

Effects of Race and Gender on Pre-service Music Teachers' Attitudes Toward Composer Diversity

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Abstract

American music education is focused almost exclusively on music written by white men (Baker, 2003; Wilkinson, 1996). Will the next generation of music teachers work toward making musical content more representative? The purpose of this pilot study was to determine undergraduate music education students' commitment to promoting the music of diverse composers in their future classrooms. The research addressed the following questions:

- 1) Do pre-service music teachers believe that composer diversity is important?
- 2) Do pre-service music teachers feel prepared to teach their students about diverse composers?
- 3) Are women teachers and/or teachers of color more likely to promote diversity than teachers who are men and/or white?

Pre-service music teachers (n=12) completed an online survey, answering questions about how they value composer diversity, and if they feel prepared to teach music written by women and/or people of color. The data were analyzed with a series of Mann Whitney U tests, comparing the responses of men (n=7) and women (n=5). All participants identified their race as white. For almost every survey item, there was no significant difference at the $p < .05$ level between men and women. The only significant difference between men and women was found where women placed more importance on choosing music that comes from a variety of cultures. I was unable to answer questions about the effects of race due to the lack of racial diversity within the sample.

Applications

- Pre-service music teachers want to use music from diverse composers in their classrooms
- Participants did not feel adequately prepared to program music from diverse composers
- Music teachers in higher education should try to adjust teacher preparation programs to better meet this need
- Teachers could work to include more music written by women and/or composers of color to familiarize their students with diverse composers from an early age