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Non-Traditional Music Classes in Secondary Public School Music Programs

By

Patrick Doran

Accepted in Partial Completion
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Music

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Master's Thesis

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Patrick Doran

July 8, 2020

Non-Traditional Music Classes in Secondary Public School Music Programs

A Thesis
Presented to
The Faculty of
Western Washington University

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Music

by
Patrick Doran
July 2020

Abstract

As U.S. demographics continue to change and schools become more diverse, music classes have evolved to better reflect their student populations. Music classes operate differently than they have in the past and offer new ways for students to receive a musical education. This thesis advocates for Non-Traditional music classes as accessible options in secondary public school music programs for students who have not opted to be involved past elementary school. Included is a discussion of the benefits of Non-Traditional music education as well as an analysis of possible barricades that may have discouraged students from participation in traditional ensemble based programs. To support this position, Washington State teachers were interviewed to profile how their inclusion of Non-Traditional music classes reflect student cultures, interests and needs. An example curriculum proposal is provided to show how a Non-Traditional music class may be developed.

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Chapter One: Introduction

In a world of rapidly advancing technologies, an increasingly diverse library of musical genres is available at our fingertips. Listeners have become better equipped to further explore and refine their personal musical tastes. At the same time, the U.S. population is changing demographically. People of color are gaining more and more representation in media and politics; it is predicted that by 2030 Non-Hispanic whites will constitute 55.8% of the population and only 44.3% by the year 2060 (Vespa et al. 7).

Coupled with technological advancements, the change in demographics demands for further multicultural representation within all facets of our society. As a result, the very core workings of our society must be critically examined, and adjustments must be made to become more culturally representative. Integral to this process is the role the US public school education system plays in the advancement of multiculturalism. Very few academic areas within the educational framework have a greater capacity for doing this than the subject of music. It offers the blend between technological advancement and multicultural awareness.

Music is inherently tied to culture; to have a musical experience is to have a cultural experience. When viewed through this lens, music may be used in the context of the schoolhouse to provide students with a multitude of cultural experiences. Music programs in the United States have a long history that has given emphasis to, and favored, the traditions and

repertoire of European and European-American music cultures. However, as our modern society blooms to become more varied in its racial and cultural makeup, so should the content of our society's music programs. Music programs present an opportunity to accommodate multiculturalism and perhaps more importantly to advocate for its advancement. "In addition to experiencing a comprehensive music education, students will forge cultural understandings of their diverse worlds while also acknowledging the human factor of music's social power" (Howard and Kelley 9).

European and European-American musics have been "put on a pedestal" as the most refined and sophisticated musical cultures of the world. Often, this elitist perspective positions western music as the ideal standard while other musics are not considered for school curriculum. All too often, the musical elitism in schools is a product of the cultural elitism in schools. Given the overt advocacy for more inclusive, culturally responsive schools, music programs are the ideal place to expand curricula and include music education beyond a singular performance-based approach (via band, orchestra, choir).

There is a need to expand the curriculum beyond token or performative acknowledgments of Non-Traditional music. A multicultural approach to the curricula would support the musical interests of students who would not otherwise thrive in the structures of traditional band, orchestra and choir curricula. All musicians benefit and grow through the critical self-examination that occurs when presented with unfamiliar or new musical tasks.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this thesis is to provide support for, and to reveal the merits of, Non-Traditional music classes in secondary public school music programs. The more common and familiar music programs that our nation's schools pride themselves deserve praise and accolades for their dedication to musical excellence; it is not the intent of this document to undermine that legacy. Rather, the focus of this thesis is intended to outline the need to provide access to culturally rich and varied music education to all public school secondary level students who have not been included in the past.

The standard musical programs tend to attract students of more affluent social backgrounds. In a 2002 study Elpus and Abril found:

Certain groups of students, including those who are male, English language learners, Hispanic, children of parents holding a high school diploma or less, and in the lowest SES quartile, were significantly underrepresented in music programs across the United States. In contrast, white students were significantly overrepresented among music students, as were students from higher SES backgrounds, native English speakers, students in the highest standardized test score quartiles, children of parents holding advanced postsecondary degrees, and students with GPAs ranging from 3.01 to 4.0. ("High School Music Ensemble Students in the United States" 128).

Although nearly all adolescences listen to music and use music to help shape their identities, secondary public school music programs continue to exclude up to 90% of the student

population and may transmit messages to those students that they are not musical. (Howard and Kelley 8).

Lind and McKoy wrote:

Whether we are aware or not, music educators are sending messages to students and society about what music is, what a musician is, and how people should interact with music. For too many students, that message is that the music that interests them and their ways of music making have no place in the school music curriculum. (134)

A disconnection between what students actively listen to and the music that is played in their schools can influence the way students perceive and value school music and discourage their enrollment. Student musical interest and identity needs to be considered when constructing new musical programs. As diverse musical genres become more popular and available to us, music programs need to reflect this trend to stay relevant to all students.

Speaking from my own experience, band, orchestra and choir did not appeal to me when I was in middle and high school because they did not reflect how music functioned in my family. My exposure to unfamiliar music traditions as a youth sparked my curiosities and has carried me to pursue a career as a music educator; furthermore, these unique experiences opened my eyes to the critical need for music education at the secondary level, in particular, to be much more diverse in its' curricular options than is often the case.

This thesis explores the benefits of, and the arguments for, further implementation and support of Non-Traditional (NT) music classes and their inclusion in the curricular offering in

secondary public school music programs. Included in the study is a focus on the significance of culturally responsive pedagogy and its impact on student enrollment and participation in NT classes. Culturally responsive pedagogy "calls for the public validation of culture, which should include not just heritage repertoires, but also explicit use and valuing of various music literacies" (Bond 160). Chapter Two identifies results in a culturally empowered student population.

The role and focus on Western music notation in secondary music classrooms is also included as an area of discussion in Chapter Two. The emphasis on music reading skills, via Western notation, often limits participation in existing music classes in later grades, discouraging students from participation. When considered globally, the vast majority of music cultures do not use European written notation when teaching or performing their musics (Garofalo 21). Emphasis on expanding music literacy is addressed, particularly as it relates to a culturally responsive approach to music education.

Finally, Chapter Two includes discussion and resources on inclusive, accessible approaches to expanded curricula within secondary music classrooms. When programs promote options for students normally not drawn to traditional secondary ensembles (band, orchestra, choir), participation, interest, and growth in the overall school music offerings grow in positive ways.

To be truly culturally responsive, students must be able to see themselves in the curricula and relate to the content in a deeper way. When focus for achieving notational literacy becomes the overriding goal for music teachers and programs, aurally-based musical cultures and learners

are categorized as inferior in comparison. Kelly-McHale suggested that such note-centric methods become analogous to “color-blinded teaching” where student musical identities are lost to the teacher and their classroom (qtd. in Bond 169).

NT music classes are unique in that teachers have the power of flexibility to create culturally responsive music classes. The inherently inclusive nature of NT music classes provides multiple opportunities for students who would otherwise be discouraged or uninterested to experiment and learn music.

As students mature, they realize the differences of music in their schools and what they experience elsewhere. Such a realization is not conducive to the affirmation of student beliefs or interests and school music programs may be perceived as inhospitable, undemocratic and noncreative (West and Cremata 72). It is the underlying goal of this document to demonstrate the value of NT classes as culturally responsive and inclusive.

To support this goal, and to share authentic examples of how NT classes are filling a need and purpose in secondary schools, Chapter Three includes comments and perceptions from secondary music teachers currently teaching NT classes. Their descriptions of benefits for a population of students not served in band, orchestra, and choir support the advocacy of NT classes as essential for a well-rounded secondary music program.

Methodology

Crucial to this study is the inclusion of my own educational journey, as I toggled a world of music making outside of public school music opportunities. In order to share my story within

a research platform, Narrative Inquiry, with myself serving as the subject of research, is utilized.

