

The Song-Hunting Project: Fostering Diversity in Music Education



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Abstract Well into the 21st century, a lack of diversity still permeates many aspects of music education in the United States. Most music education courses present the White, Anglo culture as the default frame of reference. This is still the case more than half a century after the Tanglewood Declaration of 1967, in which the music education profession declared its intent to make its content less Western high art-centric. Diversity is also conspicuously absent among the music education student body. Female, White, and high-income students are overrepresented in K-12 music education courses, particularly in high school, whereas students from low socio-economic backgrounds and non-native English speakers are significantly underrepresented. Finally, admission processes and training programs for music teachers commonly exclude all music traditions but Western high art, leading to an overwhelmingly White and middle-class music teaching force. In The Song-Hunting Project students, parents, and music teachers from a dual-language elementary school created a collaborative class songbook. The students recorded their parents singing songs in Spanish and English and then transcribed and analyzed these songs working in teams. This process provided an opportunity for participants to learn about each other's background cultures, fostering a sense of belonging to the school community. The Song-Hunting Project stands as a viable example of acknowledgement and validation of diversity in music education's curriculum content, student body, and teacher force.

Keywords Cultural diversity · Music education · Multicultural education · Bilingual education · Project-based learning

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1 Diversity in Music Education: A Brief Overview

Mainstream school music education in the U.S. has historically privileged the Euro-American high art music canon. Although the American music education landscape has constantly been evolving, from the psalm tune singing schools of colonial America, to the music appreciation movement of the late nineteenth century, and more recently the marching band craze of post-World War I (Keene 1982), one thing has stayed consistent: School music education in the U.S. has focused over time on the teaching of Euro-American high art music. Until the Civil War, when formal education was primarily reserved for children of White, Anglo descent, the music education curriculum was largely attuned to its student population, for it exposed students to what was considered the highest accomplishments of the Western European and White American musical traditions (Gustafson 2009). However, once schools for children of color became increasingly common during the Reconstruction and Jim Crow eras, issues of cultural relevance became conspicuous.

Public schools serving people of color tended to prioritize Euro-American high art music over their students' home cultures. It was safer for these schools to teach that curriculum over students' home music cultures given the White supremacist environment in which they existed, which tended to interpret people of color's intellectual empowerment as a potential social threat. Virtually all instructional materials available consisted of Euro-American high art music examples and little else. Also, Euro-American art music had traditionally been associated with higher socio-cultural capital, providing a social advantage to those who mastered it (James 1976). Since *Brown v. Board of Education* and the end of race-based segregation in U.S. schools, music classrooms in the U.S. ought to welcome racially diverse student populations. However, the Euro-American musical canon is still situated at the center of most music curricula. This translates into some students' cultural backgrounds being more decidedly acknowledged and validated than others in music education courses (Bradley 2007).

Over the past fifty years, music education professionals have been taking steps toward creating more inclusive and diverse music education experiences in schools, spurred by the socio-political demands and new sensibilities of the Civil Rights movement. In 1967, the most prominent association of music educators in the U.S., known as the Music Educators National Conference (now National Association for Music Education), organized a symposium to discuss and define the role of music education in contemporary American society (Mark 1986). This symposium culminated in a statement of intent, known as the Tanglewood Declaration. The Tanglewood Declaration provided a philosophical basis for future developments in music education. It acknowledged, "The musical repertory should be expanded to involve music of our time in its rich variety" (Choate 1968, p 139). Although this Declaration called for a broadening of the existing curriculum, it did not question Euro-American high art music's position at the center of this repertory. Hence, this music tradition's long-standing status as the most valuable school music knowledge remained unchallenged (Apple 2000).

Forty years later, in 2007, a second Tanglewood Symposium took place. Tanglewood II's Declaration was devised as a response from the music education profession to the characteristics and demands of the 21st century. This newer Declaration presented a more comprehensive stance toward acknowledging and fostering diversity in music education. It proclaimed: "A major purpose of music education is to validate the many forms of music making found in local communities" (Palmer and de Quadros 2012, p 60). Also, it asserted: "All persons are entitled to musical instruction and participation regardless of age, religion, class, nationality, race, ethnicity, disability, culture, gender and sexual orientation, and residence" (Palmer and de Quadros 2012, p 60). Finally, this Declaration stated: "Admission standards and graduation requirements for music education students should take account of the broadest view of intellectual, academic, and musical skills and competencies" (Palmer and de Quadros 2012, pp 60–61). In short, the 2007 Tanglewood Declaration explicitly called for a greater diversification of music education's curriculum content, student body, and teacher force. Unfortunately, the scope and influence of Tanglewood II has been rather modest when compared to the first one.

