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<div align="center">Urban Music Education</div>

Music education is incredibly important to students of color in urban communities, as it allows them to express themselves, connect with others, and develop communication skills (Hinckley, 1995), but what happens when approaches aren't portrayed appropriately? Although music itself offers students a way to exchange emotions, it can also lead to misinterpretations and quarrels with teachers (Fiese & DeCarbo, 1995). When students aren't properly represented in music classes at a young age, it can negatively impact their impression of future music classes (Doyle, 2014). Through code-switching, clear dialect, and diverse curriculum, teachers can provide students with critical knowledge both in and outside of the classroom.

It is crucial for music education to be at the fingertips of urban youth, as it gives them an expressional outlet, teamwork and leadership skills, and opportunities to practice time management (Hinckley, 1995). However, not just any form of music class will suffice. Possibly the most important factor within this concept is overemphasizing high expectations, as studies show that urban students feel demoralized if their teachers give them special treatment in comparison to others. When given high expectations, neoindigenous students receive higher test scores because they know they will be held to such optimism (Hinckley, 1995). This requires enthusiasm and support from teachers. It is also critical to include variety in what repertoire is programmed in each concert cycle, as these students experience a wide array of genres in their day-to-day life. The replication of the "real world" should be the goal of all urban classrooms and not just in music; therefore, teachers across the entire curriculum should discuss the wants and needs of their learners in order to provide this variety (Hinckley, 1995).

Since expression is very important to neoindigenous youth, early childhood music education should be prioritized more than it is currently. Unfortunately, many existing programs do not include as much diverse literature as required for urban cultures. Such variety is necessary for children to develop communication skills, as well as strengthen relations between students (John, Cameron, & Bartel, 2016). If this literature is updated to follow culturally responsive teaching methods, students will become more engaged in class, which has been proven to increase both test scores and attendance rates (Doyle, 2014). While observing high school ensembles, one will most likely recognize the lack of representation, not only in the musicians participating -- of whom approximately 66% are caucasion-- but also the composers of music being performed (Doyle, 2014). This poor diversity may be contributed to the deficient quantity of portrayals in early childhood programs, which might cause students to drop their music classes as soon as they become electives (John, et. al., 2016; Doyle, 2014).

Studies show that most music educators across all areas -- both performance and nonperformance-based -- do not feel readily prepared to teach urban youth, as the majority of programs develop pedagogy for "ideal" students (Fiese & DeCarbo, 1995). They feel confident when it comes to teaching music, but when faced with students who suffer from emotional and physical trauma their education falls short. They wish their schooling had included more real-life experiences, especially prior to their intern teaching placements, and in turn have had to attend clinics and workshops to feel collected in urban classrooms (Fiese & DeCarbo, 1995). How can instructors know the appropriate way to act in such a setting when their college programs didn't inform them of how to do so?

Teachers act as an encouragement or barricade to students' engagement in music education (Hoffman, 2011). Sometimes they do not consider slang before reacting to dialogue, causing urban students to feel rejected. Many may use the term "beat" interchangeably with

"rhythm," such as the phrase, "Lay down that beat." The teacher may view this as incorrect; the two words are not synonymous by definition. While the teacher uses the denotation, the students instead use connotation, causing the teacher to believe they do not know how to properly apply vocabulary. The instructor might decide to correct them, although the students used an accurate description that they are familiar with, making content more accessible for their learning style (Hoffman, 2011). They might not realize their perceived-mistake and become frustrated. If the educator had been aware of this cultural language they could approach the situation in a manner that is more suitable for neoindigenous youth (Emdin, 2016). Such miscommunication may be detrimental to the student-teacher relationship and, in turn, their learning.

In order to overcome this obstacle, teachers must know how to actively code-switch while leading a lesson, as well as instruct their students to do so as well. Christopher Emdin suggests creating a poster or bulletin board listing vocabulary words and their slang counterparts. You must then give students the opportunity to experience which words are appropriate in different settings (2016). For example, in our rhythm versus beat scenario the vocabulary word is "rhythm," while the slang term is "beat." The music educator could set the tone by describing an auditorium, such as Carnegie Hall, and have students lead discussions using proper terminology. A sentence might go something like this: "My, my, that rhythm in the exposition of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony was quite repetitive." Then the scenario could switch to a basketball court in the schoolyard while a cypher takes place. Now it would be more appropriate for students to say, "Dang Chris, that beat was fire." By giving students the chance to practice code-switching in the classroom, they will be more adept to using proper vocabulary when the time comes (Emdin, 2016).

        While teachers may not feel prepared to teach neoindigenous students, they are still capable of implementing culturally responsive methods in the classroom. They must allow students to express themselves while creating a sense of community. This should start early on in a child's life, although many early childhood music programs are not up to par (these methods can help to improve their instruction, too) (John, et. al., 2016). Poor representation does not allow students to view themselves in such a scenario. The use of code-switching can help to prevent miscommunication that may damage the student's impression of music education, which can be detrimental to the rest of their schooling (Emdin, 2016). If all of these ideas are taken into consideration, music education can be made accessible for all students, including those in urban communities.

References

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