Bell wrote:

Narratives allow researchers to present experience holistically in all its complexity and richness. They are therefore powerful constructions, which can function as instruments of social control as well as valuable teaching tools. Canagarajah argues that narratives function in opposition to elitist scholarly discourses and that their use in research offers an opportunity for marginalized groups to participate in knowledge construction in the academy...Narrative lets researchers get at information that people do not consciously know themselves. Analysis of people's stories allows deeply hidden assumptions to surface. (209)

To gain an understanding of how theories manifest in human experiences it is critical that we listen to teacher and student stories. Connelly and Clandinin explained, "The educational importance of this line of work is that it brings theoretical ideas about the nature of human life as lived to bear on educational experience as lived" (3) and that to do so "we need to listen closely to teachers and other learners and to the stories of their lives in and out of classrooms. We also need to tell our own stories as we live our own collaborative researcher/teacher lives" (12). The exchange of stories through Narrative Inquiry allows access to information that, when paired with mutual understanding and respect, promotes collaboration and implementation of best teacher practices.

My story provides an introduction, as well as example, of a student who loved music making and did so through several non-traditional routes. My experience clearly influenced my desire to explore this area of music education and its' impact on students like me.

Narrative Inquiry is coupled with supportive material coming from publications by educators who have made the case for multiculturalism, culturally responsive pedagogy and musically inclusive curricula.

Finally, meaningful insights were gained through the distribution of a questionnaire to teachers who offer NT music classes. Their responses served as primary sources for research and act as the voices to further describe the current state of NT curricula.

About Me & Non-Traditional Music

When I was fifteen years old, a group of friends and I decided to learn instruments to form a band. We all had keen music interest and a few had musical backgrounds. It was at this time that I began to take saxophone lessons. I remember that during one of our earliest lessons my teacher asked if I was interested in learning to read music or if I wanted to learn skills that would help me play with my friends. At that time, I had never considered learning to read music. I had little interest in it for I did not know how I would be able to use it in my life. I chose to learn how to play with my friends because that was my immediate need and goal.

I credit my eleven years of tap dance experience for enabling me to learn an instrument so quickly. Those years spent in tap class listening to and moving rhythmically to music were, as

I now know, critical tools for attaining musical literacy. When I finally decided to learn to play an instrument those experiences were great aides. Within months of beginning lessons, my friends and I were in the community, playing gigs for public events as a self-directed band.

The music program at my school existed almost purely in name only. It consisted of one trumpet, one trombone, one saxophone, one bass guitarist and one drummer (the bassist and guitarist were among those friends of mine who would play together on our own time outside of school hours). It was apparent to many of us that the music director was uninvested in the program. His repeated advice to the class was "If you have any talents besides music, do those instead". This had a profound impact on me. I consider myself to have a variety of talents and those words delayed my decision to pursue music whole heartedly.

I enrolled in band with the goal to learn to read music but found little support from the teacher. He told me, "It is just like math, an x-axis for time and a y-axis for pitch", and gave me a book of sight singing exercises to work from. I had a vague idea of what the notes meant on the page, the different values for rhythm, but I struggled to decode them into meaning on my instrument. Frustrated and bored, I dropped out of band after one quarter and enrolled in shop class where I experimented with arc welders and even invented an instrument.

Although my friends and I were lovers of music and spent a great deal of time outside of school making music, our school failed to provide us with meaningful musical experiences or to support our musical interests and pursuits. I was not the "type" of student who was attracted to

or prepared to succeed in band class. Despite this I continued to show a dedication and desire to grow and develop as a musician.

During the summer of my junior year of high school I had the incredible opportunity to befriend and jam with virtuoso sitar artists from India who were on tour and scheduled to give a concert later that evening in my hometown. The duo overheard my friends and I playing our instruments, introduced themselves and joined us in our music. That evening we attended their concert and were amazed by the music they made. Following the concert, the Indian musicians asked if we would like to continue our jam session. We spent the rest of the evening playing music together.

A few months later I received an invitation from the Indian musicians (now returned to home), to come study music with them in their home city of Varanasi, located in Uttar Pradesh, India. I was ecstatic for the opportunity to learn more about classical Hindustani music and pursued the idea of going. I was able to convince my high school teachers to allow me to travel to India for six weeks during my senior year. (They agreed if I completed all my school assignments in advance).

The overwhelming experience of traveling to India when I was seventeen years old had a profound impact on my life. While there I was immersed in music while situated in a deeply religious Hindu city known for human crematoriums.

My music lessons in India were taught completely by rote and it was here that I first encountered solfege (Indian syllables, not “Do Re Mi” etc.). The language barrier furthered the

need to depend on aural learning as it was often difficult for teachers to give explanations in English.

I returned from India with a new world view and a further developed musical identity and taste. In the fall I began my studies at Western Washington University (WWU). Before the normal enrollment phase began, I was able to sign up for the music theory and aural skills sequence required of incoming music majors and minors. Normally these classes require acceptance into the music program through an audition process; however, I was able to progress through the sequence with success without the prerequisite audition.

Upon arriving at WWU, I still had not developed the ability to read music fluently which made me very self-conscious. Through the course work assigned in music theory, aural skills and piano proficiency classes, I familiarized myself with notation and learned how to read music. Since I was not formally enrolled in the program, I was unable to take private lessons; the application of reading skills was not transferred to my instrument and did not develop beyond the degree required of the theory, aural skills and piano proficiency classes. Due to my inability to read music at the level of my peers, I felt grossly behind and underdeveloped as a musician. The idea of pursuing a music degree seemed impossible. Despite my discouragement, I continued the theory and aural skills music sequences because I enjoyed them and had experienced success.

I did not enroll at WWU during the winter quarter of my sophomore year. Instead, I returned to India to continue music studies in Varanasi. This second trip was even more rigorous than my first and I spent an average of seven hours a day in lessons or practicing. (In hindsight, I

wish that I had coordinated this trip through the music department at WWU for credit.

Regrettably, I did not inform the music department at WWU of my trip to India and missed an opportunity to earn credits).

Following my return from India I sought music lessons through the Saxophone studio at WWU. Although I was unable to formally register for lessons, the head of the saxophone studio arranged for me to audit lessons from one of their more advanced students. My assigned student teacher judged me by my reading abilities and did not take me seriously as a student. This experience furthered my sense of alienation from the department. I could not see myself in the music program, because I felt my deficiencies were too great to overcome.

After much deliberation, and due to my success in the theory core sequence, I decided to pursue a Bachelor of Arts in Music degree. To satisfy my ensemble credit requirement I auditioned into the symphonic band. During my audition I explained to my adjudicators that I had taken the theory and aural skills courses and that I was considering auditioning into the program. They were shocked that I had made it as far as I had without already being formally part of the music program and offered to count my symphonic band audition as my audition into the program. I was ecstatic and finally felt validated as a musician in the department.

The excitement and joy of creating music in a hospitable environment with friends, along with a keen interest in classical Hindustani music sustained me as a musician when self-doubt of my 'legitimacy' battled my confidence. I passionately sought out musical experiences that were in alignment with my needs and that supported me and my musical identity.

As an emerging music educator, I can't help but feel profound responsibility for honoring students whose journey might parallel mine. Within this responsibility comes a commitment to providing opportunities and pathways for those whose musical identities lie outside the band, orchestra, choir paradigm. My future students will be better served by a teacher who has investigated approaches and theories for advocating non-traditional pathways toward a musically enriched adolescence and adulthood.

Chapter Two: Considerations

Introduction

Culturally rich and accessible music programs are needed to encourage student involvement through the secondary years of 6th/7th-12th grade. Strong, student centered Non-Traditional (NT) music programs require teachers to be informed of their students multifaceted identities, including, but not limited to, student socioeconomic and cultural identity components. This is critical knowledge to bare in mind when constructing curricula that resonate with intended student populations, and especially important for recruitment of first time music students.

Former NAFME president Scott Schuler noted:

Our mission as music educators is to help our students find paths of active involvement in music that they are willing to continue into their adult lives. The music curriculum design answer is clear: in addition to high-quality ensemble classes, music programs must offer alternatives that attract and engage other students. (3)

The expansion of music curricula beyond long held perceptions of how secondary music classes operate and their purposes, along with a heightened awareness of NT music classes, is essential for the development and the longevity of more accessible music programs.

In the subsections that follow, two educational theories and their considerations as areas of support of NT music classes are reviewed. The first of these concerns Culturally Responsive Teaching. Defined by Gay, Culturally Responsive Teaching involves "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" (qtd. in Lind and McKoy 17).

