

FRAMEWORK FOR CULTURALLY RELEVANT AND RESPONSIVE MUSIC TEACHING

SOCIAL JUSTICE & ANTI-RACISM IN MUSIC EDUCATION

Social *injustice* is the absence of or an imbalance of equity, access, opportunity, and power across groups of people. Social injustice also includes discrimination based on race, religious beliefs, gender, sex, sexual orientation, and/or country of origin. Social injustice is also unmerited favor given to groups of people, and the oppression or systemic disregard of a group.

Social justice: is the distribution of **wealth**, **opportunities**, [power] and **privileges** within a society (Oxford Dictionary). The purpose of social justice work is to bring balance to inequities, grant access/opportunity, and redistribute power.

Social Injustice in K12 Music Teaching & Learning:

- **Curriculum: What is excluded?**
- Under-funded programs
- No program
- Lack of support
- Scheduling
- Expense

MUSIC CURRICULUM AS SOCIAL INJUSTICE:

Roots in colonialism, imperialism, and White supremacy

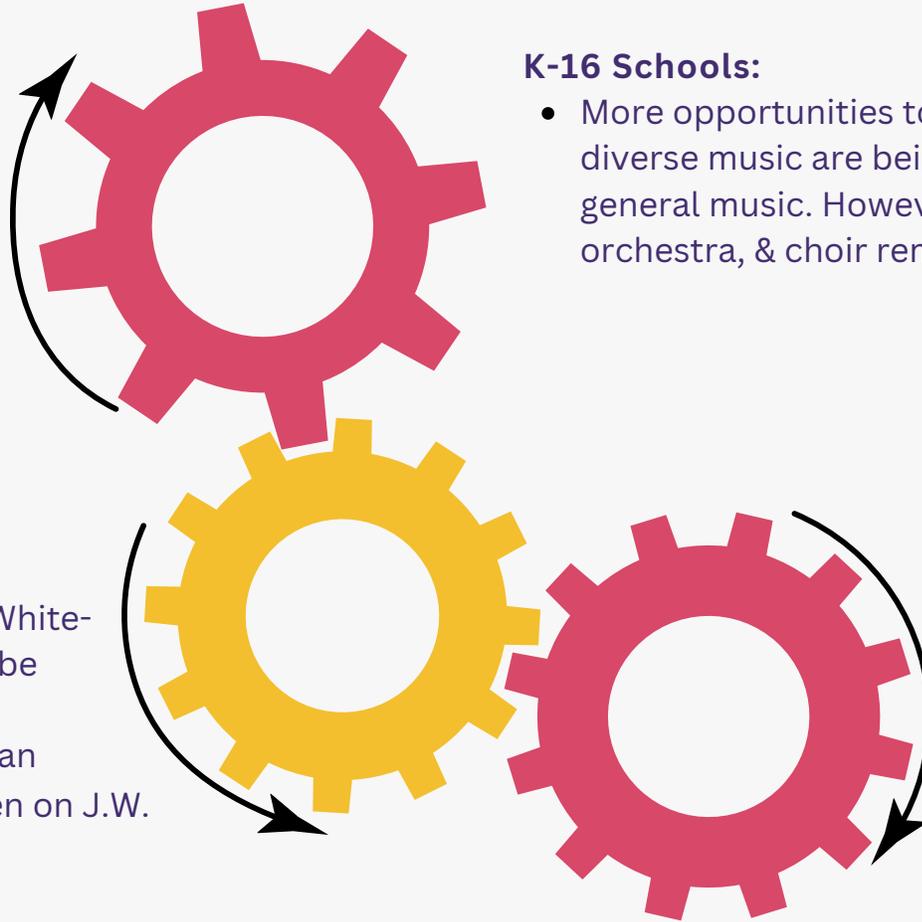
- Western art music has/had deep connections to European aristocracy.
- As Europeans set out to conquer distant lands, they did so in the names of their monarch, “civilizing” the new land with aristocratic ideas and religion, enslavement was the mechanism.
- The European aesthetic became supreme.

