
**Bridging Theory, Research, and Practice:
Eight Teacher Action Steps Towards Multicultural Music Education**

Jennifer M. Mellizo

University of Wyoming Lab School

ABSTRACT

Although many of today's music educators embrace the notion of multiculturalism in the music classroom, theoretical support has not yet translated into widespread practice. The purpose of the present article is to provide a bridge between theory, research, and practice in the area of *multicultural music education* so it can be understood and practiced in more consistent ways. First, the term multicultural music education is clarified through a critical examination of relevant literature related to theoretical foundations, research, and connections to the wider field of multicultural education. Next, the important ideas brought forth through this literature review are synthesized in the form of a proposed conceptual framework for understanding and practicing multicultural music education as curricular *content*, a *process*, and an *approach*. This framework, consisting of eight teacher action steps, illuminates the connections between multicultural music education and the wider multicultural education movement, yet remains firmly grounded in musical learning.

Keywords: multicultural music education, culturally-diverse music, world music, global education, multicultural education, culturally-responsive teaching

Introduction

I have always considered myself a *multicultural music educator*. I am interested in ethnomusicology and make frequent efforts to introduce my students to music from a wide variety of diverse cultural settings. I have travelled to Benin, Africa on two separate occasions to study music with culture-bearers, and have written numerous lesson plans based on these experiences. However, several years ago I began to question my identity as a multicultural music educator after a graduate level course

pertaining to issues in “multicultural education” left me with more questions than answers. I realized that my personal understanding of multicultural music education was inconsistent with many of the topics we covered in class, which were mostly related to reforming the underlying structure of the educational system so all students could experience success in school. In contrast, my personal understanding of the word *multicultural* was primarily centered on the diverse repertoire I included in my music curriculum. Soon after completing this course, I began to apply a critical perspective to my own teaching practices. I explored music education literature, looking for connections between musical learning and the wider multicultural education movement. Although I discovered many important theoretical ideas brought forth by music education scholars, it was difficult to find practical resources that synthesized this information in a way that was immediately useful to me as a practicing music educator.

The purpose of this article is to provide a bridge between theory, research, and practice in the area of *multicultural music education*. First, this term will be clarified through a critical examination of literature related to theoretical foundations, practice, research, and connections to the wider field of multicultural education. The ideas brought forth through this literature review will then be synthesized in the form of a proposed conceptual framework for defining, understanding, researching, and practicing multicultural music education in ways that are consistent with the wider multicultural education movement, yet firmly grounded in musical learning.

Theoretical Foundations for Multiculturalism in the Music Classroom

Over the past 50 years, a substantial amount of attention has been given to the notion of multiculturalism in music education. Many new culturally diverse music curriculum resources have been developed, music from a variety of cultural settings has been included in textbooks, the quality and availability of musical arrangements and recordings has improved, and research in this area has grown (Schippers and

Campbell 2012, Drummond 2010, Volk 1998). Proponents of multicultural music education contend teaching culturally diverse music benefits students musically, socially, and globally (Fung 1995). However, other scholars in the field have approached this topic more cautiously, wondering whether music can be “genuinely shared” between cultures, and suggesting the “continuing viability” of the multicultural music education movement requires a “firmer theoretical foundation” (Reimer 2002, 4-5).

It has been difficult to establish a strong theoretical framework for understanding and practicing multicultural music education because the word *multicultural* has been (and continues to be) very ambiguous within a music education context. Most often, multicultural music education has been defined very literally as “the teaching of a broad spectrum of music cultures” (Volk, 1998, 4). However, this conceptualization of the term *multicultural* is not consistent with its accepted meaning within the field of education as a whole.

Banks and Banks (2013) assert “multicultural education is an idea, an educational reform movement, and a process whose major goal is to change the structure of educational institutions so that male and female students, exceptional students, and students who are members of diverse racial, ethnic, language, and cultural groups will have an equal chance to achieve academically in school” (1). Multicultural educators operate under the assumption that ALL students have the ability to achieve at high levels. However, research has shown significant differences do exist between certain groups of students in terms of academic achievement (Banks and Banks 2013, Gay 2010). Therefore, the primary rationale for this educational movement becomes clear: If all students do not perform at the same level because students from certain ethnic or cultural groups are disadvantaged within the current system, then the system should be reformed so all students have equal opportunities to experience success.

Within the field of music education, only a handful of scholars have drawn specific parallels between what has been labeled *multicultural music education* and

the goals and aims of the wider multicultural education movement (Anderson and Campbell 2010, Koza 2001, Volk 1998, Elliott 1990). Several authors have distanced themselves from the term *multicultural* altogether. Miralis (2006) argues this term is “often unsuitable and misleading” (60) since diverse musical content is rarely presented within the context of the complex political issues that multiculturalists have articulated. Instead, authors have suggested alternative terms such as *culturally plural music education* (Drummond 2005, 2), *cultural diversity in music education* (Cain 2011, 31), *intercultural music education* (O’Flynn 2005, 196), or *multiethnic music education* (Miralis 2006, 60) to describe the ways in which music selections from diverse cultural settings are typically included in the curriculum.

While I agree that the inclusion of culturally diverse music in the curriculum in itself does not constitute multicultural music education, I am not in favor of abandoning this term altogether for several reasons. Anderson and Campbell (2010) assert a fundamental principle that grounds multicultural music education is the idea that music should be understood “as a global phenomenon in which there are a number of highly sophisticated musical traditions based on different but equally logical principles” (2). In essence, there is no one universal perspective from which music can be understood. Yet, many music educators continue to approach all types of music from one dominant perspective, based on Westernized (or Eurocentric) ways of understanding, regardless of the cultural setting from which the music is drawn (Drummond 2010, Dunbar-Hall 2005, Campbell 2004). Drummond (2010) contends this approach may be “the result of deep conditioning” (118) that begins with our own personal musical learning experiences and is reinforced during university teacher training programs. The importance placed on learning music through written staff notation within the dominant paradigm serves as just one example of this phenomenon, which promotes unequal power distributions, and places certain groups of students at a disadvantage in music classrooms.

