled in the general teacher education courses that are part of the curricula of music teacher education programs.

Music teacher educators who believe in the importance of engaging in conversations about race and ethnicity in music education may feel insecure about broaching the subject with their students. This may be because they were not privy to such discussions in their own preparation and, consequently, they may question their capacity to facilitate discussion of topics that may challenge their students' worldviews and deeply held beliefs and attitudes, and may touch off emotionally charged responses.

In addition to these considerations, how students perceive the person "bringing the message" can sometimes make a difference in how the information is received. I am very much aware that my ethnicity as an African American may affect how my students choose to engage with the ideas I may present. I am sometimes frustrated by the resistance that I encounter from some students who believe that I am being too sensitive and am "stirring things up" when I discuss issues related to race, ethnicity, and music education. After all, how objective can I be on the topic, given my status as an African American? Wouldn't it be natural for me to view everything through the lens of race, even when it isn't necessary? This resistance is not limited to White students. Sometimes students from ethnic minorities resist discussing these topics because they have achieved some measure of success in school by adopting a culturally "neutral" position. They mask their cultural inclinations so as not to make others uncomfortable or in order to blend into the mainstream (Gay, 2010).

While assumptions cannot always be made regarding how students from ethnic minorities may respond to conversations about race, in most cases my experience has been that they view my status as an African American instructor as an advantage. For many of my students, this is a topic they've longed to discuss, and the eagerness with which they share their thoughts and

experiences tells me that my classroom may be the first place they have had the opportunity to do so in the context of music education.

Another point of consideration in engaging our preservice music teacher educators with issues of racial and ethnic diversity is how the student/teacher power dynamic may influence students. Discerning whether students' responses to course content and activities are genuine or simply what they think they need to say to obtain a good grade is difficult. Sometimes students misunderstand our expectations when we ask them to discuss topics or answer questions about what constitutes ethical behavior toward their future P-12 students. I have had music education majors in my methods courses tell me that they are willing to take a lower grade because they can't answer a question "the way I want them to." They are operating under a mistaken assumption that my asking them to effectively articulate a perspective that may be different from their own is tantamount to demanding that they subscribe to that view.

Probably the most important factor affecting the extent to which effective discussions of the impact of race and ethnicity in music education may occur is the level of trust that has been established between the teacher and individual music education students, and among individual music education students and their peers. As mentioned earlier, the nature of the undergraduate music education program (i.e., cohorts of students moving through the program together and encountering music education faculty in multiple courses) provides an ideal environment for establishing the kind of trust needed for such discussions. It is critically important that all students believe they can express their opinions and feelings, even if they may differ from those of their peers and especially if those views might be perceived to be "politically incorrect."

Applying principles of culturally relevant pedagogy in music education has the potential to move our preservice music teachers beyond a singular focus on materials and repertoire to delve more deeply into the intricacies of culturally situated musical expression. By giving our preservice music teachers the tools to interrogate how race and ethnicity mediate music teaching and learning, we serve our ultimate objective, which is to develop music teachers who have the capacity to assist their future students in reaching their individual musical goals.

References

Allen, B. J. (2014). *Guidelines for interaction.* Retrieved from http://www.differencematters.info/uploads/pdf/guidelines-for-interaction.pdf

Anemone, R. L. (2011). *Race and human diversity: A biocultural approach.* Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Aronson, B., & Laughter, J. (2016). The theory and practice of culturally relevant education: A synthesis of research across content areas. *Review of Educational Research, 86,* 163-206.

Bamberger, J. (1996). Turning music theory on its ear. *International Journal of Computers for Mathematical Learning,* 1(1), 33-55.

Bamshad, M., Wooding, S., Salisbury, B. A., & Stephens, J. C. (2004). Deconstructing the relationship between genetics and race. *Nature Reviews Genetics, 5,* 598-609. doi:10.1038/nrg1401

Barry, N. (1996, April). *The effects of special training and field experiences upon pre-service teachers' level of comfort with multicultural music teaching situations.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New York, NY.