The White Racial Frame (Joe Feagin, 2020) & Musical Aesthetics (Phillip Ewell, 2020)

- Whiteness is the frame through which musical aesthetics are viewed
- White people and culture are seen as:
 - Refined
 - Proper
 - Connected to the Divine
 - Pure → Tonal Theory/Overtone series

“Dominant groups develop standards based on their own characteristics and customs and expect others to emulate their styles and assimilate to their customs whether it is feasible for them or productive for society (Brantlinger, 2003, p. 3).”

THE IMPACT OF THE WHITE RACIAL FRAME ON MUSIC EDUCATION



K-16 Schools:

- More opportunities to engage with diverse music are being offered in general music. However, band, orchestra, & choir remain stagnant.

Lack of Authenticity:

- “Diverse” music is White-washed in order to be marketable.
 - See *Imani* by Sean O’Laughlin (listen on J.W. Pepper)

Not Enough Resources:

- We can become reliant on pre-packaged, one-size fits all curriculum for expediency. But those resources typically don’t originate from primary sources.

ANTI-RACISM IN MUSIC EDUCATION

Anti-Racism is the process of actively identifying and opposing racism. The goal of anti-racism is to challenge racism and actively change the policies, behaviors, and beliefs that perpetuate racist ideas and actions.

As time moves forward many emerging practices are being utilized in the music classroom. These practices include decolonization, culturally relevant pedagogy, critical pedagogy for music education, the modern band movement, the formation of non-Western music ensembles.

Social justice action and anti-racism work within music education also requires increased cultural competencies of students and teachers, support from the school community, and policy changes at district and state levels.

Lastly, teachers must always reflect on their practices. Ask yourself, "what policies or classroom rules disproportionately impact students of color or working-class families?" If you find there are policies or practices that unintentionally hurt students, how can you make the change? How can your classroom be a more just and equitable learning environment?

IDENTIFYING STRUCTURAL BARRIERS

Barriers to social justice did not manifest overnight, but rather there are structural barriers embedded into our institutions, impacting policies and practices. Often times these policies or practices are rarely questioned, and can be difficult to identify.

Identifying structural barriers requires asking questions that get at the root of a problem.

Questioning *causes, effects, systems, and solutions* help identify structural barriers.

These questions include:

- Causes: What is causing racial inequity?
- Effects: What were the actions? What are the impacts?
- Systems: What institutions are responsible?
- Solutions: What are proactive strategies and solutions?