Furthermore, if we accept the notion that “all music exists within its cultural context” (Volk 1998, 15), then we must also accept the notion that musical learning

can never be completely free from the complex historical and political themes that emerge through the hegemony of social values that dominate the life of the school. Bradley (2012) uses the example of South African freedom songs to illustrate this point. She notes that most published versions of the popular song *Siyahamba* contain little to no contextual information about apartheid, and argues, “without knowledge of that context...the song’s great depth of motion and full meaning cannot truly be experienced” (189). Although some scholars have suggested too much emphasis on cultural learning could potentially take the focus away from the musical learning (Reimer 2002), I believe, as Bradley (2012) suggests, when music educators “dare to include these crucial contexts” in their teaching, it doesn’t take away from the music. In fact, “students’ understanding (of the music) becomes much deeper” (193). Therefore, instead of minimizing the political connotations of the word *multicultural*, I suggest that we dig deeper into the connections between music education and the wider multicultural education movement. An understanding of specific ideas and frameworks that have been brought forth by important multicultural scholars will help music educators reflect upon their practices, and make positive changes that will ensure ALL students have equal opportunities to experience musical fulfillment and success, regardless of the cultural groups with which they identify.

Understanding the Multicultural Education Movement

Gay (2010) asserts, “culture is at the heart of all we do in the name of education” (8) because it “determines how we think, believe, and behave, and these, in turn, affect how we teach and learn” (9). She defines *culture* as the “dynamic system of social values, cognitive codes, behavioral standards, worldviews, and beliefs used to give order and meaning to our own lives” (8-9). Banks and Banks (2013) contend the “school culture” typically reflects the accepted beliefs, values, and behavior patterns of the dominant culture within a given society. Gay (2010) adds that teachers within these dominant systems often fail to recognize the behaviors, communication

patterns, and preferred learning styles of people belonging to various subcultures, who may hold beliefs and values that conflict with those of the dominant culture. Thus, certain students are systematically placed at a disadvantage, and must overcome numerous barriers in order to experience success in school.

Five dimensions of multicultural education

Banks (2015) argues there are five distinct dimensions that must be addressed in order for true multicultural education to occur. The first dimension in Bank's framework, *content integration*, considers the ways in which teachers can use examples and content from various cultural groups to teach key concepts in any given subject area. The second dimension, *knowledge construction*, addresses the need for teachers to help students identify and understand how cultural assumptions, perspectives, and biases influence the construction of knowledge within any subject area. *Prejudice reduction* considers the ways in which methods, resources, and strategies can be used to change students' racial attitudes, thus cultivating positive intergroup relations in the classroom. *Equity pedagogy* involves teachers demonstrating the willingness to change their teaching practices to help students from different social-class, cultural, and racial groups succeed academically. Finally, *empowering school culture and social structure* requires various components of the underlying school culture and social structure be reformed and restructured to empower students from diverse cultural groups.

Understanding Multicultural Music Education

Elliott (1995) argues, "If MUSIC consists in a diversity of music cultures, then MUSIC is inherently multicultural. And if MUSIC is inherently multicultural, then music education ought to be multicultural in essence" (207). Yet, he acknowledges that music education is often carried out in very ethnocentric ways (1989, 1990). In 1989, Elliott proposed a framework of six conceptions for understanding *multicultural music education*, which essentially placed ALL approaches to music

education on a “multicultural” continuum, ranging from most ethnocentric to least ethnocentric. These conceptions were originally drawn from the work of Pratte (1979), but Elliott applied them specifically to music education.

Six conceptions of multicultural music education

At the lowest end of this spectrum is *assimilation*, which occurs when musical repertoire is selected and taught almost exclusively from a Western classical perspective (Elliott 1989). The *amalgamation* approach is characterized by the inclusion of “a limited amount of ethnic music, but primarily as it has been incorporated by Western classical composers” (Volk 1998, 12). For example, jazz might be included as an acceptable genre of music since its features are used and accepted by “legitimate Western composers” (Elliott 1990, 162). Educators who conceptualize the teaching of music through an *open society* lens believe the “allegiance to the music of one's cultural heritage represents an obstacle to social unity” (Elliott 1990, 162).

In 1989, Elliott contended that many music educators viewed the fourth conception in this framework, *insular multiculturalism*, as a “‘practical’ solution to the multicultural ‘problem’” (16). Through this approach, the educator incorporates culturally diverse curriculum materials, “based mostly on ethnic music selected according to the nature of the local community” (1990, 162). Elliott argues this approach “seems multicultural because it adds an exotic musical flavor to the conventional diet available in music programs by and for the dominant majority” (163), yet rarely includes any sort of important dialogue or learning/sharing between cultures.

Several authors note the majority of repertoire selected for study and performance in today's music classrooms continues to be derived from one dominant or mainstream perspective (Schippers and Campbell 2012, Drummond 2010, Legette 2003), which indicates most music education programs still function at the insular multicultural level—or lower, according to Elliott's framework. Legette

(2003) found that although 99% of music educators in his study “felt that music from other cultures should be included in the curriculum” (56), many indicated they did not use multicultural music in their classes and concerts on a regular basis. Both Legette (2003), and Schippers and Campbell (2012) suggest a lack exposure to and training in diverse music traditions within university teacher preparation programs contributes to this lack of practice, and Drummond (2010) adds that sometimes, music educators simply have “a natural tendency to privilege music they view as ‘theirs’” (119).

According to Elliott (1989), the fifth conception, *modified multiculturalism*, moves closer to the ideal, since a wide variety of culturally diverse music is included in the curriculum, and the transmission process within the original cultural setting is considered. However, he believes this approach still falls short because it relies heavily on the “aesthetic perspective inherent in the notion of teaching from musical concepts” (1990, 163). Elliott (1989, 1990) argues ALL music education should function as *dynamic multicultural education*, which is the sixth conception in his framework. Elliott’s notion of dynamic multiculturalism incorporates several important principles:

1. A wide range of culturally diverse music should be included in the curriculum.
2. Educators should acknowledge there is no one universal experience of music.
3. The transmission process within the original cultural setting should be considered.
4. Students should have ample opportunities to actively experience the music they are studying as a means of understanding.

When multicultural music education is conceptualized in ways that are consistent with Elliott’s description of dynamic multiculturalism, the connections between this practice and the five dimensions of multicultural education, proposed by Banks (2015), become clear.

