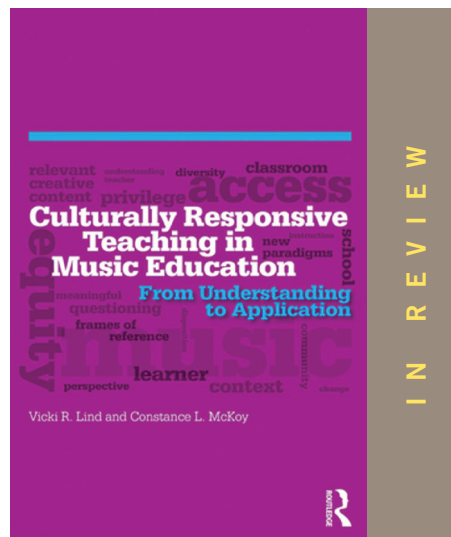


Reviewed by Victor Lozada

Culturally Responsive Teaching in Music Education: From Understanding to Application

Written by Vicki R. Lind and Constance L. McKoy
New York, NY: Routledge, 2016



Each year, student populations become more diverse, and teachers strive to find effective ways to include and engage the variety of cultures represented in their schools. In *Culturally Responsive Teaching in Music Education: From Understanding to Application*, authors Vicki Lind and Constance McKoy provide an accessible resource geared toward preservice and in-service music teachers, as well as collegiate-level music education faculty.

The book's two standalone sections, "Understanding" and "Application," allow flexibility in approaching the content. Although users may start with either section, reading the book in its entirety provides an in-depth understanding of the subject. For those who seek a direct path to using culturally responsive teaching (CRT) in their classrooms, I suggest reading the "Application" section first. Those who prefer a more nuanced understanding of how CRT may affect their teaching will find the best approach is reading the book straight through from "Understanding" to "Application."

The "Understanding" section targets those who desire in-depth comprehension of the theory behind CRT. Chapter 1 takes readers through the history of CRT in general education (including the ideas of Freire, Ladson-Billings, and Payne) and music education (such as the ideas presented at the Yale Seminar, Tanglewood, and the uses of

world music). Next, the elements of Gay's theory of CRT emerge and reinforce the validating, comprehensive, multidimensional, empowering, transformative, and emancipatory nature of culturally responsive teaching.

The next three chapters examine how teaching and learning intersect with culture, education, and music education. Chapter 2 details the substantial differences in demographics of teachers and students in the United States. Because of this gap and a history of disenfranchisement among minority populations, Lind and McKoy advocate for the development of cultural competence among teachers. Chapter 3 explains the interplay between culture and music learning experiences, exploring topics of aural learning, cultural and musical identity, gender identity, and music preference. Chapter 4 explores culture and the school, home, and community environments in which teaching and learning take place, ending with a discussion of politics within the American educational system. The authors further advocate for supportive classroom learning communities that emphasize mutual respect through culturally responsive caring, high expectations, and an awareness of different communication styles.

Designed for practitioners, the "Application" section provides strategies for culturally responsive music education classrooms. Its

three chapters are structured with teaching vignettes, teacher quotations, and strategies for implementation. Chapter 5 addresses applications of CRT in the classroom, including learning about students' lives outside of school, creating a supportive classroom that values and welcomes diversity, and making curricular and program choices that embody CRT. Chapter 6 advocates for a more culturally inclusive school culture, with strategies presented for connecting and developing pride within diverse school communities.

Chapter 7 looks beyond the school building into the surrounding community. The authors suggest that teachers should familiarize themselves with the local community as students experience it. They advise connecting with local musicians who are culture bearers, as well as learning more about how students access music outside of school, through non-traditional ensembles and musical opportunities within community and religious organizations.

Chapter 8 concludes the book by discussing potential implications for its use. One hope is for music teacher educators to transform higher education by advocating for cultural competence among colleagues and illuminating new areas of research. Another hope is for the book to serve as a continued catalyst for change across the profession of music education for students, faculty, researchers, and practitioners alike. I believe these goals can be accomplished.

Overall, the book does an outstanding job of presenting accurate information that aligns with current research within the fields of music education and general education. Although the "Understanding" section provides an in-depth look at the development of CRT, the "Application" section really shines. Teachers are encouraged to move toward a culturally responsive classroom through smaller individual projects or via an overarching change to teaching. From little things such as thinking about programming choices to more time-intensive activities, such as spending the day as a student or attending students' musical events outside of school, each suggestion can influence a teacher's classroom.

Culturally responsive teaching has been central to Orff Schulwerk since its inception via the inclusion of music from a variety of world cultures. Consider how people from Germany, the United States, and Japan, among others, have applied their culture's singing, saying, dancing, and playing to bring music to children. The beauty of using culturally responsive teaching within the Orff Schulwerk approach is that children not only gain a deeper understanding of music through their musical cultures, but also can enhance their cultures through improvisation and composition.

One possible application of CRT with Orff Schulwerk is in the teaching of improvisation. I have taught improvisation first through rhythm and then melody; for example, I began with an improvised rhythm and then asked students to improvise a melody to that rhythm in Mixolydian. When I set the children free, their musical responses did not exactly adhere to Mixolydian, but included syncopated rhythms from the radio and internet. Valuing the music they brought to the classroom gave them a place and increased their attention to the music I brought to them. The result was that children were able to improvise in Mixolydian within culturally-accepted norms as well as in rhythmic ways I did not teach.

When we use culturally responsive teaching, we view students' cultural diversity as an asset rather than a deficit, leading to multiple pathways for success. When we combine it with the Orff Schulwerk approach, the topics never become dull. *Culturally Responsive Teaching in Music Education* gives pre-service teachers, practitioners, and university faculty an extensive resource that provides flexibility in the use of this pedagogy. ■

VICTOR LOZADA teaches general music and choir at Pecan Creek Elementary School in Denton, Texas. He has completed three levels of Orff Schulwerk Teacher Education and is certified in the Kodály method. He earned bachelor's and master's degrees in music education from the University of North Texas where he is currently pursuing a PhD in music education.