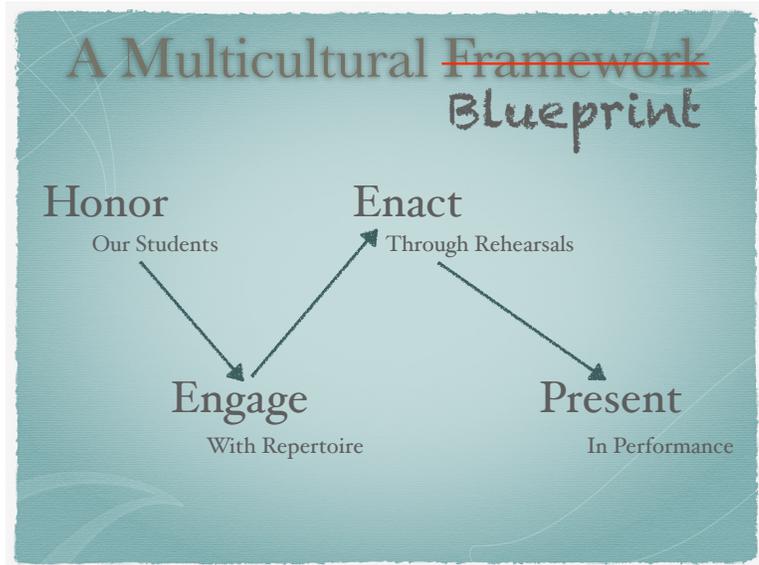


Implementing a Multicultural Framework in Choral Classrooms

Jason Bowers, Ph.D., jbowe17@lsu.edu

Louisiana State University



Multicultural Education

- All students—regardless of gender, sexual orientation, social class, and ethnic, racial, linguistic, or cultural characteristics—should have an equal opportunity to learn in school.
- Diversity enriches a nation and increases the ways in which its citizens can perceive and solve personal and public problems.
- When individuals are able to participate in a variety of cultures, they are more able to benefit from the total human experience.

-James A. Banks

Choral music ensembles are ideally situated to affect positive societal change if approached from a broad multicultural perspective.

I. Honor

A. "We teach who we are."—Parker Palmer

B. Cultural Humility—Joshua N. Hook

1. an awareness of one's limitations, both in regard to one's own cultural worldview and one's ability to understand the worldview of others
2. an interpersonal stance that is other-oriented in relation to the other person's cultural background and experiences, marked by respect and lack of superiority

C. Culturally Responsive Pedagogy—Geneva Gay

1. Developing a cultural diversity knowledge base
2. Designing culturally relevant curricula
3. Demonstrating cultural caring and building a learning community
4. Cross-cultural communications
5. Cultural congruity in classroom instruction

D. Student Engagement Considerations

1. Protocols of participation
2. Interaction with adults
3. Gender roles
4. Cooperative groups versus independent learning

E. "People who want to teach in a culturally responsive way must constantly seek to do it."—Constance L. McCoy

II. Engage

- A. What is multicultural music?
 1. Multicultural=many cultures
 2. Multicultural music=music representing many cultures
 3. All music is cultural.
- B. “The Danger of a Single Story”—Chimamanda Adichie TED Talk
- C. Considerations When Selecting Repertoire
 1. Consider your students first.
 2. Authentic— — — —>Culturally Valid (Abril)
 3. Serendipitous Opportunities
- D. Trusted Publishers of Culturally Valid Repertoire

III. Enact

- A. Rehearsal Considerations
 1. Oral/Aural versus Written Notation (let the music guide your pedagogical decisions)
 2. Vocal Timbres (let the music guide your pedagogical decisions)
 - a) Culture Bearers, Students, Recordings
 - b) Acknowledges/Validates multiple vocal timbres
 - c) Never sacrifice vocal health.

IV. Present

- A. Performance Considerations
 1. Accompaniment: instrument additions/substitutions
 2. Culturally appropriate movement: may be necessary depending on the music—videos, culture bearers
 3. Culturally appropriate attire: add a single item to uniforms, small group in full dress, images provided in performance
 4. Role of conductor: traditional conducting in front, joining the ensemble, playing an instrument, off-stage, cues from student leaders
 5. Role of Audience: passive, active, participatory, performers, viewers, responders
- B. Avoiding Cultural Appropriation
 1. Don't focus on heroes and holidays.
 2. Involve culture bearers in some way, if at all possible.
 3. Engage with the cultures in a deep and meaningful way to encourage connection and learning.