Therefore, I would like to propose the term *multicultural music education* can be understood as ***culturally diverse musical content, approached and implemented from a critical perspective, by music educators who lead their students in active music learning experiences, and consider the process of teaching and learning music that is preferred in the original cultural setting.*** However, this conceptualization of multicultural music education differs greatly from the manner in which it has been implemented in many classrooms over the past fifty years. Most often, multicultural music education has been conceptualized and practiced as *musical content* alone, with little attention given to the underlying approach or the process through which the music is taught and learned (Miralis 2006, Koza 2001, Norman 1999).

Multicultural Music Education as Curricular Content

Within this section, I will discuss two popular *content* patterns for teaching and learning culturally diverse music that have been crafted and implemented by music educators and researchers: music concepts, and music from a sociocultural perspective. These patterns form the basis for various ideas about assessment and evaluation, since they suggest categories of outcomes for the favored practices.

Music concepts

From a music concepts perspective, culturally diverse music is included in the curriculum, but the cultural context of the music is not emphasized. This practice is grounded by a *musical* rationale, which stresses the idea that exposure to a broader base of sounds may help students improve their aural, composition, and improvisation skills (Volk 1998, Fung 1995), while allowing them to achieve deeper understandings of musical concepts and elements (Anderson and Campbell 2010, Campbell 2004, Fung 1995).

Several scholars have questioned the ethics of multicultural music education from a music concepts perspective. Fung (2002) asserts, “Humans make music, and

they make music in social and cultural contexts. One cannot properly understand and appreciate music without some knowledge of its social and cultural context” (189). Hess (2013) takes this idea a step further, implying that when students are exposed to unfamiliar music they access a hypothetical image of “the Other” whether contextual information is presented or not. She states, “The image of the Other is always already waiting to be accessed” (83). Hess suggests when music educators do nothing to disrupt these hypothetical images they may actually promote “the essentialization of a culture-through a stereotype” (78).

Nam (2007) explored student outcomes resulting from multicultural music education, conceptualized from a music concepts perspective. The first teacher participant in this research study relied heavily on curriculum materials “in which Western music concepts were imposed on cultural songs” (216), while the second teacher used a well-established world-drumming curriculum, but struggled to incorporate cultural and contextual information into the lessons. Findings indicated that student participants generally expressed positive attitudes and feelings towards culturally diverse music, but few demonstrated high levels of cultural understanding after the curriculum intervention. Nam hypothesized, “It may be that more children would have demonstrated cultural sensitivity or cultural valuing if they had had an opportunity to learn cultural music with more relevant contextual and cultural information, or to directly experience cultural elements in some ways” (211).

Sociocultural

From a sociocultural perspective, relevant cultural and contextual connections are presented alongside the music. This curricular practice is associated with a *social* rationale, which highlights the idea that teaching culturally diverse music “develops multicultural awareness, understanding, and tolerance; promotes a deeper understanding and acceptance of people from other cultures; cultivates open-mindedness and unbiased thinking; and eradicates racial resentments” (Fung 1995,

37). The social rationale for multicultural music education is deeply embedded in the multicultural dimension Banks called *prejudice reduction*.

Although most music education scholars agree that diverse music should be taught with regard to cultural context, practicing educators have articulated some concerns with the sociocultural perspective. For example, there is the question of how a teacher, who has limited exposure to or knowledge about a particular musical/cultural tradition can provide students with an adequate experience that does not somehow misrepresent the people or the tradition. Nettl (1992) provides an interesting perspective on this dilemma, stating, “The idea is not to teach THE music of these cultures, but to teach something about them and for students to know they exist and are worthy of attention and respect. Emphatically, it is better to know a little than nothing” (5).

It is important, however, for music educators to understand and accept their “cultural outsider” status as they embed contextual information into lessons. Pond (2014) recounted his own personal experience as a “cultural outsider” in Ghana studying Ewe drumming, asserting that he was initially “anxious to ‘get it right’—to learn Ewe ritual and dance drumming techniques, repertoire, and contexts as authentically as possible” (170). Eventually he learned that “authenticity” was relative, and an unrealistic goal for various reasons. Rather than hiding his novice position, he chose to embrace it and make it an important part of the conversation in classroom, ensemble, and performance settings. Fung (2002) suggests that when both the teacher and students are cultural outsiders, the teacher’s role in the learning process should become that of “leader in the exploration” (199). Hess (2013) agrees, contending that when music educators are cultural outsiders; they should relinquish their role as “expert” and maintain the status of “co-learner” alongside their students in the classroom (83).

As facilitators in this exploration process, music educators have a responsibility to seek out accurate “insider” information, and can do so through books, teacher workshops/seminars, audio recordings, multimedia resources, and

websites that visually depict music in its primary setting (Fung 2002). They should also consult with culture-bearers and/or invite them into the classroom (Campbell 2004, Fung 2002). Additionally, music educators can choose high-quality curriculum resources that have already been written and published in our field. The body of culturally sensitive multicultural music curriculum resources has grown substantially in recent years, and these materials often include a wealth of relevant cultural/contextual information. Curriculum writers have increasingly begun to explore the intersection between the fields of ethnomusicology and music education as they incorporate the perspectives of culture-bearers and the insights of ethnomusicologists (Anderson and Campbell 2010, Campbell 2004). Although collaboration between these two fields is still in its infancy, I find great promise in the idea that music educators can work as both “ethnomusicologists and educators” (Campbell 2004, 27) to create practical, yet culturally-sensitive curriculum resources that are inclusive of more of the world’s music traditions.

I would like to highlight one additional point related to teaching music within the context of culture: When introducing new music in the classroom, we should avoid the assumption of clearly bounded cultures, particularly regarding geography. Students should understand that music is not a cultural artifact that is frozen in time or bound within specific geographic boundaries (Hess 2013, Fung 2002). Cultural and musical traditions evolve and change over time, and music always has the potential to transform itself according to the people experiencing it and the context in which it is performed (Schippers 2010, Fung 2002). Therefore, educators should emphasize “the qualities of individual pieces as a *sample* of a musical style”(201) and de-emphasize broad generalizations that might perpetuate stereotypes (Fung 2002). Even when a cultural insider visits the classroom to perform and share contextual information with students, this experience represents only one individual’s embodiment of a musical culture (Pond 2014, Hess 2013).

Multicultural Music Education as a Process

When multicultural music education is conceptualized and practiced as curricular content, either from a music concepts or sociocultural perspective, it is related to the multicultural dimension that Banks (1997) called *content integration*. However, several authors argue that multicultural music education should also be conceptualized as the *process* through which students engage with culturally diverse music in the classroom.