The second subsection explored inclusivity and accessibility through a multicultural philosophy as a means to "provide those who have never had close personal contact with members of ethnic groups other than their own with opportunities to [communicate] and engage with diverse people as well as to confront themselves" (Gay, qtd. in Mixon 67). Culturally Responsive Pedagogy fueled by a dedication to achieve multiculturalism culminates in the realization of NT music awareness and a music education that is accessible to all.

A third subsection was included to discuss notation centric requirements as presenting conflicts for participation. According to Garafalo,

"Making Western music notation—indeed, reading music of any kind—the central focus of music education presents a number of challenges that can discourage participation. In the first place, it does not represent the way that most people learn to play music" (21).

While notated music has a valuable place in secondary school music curricula, we have the capacity to differentiate student needs to implement inclusive, meaningful and relevant NT musical experiences.

The purpose of this subsection was to promote an expansion of how music literacy is achieved and addressed, especially when viewed through the lens of non-traditional music education in the secondary school.

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

It is well documented that a majority of students do not elect to enroll in music classes during their middle and high school years. Although the figure fluctuates from year to year, approximately 80-90% of students decline to enroll in music classes (Schuler 9; Howard and Kelley 8). In spite of the high percentage of students who do not elect music classes, research shows that 81% of adolescents listen to music every day (VanWeelden et al. 13).

With these figures in mind the issue becomes obvious: the majority of students engage in daily musical activity and yet the number of students who enroll in music classes remains a minority. Culturally Responsive Pedagogy aims to resolve this disconnect. Lind and McKoy explained, "Being culturally responsive means that teachers work to make informed curricular and programmatic choices that connect to what they know about their students" (95).

Why are so few students choosing to engage with their school's music program? The answer to this question is surprisingly simple: students are more motivated to study music they are interested in and, similarly, school music removed from the students' cultural identity is less likely to engage the students. Lind and McKoy emphasized that "understanding learners' music preferences is important to increasing the motivation and interest of students, as well as maintaining the relevancy of music in school curricula" (55). The need, then, is to expand the spectrum of music classes that are accessible and desirable to all students beyond the 10%-20% who select 'typical' classes like band, orchestra, and choir.

To achieve a more culturally responsive curricula requires critical self-reflection by current practicing music teachers. A 2009 study revealed that choral directors were often hesitant to employ NT music classes due to a lack of familiarity with NT music genres beyond those typically used in choirs, or due to an assumption that the NT music classes provide a less valid musical experience for students (Kelly and Veronee 79).

In a time when educators in general are seeking to promote the deeper goals of equity, access, and inclusion, music educators have the responsibility to expand the cultural and historical base of music study beyond its' Euro-centric paradigm. The promotion of diverse musical cultures in the classroom will result in cultivating a more musically active society, while simultaneously enriching the overall music curriculum.

A culturally responsive approach to this problem places the responsibility on teachers to draw from the student's cultural knowledge. The prior experience and the frames of reference of ethnically diverse students needs to be considered to make the curriculum relevant and to add a deeper level of meaning for the students (Lind and McKoy 17). It is also important to understand that such a multicultural approach to education is valuable for all students.

Teachers of majority White student populations often assume multicultural music classes are not relevant to their students. This is a great fallacy. The continued reliance upon the Euro-Centric repertoire in music reinforces a position of cultural supremacy. Nieto and Bode explained that in predominantly white schools, "White students receive only a partial education, which helps to legitimize their cultural blindness. Seeing only themselves, they may believe that

they are the norm and, thus the most important, and everyone else is secondary and less important" (50). This cultural blindness relegates NT music classes to inferiority and disregards the value of their "different" methodologies.

All students benefit from culturally responsive NT music classes. Typically, these classes provide students with exposure to a higher degree of cultural diversity and afford students opportunities to communicate, participate, and engage with diverse ethnic groups with whom they otherwise would not have had close contact with. Similarly, NT music classes demand that students confront themselves and their assumptions or beliefs about their own musical and cultural identities (Mixon 67). Through broad exposure to unfamiliar musics, students are able to better understand their own traditions.

Models for traditional band, orchestra and choir classes have a history of contributing to a sense of learned helplessness among students of color (Lind and McKoy 19). Continuous and negative impacts that come with a lack of cultural representation in music classes can result in long lasting and devastating implications. A 2013 research study found that 58% of music students were White and that students of higher socioeconomic status were overrepresented. The remaining 42% of students identified as people of color and of the 42%, 13% identified as Black or African American and 17% identified as Hispanic or Latino ("Who Enrolls in High School Music?" 323). These percentages clearly show that "African American and Hispanic students in the United States have significantly fewer opportunities for music study than do white students" (Schuler 9).

Studies show that despite having fewer musical opportunities, disenfranchised students who are uninterested in school often have positive experiences when culturally responsive NT music classes are available to them and are more successful overall (Mixon 69). Culturally responsive NT music classes that align with students' diversity of interests and cultures also reflect the interests and cultures of the larger community. Music is, at its best, a community experience. Parents and school administrators, not just the students, will be able to find a deeper meaning in NT music classes due to their cultural relevance and familiarity in that particular community.

Mixon wrote:

As with students, parents and other community members respond favorably to music that is meaningful to them. This is an important consideration in the current climate of budget constraints and mandatory testing accountability, as parents, students, and other community members will convey their approval with administrators who can then, in turn, provide rehearsal space, time and financial support. (70-71)

Disenfranchised students who participate in NT music classes will clearly demonstrate to the community the popularity of NT music classes. This could secure financial support for the continuation of such classes as well as help the students in the progression of their personal music education.

This potential for positive impacts on culturally diverse students is critical when considering the real need for NT classes and the need for community support to obtain funding

for curricula (Mixon 71). Responsive classes and their performances can spike audience and administrative interest. That is, audiences are more likely, and perhaps eager, to support music that they like personally and are familiar with. It would seem likely that culturally responsive NT music classes that represent the local ethnic demographic are the most successful.

Band, orchestra and choir are valuable music classes for students in a position to participate in them and are effective in creating high quality student musicians: There is no argument with this. However, it is more apparent now than it ever has been before that there is a need to diversify curricula to stay relevant to an increasingly diverse student body. Students who's identities are undergoing critical and, in many cases, vulnerable development during their high school years, need to know that their musical identities (a culmination of their cultural traditions and personal interests or taste) are being honored in the music classroom (Lind and McKoy 51).

Student identities must be drawn upon as a vital resource to enrich class content regularly. Our educational institutions must go beyond potentially superficial and glib reassurances and respectful politically correct acknowledgments or even tokenism in programming and identify with and engage with the cultural distinctiveness of the local community. This will engage the students and open doors for them rather than turn them away.

Lind and McKoy wrote:

Culturally responsive teaching in music points to new purposes, goals, and objectives for music education, transforming how we 'do' music in American schools. If we truly

embrace the concepts of culturally responsive teaching, music education will look and feel different in some ways that we can anticipate and in other ways that we have yet to imagine. (131)

At the critical age of middle and high school, this engagement may be a life changing experience for the student, as well as for the educator.

Inclusivity, Accessibility & Multicultural Approach

Music education is important for all students and a belief that everyone should be given free and accessible opportunities to learn to understand music should guide music educators to consider a broadened pallet of curricular options (Schuler 8). There are real incentives for implementing secondary public school music programs that are inclusive, multicultural and multifaceted. Non-Traditional (NT) music classes increase the number of opportunities music educators have to teach, and reach, students who would otherwise be excluded from traditional music programs.

“Inclusivity” and “multicultural philosophy” are important components of NT music classes. The inclusive and multicultural nature of NT music classes is largely a result of free access for participation; there are usually no audition requirements or preconditions for inclusion. The lack of prerequisites for the participation in NT music classes gives middle and high school students more access to musical experiences than the traditional notation bound classes. West and Cremata wrote, "School music can be inhospitable, undemocratic and noncreative, and not conducive to the development of independent and self-directed learners, and

not an affirmation of student's musical interests and skills" (72). As well as being hospitable and accessible, the content of NT music classes is often centered around student interests and needs. They are inviting and hospitable to students, as well as more accessible. In this way, they are often much more culturally responsive than traditional classes, operating within a model of inclusivity and recognition of a diverse population of students.

NT music classes have the potential to increase enrollment rate for music classes if offered in addition to traditional music classes (Mixon 69; Bond 170).

