Framing the Discussion

What do we mean by diversity and inclusion in music education?

“...diversity education attempts to address such issues as racial and social class segregation, the disproportionate achievement of students of various backgrounds, and the structural inequality in both schools and society” (Nieto, 2009).

“Critical inclusive education offers an overarching framework for preparing (special) educators to critically analyze the way in which dominant ideologies (e.g., ableism, racism, sexism, etc.) to construct normalcy. It also critiques the way these dominant norms are used to justify the exclusion of students deemed different from the dominant norm” (Siuty, 2017).

Thinking Critically About Diversity and Inclusion

Problems: Our traditional educational practices have been continuously reified until they become so expected that they are not questioned. The musical selections and repertoire that is performed systematically privileges certain musics and ways of being musical. As Allsup (2016) explained: “I remain unconvinced, however, that we have adequately interrogated the problem of musical expertise: who has it, what it is, and how it might be attained” (p. 9). These questions are not just subject matter considerations, as music is a cultural facet of people’s lives. By including and excluding, we also express who our work serves most.

Upshot: Inclusion is concerned with the process of increasing and sustaining the participation of all people in a society” (Booth, 1996). By examining whom we serve and who is missing we can think more flexibly about what our music programs are. Rather than being doorkeepers who carefully mind who is allowed in, we might instead define our successes by whom we include and how they succeed.
Naming and Calling Out Institutional Barriers and Practices

What barriers and practices exist in our current K-12/higher education institutional structures and sociocultural beliefs that impede progress toward advancing diversity and inclusion in music education?

I. Traditions and Inheritances

Problems: Traditions of our curricular strands, top-down teaching models, and restrictions in program offerings create a disenfranchisement of some students while privileging others especially in the large ensemble model. Music education is valued when “formally” done in schools or lessons; prior musical knowledge of children is not offered, honored, or cultivated; curriculum predicated on specialization, the canon and talent as the hallmark of musicianship remain.

Upshot: Narrow and normative vision of schooling results in competency in one major performance area and musical experience for students. Social class segregation is a result of traditions and limits of the discipline’s offerings, perpetuating the mindset of “musician” as narrowly defined and schools of music as exclusive.

Ways forward: Explore and utilize student-centered teaching, democratic approaches, and collaborative practices within all ensembles that implements creating, performing, and responding standards. Select repertoire with/from underrepresented groups such as women composers and non-western cultures. Create curriculum that is rooted in comprehensive, process-based experiences with music; make the discipline more accessible and less exclusive to students; being more culturally responsive to students’ needs through honoring ‘home’ music and personal experiences; fostering a climate of “music for all,” no matter the musical offering.

II. Curricular Structure

Problems: Tracking creates curricular limitations that spread from preservice experiences into the profession and back. When tracks circumscribe musical experiences, programs become replicative, with no open spaces for some populations or musics to become part of the curriculum. Hegemony occurs wherever a canon is privileged, relegating non-canonic experiences to “extra-curricular” status. When curricula are atomized and technocratic, student and faculty loads are heavy. The resulting loss of extra-curricular music-making highlights these forms exclusions. Across the curriculum, such exclusivity locks out and dictates inequities.

Upshot: Tracked degree programs preserve structural inequity through a hegemony of the required; suppression of open mind-sets and promotion of cookie-cutter career preparation; and the exclusion of non-canonic aesthetics and practices. These issues work against licensure intent of diversity and inclusion.

Ways forward: Envision and enact curricular changes on basis of 21st-century careers. Integrate and synthesize curricular offerings; minimize atomization and tracking. Organize learning around “big ideas,” rather than competencies. Open spaces for structural equity in the curriculum by: studying and experiencing multiple aesthetics and practices; building on, deepening, and expanding students’ interests; situating student learning experiences in various and highly diverse communities; and providing choices within curricula through projects and “required options.”

III. Accreditation

Problems: The language and codes in accreditation suggest that to be professional, music educators must possess a specialized knowledge and skill-base which is highly “product-oriented” and highly controlled by performance dictates, along with “package/delivery” musico/lo/gical/music theory knowledge (Leonhard, 1985). This product-package/delivery-oriented conception is accompanied by liberal arts courses, with some professional knowledge courses added (50 % music, 30-35% liberal arts [college requirements], and 15-20% professional—NASM, p. 119). According to Campbell and Burdell (1996), this specialized body of knowledge and skill in music is centered on what “musicians do,” and on the pedagogy necessary to “make music.”
**Upshot:** Elaborating an identity of a musician (not a music educator) and the newly acquired function of developing future musicians (in the K-12 schools) frames music education preservice teachers’ concerns with their teaching role. Indicative of this role is the practice of selecting and sorting children by skill-ability, and the discourse of audition, select ensembles, quality repertoire, conducting technique, etc. Equally indicative is the low presence of talk focused on inclusion of multi-musical practices, principles of learning or career aspirations as “general” music teachers.

### IV. Professional Organizations

**Problems:** Curriculum endorsements and performing opportunities are based upon technocratic frameworks; overly standardized, fostering prescribed components favoring specific forms of musical competence and excellences; curriculum favors specific forms of assessment based on sorting; competition with performing opportunities leading to sorting, fostering implicit/embedded SES privileging.