Active learning experiences

Elliott (1990) suggests that more than learning *about* a music culture, students should have opportunities to learn *through* a music culture. He therefore stresses the importance of active, participatory music-making experiences within the context of multicultural music education. Over the years, music education authors and researchers have discussed and explored the unique impact of different types of active learning experiences, such as: Singing, listening, creating/composing, and playing instruments. Much of the research in this area has focused on the relationship between active engagement in music and *prejudice reduction*.

Singing

Illari, Chen-Hafteck, and Crawford (2013) state, “it is important for educators to provide experiences that will help students embrace diversity and move beyond stereotypes” (208). They suggest *singing* as a particularly meaningful active musical experience, arguing, “Singing is not only a powerful means of human communication, but is also an expression of lifestyles, values, and belief systems” (203). In 2005, Neto, Mullet, and do Rosario explored whether the act of singing could reduce racial stereotyping within a sample of children living in Portugal. Students in the control group sang traditional Portuguese songs (the regular music curriculum) while children in the treatment group sang a selection of Cape Verdean songs in addition to their regular music content. Results showed that levels of racial

stereotyping were significantly reduced in the treatment group at end of the six-month treatment period, while there was no significant difference in the control group.

Listening

Campbell (2004) recommends *listening* as an important way to engage with culturally diverse music, and provides important details about how various types of listening experiences can be very “active” in nature. She suggests activities related to “engaged listening”, which require students to move, sing, or play along with recordings of music, and “enactive listening”, which require students to work towards re-creating a performance of a particular musical selection “in as stylistically accurate a way as possible” (55).

Creating and composing

Campbell (2004) also contends students should have opportunities to create music “in the style of a particular genre or tradition” (192). There is some concern that “we might be seen as ‘tampering’ with the music should we attempt to change it, rearrange, or allow our students to create new music in the style of a given tradition” (193). However, Campbell contends that when music is approached sensitively and critically, “it is often a source of pride for people from a culture to hear their traditions – or new expressions reminiscent of their traditions – performed by those who have given their time and energy to it” (193). She says, “straight from the mouths of culture-bearers, the message to teachers is that ‘It’s OK to create and re-create ‘world music’” (193).

Downton et al. (2012) considered *creating* as a means of active musical learning while using the computer program *Impromptu* to explore “how youth, while engaging in composing and analyzing tunes from other cultures, developed an understanding of ideas and people from differing cultures” (9). *Impromptu* allows users to explore, reconstruct, remix, and compose music from different cultural

settings by rearranging short blocks of pitches. This curriculum intervention provided students with “an opportunity to investigate how a single composition reflects the cultural values in which it was created and how the process of composing can lead to a reflection on one’s own cultural values” (9). Results indicated that when children actively engaged with the music of another culture through composition, they made personal connections with that musical tradition, and grew in terms of their awareness and respect of other cultures.

Playing instruments

Edwards (1998) considered *playing instruments* as a distinct variable within her multicultural music intervention, as she examined multiple conceptualizations of multicultural music education at once. Students in four treatment groups were exposed to different types of multicultural music instruction, based on the music of several American Indian tribes. Group A received large-group lessons and had opportunities to play “authentic instruments” on a regular basis. Group B received large-group lessons designed and taught by a culture-bearer/guest artist. Groups C and D participated in student directed, small group learning centers. Each center had a “culture-specific” theme, and students were provided with “instruments, recordings, information and pictures of the tribe (historical and contemporary), a tribal folktale, a map highlighting the location of the tribe’s reservation, and other relevant information or materials” (65). The key difference between Groups C and D was that students in Group C had access to what were deemed “authentic” instruments, while students in Group D had access to “non-authentic” instruments.

Findings indicated that students in all treatment groups achieved musical learning through multicultural music instruction and indicated positive attitudes towards their instruction. Although students in all treatment groups also demonstrated growth in terms of cultural understanding, the depth of growth in this area varied between groups. Edwards noted students who were taught by a cultural-bearer (Group B) achieved the highest levels of cultural understanding

through the curriculum intervention. She concluded that small-group, student-directed learning centers were also effective. This finding is important because it indicates many students have already developed the ability to construct their own meaningful cultural learning experiences when they are given the time, space, and tools to do so. In terms of actively playing instruments, students who had opportunities to play authentic instruments were generally more positive about the multicultural instruction they received compared to students who played non-authentic instruments.

Shehan (1987) and Chen-Hafteck (2007) conceptualized multicultural music education as both content and a process in their research studies, and incorporated a variety of active learning experiences such as playing instruments, listening, singing, creating, and learning about the daily lives and cultural traditions of people in a given cultural setting. Campbell used a curriculum that highlighted the music of Southeast Asia, while Chen-Hafteck's curriculum was based on the *Sound of silk* project, which is an "educational program that combines the study of Chinese culture and music" (340). Shehan* found that the students in her study demonstrated musical learning and increased positive attitudes towards the new type of music after the curriculum intervention. Although small changes in ethnocentric attitudes after the curriculum intervention were also noted, these results were not significant. She hypothesized the short duration of the study (which was only five lessons), coupled with a lack of "direct experience with representatives of the ethnic group in question" (19) may have affected these results. Chen-Hafteck found that many students in her study achieved increased levels of cultural understanding after the multicultural curriculum intervention, with the highest levels of cultural understanding occurring when teachers and students "were constantly in touch with people from the culture that they studied" (348).

*This is Patricia K. Shehan Campbell, cited also as Campbell in this article.

The results of these research studies, in combination, provide evidence that the positive effects of multicultural music education, such as musical learning, positive attitudes about diverse music, cultural understanding, and stereotype reduction can be enhanced when educators provide opportunities for students to actively engage with the music cultures that are under study. However, these positive outcomes are dependent on a number of additional factors, including length of treatment and direct contact with people from the designated cultures.

Transmission process

Several scholars have also discussed the importance of considering the *transmission process* when diverse music is taught and learned outside of its original setting. Schippers (2010) and Elliott (1990) argue the critical values of any musical culture are deeply embedded in its music transmission process. When this transmission process is ignored completely, teachers run the risk of undermining the identity and value system of a given cultural group, as they reinforce the cultural assumption that one method of teaching and learning music is superior to another. In this way, consideration of the transmission process in the music classroom is related to *knowledge construction*.