Good intentions notwithstanding, music education has been shy in implementing concrete actions toward diversifying its curriculum content, student population, and teacher body. The core of most music education curricula continues to be primarily Euro-American. For example, of the 3665 songs appearing in Macmillan McGraw-Hill's kindergarten-through-fifth-grade textbook series *Share the Music* from 1995 to 2003, and *Spotlight on Music* from 2006, U.S. White culture accounted for 46.05% of songs, while African-American songs constituted only 5.78% of the total, followed by 4.28% of songs from England, and 3.21% from Germany (Mason 2010). Similarly, of the 4000 songs included in Silver Burdett Ginn's kindergarten-through-fifth-grade textbook series *Music Connection* from 1995 and *Making Music* from 2002 to 2005, 53.12% pertained to U.S. White culture, while African-American songs constituted only 5.10%, German songs accounted for 3.07%, and French songs for 2.80% of the total (Mason 2010).

As the cultural background of people of color remains marginalized in most music curricula, it perhaps comes as no surprise that students and teachers of color are disproportionately underrepresented in music education programs. National demographic data from 2002 on high school band, choir, and orchestra students from the U.S. shows, for instance, that White students make up 62.3% of the general high school population, but 65.7% of music students are White (Elpus and Abril 2011). Hispanic students make up 15.1% of the population, but only 10.2% of music students are Hispanic (Elpus and Abril 2011). Female and high-income students are also overrepresented in high school music ensembles (Elpus and Abril 2011). Likewise, most college music education programs only accept Euro-American high art music as audition repertory in their admission processes, leading to an overwhelmingly White and middle-classed music teaching force (Koza 2008).

The normalization of sexual and gender diversity is another area in which U.S. music education has plenty of room for improvement. Gender conformity and heterosexuality have traditionally been, and continue to be the norm in music education programs (Bergonzi 2009). Music curricula tend to sanction gender conforming,

heterosexual identities through seemingly innocuous mechanisms such as traditional musical drama plots and biographies of composers and musicians. Moreover, music teachers from eight U.S. states are currently prohibited by law from portraying LGBTQ+ issues or people in a positive manner, thwarting their ability to normalize sexual and gender diversity in their classrooms (GLSEN 2017).

U.S. music education also ought to continue growing with regards to serving students with physical and/or cognitive disabilities. On the one hand, secondary students with mild intellectual disabilities have the opportunity to learn music in inclusive educational settings at a much higher rate than in other subjects such as mathematics and language arts (Bouck 2011). On the other hand, secondary students with physical disabilities are frequently excluded from instrumental music programs due to music teachers' lack of knowledge and resources on how to best serve these students (Nabb and Balcetis 2010).

Religious diversity is also at stake in music education through the presence/absence of sacred music in school repertoires. School divisions across the U.S. have been sued both for using sacred music and for banning it altogether from their music programs. In both cases, the plaintiffs argued that their districts were at odds with the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which prevents against the establishment of a state-sponsored religion—such as Christianity or secular humanism/atheism (Drummond 2014). Given the legal ambiguity that characterizes this area, some music teachers decide to celebrate religious diversity by programming sacred music from multiple traditions, while others prefer to stay away from sacred music altogether, even if that leads to missed learning opportunities about an important part of many societies' cultural history. Still, some music teachers opt for designing a curriculum that reflects the beliefs and cultures of their local communities. This last option often translates into minority students' cultural backgrounds being overlooked in the music classroom.

One last form of diversity largely overlooked in music education is linguistic diversity. English Language Learners (ELLs) compose an increasingly large section of the U.S. student body (Gándara and Contreras 2009). And yet, students who speak a language other than English (most commonly Spanish) are significantly underrepresented in high school music programs. These students tend to get pulled from “specials” (i.e. subjects such as music, physical education, and visual arts) to receive additional test preparation and/or language instruction (Elpus and Abril 2011). Some areas of the U.S. with large Latinx populations, such as California and Texas, suffer from a chronic shortage of certified bilingual teachers. Hence, teacher education programs in some U.S. states experience difficulties in keeping up with their need for bilingual teachers to properly serve their student population (Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond 2017; Kennedy 2013). No studies to this date have focused on studying teachers who are doubly certified in music and bilingual education. However, nothing suggests that the provision of certified bilingual teachers within music education is proportionally higher than among the general pool of teachers.