Schuler wrote:

Enrollment numbers do matter, philosophically and practically. We must teach more students because inclusiveness builds program support from families and friends. Most important, we must inspire more students so that they grow up to become adults who support music education and musical activity. (8)

Larger numbers of students in programs will yield greater financial support from school administrators as well as from families and friends of students in local communities (Mixon 71). An increase in student recruitment and participation will stimulate programs and ensure their longevity. Music teachers are united in their mission to cultivate a more musically active and supportive culture and community (Schuler 9).

Robust secondary public school music programs provide both traditional ensembles and NT classes. Both reflect an investment in cultivating active and supported music endeavors. Traditional music classes demand a high standard of musical excellence and have developed a

long legacy in our country. The merits of traditional music classes are not in question. However, the relationship between traditional music classes and NT music classes is not an “either-or” proposition, rather, it is a “both/and” inclusive scenario. There is room for traditional and NT music in the public education systems and curricula and one need not replace the other. The goal is to reach as many students as possible, including those drawn to traditional and those drawn to NT music classes. (The questionnaire results, which are discussed further in chapter 3, bear witness to the mutual inclusion of both traditional ensembles and NT music classes offered by the same teacher).

In a response to community and student interests, some schools have opted for non-traditional ensembles as the prominent performing groups represented. An example of an exemplary program outside the traditional band, choir, orchestra is the steel band program at A.J. Moore Academy/Professional Development School in Waco, Texas. The majority of the students in the steel band program are from the inner city, are at-risk and are on free or reduced lunch programs. It is believed by many of the school staff that some students would have dropped out of school had it not been for the allure of the steel band programs. Research shows that enrollment in music classes increases when teachers incorporate multicultural repertoire and offer NT music classes that reflect student interests (Bond 170).

Larry Ordener, music director at A.J. Moore High School, found that steel bands were more appealing to this group of students than traditional music programs and used this appeal to draw and keep students in school. In response to student interest, A.J. Moore High School offers

a jazz band, four beginning steel bands, and one advanced steel band for more experienced students. These ensembles constitute the entire music program at A.J. Moore and they all rely heavily on teaching by rote before introducing notation. In the context of A.J. Moore, where the student population is largely disenfranchised, as Williams reported, there is "little to no interest in 'traditional' music programs such as band or orchestra" (54-55). Such a music program, centered on traditional music ensembles, will exist outside of student curiosity and, therefore, will likely fail.

Steel bands are only one example of what form an NT music class might take. NT music classes are flexible and can be reformatted to serve the needs of the students. The NT classes may be performance-based with larger numbers participating, or in smaller participant numbers. Rock and roll combo groups are similar to the steel band experience. Rock bands are, essentially, chamber music ensembles where each member plays an independent and vital role to the music.

Schuler explained:

...such classes (like rock band) offer unusually powerful opportunities to address the complete range of standards, including singing, playing instruments, improvising and composing/songwriting, notation, harmonizing, and analyzing (including cover charts from albums). Students who develop skill in doing this kind of music making are very likely to extend their involvement beyond the school building and after graduation from high school. (11)

Similar to traditional chamber ensembles, students in NT ensembles learn to cooperate and communicate with each other in their student directed NT group. For some students, a rock band will be more appealing than a string quartet and better reflect their interests. These students will be far more likely to continue playing music into their adult lives: a wish and mission for all music educators.

Reflecting back on my high school experience, my friends and I formed our own NT ensemble in the absence of any real support from our school. We scheduled our practice times and arranged the logistics (a complicated process when living in rural Washington) and the places for the practices to be held. We worked together collaboratively and created music we were proud of. We produced and recorded our songs and pursued all opportunities to gig in our community. We directed our musical projects and our ownership in the process fueled our creative energies and excitement. This kind of a NT music experience, which we enjoyed immensely, can be replicated and guided under the banner of NT music classes. This can take on many different forms in many genres.

The results of the questionnaire from sixteen participating Washington State music educators reveal that NT music classes range in form from instrument proficiency classes, such as guitar, piano or ukulele, to ensemble groups such as mariachi, steel pan, taiko and percussion. They also range to academic and theoretical subjects, such as music theory, survey, appreciation, history and songwriting with technology classes. These classes, all of which are currently taught in middle and high schools in Washington, reflect the individual interest and identities of

students and, thus, gives much more access for students to a musical education besides traditional music courses.

Survey results, plus supportive articles and books, plus my own personal experience point to the fact that NT music classes value individual student growth as more important than their performance. Community development and participation are priorities; with no prerequisite for membership, there is often a feeling of welcomeness to all students, regardless of prior music content knowledge or involvement.

As a result of the varied experiences of students involved, teachers must be flexible and creative and find ways to incorporate a wide range of skill levels, from beginners to advanced, whether it be NT or traditional. Successful educators utilize their student's abilities; as students become more comfortable with what they can do, the teacher gradually introduces new ideas and increases the difficulty of the music class.

Garofalo stated it best: "A system that focuses only on the best musicians cannot possibly transform music into a broad-based participatory social activity. But a system that makes musicking available broadly is capable of producing top quality musicians" (23).

Expanding Music Literacy

Music programs that include non-traditional music classes extend the accessibility of music education to many students who have had no prior music training or are not drawn to traditional ensembles but who are, nonetheless, interested in music. As Schuler emphasized,

"Programs that fail to offer alternatives that appeal to other students abandon every pretense of inclusiveness and turn music into a competitive sport" (8).

Engagement in traditional ensembles often includes emphasis on developing advanced skills in reading and applying notation. Pedagogical reliance upon Western notation is an important part of the traditional ensemble experience; however, for NT music classes, it must be reconsidered. Notation can supplement NT music classes, but it is not critical for their success. The emphasis for NT music classes can, and should, be geared toward a varied approach to expressing musical understanding. These classes allow for an expanded perspective of music literacy.

The reliance upon Western notation to teach music has had unexpected negative consequences for students not familiar with the tool. Such a "one-size-fits-all" approach, and the goal to teach only Western notation, is similar to a color-blind approach to teaching (Bond 166). When notation is positioned as the primary standard to teach and measure student success and retention, other musical skills can become valued less and lose their importance in the music classroom. In programs emphasizing a singular approach of 'notes on the page' Western notation becomes viewed as the only "true" method of measuring and learning to play music. The words "notation" and "music" become analogous and are used to define how students learn to understand music and what constitutes musicianship.

In truth, "Every genre of music requires us to learn unique methods of articulation, phrasing, and harmonic structure. And, within those genres, cultural differences require yet

further understanding of musical nuance" (Hansen et al. 196). NT musics contain elements of self-critical and self-corrective analyses that can propel students towards independent musicianship with options and avenues for creative expression. All too often, traditional music ensembles follow rigid structures that fail to inspire such independence and self-analysis.

Notation centric programs are "color-blind" (Bond 169) in that they reduce the legitimacy of alternative aural musical cultures and deny students representing non-majority cultures the recognition of the strength in their own music. As a result, students who are fluent with notation are privileged in their schools above those whose musical abilities are disregarded or not valued to the extent of notation-centric programs.

NT music classes abiding by the guidelines of cultural responsiveness operate under the premise that all music traditions are valid and worthy of being taught, whether they use notation or not. The student's cultural knowledge of music and abilities should be acknowledged, realized, and incorporated into the classroom in some significant way. The goal is to honor each student's contributions, not negate them.

Research shows that students may develop negative attitudes toward classical music if unfamiliar with it, which might result in a frustration with both classical music and notation (VanWeelden 13-14). Negative attitudes toward classical music and notation, coupled with the failure of educational institutions to recognize alternative cultural musical motifs and talents, work in tandem to discourage student participation. This subliminally reinforces support for

European music as the only standard by which to measure all other traditions, practices and methods.

The first grave mistake that needs to be addressed is the belief held by many music teachers that musicianship is defined by one's ability to read notation. Lind and McKoy suggested that "this premature focus on reading staff notation may be fueled by several factors, including a tacit subscription to a paradigm that focuses on 'notational centrality' or equating 'music' with notated music" as being far superior to any other techniques (44). Such a belief serves to exclude the development and validation of other musical cultures in both academia and society at large. This is evident by the lumping of NT music into vague and broad genres, such as "pop" or "world", that lack specificity and, as a result, NT music is transformed as tokens for insincere appreciation and disingenuous displays of diversity.