Koza (2001) asserts, “The fact that much of the world’s population learns and transmits music exclusively ‘by ear’ indicates that aural learning is a valid and effective practice” (250). Yet, formal music programs in many parts of the world, including “North America, Europe, Australia and New Zealand...parts of Asia, Africa, and Latin America” (Campbell 2004, xvi) continue to place written staff notation “highest in a hierarchy” of pedagogical processes over the “instructional approaches of so many other rich traditions” (xvi). Music educators can attempt to balance out this unequal power distribution by introducing each individual musical selection through the preferred method of transmission within the original cultural setting. However, as Koza notes, this is a complicated issue. She states, “Because learning through reading standard notation is privileged by many musicians in power” it is

possible that “the ability to read music will separate children into ‘haves’ and ‘have nots’ and will deny ‘have nots’ access to elite and powerful circles” (251). One potential solution to this dilemma is to ensure “the widest possible range” of music (Elliott 1989, 18) is included in the curriculum so students have ample opportunities to experience both aural and written transmission processes. Additionally, teachers can consider introducing music drawn from aural traditions through aural/oral means initially, and then using written notation to “support and enhance the experience” (Campbell 2004, 126) later in the process.

Multicultural Music Education as an *Approach*

The previous section of this article detailed the ways in which multicultural music education can support the goals of the wider multicultural education music movement when teachers engage students in active learning experiences with culturally diverse music, while considering preferred method of transmission in the original cultural setting. Yet, this framework for understanding multicultural music education is still incomplete because it fails to recognize the underlying *approach* of the music educator, which has the power to either enhance or limit the benefits of any curriculum.

Developing a critical perspective

Campbell (2004) asserts, “It is a brave quest . . . on a sometimes lonely journey, to challenge a curricular model that is rooted in nineteenth century values and infrastructures” (xvi). As this passage implies, changing our *approach* will likely be lengthy process along a bumpy road. However, we all have the power to take small steps towards making “a broader perspective the norm instead of an exception across the board” (xvii). As a starting point, educators can reimagine the ways in which music is typically analyzed, compared, and contrasted in their classrooms. Traditionally, the elements of music have served as the primary basis for cross-cultural musical comparisons (Koza 2001, Elliott 1989). These types of comparisons

are certainly valuable; especially since concepts such as rhythm, pitch, melody, tempo, timbre, dynamics, and form are deeply embedded within many music curricula and standards documents. However, applying this analytical approach to all types music, “may contradict the ways music creators may have of conceptualizing their music and its meaning” (Dumbar-Hall 2005, 128).

Volk (1998) asserts multicultural music education “is as much about people as it is about music” (194). Therefore, issues such as the “meaning and use” (Elliott 1990, 157) that music has to people and/or the “message [it] bring[s] from their society” (Nettl 1992, 4) should be considered as we listen to music and analyze it in the classroom setting. Elliott (1989) recommends applying a “world view of musical concepts” (18) to ALL music, contending that when all music is considered from the same critical perspective, “Western aesthetic concepts” and “technical terms” are deemphasized (18). Instead, terminology is “amended and/or replaced with concepts original to the music culture under study” (18). This type of critical approach allows us to debunk the myth that music is “a universal language,” through which everyone can immediately understand each other (Koza 2001, 243). Instead, we propose music as a powerful tool for cultural understanding, but only if we choose to identify and celebrate differences just as much as we look for similarities.

Teacher worldview

As a precursor to this critical approach, music educators should take steps to broaden their own perspective of what it means to know and understand music in a variety of cultural settings. Wurzel (2004) asserts, teachers should “identify potential cultural conflicts, and become aware of their own inescapable ethnocentric behaviors and feelings” (p. 29). In doing so, they will achieve better understandings of the ways in which “cultural attitudes, assumptions, mechanisms, rules, and regulations” (Gay 2010, 28) influence their content choices and teaching approaches, and may contribute to an atmosphere of inequality in the learning environment.

Nam (2007) reflected on the ways in which underlying teacher worldview might have influenced the results of his research study, noting that the student participants' comments regarding music lessons that were taught within the framework of his multicultural music intervention tended to mirror those made by their teachers. He pointed out just "how important the teacher's role may be", and suggested since teachers have a direct impact "on shaping children's global perspectives", they should reflect carefully on their own cultural biases and prejudices and "think once more about their comments and language as they share information" (213).

Culturally responsive teaching

When teachers arrive at a level of cultural self-awareness that allows them to acknowledge the ways in which their own culture influences student learning in their classrooms, they can begin making relevant changes in their teaching practices through elements of *culturally responsive teaching*. Gay (2010) defined culturally responsive teaching as "using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them" (31). Abril (2013) asserts, "Culturally responsive teaching helps move the attention from the *things* we teach to the *children* we teach" (8).

Although "the theory of culturally responsive pedagogy was developed within a general education context" (Shaw 2016, 65), it has recently been given more attention within the field of music education (Shaw 2016, Cain 2015, Abril 2013). Abril (2013) contends a culturally responsive teaching approach requires music educators to take the necessary time to learn about their students "musical backgrounds, skills, preferences, and experiences" (8) as a means of developing the knowledge necessary to make classroom learning experiences more meaningful for them. Shaw (2016) asserts, "Culturally responsive pedagogy affords music teachers opportunities to meaningfully bridge students' home and school experiences,

expand their musical and cultural horizons, and affirm their identities” (66). Additionally, culturally responsive music educators consider each student’s personal learning style. For example, while one student may benefit greatly from a “modeling-and-imitation strategy” (10), another may need to use mnemonic devices to master and remember a difficult rhythmic pattern (Campbell 2004).

Abril (2013) draws a distinction between multicultural music education and culturally responsive teaching, asserting, “Choosing a song from South America to sing and playing an arrangement of a Peruvian song on Orff instruments, no matter how culturally valid or representative the music, is not, in itself, culturally responsive” (10). Although I do agree with Abril here, it is important to note that this statement indicates he conceptualizes multicultural music education primarily as the students’ active engagement with culturally diverse music. I contend that when multicultural music education is conceptualized as an approach as well, elements of culturally responsive teaching are deeply embedded in this practice. In my opinion, culturally responsive teaching can actually function as *equity pedagogy*. As teachers get to know their students as “individuals and as members of extended social circles” (8), and change their pedagogical practices accordingly, they will likely make great strides towards helping them achieve higher levels of success in the music classroom.