Additional forms of diversity, such as generational and of country of origin should also be considered. However, the ones mentioned thus far provide enough

evidence that a lack of diversity is conspicuous and persistent in music education. Likewise, the confluence of several forms of diversity, commonly referred to as intersectionality, should also be considered (Carter 2013). When various forms of social privilege conflate in one individual, as in the case of a WASP (White, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant), heterosexual, and English-speaking man, this person tends to benefit from multiple layers of systemic privilege. Conversely, people who experience interdependent forms of social disadvantage, such as an African-American, Muslim, lesbian, disable-bodied woman, tend to suffer strong systemic discrimination. As a result, systemically privileged individuals are more likely to both enter and see themselves fairly represented in elitist environments such as most current music education programs than systemically disadvantaged individuals, regardless of their particular skills and personality.

For over half a century, experts and institutions have been calling attention to U.S. music education's general disconnect from its social and cultural diversity, yet the disconnect still persists well into the 21st century. The problem is less one of lack of ideas that address the issue than it is of making existing initiatives more widely available.

In response to this situation, the next section presents a case study of a third-grade general music learning project that validates students' home music cultures while building a stronger school community (Yin 1981). Case studies provide in-depth understanding of a real-life issue or problem using the case as a specific illustration (Creswell 2013, p 97). This case study illustrates one of many ways in which, by embracing teacher, student, and curricular diversity, U.S. music education may increase its educational potential.

2 The Song-Hunting Project: A Diversifying Intervention in Music Education

The Song-Hunting Project is an example of a small but increasing number of learning projects that challenge the current music education landscape by acknowledging and validating teacher, student, and curricular diversity in music education. This project took place in the spring semester of 2012 after a semester of collaboration between two elementary general music teachers, one of them officially employed at a dual-language elementary school and the other volunteering at this school while also earning a master's degree in music education with a multicultural education focus from a nearby university. The Project's main goal was to create a new music curriculum, understood here as an organized collection of musical pieces. A group of third-grade students, their parents, and the two music teachers worked collaboratively to put together a repertory of class songs capturing participants' home music cultures and languages. This process allowed participants to learn about each other's musical and linguistic backgrounds and develop a stronger sense of belonging to the school community.

2.1 *Rationale*

The Song-Hunting Project emerged in the context of an ongoing collaboration between two music teachers. One was the general music teacher of a public charter elementary school with a Spanish dual-language program located in a Midwest U.S. mid-sized city. The other—the author of this chapter—was a master’s student in music education volunteering her time in the above teacher’s classroom.

Before starting the project, the author deliberated how her positionality could be useful in assisting the school’s general music teacher. She considered her experience as a female elementary music teacher who is also a native speaker of Spanish. Likewise, she took account of her knowledge as an emerging scholar specializing on issues of multicultural music education. The author examined the classroom context in which she was volunteering, and detected two curricular and instructional challenges for which her personal and professional experiences could prove helpful. These challenges were: a non-contextual approach to curriculum content selection and an emphasis on individual learning. The Song-Hunting Project developed a synergic response to both.

First, the music curriculum implemented in this school before the Song-Hunting Project was unrepresentative of the school’s demographic make-up. Euro-American White, Anglo music occupied the center of the curriculum, to which a multicultural aspect was added through so-called world music. Beside high art music from Western Europe and the U.S., students listened to, sang, and played tunes from places such as Ireland, Korea, Russia, Italy, India, and Vietnam. Curricular contents were, thus, somewhat diverse. However, for a music curriculum to be not only multicultural and diverse, but also culturally relevant, it ought to acknowledge and affirm the musical and linguistic diversity *that is present in the classroom* (Gay 2000; Ladson-Billings 1995). In addition, for this curriculum to have a social reconstructionist edge, it ought to ensure that all students’ musical and linguistic backgrounds were situated center stage in the curriculum (Counts 1932; Koza 2001). Music curricula largely composed of music from the Euro-American tradition, plus add-ons from other music traditions, fail to challenge Euro-American music’s privileged status as canonic knowledge. Hence, they disadvantage students whose cultural backgrounds are not White, Anglo, and middle-classed. More equitable learning environments can emerge when dominant viewpoints are consciously decentered and culture’s margins brought to the center (Apple 2000).