**Upshot:** Minimized teacher “voice” and empowerment; forced choice (you're in or you're out...); rigid classification of knowledge; rigid compliance, minimal flexibility, perpetuates the status quo, reproduction of values (self-replication cycle).

**Ways forward:** Individuals have the power and agency to expand/modify/lead or remove from participation within authorized agencies. Remove participation policies that get in the way of student access, participation, and achievement. Develop initiatives focused on multicultural performing opportunities and culturally relevant teaching. (Lind & McKoy, 2016; Roberts & Shehan-Campbell, 2015) Advocate for curricular and learning experiences that place people at the center of education rather than materials, skills, and repertoire (Kelly-McHale & Abril, 2015).

### V. Recruitment and Admissions

**Problems:** Recruitment is exclusively constructed around and targeted towards filling existing ensembles and studios; permitted instruments/musical practices are highly restricted (narrowly-defined concepts of beauty and appropriate repertoire); absent are musical/social values, ideals, roles outside of the performance paradigm. Admission is limited by narrow cultural concepts of musical competence, validity and excellence as defined by the repertoire, instrumentation and performance practices of the traditional Band, Orchestra, Chorus, ensemble paradigm; favoring only those with resources to support years of formal, private music instruction. Music Education faculty are not always directly empowered in recruitment and admission processes.

**Upshot:** Implicit preference and oppression of class and race; cost and overburdened degree requirements are preventive; reproduction of status quo; suppressed awareness; limited inquiry (Bradley, 2015); implied devaluation of Music Education as a degree option.

**Ways forward:** Administrative structures should empower Music Education faculty with a substantive role in recruitment and admissions processes; Music Education faculty must insist on incorporation of student dispositions, criteria and values specific to the field of music education; raise awareness with studio faculty, administration, and colleagues to upshots of current practices; broaden concepts of quality/excellence outside of culturally specific ideas; develop collaboratively additional “access-points” to schools of music for study; develop ways to select students that addresses needs of the field (and current K-12 students) in addition to needs of the institution.
Full Circle

Traditional practices continuously reify ways of knowing and ways of being musical. We are then confronted with accepted ways of being musical that are privileged in schools of music and then perceived as being of most value for inclusion in K-12 music education.

Accepting current practices as “correct” does more to exclude than include. Questions of what musics are included are not just related to subject matter. They are questions related to whom we include and point directly to issues of equity.

K-12 Thoughts and Responses

NOTES:
What inspirations and challenges do K-12 music educators have for music education teacher preparation programs?

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Central Themes

Thinking inclusively benefits everyone. To achieve inclusion and diversity education goals, move toward individualization, personalization of admissions, curriculum content, and learning experiences. Situate the processes and outcomes of the degree program within a global and culturally responsive framework aimed at developing career flexibility and adaptability.

I. Inheritance and Traditions

- Interrogate the mindset of privilege—contrast this with a mindset of equity and cultural pluralism. Shift minds toward a multicultural and culturally responsive experience. Engage in the “culture of today.”
- Move away from a culture of sorting and labeling. Disrupt the “opportunity pipeline” and look in additional places for potential teacher candidates, keeping a culturally responsive perspective in mind.
- Move toward comprehensive musicianship; Move away from virtuosity (conservatory) musicianship.
- Move from an acquisition of content model of pedagogy to a model of pedagogy based in investigation and synthesis.

II. Curriculum Structures

- Be career minded. Abolish tracks. Implement a multicultural perspective—provide opportunities for inquiry, personal expression, and identity affirmation.
- Use an anthropological lens as a way to address embedded racialization of content, and as a way to address cultural relevance.
- Conceptualize music study as human practices in which functions, styles, genres, tools and approaches become central in understanding.
- Re-Imagine aural skills as aural learning.

III. Accreditation

- Ask accreditation bodies how they proactively respond to cultural change and how they hold themselves accountable to change. A status quo response re-affirms inequity and exclusivity and is self-serving.
- Ask accreditation bodies to acknowledge that they highly control curriculum and that they should take a generative and interdisciplinary approach to curriculum and not a skill/competencies approach.
- Ask accreditation agencies to articulate specifically and directly how they are responsive to multiculturalism, inclusivity, and diversity.
- Ask accreditation agencies to articulate what it is they are conserving, preserving, curating, and promoting.

IV. Professional Organizations

- Ask professional organizations to analyze their mission and purpose and identify whether it is creating inequity deliberately (or unintended bias) through its structures and practices.
- Ask professional organizations to be explicit and intentional about offering professional development focused on equity, inclusivity, and diversity education.
- Emphasize and/or re-brand public perception around musical learning— not competition.
- Analyze publications and materials and promote ideas that support musical development within a diversity/multicultural context. Move away from materials categorized primarily by leveled technique that support sorting and competition.

V. Recruitment and Admissions

- Cultivate habits of mind among school of music faculty that are supportive of self-analysis aimed at equity and inclusion.
- Re-conceptualize audition criteria and admission processes. Move away from ensemble-driven admissions and move toward open admissions centered on a future music education student’s individualized artistry, and inquiry and investigation within specific cultural practices. Probe applicants’ experiences, interests, and prior work with K-12 populations as a screening mechanism and weighted component for admissions.
- Give power to the music education department to determine who is admitted into the music education degree program.