Multicultural music education as empowering school culture and social structure

To address the dimension that Banks called *empowering school culture and social structure*, music educators can consider how the needs of more students can be met through school music programs. This idea is particularly important at the secondary level, when music classes often become electives. Elpus (2014) found that only 34% of high school students in the United States enrolled in at least one music course over the span of their high school years (9th–12th grade). This number remained relatively stable from 1982 through 2009. Additional data analysis revealed that

Hispanic students, English Language Learners (ELL), and students with individualized instructional plans (IEP) were underrepresented in school music programs. Although secondary music ensembles such as band, choir, and orchestra meet the needs of certain students, clearly there are many students in the educational system whose needs are not currently being met. In order to consider the ways in which we can reach more students through school music programs, we should explore the potential of non-traditional music ensembles and/or courses in the area of music technology.

Last year, I purchased a steel pan for my classroom. Initially, this purchase reflected my attempt to connect with an individual student, who had recently moved to my community in the United States, from Trinidad. He did not want to play a traditional band or orchestra instrument, but I learned that he really enjoyed playing the steel pans—and had been quite successful in doing so when he lived in Trinidad. As this student began playing the steel pan in my classroom, his entire demeanor changed. He was actively engaged in the music lessons, and was much more open to new suggestions and ideas. I believe this behavior change was due in some part to the effort I had made to acknowledge his musical background and preferences. Additionally, his unique skill was noticed by other students, which contributed to an overall boost in his self-confidence, as he became a valued member of our class and began to connect with his fellow classmates.

As the year progressed, I noticed that the purchase of this new instrument had an additional, unintended consequence in my classroom. All of the other students in my class wanted to play the steel pan as well. Several fundraisers later, we had 10 steel pans (student models) in our classroom and a thriving steel pan ensemble. This ensemble attracts all types of students, but I have noticed that students with limited formal music training are particularly empowered to participate because “the technique necessary to make a good sound is very simple” and “rote learning and music reading are considered equally valid educational methods” (Williams 2008, 55). Variables such as fluency in written music notation,

access to private music lessons, and/or exposure to certain types of music in the home environment do not guarantee higher levels of success in a steel pan ensemble. Future researchers should explore the ways in which non-traditional music ensembles can alter the underlying school structure by empowering more students to participate in music classes.

Building a Better Rationale

Abril (2006) is the only researcher who has given substantial attention to all three aspects of multicultural music education that have been discussed in this article: *content*, *process*, and *approach*. He compared differences in perceived student learning after a multicultural curriculum intervention when students were placed in either a *music concepts* or a *sociocultural* group. Students within both groups actively engaged with the music as they “sang, moved to, and played instrumental arrangements of songs from various non-western cultures” (33). “The lessons for the *music concepts* group used the formal elements of music as a framework” (33) and students were provided with very little cultural or contextual information about the music. In contrast, students in the *sociocultural group* were prompted to discuss the context of the songs, and the instructor highlighted “the multiple ways musical meaning could be constructed, depending on an individual’s cultural position. In addition, students were asked to consider...the ways prejudice and stereotypes could affect their listening experiences” (34).

Findings indicated students in the *music concept* group noted more musical learning in their responses, while students in the *sociocultural* group noted more sociocultural learning. Within the sociocultural group, 26 students “provided descriptions reflecting awareness, sensitivity and/or valuing of other people and cultures” (39), compared to only one student in the music concept group. Abril therefore hypothesized that because diverse musical content alone might not be enough to promote tolerance, acceptance, and cultural understanding, sociocultural connections in the music should be explicitly highlighted if cross-cultural valuing

and cultural understanding are desired and expected outcomes of multicultural music instruction.

A Conceptual Framework for Multicultural Music Education

The final section of this article represents my attempt to bridge the gap between theory, research, and practice by proposing a conceptual framework for understanding and practicing multicultural music education—through eight teacher action steps. This framework (shown in Figure 1) synthesizes the important literature that has been discussed in this article in a way that emphasizes musical learning, but also promotes growth in terms of the multicultural dimensions discussed by Banks (2015). As reflected in this figure, these dimensions often overlap. For example, choosing high quality representations of culturally diverse music could be viewed as both *content integration* and *prejudice reduction*.



