

Action Project: Social Justice in Grade 9 Music Education

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The current affairs of social justice within North America leads to the question of ways to incorporate discussions around social justice within a music classroom context. Our students may know about certain social justice issues such as racism, classism, sexism, ableism, colonialism, heteronormativity and discrimination, but might not be able to understand or process the effect it has on music or their greater worldview. As such, implementing social action projects in an inclusive and safe environment can help students to understand their own perspective, as well as that of those around them, whether this be their peers, family, or colleagues. According to Maybin (2019), “social justice involves the active participation of both teachers and students in naming acts of social injustice and engaging in activities that promote socially just communities” (p. 471).

In creating this social action project, the hope is that the students will begin to dialogue with each other in a way that encourages critical thinking of the types of music to which they listen and creates an awareness of their own perspective, as well as learning to accept the position of others. The aim of a social justice project is “to learn about the problems that dramatically impact quality of life for certain populations, and how people have worked to solve those problems” (Gonzales, 2016). The project will be based on the following Saskatchewan Arts Education 09 curricular outcomes (2009):

- CP9.9: Compose and perform sound compositions to express perspectives and raise awareness about a topic of concern to youth.
- CR9.2: Investigate and identify ways that today’s arts expressions can inspire change.
- CR9.3: Investigate and identify how arts expressions can challenge thinking about values, ideas, and beliefs.
- CH9.1: Investigate and discuss the role of artists in raising awareness or taking action on topics of concern.

Additionally, as a class, we will be guided by the following questions:

- Why is it important to understand social justice issues and movements?

- How can we become more aware of people's differing perspectives?
- How does the music industry play a role in either forwarding or stalling social justice movements?
- What social justice issues are most prevalent in your world? What can you do to learn about the history of these issues?
- How does this study create a more inclusive environment for everyone to share and be heard?

In asking these questions, we hope to learn more about ourselves and how to be a light and a change in our world.

Resources that will be used in guiding this discussion are The Global Oneness Project and Cult of Pedagogy Teacher Resources.

References

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