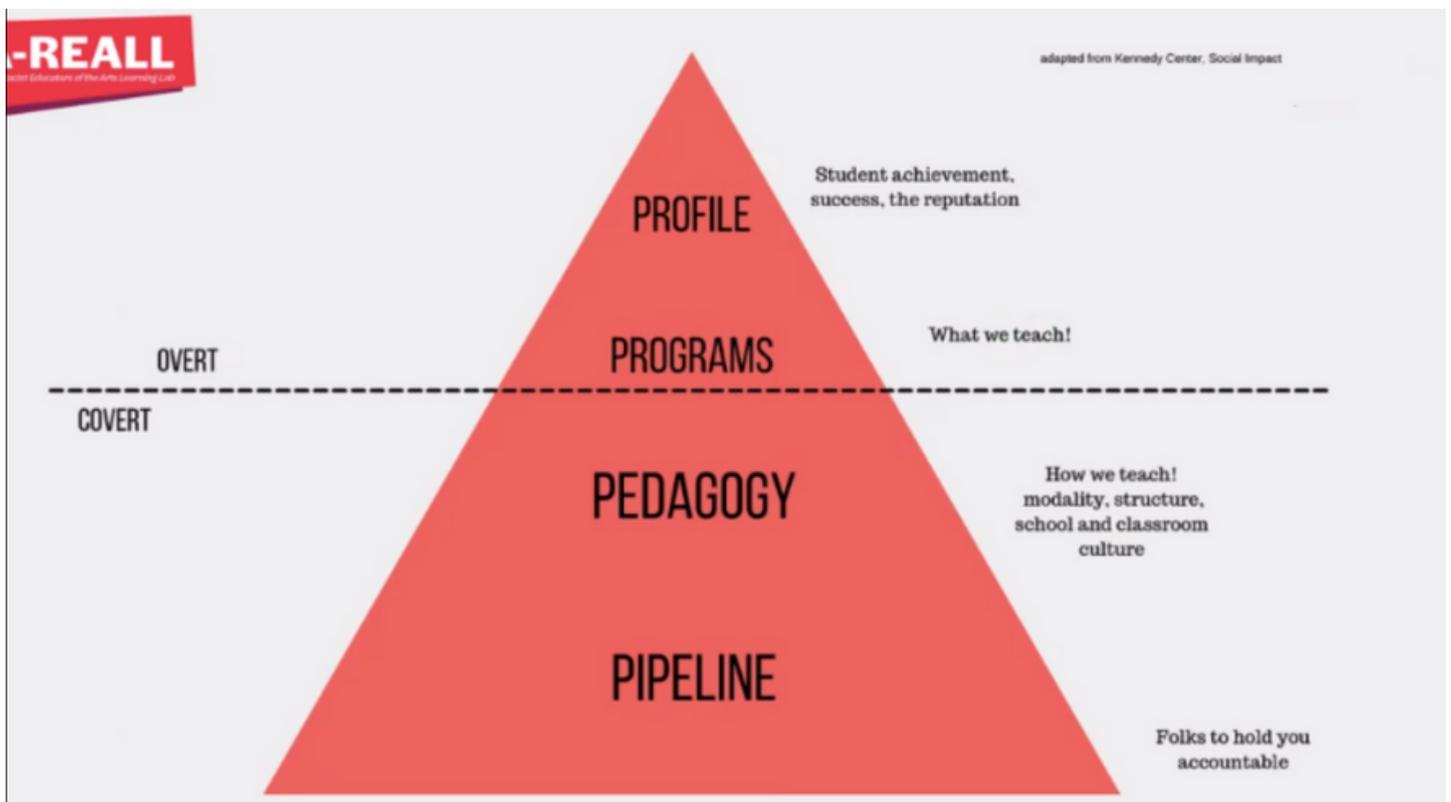
Asking these questions help us interrogate the systems that are in place, and take action towards justice.



SHIFTING TO ANTI-RACIST & SOCIAL JUSTICE PRACTICE

In times of unrest or a reaction to an injustice greater focus is placed on programs and product as a means of demonstrating changes being made. Unfortunately, programming without a shift in mindset or consciousness is not sustainable. Without a shift or change in mindset, new programs or initiatives are suffocated by old practices.

To shift to socially just practice we must look to the 4 P's: Pipeline => Pedagogy => Programs => Profile. The pipeline represent community stakeholders for accountability and informed support. Pedagogy is the guiding teaching philosophy and methodology. Programs are what we teach, and profile is the end product. Pipeline and Pedagogy are essential for sustaining and facilitating dynamic change in music teaching and learning.



Graphic taken from Maryland State Department of Education - Fine Arts Anti-Racist Educators of the Arts Learning Lab

