

**Challenging White Supremacy Culture in Music Education:**

**A Collaborative Workshop**

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## Detailed Lesson Plans

(any text that is highlighted indicates a tip for the facilitator)

### Lesson 1: Welcome and Body Percussion Icebreaker (20 mins)

- I. Detailed procedure:
  - a. Play music while participants enter to create a welcoming environment.
  - b. Welcome participants, thank them for coming, briefly explain what the workshop is: an opportunity to learn about white supremacy culture in music education, collect tools for dismantling it, and collaboratively conceptualize an anti-racist music education.
  - c. Ask participants to gather in a large circle.
  - d. Ask participants to experiment with different sounds they can make with just their bodies: clapping, stomping, slapping their knees, singing, etc.
  - e. After a little experimentation, ask participants to compose a 4-beat body percussion excerpt to a moderate tempo. Give participants the tempo and provide a few examples of your own. Then, give participants a minute to figure out their mini composition.
  - f. Go around the circle and each participant will perform their 4-beat composition one after the other to create a large collaborative composition.
  - g. Once you've gone around the circle, give yourselves a round of applause and thank participants for their contributions.
- II. Goals/Objectives:
  - a. PG1: connect with and learn from other music educators.
- III. Rationale:
  - a. Draws on participants' prior knowledge as musicians and encourages musical participation in a way that is low-pressure and light-hearted.
  - b. Everyone gets a chance to participate without having to talk. This is helpful since they will be new to the space and might not feel fully comfortable yet.
  - c. Participants are collaborating right from the beginning.
  - d. Shows that music can be made with minimal resources, which is a concept that will return in the critical hip-hop pedagogy portion of the workshop.

## Lesson 2: Workshop Introduction + Community Agreements (30 mins)

- I. Detailed procedure:
  - a. Go over some of the big goals for the workshop:
    - i. Create an inclusive social justice community in this workshop and develop community-building strategies for your learning spaces.
    - ii. Understand the ways in which white supremacy culture manifests in music education and society at large.
    - iii. Develop an intersectional critical awareness of ourselves, our students, and our schools/communities.
    - iv. Collect and create practical tools for dismantling white supremacy culture in our learning spaces.
    - v. Develop a plan for creating a more anti-racist and liberatory music education in short-term and long-terms ways.
  - b. Remind participants that it is OK if they don't understand all of the goals yet, they will be unpacked throughout the workshop.
  - c. Review the schedule broadly. Do not provide too many details, just the main activities so that participants can be prepared, but not overwhelmed.
  - d. Ask if participants have questions.
  - e. Move to community agreements. Explain that agreements are important for co-creating a space where **everyone** has the ability to learn and grow.
  - f. Go over the pre-established agreements (can call on participants to read to stimulate more engagement):
    - i. Own your intent *and* your impact.
      1. Think critically about your intentions before you speak/act.
      2. Take accountability when your words or actions are received as hurtful by others.
    - ii. Practice tuning into your body and name/hold any emotions that come up.

1. Generational histories of racialized trauma and violence live deep within our bodies, often causing us to react viscerally to conversations about racism.
  2. Rather than ignoring, suppressing, acting out, or festering, try to observe your body's natural reactions without assigning value judgements.
- iii. Practice and value honesty and vulnerability
1. The knowledge embedded in our experiences is critical for dismantling oppressive systems.
- iv. Speak from your experience/Use "I" statements.
1. Avoid making assumptions or generalizing statements about others.
- v. Practice calling in rather than calling out/Question the idea, not the person.
1. "Calling out" or "questioning the person" is often punitive and limits our capacity for growth.
  2. Practicing genuine and meaningful accountability requires us to engage in difficult conversations, rather than shutting them down.
- vi. Accept and expect lack of clarity or closure
1. Anti-racism work is deeply complex and never-ending.
- vii. Allow for productive discomfort
1. Many of our moments of growth, revelations, changes in behavior, or paradigm shifts occur when we are on the "learning edge" of our comfort zones (Adams et al., 2023, p. 73)
- g. Ask participants for questions about pre-established agreements.
- h. Ask participants to pair up and discuss any additional needs they have for the workshop. (5 mins)
- i. Come back to the large group and ask participants to share any additions to the community agreements list.
- j. Post agreements somewhere visible for the remainder of the workshop.

II. Goals/Objectives:

- a. LO1: consider and state their needs in the co-creation of community agreements for the workshop.