Societies reflect their institutionalized values. If NT music is labeled "other" or "different", and if the ability to read notation is considered the only way that academics and music teachers are able to define musicianship, society at large will also adopt these attitudes and propagate them. In truth, musical literacy is more than the notes on the page: Notation is a "tool" to produce and reproduce musical ideas. Music itself has a much broader definition that is not limited to what is written via a singular system.

The use of notation to teach music is not representative of how the majority of people in the world learn to play music. Music educator Rick Saunders advised it is better to "teach by doing...That's how the majority of the world learns music. Go to West Africa, do you think

they're sitting there with quarter notes?" (qtd. in Garofalo 21). A critical perspective reveals that the Western musical traditions have diverged from the music of the rest of the world.

In Western traditions, the development of fluency in music notation is often used to measure success and serves as the cornerstone of pedagogical practices. The institutionalization and reliance upon Western notation in our education programs has isolated Western musicians from the world's music cultures. Jeffery summarized, succinctly, that "we modern Westerners are the ones who do things differently, and our preference for writing [music] is our handicap." (qtd. in Lind and McKoy 44).

Another great risk that notation-centric curricula poses is that students will become dependent on the written page to a point that they will not be able to play music without its aide. The likelihood for this to occur is greater when students learn to read notation while simultaneously learning the fundamentals of their instrument. Whether right or wrong, this is how the majority of band and orchestra classes operate. When notation fluency is prioritized in the classroom students are likely to learn to read instrument fingerings rather than the actual musical elements and how they interact with each other and the sounds they create (Garofalo 21). A dependency on notation to identify which note to play and when to play it undermines the development of the ear. Students are robbed of aural problem solving opportunities critical to their ear training. Music, after all, is something we hear.

A musician's aural acuity is their most vital resource and its development needs to start immediately when the student begins to learn music. The ability to play by ear supports other

musical skills including sight-reading, playing from memory, performing rehearsed music and improvising (Lind and McKoy 44). In fact, students who are aurally trained possess advantages; they are better equipped to contextualize sound by ear and are not charged to create meaning out of written notation by itself. In short, strong aural foundations provide students with the means to create, perform and respond to music sooner in their education and in more meaningful ways than strict notation allows.

Aural knowledge can be accessed and applied in practice almost instantly in a musical problem solving situation, such as learning new musical concepts. The success of a middle school aged student I teach saxophone and tap dance lessons to illustrates this well. One day, this particular student brought sheet music she was practicing for her school band. The section she was struggling with was reading a string of triplets and how to play them rhythmically correct. She said she had asked her band director for help and that his explanation only confused her more. As soon as I told her that the rhythm was the same as the rhythm for the tap step "drawback", she was immediately able to play the music. Being able to 'tap' (literally and figuratively) into her aural knowledge provided context and simplified the task. She was pleased with herself and made a step forward in understanding and playing the once tricky rhythm.

A reevaluation and reorientation of Western notation and its position as the educational benchmark in secondary public school music programs has the potential to reward teachers with more culturally empowered and diverse students. As student identities develop during adolescence, music teachers have the capacity to validate student beliefs by recognizing and

honoring their uniqueness. They also expand their approaches to fully embracing music literacy beyond ‘notes on the page’.

Many students will enter the classroom with strong musical opinions; some will be regular participants in music outside of school (for example church choirs, mariachi ensembles, etc.). NT music classes, especially those recognizing the value of aural learning, create environments that support and legitimize the individual student’s personal interests, culture, and family background. Regardless of a student’s past experiences with music or competence with written notation, music teachers must encourage students to continue to pursue their musical development by providing avenues to do so within the music curriculum (Howard and Kelley 9).

Summary

The diverse cultures represented in secondary public schools in the United States contribute to a rich opportunity for all educators, especially to those who teach music. Inclusion of accurate, respectful and meaningful NT music classes as pillars of the music curricula is critical for students of non-European ethnic backgrounds as a means to validate their musical traditions and identities.

In addition, Western notation-centric curricula has acted as a barricade for students whose musical experiences do not align with the long held expectations of secondary public school music programs. The position of notation fluency as the epitome of musical abilities and as integral to defining ones musicianship must be reevaluated to prevent further incompatibilities

and discouragements. The value of musical growth through aural literacy has a place in today's multicultural schools.

Through the practice of culturally responsive pedagogy supported by a belief in inclusive models of participation, teachers have the capacity to enrich the lives of all their students and contribute to the development of a more culturally aware and representative society. In this way, NT music teachers are agents of change who "confront inequality and stratification in schools and in society...[and] promote democracy by preparing students to contribute to the general wellbeing of society, not only to their own self-interests" (Nieto and Bode 10).

For teachers dedicated to the advancement of radical social change, NT music classes provide students with a medium to develop and advocate their beliefs and world views. Howard and Kelley explained "In addition to experiencing a comprehensive music education, students will forge cultural understandings of their diverse worlds while also acknowledging the human factor of music's social power" (12).

Chapter Three: Discussion of Interviews

Procedure

The purpose of this study was to gather evidence to show the benefits of non-traditional (NT) music classes offered in secondary public school music programs. A survey was sent to identified Washington state music teachers as part of the collection of information. Teacher statements revealed the success of NT music classes as culturally responsive, inclusive, and accessible beyond what is typical of traditional music classes. As highlighted by teacher testimonials in the following section, a potential outcome of NT music classes is an increased recruitment of ethnically diverse students into music programs and a more accurate representation of their community demographics and musical traditions inside the school setting.

A questionnaire was created and submitted by email to 40 secondary music educators who teach NT music classes as part of the music program offerings at their schools. Of the 40 invited, 16 middle and high school teachers elected to participate and completed the questionnaire. (It should be mentioned that the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic in March of 2020 occurred a week prior to the deadline for teacher responses and may have discouraged some from participation.)

Teachers were identified by reference from Western Washington University faculty. In addition, a Facebook query was posted on February 24th to the Washington Band Directors Facebook page inviting music teachers to participate. Respondents provided their emails and were sent the questionnaire for completion.

School settings varied from urban to rural and represented a range of socioeconomic contexts. Each participating teacher currently teaches NT music classes in addition to the traditional music classes that they offer. The teacher reported NT music classes include:

- Guitar
- General Music
- Mariachi
- Music Theory
- Piano
- Music Survey
- Steel Pan
- Ukulele
- Music Tech/Songwriting
- Taiko Ensemble
- Tubapalooza Brass Choir
- SPED Drumming
- Percussion
- Music Appreciation
- History of Pop Music

Survey Responses

Results to the interview questionnaire show that culturally responsive NT music classes in secondary public school music programs allow access to music education for students who do not normally enroll in traditional music classes. In this small study alone, with sixteen participating teachers, 939 students were reported enrolled in NT music classes. Perhaps these students would not have received music education within the school day if their only options to choose from were traditional music classes (band, orchestra, choir). With these nearly one thousand students in mind, the appeal of NT music classes to students can be clearly seen and their positive impacts on secondary public school music programs become obvious. A new population of students are enrolling in music.

Access opportunities to music education through NT music classes have allowed students to study music in new and different ways that are meaningful to them. Teacher McKenzie Clark commented,

Students want to be engaged in their learning. Music can be incredibly engaging for students. Some students experience difficulty finding a place in band/choir, especially if they did not participate in ensembles at a younger age. Guitar is a great way to offer an experience in music to a variety of students.

Guitar-focused NT music classes were the most commonly mentioned, with eight of the sixteen interviewed teachers offering instruction on the instrument. The popularity of the guitar

among middle and high school students lends itself to the recruitment of students into both NT and traditional music classes. Music teacher Brad Hendry explained this relationship,

If you have the opportunity to learn something like Guitar, which could lead to you teaching students outside of the Band/Choir/Orchestra vein, you could be pulling in students to Music who would otherwise not participate in a Music class. Guitar could also be a gateway to getting students into ensembles like: Jazz Band (guitar, bass guitar), Jazz Choir, Mariachi, etc.