Bereiter, C., & Engelmann, S. (1966). *Teaching disadvantaged children in the preschool.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Bloom, B. S., Davis, A., & Hess, R. (1965). *Compensatory education for cultural deprivation.* New York, NY: Holt.

Boykin, A. W, Tyler, K. M., Watkins-Lewis, K. M., & Kizzie, K. (2006). Culture in the sanctioned classroom practices of elementary school teachers serving low-income African American students. *Journal of Education of Students Placed At-Risk,* 11,161-173.

Bradfield-Kreider, P. (2001). Personal transformations from the inside out: Nurturing monocultural teachers' growth toward multicultural competence. *Multicultural Education, 8(4),* 31-34.

Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, 347 U.S. 483 (1954).

Collins, P. H. (1990). Black feminist thought in the matrix of domination. In P. H. Collins (Ed.), *Black feminist thought: Knowledge, consciousness, and the politics of empowerment* (pp. 221-238). Boston, MA: Unwin Hyman.

Cooper, M. (2016, May). Remarks on diversity roil music education group. *The New York Times,* p. C2. Retrieved from https://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/13/arts/music/music-education-groups-leader-departs-after-remarks-on-diversity.html

Crow, L. D., Murray, W. I., & Smythe, H. H. (1966). *Educating the culturally disadvantaged child: Principles and programs.* New York, NY: David McKay.

Delpit, L. (2006). *Other people's children: Cultural conflict in the classroom* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: New Press.

Elliott, D. J. (1995). *Music matters: A new philosophy of music education.* New York, NY: Oxford.

Elpus, K., & Abril, C.R. (2011). High school music ensemble students in the United States: A demographic profile. *Journal of Research in Music Education,* 59(2), 128-145. doi:0.1177/0022429411405207

Emmanuel, D. T. (2005). The effects of a music education immersion internship in a culturally diverse setting on the beliefs and attitudes of pre-service music teachers. *International Journal of Music Education,* 23, 49-62.

Freire, P. (1971). *Pedagogy of the oppressed.* New York, NY: Herder and Herder.

Gay, G. (2000). *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research, and practice.* New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Gay, G. (2002). Preparing for culturally responsive teaching. *Journal of Teacher Education, 53,* 106-116.

Gay, G. (2010). *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research, and practice* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Gay, G., & Howard, T. C. (2000). Multicultural teacher education for the 21st century. *The Teacher Educator, 36,* 1-16.

Gibson, M. A. (2001). Immigrant adaptation and patterns of acculturation. *Human Development, 44,* 19-23. doi:10.1159/00005703

Hale, J. (2001). *Learning while Black: Creating educational excellence for African American children.* Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Hardiman, R., Jackson, B., & Griffin, P. (2007). Conceptual foundations for social justice education. In M. Adams, L. A. Bell, & P. Griffin (Eds.), *Teaching for diversity and social justice* (pp. 36-66). New York, NY: Routledge.

Henry, W., & Emmanuel, D. T. (2010). Globalizing music education: A contextual approach to developing students' intercultural competence. In M. Schmidt (Ed.), *Collaborative action for change: The proceedings from the* 2007 *Symposium on Music Teacher Education* (pp. 71-84). New York, NY: Rowman and Littlefield.

Kelly, S. N. (2003). The influence of selected cultural factors on the environmental teaching preference of undergraduate music education majors. *Journal of Music Teacher Education,* 12(2), 40-50.

Kim, B. S. K., & Abreu, J. M. (2001). Acculturation measurement: Theory, current instruments, and future directions. In J. G. Ponterotto, J.M. Casas, L. A. Suzuki, & C. M. Alexander (Eds.), *Handbook of multicultural counseling* (2nd ed., pp. 394-424). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Kluger, R . (1975). *Simple justice: The history* of Brown v. Board of Education *and Black America's struggle for equality.* New York, NY: Knopf.