The Song-Hunting Project drew on its participants’ cultural backgrounds to create a more contextual curriculum. Unlike most music education curricula, which consist of a generic collection of canonical and multicultural music pieces, the Song-Hunting Project produced a songbook composed of pieces representative of its participants’ musical and linguistic backgrounds. The students, their families, and the music teachers, rather than a group of professional curriculum designers, determined what knowledge was worth studying. This strategy increased participants’ sense of ownership of the new curriculum. In addition, this process challenged an all-too-common practice in music education: publishing companies and

teachers deciding single-handedly what music traditions best represent their students. When curricular decisions are based on reductionist assumptions about students' races, ethnicities, native languages, or nationalities, the resulting curricula risk stereotyping the target students (Abril 2009).¹ In the Song-Hunting Project, reductionist assumptions were suspended by asking participants to define themselves musically. Hence, some of the songs that parents sang to their children did not match their native languages or countries of origin. And yet, these songs were still entirely true to their households' music cultures, ultimately evidencing cultures' and identities' complex and dynamic nature (Miller 2010).

Second, almost all activities taking place in the music classroom before the Song-Hunting Project were either individual or they had an individual focus—even those often performed collectively, such as singing or dancing.² This emphasis on the individual favored comparisons between students' performances, and interpersonal competition over collaboration. It also favored students raised in line with a White, Anglo liberal mentality. Liberalism, a socio-political and economic philosophy that extols individual effort as the main attribute for personal success, serves as the basis for normative American White, Anglo culture. Liberalism tends to downplay the role that social structures play in people's lives. Learning environments that function within a liberal mentality approach students as discrete learning units and presume a level-playing field for all. These environments tend to neglect students in positions of less privilege. There are, however, alternative approaches to liberalism. One of them is allocentrism, a perspective that emphasizes collaboration and cohesiveness among groups over individual behavior. Allocentrism capitalizes on people's differing strengths and abilities for the benefit of the entire group and it acknowledges the crucial role that environmental circumstances play on individual performances. Allocentrism is a common perspective among Latinx families (Kelly-McHale and Abril 2015). This approach to merit attribution was seldom present in this music classroom.

The Song-Hunting Project encouraged a collaborative approach to learning through the project method (Kilpatrick 1918). The project method presents students with real-life "purposeful" problems that they ought to solve by counting on each other's strengths and on their teachers as facilitators. In the Song-Hunting Project, collective success became the end goal and individual achievement was dependent upon successful interpersonal work.

Besides culturally relevant pedagogy and the project method, the Song-Hunting Project was also inspired by the early ethnomusicological work of Béla Bartók and Zoltán Kodály (Bartók 1979; Eöszé 1962). Bartók and Kodály, two Hungarian nationalist composers born in the late nineteenth century, argued that music played

¹This is the case, for example, of Mariachi ensembles established in schools with large Latinx student populations, despite Mariachi music being representative of only Western Mexico, and other music genres, such as hip-hop and urban Latin, being arguably more pervasive and meaningful than folk-based genres for young Latinx born and raised in the U.S.

²Students were being asked to follow individual-centered classroom norms such as "no speaking" and "no touching (neither one another nor the instruments)" at nearly all times.

a key role in the construction of collective identities. They both conducted ambitious fieldwork collecting, transcribing, and analyzing Hungarian folk music. Kodály, who was also a music pedagogue, advocated for the use of tunes from children's cultural backgrounds as main repertoire in their music instruction. The Song-Hunting Project follows on Kodály's footsteps, developing a new curriculum that students can relate to, and avoiding issues of cultural alienation and marginalization that might hinder some students' academic achievement and self-esteem.