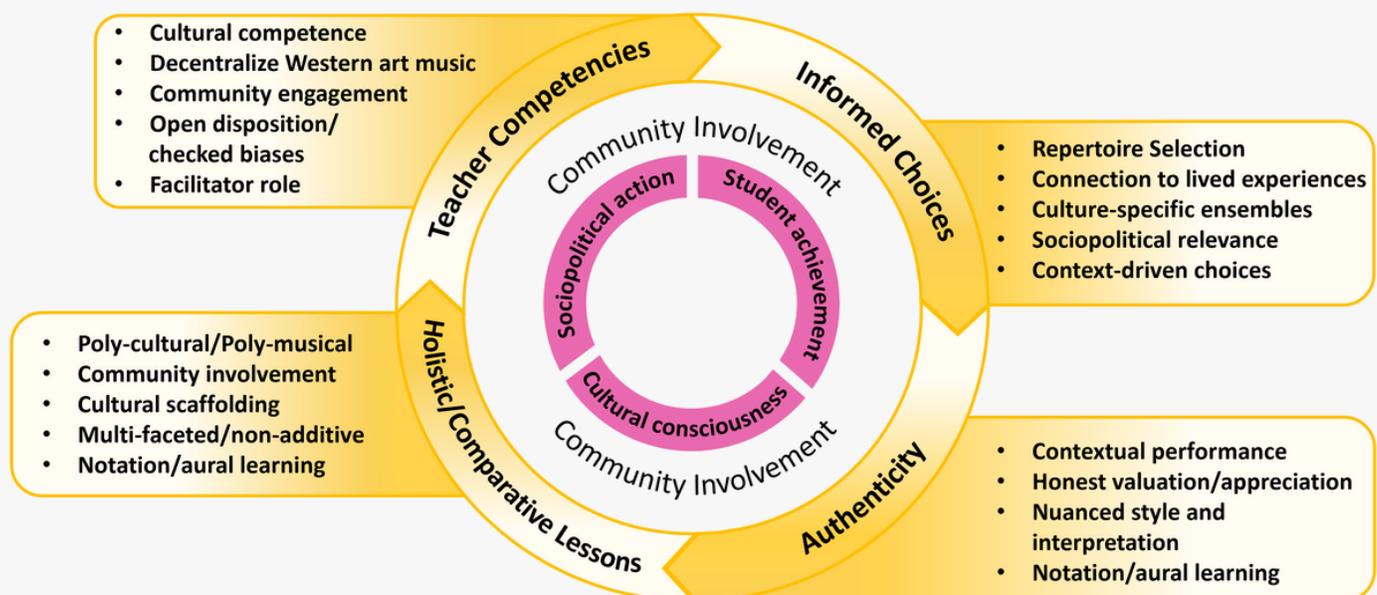
SHIFTING PEDAGOGY: FRAMEWORK FOR CULTURALLY RELEVANT AND RESPONSIVE MUSIC TEACHING

The Framework for Culturally Relevant and Responsive Music Teaching (FCRRMT) was developed in 2021 by Liz Palmer, Jason Vodicka, Tina Huynh, Chrissie D'Alexander, and Lisa Crawford with the aim of providing music teachers with a practical guide for implementing culturally relevant or culturally responsive teaching. At its core, CRP is an assets-based approach, capitalizing on student experiences, centering students as experts. Ladson-Billings' (1995) culturally relevant pedagogy model has 3 pillars: (a) student achievement, (b) cultural competence, and (c) sociopolitical consciousness. Each pillar supports students' intellectual and cultural awareness.

The FCRRMT is grounding in Ladson-Billings' 1995 framework and buildings on similar frameworks in music (Shaw, 2012; Lind & McKoy, 2016). The frame work has 4 quadrants (or access points):

- Teacher Competencies
- Informed Choices
- Authenticity
- Holistic/Comparative Lessons

The framework is represented as a circle to demonstrate the ongoing nature of culturally relevant and responsive teaching.



QUADRANT 1: TEACHER COMPETENCIES

Teacher Competencies is broken down into 5 components: a) Cultural Competence, b) Decentralize Western art Music, c) Community Engagement, d) Open disposition/Checked Biases, and e) Facilitator Role.

Quadrant 1 focuses on the teacher's reflexive practice and personal growth. As teachers work through quadrant 1, there are guiding questions/statements that support reflection.

Cultural Competence:

- Humility and Hospitality
- Understanding of other cultural norms
- Seeing yourself as "Other"

Decentralize Western art Music:

- Curricular choices outside of WAM classical traditions.
- Western Art Music is no longer the norm or the starting point for music discovery.

Community Engagement:

- What musical opportunities exist in the school community?
- Creating/participating in cultural exchanges.

Open disposition/Checked Biases:

- Where are your biases/blind spots?
- How might you overcome them?
- Creating opportunities to learn
- Seeking out new musical opportunities

Facilitator Role:

- Students have a role in sharing information
- Step outside of teacher directed learning

OPEN DISPOSITION/CHECKED BIASES

As teachers begin their journey using the framework it is important to look inward and assess any implicit or explicit biases that may be present. These biases may be connected to attitudes about race/ethnicity, sexuality, gender, and even music.

