

All-State: Casting a Wider Net: Culturally Responsive Music Teaching

presented by Dr. Samuel Tsugawa — reported by Joe Berns

I was particularly moved by Dr. Tsugawa's presentation on culturally responsive teaching. Dr. Tsugawa argues that connecting with other people is our most important goal as music educators, and this informs and drives the other goals we pursue in our classrooms.

We started by sharing a musical "growing up" story—when we first discovered music, how we learned, what we play and listen to, and what we value in music. We then went on to talk about IDEA (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access) in music education. Starting from the idea of "music for all," we discussed the problems (some students have barriers to music education), the importance of IDEA, and things we can do to become more culturally responsive educators.

We listed the barriers some have to music in the classroom. This included money, language, cultural differences, gender stereotypes, race stereotypes, lack of role models, and others. If we seriously believe in "music for all," then we as teachers need to recognize these barriers and teach in a way that is responsive to students'

needs. Some proven actions that successful teachers already take, provided by Dr. Tsugawa:

- Maintain a safe classroom
- Make the class accessible to all students
 - Know students, families, community
 - Let them know you
 - Include everyone who wants to make music
- Constantly evaluate own values, assumptions, and biases
 - Consider how this affects the curriculum

Dr. Tsugawa concluded that no one approach is guaranteed to work. Rather than a black-and-white, right-or-wrong approach, we need to mix and match what we can to ensure the best music education for all students.

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