2.2 *Process*

The Song-Hunting Project was carried out by a group of sixteen third-grade students.³ Nine students were boys and the rest were girls. Also, twelve students were Latinxs, two were African American and the remaining two students were White.⁴

The development of the Song-Hunting Project can be divided in five stages for analytic purposes: introduction, planning, collection, analysis, and reflection. The *introductory* phase entailed two main tasks: to understand what a songbook is, and to check if students were interested in building together a class songbook. After a brief oral introduction, the author shared two hard-copy songbooks with the students, so that they could get an idea of what a songbook looked like and how their contents are commonly structured (Querol Gavaldá 1971; Torner and Bal y Gay 1973). After some self-directed exploration, the students and their teachers voiced their reflections as a group. This phase ended with a formal proposal to create a class songbook, to which students responded positively despite being a completely different project from what they were used to doing. Students showed excitement about interviewing their parents in the role of emerging ethnomusicologists. They also reacted enthusiastically to the idea of building a common artifact as a class and learning about each other's families' musical backgrounds.

During the *planning* stage, students decided what criteria they wanted to use to organize their songbook based on the musical elements that they had studied in general music. This phase served to consolidate and expand students' knowledge of musical concepts. First, students brainstormed concepts that they recalled from past lessons. Then, they came up with a classroom-wide classification system for their songs. They agreed on contemplating nine elements: country of origin (Mexico, U.S., Puerto Rico, Guatemala, France, or Spain), dynamics (consistent or changing), form (verse-chorus or strophic), language (Spanish, English, or French), meter (duple or triple), mode (Major or minor), authorship (folk/unknown or a specific person), tempo (fast or slow) and theme (nursery rhyme, dance song, or national

³The school's general music teacher chose a group of third-grade students to carry out the Song-Hunting Project based on pragmatic reasons: this group met on Mondays and Wednesdays, both days when the author was volunteering at the school.

⁴This statement is based on the general music teacher's description of his students. There were no African American or White girls in this class.

anthem). Finally, students created teams and each team crafted a working definition for a couple of the musical elements selected. These definitions provided a shared understanding of the elements to be analyzed that students could refer to when working on a song.

In the *collection* phase, the students and the author compiled songs from their households and interviewed their participants, gathering additional information about the recorded tunes to assist the later analysis. Most students borrowed the author's voice recorder for a day and brought it back to school with a recording of one of their parents singing. As the end of the semester approached, several students recorded and interviewed their parents the same evening, during a school-wide community-building event carried out in the school playground.

Once there were enough songs to start building a songbook, the *analysis* phase began. In practice, this phase overlapped with the collection stage. Students gathered in small groups and assisted each other in analyzing their group's songs. Each group had a laptop computer with all the recorded songs, allowing students to listen to a recording as many times as needed. Meanwhile, the general teacher and the author monitored the development of the analysis, assisting the groups when necessary.

The project ended with a *reflection* phase in which students accessed and assessed the Project's resulting repository of songs using laptop computers.⁵ First, students paired up and explored the Project's songbook. They had an opportunity to check both their own work and that of their peers. Students were satisfied to see all the analyses together in one location producing a cohesive whole of substantial length. Next, we reflected as a class on the entire process. Students expressed pride on their consistent work over the weeks. Likewise, several students stressed the significance that some songs had for them, affirming one of the Project's main goals. Finally, students wrote anonymous feedback on the resulting song repository, on their experience, and on their teachers' instruction. This feedback was overwhelmingly positive.⁶ The school's music teacher also wrote a positive remark about his experience carrying out the Project.⁷

The above description reflects the Song-Hunting Project's final version, after it underwent two substantial adaptations in response to students' interests and needs, and to time scarcity. The first major adaptation involved the language of instruction. The Song-Hunting Project, initially designed as "Proyecto Caza-Canciones," was supposed to use Spanish as primary language of instruction. Making Spanish the primary language would help to compensate for the fact that, despite Spanish being

⁵Although the initial plan was for students to upload their songs and analyses to a common online repository, adding a stronger technological component to the Project, time constrains led to the author taking care of this task.

⁶Students wrote, for instance, that the Song-Hunting Project was "cool" and indicated their personal preference for particular songs and performances.