Based on participant responses, it appears NT guitar classes work extremely well to bridge the gap between NT and traditional music classes and to bolster student enrollment. For some teachers, NT music classes are conduits of recruitment of students and help grow their traditional music classes. Half of the teachers in this study reported that NT music classes contribute to increased enrollment numbers in their traditional music classes. As teacher Kay Reily said of her NT music classes, "They reach a completely different population than traditional music classes, and both feed each other."

Guitar and other NT music classes are often more financially accessible than traditional music classes. This aspect lessens the economic barriers that often prevent students from enrollment in the more costly traditional ensembles. Music teacher Vince Caruso explained that NT music classes,"allows them [students] to explore an innately human art form without the financial hurdles that band/orchestra sometimes present and no commitments outside of school. Some kids dig music but don't want to (or can't be) be in the traditional music program."

Finances should never be a qualifying factor to receive a music education but it is often the case, becoming a barrier for those who can't afford to participate in traditional ensemble-based classes.

Less financially restrictive NT music programs give more students access to music education. They also grant teachers opportunities to build relationships with a larger number of students in their school. Several teachers commented that NT music classes give them a sense of fulfillment; through them, they are able to reach a larger and more diverse population of students. Teacher Erica Ewell said that, "I enjoy teaching piano because it has introduced me to a whole section of the student body that I would otherwise never have met." Allen Madsen noted, "It is so gratifying to provide opportunities for students that might not ever get involved in artistic self-expression!" Clark summarized, indicating "The culture is built upon the idea that this may be their [the students] only opportunity to learn about music/guitar from an expert." Teacher Jarid Norman spoke of the significance NT music classes,

(Non-traditional classes) offer one more adult that students have the potential of interacting with in a positive manner. Relationships with students comes first. In my class, I have found that the ukulele speaks to some of the students and they go on to purchase their own, learn songs off YouTube, and then perform in the school talent show because they have found their 'voice.'

Student voice is critical to keep students active in music programs. Culturally responsive curricula acknowledge, support and validate students as they develop their musical "voices" and identities. Music teacher Garrett Newbill stated:

When students get to express who they are through personal choices and music development. Students are empowered to make something that is their own. They are seen as an individual who is capable of creation, which is a huge morale boost for a lot of kiddos.....Secondary music education has privileged the ensemble/traditional setting for far too long. We are behind the curve by a long shot and are finally starting to play catch up. Non-traditional classes are definitely the future of music education and are able to reach kids who simply have been excluded from music after elementary school...NT classes are truly student-centered courses, and the students should feel that way...It gives students some confirmation of their identity, because they are finally seen!

NT music classes are student centered and draw from student identities. Students are "seen," as Newbill stated, and eager to engage in music that reflects their cultural backgrounds and musical interests. Mariachi classes are exemplary of NT music classes that reflect school demographics, thus informing music curricula and promoting successful links between school and community.

Music teacher Derek Pulsifer explained that his Mariachi classes

.....have a larger percentage of students with limited English proficiency (or that are monolingual Spanish speakers). Those tend to be the kids who have recently moved into

the country, so they're choosing something that feels familiar (while formal public school music education is rare in Mexico, at least the music style is something familiar to them. They know the music even if they haven't studied it formally).

Pulsifer's students are drawn to Mariachi for its welcoming familiarity and appeal as a positive representation of their home-country and culture. Madsen has had similar success and commented:

Mariachi classes give students a chance to make music that is brimming with joy and emotion. It gives my Hispanic students a deep sense of pride in their culture and means of connecting to their parents and grandparents. It allows them to serve as cultural ambassadors to our community as well. It's a beautiful thing!

Madsen's Mariachi classes provide the students a platform to share their culture, inform the community, and perhaps, break down racial assumptions. Students are recognized, listened to and honored for who they are, what they know and what they want to learn. Mariachi classes show how NT music classes can connect schools to their local communities and garner their support.

My students and community get to have the music of their culture in their schools, which is not something most immigrant communities really get. The community loves hearing the mariachi any time they get out and perform. It connects some kids who wouldn't take a traditional ensemble to the power of music. (Pulsifer, Survey Response)

Mariachi classes offered within the school day does more than welcome immigrant students with familiar musical medium: They reassure immigrant communities that they have a seat at the table and are welcome as rightful participating members of U.S. society. They are seen, and they are important. Madsen noted:

Hispanic students are extremely grateful to have a music teacher that takes “their” music so seriously. Students appreciate my efforts to be culturally accurate and sensitive. I ask lots of questions and they invariably give me answers. It is very validating to them to see that the music of their culture is relevant, desirable, and worthwhile.

NT music classes give teachers the freedom to implement music classes that are culturally validating. Pulsifer and Madsen's mariachi programs are successful because they use students' cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference and performance styles to add a deeper level of meaning and cultural relevance to their school's music programs. Clark summarized,

NT classes should reflect the students' wishes and identities. NT classes should be inclusive of all demographics, but might be more successful if the NT class is related to the interests of the community. For example, I personally see value in mariachi music, but mariachi is not a type of music engrained in my community's identity. While a mariachi class could be successful, I think my guitar class represents the interests of my students more.

While mariachi classes may be appropriate and met with enthusiasm in Pulsifer and Madsen's communities, they may not be as relevant to others. For culturally responsive NT music classes to reach their full potential, they should be aligned with student interests.

NT music classes allow teachers to adapt their classes to reflect their students and perceived student needs. NT music content is often flexible and can be easily changed to better reflect students' musical interests. Newbill utilizes his students' interest to support engagement in his NT music classes.

In my NT classes we do tons of projects. Students are always working on their own thing, which gives me time to give individual help and field questions. Sometimes they do projects in pairs/small groups which allows students to show their knowledge to each other. The nice thing about popular music/nontraditional music is that it connects directly with a student's interest so they always have some buy in/prior knowledge to draw from.

(Newbill, Survey Response)

Content centered on students, their interests and musical desires, encourages further musical exploration and development.

John Theine described his student's enthusiasm for a Taiko Drumming class and the type of culture that it creates. "The taiko group is the only such group in public schools in the state of Washington. Kids have performed up and down the West Coast and have been invited twice to perform in Disneyland...This gives kids something to be proud of." When asked to describe the steps taken to have taiko included in the school curriculum, Theine explained that none of the NT

classes that he teaches are in the school curriculum. He wrote, "There is no budget for them. My district will not support them as classes, but is willing to let me teach them." Despite having no financial support from his district, Theine's taiko class has flourished. Students volunteer their time for taiko because they enjoy it and take pride in their NT accomplishments.

While some districts may not financially support NT music classes, (such as Theine's district), seven participating teachers explained that they teach NT music classes in order to achieve a full-time (1.0) salary. In these situations, the financial incentive for teachers becomes clear. Some music teachers will take jobs in schools where NT music classes already exist, but it is likely that they will need to develop classes from the ground up to reach full salary.

Norman advised,

Do some research about the culture of your school where something like mariachi may be appropriate...Look into aligning it vertically with other NT music classes. For instance, I did ukulele because it segued nicely into learning guitar at the high school.

If teachers feel unprepared to teach a NT music class, such as mariachi, they can study it with their students while they teach it. Madsen recalled when beginning his mariachi program, "I basically stayed a few pages ahead of my students that first year until I felt comfortable." Ewell offered similar advice; "It will be slow going at first, and you may not get many kids signed up, but give it time. Word will spread, and it will grow. Also, be patient with yourself and allow room for change."

NT music classes are becoming more common in secondary public school music programs. There are financial incentives for teachers to teach them and they appeal to populations of students who are not typically drawn to traditional music classes. As Clark said,

NT classes have a great value in reaching a different type of student than traditional classes. I also find that band and choir tend to lean heavily towards a white-centric demographic, seen in the educators themselves, composers, and the students. While I wish band and choir could find a way to be more inclusive, I think NT classes fill a critical void that band/choir sometimes cannot seem to fill.

It is obvious and encouraging that the sixteen teachers electing to participate in this survey are committed to their NT music classes and the success of all of their students. I'm confident they are representative of a broader spectrum of teachers who've made steps toward including NT classes within the secondary music curriculum program at their schools.

Summary

Sixteen middle and high school secondary music teachers responded to a survey inquiring about the non-tradition (NT) classes at their respective schools. Their contributions reaffirmed the positive impact inclusive, accessible, and culturally responsive music classes have on a cohesive music program. Teacher responses showed the variety of benefits NT music classes can have in secondary public schools and their communities. Clearly, secondary music classes beyond the traditional ensembles of band, orchestra, and choir enhance and broaden music programs. NT music classes offer new ways for students to access quality music education.

