Spoken Paper

Weaving the Lived Musical Experiences of Pre-Service Music Teachers to Decolonize Music Education

Tamara Thies  California State University, Long Beach, USA

Students entering higher education in the fields of music and music education bring significantly more diverse musical backgrounds into their studies than previous generations. These musical experiences, when intentionally tapped in the classroom, provide diverse entry points for identifying, learning, and creating musical experiences. By incorporating students’ personal musical backgrounds into coursework, the possibility to decolonize music and music education increase.

The purpose of this qualitative investigation was to explore how two pre-service teachers’ eclectic musical backgrounds impacted their learning, creating, and teaching. Data included interviews and course projects (video philosophy, childhood inspiration orffestration, rap video, original composition) that embrace students’ musical backgrounds.
Thoughtful examination revealed the depth and complexities of rediscovered experiences that influence pre-service teachers’ perceptions of music making and music education. The three strongest themes from interviews outlined: parental and sibling listening preferences, varied musical opportunities during formative years, and projects in music education courses that offer possibilities to explore personal interests. Better understanding of pre-service music educators’ diverse musical backgrounds and experiences contributes to two current conversations in the field of music teacher education: expanding music teacher preparation curriculum to address relevancy through culturally responsive pedagogy and decolonizing music and music education.