What is Bias? Bias is a particular tendency, trend, inclination, feeling, or opinion, especially one that is preconceived or unreasoned **OR** unreasonably hostile feelings or opinions about a social group; prejudice.

Biases inform our attitudes/opinions about people, places, objects, etc. Attitude informs our behaviors.

Example of Musical Bias:

Electronic music of the mid-20th century is considered to be sophisticated academic music. Composers like Milton Babbitt, Karlheinz Stockhausen, Edgar Varèse, Pierre Boulez, etc. have earned spaces in the annals of music theory for their experimentation with electronic music, whereas, contemporary popular musicians are denigrated for sampling, using song form, and backbeats.

- Cultural competence
- Decentralize Western art music
- Community engagement
- Open disposition/checked biases
- Facilitator role



The open door as ethical treatment of the "Other" (open disposition)

"Après vous Monsieur" or "After you, sir!" (Levinas, 1985, p. 89).

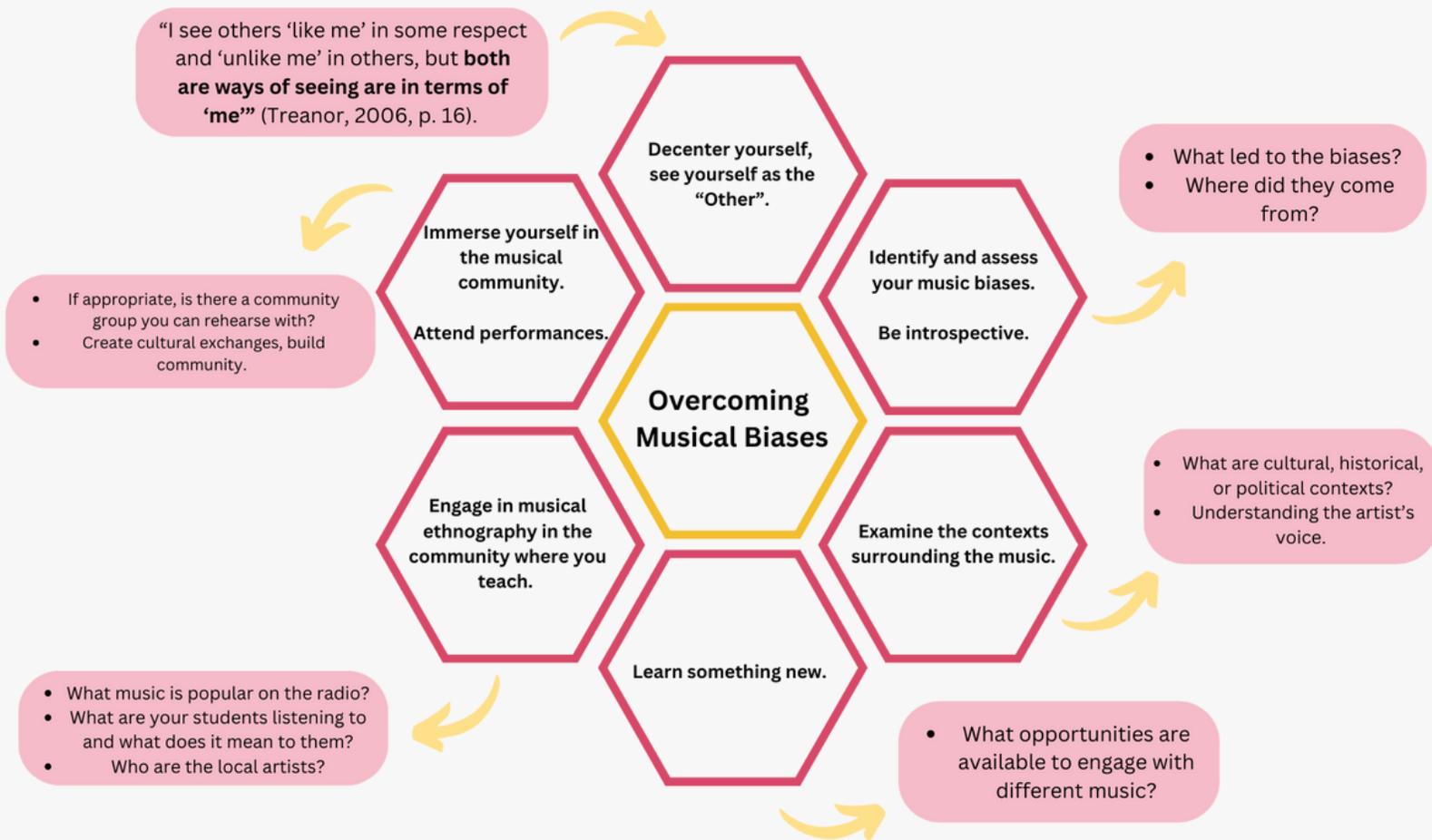
"Before the open door, a promise towards responsibility in which acts of hospitality and welcoming to the other are described with the adjective "ethical" (Higgins, 2012, p. 12).