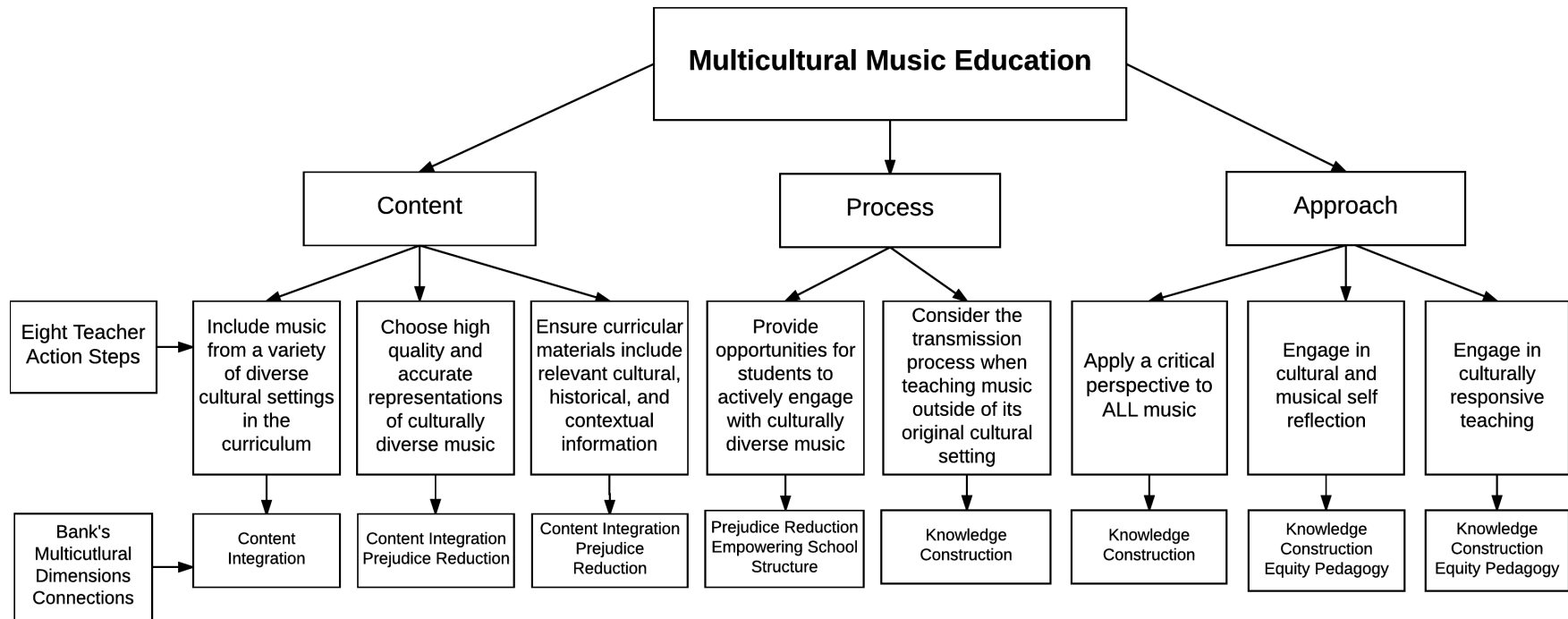


Figure 1. A proposed conceptual framework for understanding multicultural music education. This framework considers three components of multicultural music education (content, process, and approach), references Bank’s dimensions of multicultural education (2015), and suggests eight action steps for practicing music teachers.

Each of the eight teacher action steps shown in Figure 1 will now be considered in more detail. Each action step is accompanied by an enduring understanding, essential question, and suggestions for practice. The terms “enduring understanding” and “essential question” were inspired by terminology used in the new U.S. National Core Music Standards document (<http://www.nationalartsstandards.org>) (SEADAE 2014).

1. Choose music from a variety of diverse cultural settings.

Enduring Understanding: Music from many diverse cultural settings should be included in the curriculum.

Essential Question: How can I incorporate culturally diverse music into the curriculum in meaningful ways?

Suggestions for Practice:

- Start small (Elliott 1990, Campbell 2004). Campbell asserts, “an understanding of even a single musical piece through deep and continued listening, participatory, performance, and creative experiences, and study of its cultural context and meaning, are likely to make an important impact in the musical education of students at every age and level of development” (2004, 27).
- Consider **ALL** music as valid music for study. Koza (2001) contends, “Multicultural music education should focus on content representing the diversity of the community, the nation, and the world. This means the inclusion of contributions by people whose music has not been heard in schools in the past” (251).

2. Choose high quality and accurate representations of culturally diverse music.

Enduring Understanding: Steps should be taken to ensure resources and recordings used in the music classroom provide high quality and accurate representations of the music culture that is under study.

Essential Question: How can I ensure I am using high quality and accurate representations of culturally diverse music?

Suggestions for Practice:

- Consider starting with high quality resources that have already been written, such as Wade and Campbell's *Global Music Series* (2004-present) and Anderson and Campbell's *Multicultural Perspectives in Music Education* (2010). Additionally, Kang and Yoo (2016) and Mellizo (2016) provide recent examples of how practicing music educators are working to bridge the fields of ethnomusicology and music education through practical journal articles.
- Treat listening examples/songs as “samples” of a musical style—rather than stereotyping entire genres of music or groups of people based on geography (Fung, 2002).
- Invite culture-bearers to serve as a guest artists in your classroom to “perform, lead students in participatory experiences, tell traditional tales, contextualize the music, and offer an understanding of music as personally meaningful” (Campbell 2004, 15).
- If it is not possible to provide students with opportunities to have direct contact with people from the designated cultural group, consider using video clips or audio recordings of music within its original cultural setting.

3. Present relevant cultural, contextual, and historical information as the music is taught.

Enduring Understanding: “All music exists within a cultural context” (Volk 1998, 15).

Essential Question: How can I teach diverse music with regard to history, culture, and context?

Suggestions for Practice:

- Become a co-learner in classroom and envision yourself as a facilitator of the exploration. As Nettl (1992) implied, it is not necessary to have ALL the answers. It is okay for teachers to construct knowledge alongside their students as the learning process unfolds.

- As a starting point, students should know “the time and place of the music’s origin, the rationale behind its acceptance as popular or artistic expression, or the role it plays in people’s lives” (Campbell 2004, 217).
- Recognize your “cultural-outsider” status and seek out additional insider information through books, teacher workshops/seminars, and/or culture-bearers in your community (Fung, 2002).
- Choose resources that have been written through the lens of cultural insiders and already include relevant cultural, historical, and contextual information.

4. Provide opportunities for students to actively engage with the culturally diverse music they are studying.

Enduring Understanding: When students have opportunities to actively engage with culturally diverse music, they will achieve deeper levels of musical and cultural understanding.

Essential Question: What types of active learning experiences with culturally diverse music can I plan for my students?

Suggestions for Practice:

- Consider active musical learning experiences such as singing, engaged and enactive listening (Campbell 2004), playing instruments, and creating/composing.
- Release yourself from the expectation that the music will sound the same in your classroom as it does in the original cultural setting (Campbell 2013). Instead, strive to strike a sensitive balance between a focus on the original culture of the music and the “new” instructional culture that emerges as students engage with it in your classroom (Campbell 2004).
- Consider starting a non-Western ensemble or teaching a music technology course as a means of reaching more students through the school music program.

5. Consider the music transmission process when teaching diverse music outside of its original cultural setting.

Enduring Understanding: There are multiple ways to effectively teach and learn music.

Essential Question: Do I consider the ways in which music is usually transmitted within a given music culture as I introduce it in my classroom?

Suggestions for Practice:

- When music is drawn from an aural tradition, consider teaching it through aural/oral techniques initially. Then, written music notation can be used to “support and enhance” the experience later in the process (Campbell 2004, 126).
- Invite a culture bearer into the classroom. This person is likely to have insider knowledge about the typical relationship between teacher and student in a given cultural setting.
- Ensure the “the widest possible range” of music (Elliott 1989, 18) is included in the curriculum so students will have adequate access to both written and aural traditions.
- Seek additional detailed information about music transmission processes in a variety of cultural settings through Schippers' (2010) Twelve Continuum Transmission Framework (TCTF). This important resource considers important issues such as the balance between holistic and analytical approaches, written and aural modes of transmission, and interaction between the teacher and learner.