⁷The general music teacher wrote that the Song-Hunting Project created a learning challenge for students to critically listen to and evaluate songs from their families, and that it also generated a great opportunity for all of the parts involved to learn together. Likewise, he commented that it was "fabulous" to work with the author and expressed gratitude for being a part of this experience.

most students' native language and bilingualism a key feature of the school, music classes were carried entirely in English—the general music teacher's native language. Despite these intentions, it became clear early on that not all the students were *de facto* bilingual; some struggled to follow a class conducted in Spanish. English thus became the Project's primary language because, unlike Spanish, all students spoke English and understood it fluently. Spanish was still present in the Project through occasional oral exchanges with the students and in most song' lyrics. In sum, optimizing communication with all the participants took precedence over fostering bilingualism through music education.

The second major project adaptation involved students' use of technology in the classroom. The author's initial plan was for students to not only record songs using a digital voice recorder and analyze them using laptop computers, but to also create a closed-access online repository for their songs and analyses. Time constraints led to prioritizing music-focused activities over technology-focused tasks. As a result, the author uploaded students' recordings and analyses to an online repository, and students had a chance to interact with that repository and comment on their end result during the reflection phase. Although the Project incorporated technology more modestly than initially envisioned, important implications still emerged from the technology-focused activities that did take place. Technology allowed students to skip the music transcription phase characteristic of hard-copy songbooks and draw their musical analyses directly from audio recordings. Analyzing songs through digital voice recordings allowed participants to bypass dominant, Eurocentric conceptions of music literacy as the reading and writing of modern staff music notation. Also, the resulting online repository made the Project more accessible, allowing participants and their families to gain remote access to the Project from the school library or their homes at any time.

2.3 Discussion

The Song-Hunting Project successfully addressed its two initial purposes: to put together a new music repertory based on the school community's diverse home cultures and languages, and to favor cooperative learning. Evidence of ways in which the Project met these two goals may be organized around the Project's main constituencies: (1) the students, (2) their families, (3) the general music teacher, (4) the author, and (5) other music teachers.

First, the success of the new musical curriculum can be inferred from the different degrees in which students engaged with it. Latina students demonstrated the highest levels of interest and commitment, followed by Latino and African-American male students, who also remained remarkably involved during the whole process. The two White male students in this third-grade class were, however, less enthusiastic. For example, Latinx and African-American students were content to see their home cultures acknowledged and validated in the music classroom. Latina students were also excited to realize that the author knew most of their parents'

songs from memory. In turn, White, male students showed some resistance to the Project. One of the two White students declined his invitation to take the voice recorder home by asserting that his parents did not know any children's songs. This student's behavior speaks to the Project's success in challenging American White, Anglo culture's privileged position at the center of the music curriculum. The Song-Hunting Project aimed to give comparable attention to all students' musical and linguistic backgrounds.

In addition, the Song-Hunting Project contributed to cultivating a stronger sense of community among students by enabling a space for self-directed group work and the celebration of cultural commonalities among students. The Project supported students' growth as independent and interdependent learners, encouraging them to take ownership of the educational process. The Project demanded a larger share of self-directed work to what students were used. However, students responded positively to this challenge by acting in responsible and mature ways. For example, the entire Project relied on students' capacity to take home and appropriately use a borrowed digital voice recorder, and to conduct a short interview with their parents without direct teacher supervision. Also, students were expected to work autonomously in small groups at their own pace during class. Students' recounts of the moment when they finally got to show the online songbook to their parents suggest that students dealt well with these challenges and, as a result, took ownership of the Project.

The Song-Hunting Project also provided a venue for students to share and discuss commonalities and differences among their cultural and linguistic backgrounds. For instance, some students were thrilled to find out that nursery rhymes recorded by other classmates were the same as the ones they heard from their parents while growing up. As students became more familiar with the collected repertoire, they also enjoyed listening to and memorizing each other's songs.

Second, the Song-Hunting Project fostered student families' sense of belonging to the school community by validating their home cultures. To an extent, the Project helped to reinforce parents' self-image as valuable members of their school community. Parents shared their reactions to the Project with the two music teachers through informal conversations. Although some parents were initially reticent to having their children voice-record them, they agreed to participate nonetheless. As they later commented, families appreciated the opportunity to contribute to their children's learning and responded well to seeing their musical and linguistic backgrounds legitimated by the school.

Third, the Song-Hunting Project proved consequential for the general music teacher and his students. It was in the regular music teacher's hands to either make the Project a sustainable and collaborative part of his teaching practice or an anecdotal instructional experience. The author hoped that the project's outcomes would be compelling enough to move the general music teacher to use The Song-Hunting Project as leverage toward more collaborative and culturally relevant teaching practices. However, she also feared that, if this was not the case, the Project might leave minoritized students feeling even more disempowered than before the Project had exposed an alternative, more culturally responsible way of doing music education.

