

Hidden Curriculum and Subtle Structures

Understanding and Addressing Systemic Inequity in Music Teaching

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I. The Purpose: Address Hidden and Null Curriculum

Key Terms –

Critical Pedagogy (Bradshaw, 2017):

Educational approach that seeks to transform systems and structures that contribute to oppression and marginalization. It strives to understand what works and what does not work from the context of what learners themselves see, experience, and express while learning.

Hidden Curriculum (Bradshaw, 2018 “Minding...”; Jackson, 1968):

“The unstated norms, attitudes, behaviors, and beliefs conveyed and learned in instructional settings, not as the formal overt curriculum but as underlying rules that structure routines and relationships.”

Null Curriculum (Eisner, 1985):

Content, topics, facts, and processes that do not appear in curriculum sequencing or design.

Diversity:

Appreciating people for what makes them different.

Inclusion:

An organized effort to ensure diversity and acceptance of others.

Equity:

Giving what is needed to those who need it as a means for achieving equality.

Intersectionality:

The idea that one's perspective and beliefs lie at the intersection of all one's experiences and identity factors.

Positionality:

How one's intersectionality influences one's understanding.

II. The Problem: Though actively pursuing diversity and inclusion, music schools and departments have left untouched the subtle inequitable institutional structures featured in hidden and null curriculum (Kajikawa, 2019).

This isn't about political correctness, tolerance, or mere appropriation – it's about equity.

Case Study 1: “African Rhythm”

Case Study 2: “Classical” Music

III. Three Practical Steps

Educate

Initiate

Evaluate

Call to Action:

“While changing the genders, skin colors, and physical abilities of characters . . . to be more inclusive is a critically important step toward equity and justice, if this type of diversifying is both the means and the end goal . . . we will not noticeably disrupt structural inequities in the systems we work and live in . . . we also convey the implicit – and false – message that problems related to racism and equity are so insignificant that simply changing a story character's skin color should be sufficient to solve them. In addition . . . the practice treats as null curriculum the fact that numerous societal structures have been developed . . . that direct unearned benefits and advantages to some people, while withholding benefits and even placing hindrances in the paths of others.” Amy Bradshaw (2018 “Minding...”)

References and Resources for Further Reading:

Key: * = Major Resource for this Presentation | # = Interesting Further Reading

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Note: This presentation was developed and recorded in early February 2021. Given the ever-changing nature of issues of diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice, it is possible events have occurred between the development/recording of this presentation and the actual presentation date itself. Any omission of relevant current events is completely unintentional. It was my goal to provide content that can be applicable and fruitful regardless of the current political or social climate. It is important to note, however, that the concepts and ideas presented today ought to be discussed in the context of the current climate!