6. Apply a critical perspective to ALL types of music.

Enduring Understanding: There is no one, universal definition of music.

Essential Question: How can I help students to analyze, compare, and contrast music from a critical perspective that does not impose Western ways of understanding on ALL types of music?

Suggestions for Practice:

- Consider applying a “world view of musical concepts” (Elliott 1989, 18) that considers all music from the same critical perspective, instead of analyzing all music based solely on Western musical elements. This critical perspective allows terminology to be “amended and/or replaced with concepts original to the music culture under study” (Elliott 1989, 18). Educators should consult Elliott’s original article (1989), which provides a helpful visual diagram of this idea.
- Use a listening log to help students analyze music from a critical perspective. I modify a listening template from the Model Cornerstone Assessments section of the new U.S. National Core Music standards document (SEADAE 2014). This particular template prompts students to consider music in three distinct ways: “Notice” (I hear), “Analyze” (I think), and “Question” (I wonder). First, students listen for the musical sounds. Next, they think about the meaning of the sounds to people within social and cultural context. Finally, they wonder and ask questions about how they might perform this music in a way that reflects the original intent, but also has personal meaning.

7. Engage in cultural and musical self reflection

Enduring Understanding: Cultural attitudes and assumptions influence repertoire choices and teaching approach in the music classroom.

Essential Question: In what ways does my “culture” impact student learning in my classroom.

Suggestions for Practice:

- Consider the “essential question” and use follow-up questions to guide your self-reflection. For example:
 - What types of music do you like best? In what ways do you privilege this type of music in your classroom?

- When you introduce culturally diverse music, do you take time to learn about contextual and historical connections and/or the lives of people in the original cultural setting? Do you share this information with your students? Why or why not?
- How did you learn music? Is this the same way that you choose to teach music?
- What types of musical opportunities comprised your college experience? Did you participate in a non-Western musical ensemble or have opportunities to study abroad?
- How much emphasis do you place on learning all types of music through standard written notation?
- Do comparisons of music in your classroom include the discussion of musical elements alone or do you consider “human” concepts as well?
- What type of music do your students like? Do you consider their interests and individual strengths while selecting repertoire?

8. Consider elements of culturally responsive teaching

Enduring Understanding: All children come to us with different “musical backgrounds, skills, preferences, and experiences” (Abril 2013, 8). These factors affect student learning in the classroom.

Essential Question: How can I acknowledge my students’ strengths, backgrounds, preferences, and out-of-school musical experiences so they will feel successful, valued, and empowered to learn in my classroom?

Suggestions for Practice:

- Take time to get to know your students’ out-of-school musical interests and recognize musical accomplishments that do not occur within the traditional school music class setting.

- Recognize the progress of beginners as much as the students who come into the classroom with advanced technical skills because they have had extensive access to private musical training.
- Recognize that some students receive more encouragement and support in their home environments - consider this factor in terms of at-home practice expectations/practice log requirements/grading procedures.
- Consider flexible instrumentation that doesn't fit certain cultural norms. For example, why can't an oboe player play in the jazz band?
- Recognize, acknowledge, and value your students' preferred learning styles.
- Present written notation as "another way of doing it" instead of a "better way of doing it"
- Consider offering "non-traditional" music ensembles, or music technology classes in order to meet the musical needs of more students, particularly at the secondary level.

Conclusion

Miralis (2006) highlights the importance of "selecting the appropriate term to define what we do as music educators," arguing, "The terminology we use should provide a clear understanding of our underlying philosophy and goals" (61). This literature review has revealed there is still no widely accepted definition of the word *multicultural* in a music education context. In practice, multicultural music education has often been narrowly conceptualized as content integration alone, which has limited its potential. Although most music educators agree that culturally diverse music should be included in the curriculum (Legette 2003), hypothetical acceptance has not translated into widespread practice, possibly because many teachers "have not acquired a conceptual framework for, or positive disposition towards the implementation of such [multicultural] programs" (Marsh 2000, 243).

In theoretical ways, multicultural music education has been given substantial consideration over the past 50 years. Scholars in the field have discussed important topics such as the music transmission process, the importance of approaching music

within cultural context, and the current tendency to analyze all music from a single, dominant perspective (Schippers 2010, Drummond 2010, Campbell, 2004). However, more work must be done to make these ideas practical and useful for practicing music educators.

The purpose of this article was to study and synthesize the work of important music education scholars and researchers in order to propose a conceptual framework, through which multicultural music education could be defined, understood, and practiced in more consistent ways. This framework (shown in Figure 1) also illuminates the connections between multicultural music education and the wider multicultural education movement. I hope these connections will spark new conversations, inform future research, and inspire increased practice.

My own personal journey towards becoming a multicultural music educator has changed me for the better, both personally and professionally. I am now acutely aware of the ways in which my own cultural and musical assumptions and biases influence student learning in my music classroom. Each day I embrace a new opportunity to ensure that all of my students, regardless of the cultural groups with which they identify, have equal opportunities to experience musical fulfillment and success. This journey of cultural self-reflection has allowed me to replace my desire for musical perfection and expertise with a commitment to musical and human understanding, and has given me new life and new purpose as a music educator. Through multicultural music education, I am reaching more students than ever before, as I strive to empower ALL students to reach their musical potential. I hope the eight action steps presented through this article will help more practicing music educators “confront their own and others’ musical beliefs and assumptions” and come to the wonderful and refreshing realization that “what may seem natural, common, and universal about music, is not” (Elliott 1990, 160).

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Jennifer M. Mellizo graduated from the University of Wyoming with a BM in Music Education in 2000 and has been teaching music in public schools for the past 16 years. She completed a MA in Music Education from UW in 2006, and a PhD in Curriculum & Instruction, with a minor in quantitative research methods in 2016. Currently, she teaches elementary general music, elementary band/choir, and middle school band/choir at the University of Wyoming Lab School in Laramie, WY. She was named an Arch Coal Teacher of the Year in 2014, the Southeast Wyoming Music Educator of the Year in 2015, the Albany County Teacher of the Year in 2016, and the UW College of Education Outstanding Graduate Student in 2016. Her research interests include multicultural music education, world music pedagogy, early adolescent intercultural sensitivity, and the musical/cultural traditions of Benin, West Africa. Please contact Jennifer via email at jmellizo@acsd1.org.



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