Quadrant 1: Teacher Competencies

OVERCOMING MUSICAL BIASES

Overcoming biases, musical or otherwise requires inward reflection. Asking yourself the tough questions, *Do you have any musical biases? If so, where do they exist?* It is natural to have biases, however, biases become a problem when they disproportionately exclude someone or something, or leading to discrimination. We've identified 6 considerations for overcoming musical biases.

Considerations for Overcoming Biases:



QUADRANT 2: INFORMED CHOICES

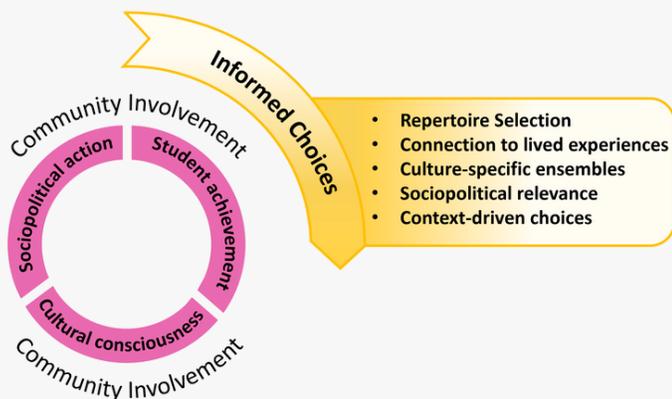
Informed choices is broken down into 5 components: a) Repertoire Selection, b) Connection to Students' Lived Experience, c) Culture-Specific Ensembles, d) Sociopolitical Relevance, and e) Context-driven Choices. Quadrant 2 shifts the focus from the teacher's reflexive practice and personal growth to getting to know students' and connecting to their personal experiences and cultural contexts. Below is a breakdown to help guide application of quadrant 2, Informed Choices, and its components.

Context-driven Choices: What's happening that may impact a student's day to day?

- What's happening *globally*?
- What's happening *nationally*?
- What's happening *locally*?
- What's happening in the *school*?
- What's happening *personally*?

Connection to Students' Lived Experiences:

- How do students make meaning in their lives?
- What musics are important to students in the class?
- Engaging in discovery-based projects, e.g., Modern Musician Projects or Musical Heritage Projects.
- Getting to know your students:
 - What do my students like to do outside of school?
 - What challenges do they face in their lives?
 - What music do they listen to on their own?
 - What are they like in other classes?



Quadrant 2: Informed Choices

CONTINUED:

Culture Specific Ensembles:

- Examples include Mariachi, Gamelan, Steel Pan, West African Drumming, Gospel Choir
- A cappella, hip hop/rap/rock/r&b
- Non-additive – why can't these substitute for the "big three" (choir, band, orchestra)
- Connection to community practice

Sociopolitical Relevance: Often omitted from implementation.

