



ONTARIO MUSIC
EDUCATORS'
ASSOCIATION

BLACK MUSIC IN MUSIC EDUCATION: REPERTOIRE, REPRESENTATION, AND COURAGEOUS CONVERSATIONS

Dr. Karen Cyrus, Karen Burke, Salah Wilson
York University

Students whose social identity is defined by race, gender, immigration status, and other group memberships, may suffer a persistent psychological threat in certain domains, such as education and work, which could undermine learning and performance (Cohen & Sherman, 2014, p. 343). This also applies to music education: learners may become demotivated when they do not see positive representations of themselves in the curriculum. The inclusion of a variety of pan-African music is necessary as children of African heritage need to see multifaceted representations of themselves in the curriculum beyond tokenism; there is need for greater cultural representation in music education (Davis 2005; Petersen 2008; Campbell 2010).

Incorporating Black music into the curriculum is a process. It starts with accessing the repertoire, aligning the music to learning objectives, and creating new objectives. The objectives should include self-affirmative activities that buttress the resilience of participants (Solomon & Levine-Rasky 2003; Cohen & Garcia 2008; Walton & Cohen 2011; Yeager & Walton 2011). There is also a need for “ethno-culturally-centred learning environments... that involves all community members and creates spaces for intergenerational learning and the transmission of oral history” (Hampton 2010). This poster presentation explores the process that one research team used to tackle the challenge of sourcing and integrating a variety of pan-African music in the curriculum of a community music school. A visual representation of sources of Black music, and methods to integrate the music will be presented to help music educators respond to the devaluation of identity that many students suffer when their culture is only affirmed once per year during Black History Month.

- Campbell, Patricia S. (2010). *Songs in Their Heads: Music and its Meaning in Children's Lives*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Cohen, Geoffrey and Julio Garcia. (2008). “Identity, belonging, and achievement: a model, interventions, implications.” *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, (17)6, 365–69.
- Cohen, Geoffrey L. and David K. Sherman. (2014). “The psychology of change: self-affirmation and social psychological intervention,” *Annual Review of Psychology* 65, 333–71.
- Davis, Robert A. (2005). “Music education and cultural identity,” *Educational Philosophy and Theory* (37)1, 47–63.
- Hampton, Rosalind. (2010). “Black learners in Canada,” *Race & Class* (52)1, 103–10.
- Petersen, Alvin B. (2008). “Ethnomusicology and music education: continuing the dialogue,” *SAMUS: South African Music Studies* 28, 169–83.
- Solomon, R. Patrick and Cynthia Levine-Rasky. (2003). *Teaching for Equity and Diversity: Research to Practice*. Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press.
- Walton, Gregory. M. and Geoffrey L. Cohen. (2011). “A brief social-belonging intervention improves academic and health outcomes of minority students,” *Science* 331, 1447–51.
- Yeager, David and Gregory Walton. (2011). “Social-psychological interventions in education: they're not magic,” *Review of Educational Research* 81, 267–301.