There are many reasons students may not enroll in traditional music classes. For some finances could be a factor, while others might be uninterested in the performance requirements and repertoire typically heard in traditional music classes. As described by teachers in their responses to the questionnaire, these discouragements can be remedied by creating culturally responsive and financially accessible NT music programs. Many students who begin their music education in such programs later enroll in traditional ensembles as well and are likely to continue making music into their adult lives.

Culturally responsive NT music classes validate student musical heritages and allow for cultural exchanges that support diversity in schools and promote representation in content. Such is the case with Mariachi bands where Latinx students have been able to speak as musical ambassadors to enrich understandings of Latinx culture through discussions of mariachi music. Culturally responsive NT music programs like these have been met with enthusiasm by their local communities for their cultural familiarity and support of musical practices.

NT music classes are flexible and can be adjusted to reflect student interests and need. This student-centered approach creates new opportunities for students to become personally invested in their musical education. As discussed, students often develop a sense of pride during their NT music experience.

If the mission of a comprehensive quality music education is to support and promote a life-time of music making, then the non-traditional music offerings described and supported by

participating survey responders described the steps and purposes. When one considers the multiple benefits, the question becomes why any secondary school would go without?

Chapter Four: Summary

The purpose of this thesis was to advocate for the inclusion of non-traditional music courses in secondary public-school music programs. Resources to support this promotion included articles and books on the topic and, most importantly, questionnaire responses from select music educators currently teaching courses identified as non-traditional (ie, not band, orchestra, choir). In addition to these primary references, my own experience was included, as it paralleled the key categories of culturally responsive theory, inclusive practices, and expanded views of music literacy.

The combination of Narrative Inquiry and questionnaire results worked in tandem to reinforce what I've believed all along: Quality music education must be available for all students. This is what drives my philosophy as a teacher. I knew this before, but this belief has grown and inspires me as an educator.

Every student is capable of achieving a higher level of musicianship and it is my desire to create music programs that are accessible to all students despite their backgrounds. Secondary level students who are hesitant to pursue music through the more commonly found routes of band, orchestra, and choir deserve an opportunity to explore their potential as musical beings. I am most eager to share the joys of music with those who have yet to experience them.

My goal as a music educator is to advocate for secondary music teachers to bring local community music practices and traditions into the music classroom. This is best facilitated through non-traditional (NT) class opportunities.

In all of the educational settings to come, my students will be encouraged to share music with the class and will be met with support to continue to explore and develop their musical tastes and identities. To foster the development of a global perspective and an understanding of music, its diverse histories and ties to culture, I will engage students in ways that expose them to unfamiliar and different ways that music can be made. This ongoing exchange, what students carry with them into the classroom and what I can prepare for them to advance their curiosities, will result in more varied, representative and inclusive music classes. I am excited to learn from my students and to discover how they find value in music.

As a music educator, I am committed to support traditional music programs and I seek to build upon them through the implementation of NT music classes. Using my formative experiences during my own high school and undergraduate years to inform my teaching, I seek to recruit students into music programs by providing them access through NT music classes.

It is my belief that many post secondary level students, whose passion for music grow from NT music experiences, will continue their musical pursuits, perhaps at university. As a music teacher I will use my position of expertise to validate diverse student music identities and music cultures so that all students feel confident and prepared to be musically active after high school.

I will engage in difficult conversations with school administrators, faculty and community members in order to reveal the existent accessibility barriers to music education and to advocate for NT music classes as inclusive music options. The merits of NT music classes

and their value in secondary schools will be an ongoing discussion for me and I will actively insist on their place in music programs. My strategy will be to gain support from the local community by creating NT music classes that serve their cultural heritages.

Teachers taking their first steps towards NT options should research their school's population for insight to create responsive music classes. Student's interests need to be considered and teachers must be flexible to coach and guide their NT class participants toward musical goals.

This requires a level of humility, ingenuity, creativity, and responsiveness. Teachers need to own what may be a lack of expertise as they familiarize themselves with NT music that goes beyond their own experience. This is what highly effective teachers do. They continue to be learners themselves, and do the work needed.

Lind and McKoy wrote:

...Culturally responsive teaching is best educational practice, and it is becoming more important.... In so many ways, culturally responsive teaching *is* 'good teaching,' but good teaching doesn't just happen. Good teaching is the result of hard work, dedication, and perseverance. It requires the best that we have to offer—but then, our future generations of musicians, both amateur and professional, deserve no less than our very best. (141-142).

In NT music programs students and teachers can learn together. The ability to practice patience, perseverance, and a belief in all students guides the inclusion of non-traditional music classes at the secondary level. I can hardly wait.

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Appendix A

Bluegrass for Beginners

A collaborative exploration of bluegrass and its forms

Ten week duration

About the Course

Dear Administrator,

Provided here is a proposal for a music curriculum that is unique in its design for students who are eager to play but may not be experienced with, or particularly interested in, music courses that are commonly found in high school settings. This course is open to everyone and students are encouraged to take it multiple times. Student leadership is encouraged and extra opportunities will be made available for more experienced students and those who have previously taken the course. Student collaboration is essential for success.

Course Goals:

- Students specialize in a bluegrass instrument and develop necessary skills/techniques.
- Students create their own arrangements/interpretations standard bluegrass songs.
- Students experience camaraderie in their small and large group collaborations and performances.
- Students develop a musical identity and become “lifers.” They continue to play after completion of the course.

This course will satisfy fine arts requirements. It is an alternative to music classes typical of high schools i.e. orchestra, band, jazz band and choir. Students are expected to have and play their instrument in every class period. This is a hands on course where students will learn to interact and communicate with each other both in large and small bluegrass ensembles. An

emphasis on student initiative and leadership will characterize the final four weeks of the course where students carry the responsibility to arrange, rehearse and perform bluegrass repertoire.

Essential Questions:

- What is bluegrass music?
- What is bluegrass culture?
- Is early bluegrass content acceptable in modern society?
- What are bluegrass instruments?
- What is the role of my bluegrass instrument in a large or small ensemble?
- How can I arrange a bluegrass song for a large or small ensemble?
- How do I prepare for a performance?

This curriculum is student centered and allows students daily opportunities to share their ideas on the music that is studied. Ultimately student input will determine the shape and scope that class and group projects take. The teacher will be available as an artistic advisor and coach to help guide students along their way. In addition to the development of transferable musical abilities, this student centered approach contributes to student personnel initiative, accountability, leadership, group management skills and teamwork.

Units: (two weeks each)

1. Explore Instruments: Banjo, Guitar, Mandolin, Fiddle, Bass, Ukulele
2. Instrument Specialization: Choose your favorite!
3. Large Bluegrass Ensemble: Learn/arrange repertoire as a class

4. Small Bluegrass Ensemble 1: Small groups with performance of arrangement(s)
5. Small Bluegrass Ensemble 2: Repeat Unit 4 in new small groups

Although the first unit is presented as an introduction and exploration of bluegrass instruments I want to stress here that this is not an instrument survey course. The purpose of Unit 1 is to allow students who have no prior experience playing an instrument the chance to experiment before they decide their specialization (Unit 2). In other words, if on day one a student comes to class eager to learn the mandolin then I will not discourage them with mandatory guitar lessons. Similarly, a student who has experience on an instrument will not be required to practice other instruments as part of their course fulfillment. The focus of this course is for students to learn to play together.

In unit 2 students will develop and practice the fundamentals of bluegrass on their instrument. This will include basic technique as well as scale patterns, chord positions, rhythmic motives for accompaniment and other ensemble concepts and skills. Class time will be made for practice of instruments.

In Unit 3 the class will begin to learn repertoire. Under the direction of the teacher, the class will practice and arrange a variety of bluegrass songs to create a replicable rendition unique to the class and student vision. Unit 3 serves as an introduction to repertoire and provides students their first steps into ensemble playing and performance. A detailed sample of Unit 3 is provided later in this proposal.

During the last four weeks in Units 4 and 5, students will be divided into small group ensembles that will select, arrange and prepare bluegrass repertoire for performance. The teacher will be available to offer suggestions and advice but these are meant to be student led projects. On the last day of the unit student ensembles will perform for each other in the classroom.