- Sociopolitical issues can be local – *school* or *community* level, or even personal – they do not have to be political with a "capital P" or governmental partisan issues.
- Examples and resources:
 - Spinifex Gum project:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X-_O_JfijY4
 - "No Longer There"
<https://www.spinifexgum.com/>
 - Justice Choir www.justicechoir.org

Repertoire Selection: Points to consider

- Selection Checklist:
 - Culturally appropriate in school context
 - Can be taught contextually
 - Meets the needs of students and community
 - Student- or culture-centered choices, not just skill-centered
 - Opens avenues for dialogue
 - Involves student choice and student voice
 - Connects meaningfully to students' lives
- Deeper and meaningful understandings of diverse music. Depth v. Breadth.
- Spiral Curriculum

QUADRANT 3: AUTHENTICITY

Authenticity explores 3 components: a) Contextual Performances, b) Honest Valuation/Nuanced Style & Interpretation, and c) Aural & Notation Learning. Quadrant 3 moves toward music learning and performance considerations. As teachers and students make decisions related to quadrant 2, Quadrant 3 prepares teacher and students for the learning and performance processes. Quadrant 3's components are explored below:

Contextual Performances:

- Is the performance (repertoire, clothing, etc.) appropriate for the situation?
- How do the teacher/students and performers provide context for audience members?

Honest Valuation/Nuanced Style & Interpretation:

- Accepting music as is.
- Value based on what is present in the music v. what is "missing."
- Gaining understanding and openness towards performance practices and cultural aesthetics across musical and cultural diasporas.
- Applying correct performance practice

Aural and Notation Learning:

- Balance between reading notation and aural learning
- Assessing when notation vs. aural learning is appropriate

HONEST VALUATION/ NUANCED STYLE & INTERPRETATION

To achieve musical **authenticity** it is important to immerse yourself in the unique characteristics and cultural contexts for the style of music you wish to perform. Immersion may look like researching the music, attending performances, and maybe even performing.

Anuja Kamat's YouTube channel provides viewers various lessons on Indian Classical Music. The series takes viewers through a variety of different aspects of Indian Classical Music, including:

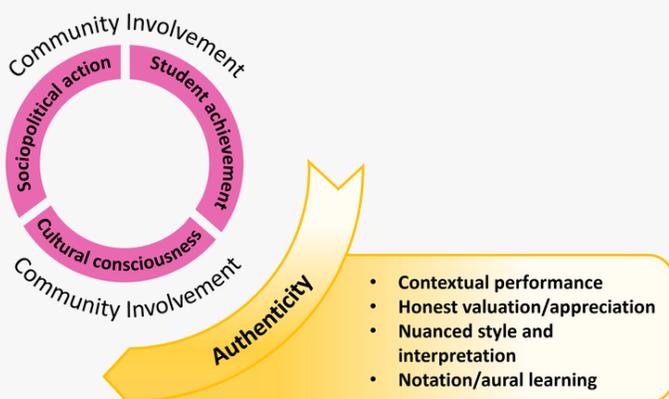
- Concepts of Sangeet, Aahat-Anahat Naad
- Concept of 'Swara' - Hindustani, Carnatic Theory
- 'Saptak' (octave) and vocal registers

In their introductory video, Kamat provides the following note to their audience:

"The following episodes do not aim to teach the viewer to sing/perform Indian classical music. Rather it aims at acquainting the viewer to the theoretical basis of Indian classical music.

The viewer is suggested to take guidance of a Guru or music teacher in he/she is interested to learn to sing/perform Indian classical music."

The note communicates the importance of understanding the theoretical basis for diverse musics and learning the appropriate performance practice.



Quadrant 3: Authenticity

QUADRANT 4: HOLISTIC/COMPARATIVE LESSONS

Holistic/Comparative Lessons bridges gaps in instructional content, where broad connections are made between a variety of musical context and diasporas, rather than lessons being taught in isolation. Quadrant 4 is broken down into 5 components: a) Poly-Cultural/Poly-Musical, b) Community Involvement, c) Cultural Scaffolding, d) Multi-faceted/Non-additive, and e) Notation/Aural Learning. The 5 components explored in the following ways:

Poly-Cultural/Poly-Musical:

- What musical cultures are represented in class?
 - What do students want to share with me and other students?
- Respecting and honoring cultures and musics. Always thinking about appreciation and not appropriation.
- Critical discourse about students' individual/personal cultural identity and "new" cultures. *We are the "Other" in someone else's contexts.*

Community Involvement:

- Connections with culture bearers.
 - Parents, community members,
 - Connecting online across the nation, or cultural exchanges with students from a different country
 - Starting a new ensemble, with admin support.
 - Embassy
- Activities. Curriculum that involves in-person or virtual field trips, partnerships with other classroom teachers, to provide a holistic sense of a culture. Look out for temporary exhibits, sign up for community newsletters.

