

School Actionable Project
“Busking School Action Project” Rationale

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The school that I teach at is comprised of students from Kindergarten to Grade Six. Our English as a Second Language population is significant and is represented by a variety of cultures including: Lebanon, Japan, Iraq, Spain, Mexico, China, and Pakistan just to name a few. The purpose of this actionable project is to give students the opportunity to participate and share culturally relevant music with others in the school community. In Bradley's (2012) article, when examining formal education:

colonial residue continues to define how knowledge is produced and what forms of knowledge production, including the diverse musical practices of most of the world's people, have long been dismissed, even denigrated, as a result of lingering colonial attitudes. (Bradley, 2012, p.2)

Historically, the relationship between the colonizers and the colonized was complex. Both sides received benefits, but the benefits remained unequal and produced inequitable outcomes (Bradley, 2012, p.2). Today, colonization is evident in the music classroom:

when it promotes unequal power relations in the classroom; when it operates from presumptions that students are "empty vessels" to be filled; when it proceeds as if only some students are deserving or truly capable of learning music; or when it implies, however inadvertently, that only some musical genres have educative value. (Bradley, 2012, p. 19)

As we examine our teaching practise we must ask ourselves, "Who has the authority to speak, think, and act?" (Stanton, 2018, p.7). "Which voices are actively silenced? How do we change this equation of power at a structural level" (Stanton, 2018, p.7)? Decolonizing the music classroom requires us to ask ourselves if the learning and teaching environment "displays, an

ongoing and relentless curiosity about all forms of knowledge production, including those within music education” (Bradley, 2012, p. 21).

A possible strategy towards decolonizing the music classroom and demonstrating an openness to learn and understand alternative forms of knowledge would be to include music that is culturally relevant to the students. This *Busking Actionable School Project*, has the potential to be culturally responsive to the needs of students to be able to connect to their learning. According to DeVito et al (2020), “The foundation of this culturally responsive approach is to have the students share and arrange the music experiences in their homes, with friends and family (including generational music from adults), and in the playgrounds and outdoor areas of the community after school” (p.6). This project would invite students to share music with the community that is relevant to themselves. They would have autonomy over who was in their groups (individual, partners, or ensemble), choosing their genre and repertoire, instrumentation, and various materials leading towards their performance. The funds raised would also have a community connection as a non-government organization (NGO) would be chosen to receive the funds raised through busking performances. Student voice, choice, and personal cultural relevancy are foundational principles of this project as students communicate their musical and cultural identities through this learning endeavour.

References

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- Stanton, B. (2018). Musicking in the Borders: Toward Decolonizing Methodologies. *Philosophy of Music Education Review*, 26(1), 4–23.