The general teacher's positive feedback on the songbook, already mentioned in the previous section, suggests a positive attitude toward sustainability and collaboration after the Project was over.

Fourth, the Song-Hunting Project served to validate the author as a competent facilitator. Given that the author did not belong to the dominant U.S. culture, she wondered whether students would read her as a legitimate expert. The author openly shared her cultural and linguistic background with the students as a way to address her Otherness in the classroom. She also recorded her mother singing and analyzed the resulting song along with the students, answering any questions that they had about her background culture. This strategy proved effective in legitimizing her role as a facilitator before the students.⁸ The author also wondered whether the Latinx students would perceive her as an insider or outsider. Unlike any of the students, she was born and raised in Spain. However, the author and the students shared linguistic and musical knowledge as a result of four centuries of Spain's colonial rule in Latin America. Although the author's Castilian accent differed from the Latin American accent of the Spanish-speaking students, she was still seen as a native speaker of Spanish.⁹ Also, she was able to recall many of the songs recorded by the students from her own childhood. Students' verbal and non-verbal responses to their commonalities evidenced that Latinx students saw the author as an ally.

The author also wondered about her role as a co-facilitator along with the regular music teacher, and to what extent their joint instruction might model collaborative work for students. Given the author's double professional identity as an elementary music teacher and a graduate student, she wondered whether the general teacher might read the entire intervention as arrogant or opportunistic. The author's commitment to the school went beyond the limits of The Song-Hunting Project, helping to minimize the chances of being read as opportunistic—a complaint that teachers have of education scholars. She volunteered in the music room additional days besides those when the Song-Hunting Project was taking place and she helped to organize and carry out the school's end-of-the-year concerts.¹⁰ She also continued to volunteer after the Song-Hunting Project was over, and until the school moved into a new location. With regard to being read as arrogant, the author made sure that the general music teacher knew she would like to continue benefitting from his mentorship throughout the development of the Project, even though the design was hers. She also put effort into ensuring communication was fluid between the general teacher and herself regarding all the changes introduced in the Program. The general

⁸The author recorded her mother through on-line video call and then analyzed her song along with the students following their criteria. This recording was included in the Project's songbook along with all the others.

⁹The author. Students proved to be aware of this circumstance. One of the students, for instance, remarked that the author sounded like a movie character whenever she spoke Spanish, most probably alluding to movies dubbed into Spanish from Spain, a variety with which the student may not have had any other contact in person.

¹⁰An indication of this general music teacher's appreciation for the author's regular assistance is the way in which he mentioned hers in the end-of the-year concert's hand programs as "Special Teaching Assistant."

music teacher responded positively to this new co-teaching situation. He remained engaged and provided valuable feedback and suggestions whenever he deemed appropriate.

Fifth, the Song-Hunting Project encouraged other music teachers in the same school district. Likewise, it hopes to keep inspiring music educators to create music curricula more attuned to their students' home cultures. Soon after the Project ended, the author received an invitation to lead a district-wide professional development session for elementary music teachers based on the Song-Hunting Project. Participating elementary music teachers showed interest in the Project, demanding advice on ways to adapt it to their respective teaching contexts. The Song-Hunting Project may thus have impacted not only the students, their families, the author, and the general music teacher at the school where it was carried out, but it also served as a model for other music teachers in the district to conduct similar diversity-affirming projects in their music classrooms. The present chapter may likewise stimulate readers to re-evaluate their current teacher practices and aim for more culturally responsible and collaborative teaching and learning practices.

Learning projects like The Song-Hunting Project acknowledge and celebrate human diversity alongside cultivating students' musical learning. Music education's curriculum content, student population, and teacher force have historically represented a narrow section of the United States (U.S.) society in cultural, racial, class-based, sexual and gender-based, disability-based, religious, and linguistic terms. That is, music education has historically supported forms of knowledge and kids of people who enjoy privilege in contemporary American society. Well into the 21st century, U.S. music education continues to reproduce social and economic inequalities. Initiatives like The Song-Hunting Project seek to disrupt and eventually dismantle U.S. music education's prevailing elitism.

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