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Cultural Scaffolding:

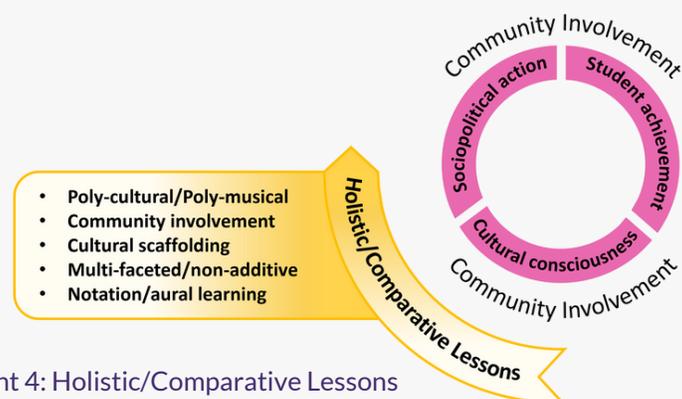
- Create an environment and classroom culture of discussion from the beginning of the year.
- Use intentionally worded guiding questions.
- Model the thought process, go through the process as a whole class.
- Start with examples that are closely related to students' lived experiences.
- Start with yourself as an expert of another musical culture.

Multi-faceted/Non-additive:

- Additive means to "sprinkle" "ethnic", multicultural, or "world music" into a curriculum with minimal contextual reference while centering Western art music. Full integration is the goal.
- Embrace depth rather than breadth. Go deep, make connections. *The additive approach is akin to a "tourist" or "explorer" approach*
- Respect and understand cultural context of a musical piece and its composer/artist
- Performances with authenticity and in equal standing to other cultural musics, including Western art music
- Making connections between diasporas, history, art, and culture.

Notation/Aural Learning:

- Understanding musical context-setting
 - Language and phonetic coaching
- Where does written notation fail to capture cultural nuance and performance practice?



Quadrant 4: Holistic/Comparative Lessons

HOLISTIC AND COMPARATIVE DEFINED

Holistic defined:

1) Lessons and curriculum are balanced, hit many aspects of music making such as mastering skills **and** understanding music as a cultural phenomenon, rather than just focusing on skills, for instance.

When learning a piece of music and about its artist or composer, we're not just learning how to perform the piece, but:

- in what context did the artist write this? Why did they write this?
- Was it a response to a cultural movement?
- An expression of a personal issue they were dealing with?
- What was going on historically at the time of the writing?
- And, how does this relate to the students' lives?

Holistic lessons consider local and global musical practices, helping students develop cultural competence

2) Students, community members, and teacher are all part of the teaching/learning process, so you facilitate bringing diverse perspectives and experiences into the classroom.

Comparative defined: comparing characteristics of musics (perhaps different genres of music, or musics of different cultures) in a way that equalizes them instead of prioritizing or centralizing Western Art Music. Hess (2015) brings this example: "Comparative teaching allows different musical traditions to inform each other. It allows teachers and students to consider the ways that West African music influenced samba, for example, and the connections of many popular styles to Africa" (p. 341).

THE JOURNEY CONTINUES

Using socially just, anti-racist, and culturally relevant and responsive teaching practices are ongoing parallel journeys which requires willingness to learn; being personally reflective and critical of current practices; and engaging in reflexivity, while also broadening your musical horizons. This work can difficult and time consuming, but worthwhile.

As we take this journey we must remember to decenter ourselves. Although we are doing the work, this journey isn't really about us, and though this journey is a personal one, the end result is equity, dignity, and respect for our students. This process will require us to unlearn, relearn, and hold ourselves accountable. I encourage you to join conversations where you can listen, understand, and speak when ready. Lastly, be kind to yourself. Give yourself grace when you need to, but don't let yourself off of the hook!

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