It is not included as a mandatory component of the curriculum but it is my hope that the large class and small group ensembles will give performances for their school peers or even the larger public community.

Washington State Music Standards Addressed:

- (MU:Cr1.1.E.5) Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.
 - Compose and improvise melodic and rhythmic ideas or motives that reflect characteristic(s) of music or text(s) studied in rehearsal.
- (MU:Cr2.1.E.5) Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.
 - Select and develop draft melodic and rhythmic ideas or motives that demonstrate understanding of characteristic(s) of music or text(s) studied in rehearsal.
- (MU:Cr3.2.E.5) Refine and complete artistic work.
 - Share personally-developed melodic and rhythmic ideas or motives—individually or as an ensemble—that demonstrate understanding of characteristics of music or texts studied in rehearsal.

Resources, Materials, Equipment

Space:

- One large classroom
- Enough chairs without arms or attached desks to sit entire class
- 3-5 additional spaces for small ensembles to practice/rehearse during class time
 - Practice rooms

Instruments:

- 10- 20 Guitars
- 5 Banjos
- 5 Mandolins
- 5 Fiddles
- 5 Bass Fiddles
- 5 Ukuleles

Technology:

- Speakers for in class listening examples
- Projector or other display device
- Access to printer/copier

Texts:

- *Earl Scruggs and the 5-String Banjo*

- *Play Like a Legend: Bill Monroe Tunes and Songs for Mandolin*
- *Vassar Clements Fiddle*
- *Bluegrass Fakebook*

Incidentals:

- Replacement strings for all instruments
- Variety of picks for Guitar and Mandolin
- Banjo finger picks
- Rosen
- Music stands

Key Academic Vocabulary

Music:

- Scale
- Chord/Arpeggio
- Rhythm
- Pick-up
- Harmony
- Melody
- Dynamics
- Accompany/accompaniment

- Ensemble

Objectives

Students will be able to:

1. Play a bluegrass instrument
2. Collaborate with each other to create a unique rendition of bluegrass repertoire
3. Play and perform in a bluegrass setting/context

Assessment

Formative:

1. Teacher will gauge student learning through in-class observations of development and progress of instrumental skills
2. Teacher will observe student growth in student led small ensemble performances
3. Teacher will diagnose student retention through conversation and regular questioning
4. Students will complete self evaluations

Summative:

- Units 4 and 5's performance projects require students to arrange, practice and perform bluegrass repertoire. These culminating projects highlight the Washington State music standards that are: 1. generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work; 2. organize and develop artistic ideas and work; 3. refine and complete artistic work.

Unit 3: Large Bluegrass Ensemble

The purpose of lesson 3 is to help students become comfortable performing class and in front of each other. This unit serves to model the chemistry that is necessary to successfully lead an ensemble so that later in Units 4 and 5 students can replicate the process on their own in small groups. The sequence of the lessons will lead student through the processes involved in learning, refining and performing bluegrass music. The number of songs that the class learns in this period is dependent on the teacher's satisfaction with student execution. The lessons and learning sequence should be repeated multiple times to learn multiple songs. The teacher should adjust their pace to accommodate student retention.

Lessons/learning sequence:

1. Introduce song to class
 - Include historical and performance context
2. Chords and lyrics
3. Add melody instruments
 - Include solos
4. Class led arrangement of song
 - How chorus, verse, solos fit together. Ways to "kick off" and "close out" a tune
5. Classroom rehearsal and performance of song(s)

Unit 3: Sample Lesson #2, Chords and Lyrics to “Pig in a Pen”

- Introduction:
 - Who wrote it? Where and when was it written?
- Discussion of lyrics and of bluegrass as a stereotyped genre
 - Allow students to comment on stereotyped themes and change lyrics to better fit our times.
- Teacher plays Chords and sings melody:
 - Students listen one time then join and sing melody while teacher plays chords.
- Students gather instruments
 - Go over chords to song.
- Students play chords
 - Students play chords while teacher sings lyrics.
- Students play chords and sing lyrics at the same time
- Ask for volunteers to sing verses as soloists
- Play the entire song

Standards Addressed:

1. (MU:Cr1.1.E.5) Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.
2. (MU:Cr2.1.E.5) Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.

By the end of this lesson students can:

1. Play the chords to “Pig in a Pen” in time with their classmates
2. Accompany themselves and their classmates on an instrument while singing the lyrics

Academic language addressed:

- Rhythm
- Harmony
- Dynamics
- Accompany/Accompaniment
- Ensemble
- Solo

Resources Needed:

- Students previously chosen instruments
 - In the previous unit students chose an instrument to specialize in. Those chosen instruments need to be available at every class thereafter. For this reason the exact instruments required on a daily basis will vary from term to term and is dependent on which instruments students choose to focus on.
- A projector to display lyrics

Review of Prior Information:

- The historical and cultural context of “Pig in a Pen” will be reviewed. Who wrote it? Where was it played? Who made a famous recording of it? Who plays it today? etc.

- Review of rhythmic motives appropriate for different instruments.
 - For example: specific banjo rolls appropriate for this song, mandolin “chunk” rhythms, bass rhythmic and scalar motives etc.

Student Based Tasks:

1. Analysis, critique and edit lyrics
2. Show competency on given instrument
3. Sing and play instrument simultaneously
4. Sing as soloists
5. Support soloists as ensemble members

Formative Assessment:

1. Teacher will observe student abilities to keep time, sing and play chords
2. Teacher will take note of which students volunteered to solo
3. Teacher will ask questions that point towards key concepts
 - Such as when should we play loudest? When should we play softest?

Supplementary Material

Pig in a Pen

Chorus:

I got a pig, hold him in a pen
Corn to feed him on
All I need is a pretty little girl
To feed him when I'm gone

Verse 1:

Going on the mountain
To sow a little cane
Raise a barrel of sorghum
Sweet little Liza Jane

Repeat Chorus

Verse 2:

Black clouds a-rising
Surest sign of rain
Get the old gray bonnet on
Sweet little Liza Jane

Repeat Chorus

Verse 3:

Yonder comes that gal of mine
How do you think I know
Can't you tell by that gingham gown
Hanging down so low

Repeat Chorus

Verse 4:

Bake them biscuits
Bake them good and brown
When you get them biscuits baked
We're Alabamy bound

Repeat Chorus

Chords:

G→C→G→D(7)→G

Appendix B

Interview Questionnaire

General Information:

- What music classes do you teach? (ie., Band, Choir, Orchestra and/or others?)
- How long have you been in your present position? How many total years have you taught?
- Are you the only music teacher in your school?
- Please share the number of students in your ensemble classes and in any other music classes (*Non-traditional (NT) includes any music classes not listed as traditional band, orchestra, choir). Include grade levels.

Non-Traditional Music Classes:

- Did you receive any special training or experience prior to teaching NT music classes?
- How did you develop the curriculum? Did you use a published curriculum or online resources?
- Do NT music classes include more diverse learners? Describe and please share details.
- Describe the steps taken to have these classes included in the school curriculum. Please include information for funding.
- Are there performance expectations in your NT music classes? If so, are any of these performances beyond the classroom setting and hours?
- How do you differentiate instruction for students who are at different levels in their musical skills and confidence?

- What role does western music notation play in your class?
- Has enrollment in NT classes had an impact on enrollment in other music classes?
- Do students registered in the NT class have prior music experience in or outside of school?

Benefits For and Opinions About:

- What drew you to teach NT "general music" type classes for secondary level students? Why do you teach these classes?
- Did your teacher preparation program include classes on implementing NT music classes?
- Which supplementary or professional development opportunities have you sought and/or can you recommend?
- How do NT music classes positively affect students lives?
- How does the classroom environment of NT music classes compare to band, orchestra and choir classes?
- Describe the culture you strive to create in your NT music classes as compared to traditional ensemble courses. (For instance, placement in an orchestra and dress code for concerts)
- Have students continued their music educations after leaving your NT class?
- How has student experience as a musician (non-elitist/nontraditional) contributed to their sense of identity?

- Describe feedback from parents and students who have graduated from your NT music programs.
- What advice do you have for music educators who wish to develop and propose NT classes in their schools?

Is there anything that I have not asked or other information you would like to share?