Kumar, R., & Hamer, L. (2012). Preservice teachers' attitudes and beliefs toward student diversity and proposed instructional practice: A sequential design study. *Journal of Teacher Education, 64,* 162-177,

Ladson-Billings, G. J. (1995a). But that's just good teaching! The case for culturally relevant pedagogy. *Theory into Practice, 34,* 159-165.

Ladson-Billings, G. J. (1995b). Toward a theory of culturally relevant pedagogy. *American Education Research Journal, 32,* 465-491.

Ladson-Billings, G. J. (2006). It's not the culture of poverty, it's the poverty of culture: The problem with teacher education. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly, 37,* 104-109.

Lind, V. R., & McKoy, C. L. (2016). *Culturally responsive teaching in music education: From understanding to application.* New York, NY: Routledge.

Lusca, E. L. (2008, October). *Race as a social construct.* Retrieved from https://anthropology.net/2008/10/01/race-as-a-social-construct/

Maruca, M. (2004). Brown v. Board of Education *historical handbook.* Oro Valley, AZ: Western National Parks Association.

McIntosh, P. (1988). *White privilege and male privilege: A personal account of coming to see correspondences through work in womens studies.* Wellesley, MA: Wellesley College Center for Research on Women.

McKoy, C. L. (2013). Effects of selected demographic variables on music student teachers' self-reported cross-cultural competence. *Journal of Research in Music Education, 60,* 375-394. doi:10.1177/0022429412463398

Olson, S. (2002). *Mapping human history: Discovering the past through our genes.* Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.

Palmer, P. (1997). *The courage to teach: Exploring the inner landscape of a teachers life.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Palmié, S. (2007). Genomics, divination, "racecraft:' *American Ethnologist,* 34(2), 205-222. doi:10.1525/ae.2007.34.2.205

People, J., & Bailey, G. (2010). *Humanity: An introduction to cultural anthropology* (9th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.

Perry, I. (2011). *More beautiful and more terrible:* The *embrace and transcendence of racial inequality in the United States.* New York, NY: New York University Press.

Plessy v. Ferguson, 267 U.S. 163 (1896).

Porter, R. E., & Samovar, L. A. (1991). Basic principles of intercultural communication. In L. A. Samovar & R. E. Porter (Eds.), *Intercultural communication: A reader* (6th ed., pp. 5-22). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Reimer, B. (1970). *A philosophy of music education.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Reimer, B. (2003). *A philosophy of music education: Advancing the vision* (3rd ed.). New York, NY: Prentice Hall.

Risch, N. (2005). The whole side of it-An interview with Neil Risch by Jane Gitschier. *PLoS Genetics,* 1(1), e14. doi:10.1371/journal.pgen.0010014

Robinson, N. R. (2017). Developing a critical consciousness for diversity and equity among preservice music teachers. *Journal of Music Teacher Education, 26(3),* 11-26.

Sam, D. L., & Berry, J. W (2010). Acculturation: When individuals and groups of different cultural backgrounds meet. *Perspectives on Psychological Science, 5,* 472-481. doi:10.1177/1745691610373075

Templeton, A. R. (2013). Biological races in humans. *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science Part C: Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences, 44(3),* 262-271. doi:10.1016/j.shpsc.2013.04.010

Tyler, K. M., Boykin, A. W., & Walton, T. R. (2006). Cultural considerations in teachers' perceptions of student classroom behavior and achievement. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 22,* 998-1005.

Vasquez-Montilla, E., Just, M., & Triscari, R. (2014). Teachers' dispositions and beliefs about cultural and linguistic diversity. *Universal Journal of Educational Research,* 2, 577-587.

Villegas, A. M., & Lucas, T. (2002). Preparing culturally responsive teachers: Rethinking the curriculum. *Journal of Teacher Education, 53,* 20-32.

Woody, R. H. (2012). Playing by ear: Foundation or frill? *Music Educators Journal, 99(2),* 82-88.