III. Rationale:

- a. I chose to do the icebreaker before explaining the workshop logistics because I wanted participants to “loosen up” a bit before we got into the content.
- b. I think goals and schedule can seem daunting at times, so I kept it simple and broad. Hopefully, this will get participants excited about the learning without getting overwhelmed.
- c. Given the topic of racism and white supremacy, I felt that it was important to create pre-established agreements for the group that addressed the need for honesty, vulnerability, recognizing triggers, taking accountability, avoiding stereotypes, and allowing for discomfort.
- d. When people are given the chance to have their needs heard and met, they are more likely to learn effectively. For this reason, I think the pair and large group share on additions to the agreements was also necessary.

### Lesson 3: Who is in the Room? Step into the Circle Activity (30 mins)

- I. Detailed procedure:
  - a. Ask participants to get in a circle.
  - b. Preface the activity by saying that it is a silent activity where individuals will step into the circle if the statement applies to them. Then they will be prompted to step back in preparation for the next statement.
    - i. If this is done virtually, you can use a hand raising function or something similar.
  - c. Tell participants that the purpose is to get an understanding of who is in the room without putting pressure on people to share about themselves. Tell them to notice what comes up for them personally and what they're witnessing without assigning judgements.
  - d. Once participants are clear on the instructions, read the following prompts in order: step into the circle if...
    - i. You studied music education at a college, university, or institute of higher learning.
    - ii. You currently teach in a K-12 school.
    - iii. You currently teach in a community setting.
    - iv. You currently teach in higher education.
    - v. You are currently studying music education as a student.
    - vi. You have been teaching music for more than 10 years.
    - vii. You are in your first year of teaching music.
    - viii. You are an extrovert and/or are generally comfortable with sharing your personal experiences.
    - ix. You have experience with teaching or learning about culturally responsive/sustaining teaching, critical pedagogy, hip-hop pedagogy, popular music education, informal education or other asset-based, non-traditional pedagogies.
    - x. This is your first time attending a workshop on racism or white supremacy.

- xi. You want to learn more about anti-racism in and outside of music education.
  - xii. You teach in a predominantly white school, district, community, institution, etc.
  - xiii. You believe that there is a need for anti-racism in music education.
  - xiv. You feel that you are already doing some things to decenter whiteness or combat racism in your teaching.
  - xv. You feel that your identities give you the privilege and freedom to do anti-racist work relatively safely.
- e. Thank participants for their sharing and ask them to return to their seats.
  - f. Debrief the exercise as a full group:
    - i. What did it feel like to share in that way? What were some statements where you hesitated? What did you learn about everyone else in the room? Do you feel more connected to the participants knowing that you share different qualities with different people?

II. Goals/Objectives:

- a. CG2: critically consider the social locations and specific needs of their students.
- b. PG1: connect with and learn from other music educators.
- c. PG6: show their engagement in the workshop by actively participating in pair sharing, large group sharing, activities, and surveys.

III. Rationale:

- a. Whereas the icebreaker was really just for fun, this one digs a little deeper and allows participants to learn more about each other. However, it is still very low risk as participants still may not be fully comfortable sharing.
- b. The statements start with music, and then move toward more personal prompts about experiences with anti-racism. This helps to ease participants into the exercise and recognize commonalities in music first.
- c. The final prompts start to introduce considerations of social identity which offers a segue into the next portion of the workshop.

## Lesson 4: Introduction to Social Identity and Intersectionality + Positionality Exercise (40mins)

- I. Detailed Procedure
  - a. Present slides on social identity and intersectionality (*full presentation in "materials" section*)
    - i. When presenting the social identity categories, ask participants which identities are most privileged in each category to test their prior knowledge and understanding.
    - ii. When presenting the different aspects of social identity (multiple, visible/invisible, fixed/changing, etc.) give examples.
  - b. Explain to participants that it is important that we recognize our positionality when participating in anti-racist work, so we are going to practice positioning/socially locating ourselves.
  - c. Share your positionality statement as an example.
    - i. This is mine: I am a white, U.S.-born, non-native, non-disabled, middle-class, queer, femme, young adult, college-educated scholar at a predominantly white institution. All of these identities inform my work and worldview. Professionally, I consider myself an academic and an activist who is primarily committed to the work of dismantling white supremacy in and out of music education. As a result of many of my identities, I experience unearned power and privilege that position me to do this work in a way that will often be viewed as neutral. Although I am committed to using my platforms to challenge white supremacy, my ability to participate in anti-racist work freely simultaneously reproduces the systems of oppression I seek to dismantle. This is a contradiction that is inherent and that I hold with importance throughout my work.
  - d. Point out different relevant points of the statement: social identities, association to power and privilege, relationship to work, and statement about what it means to be doing this work with these identities.
  - e. Tell participants that they are going to practice writing their own positionality statements. Present the following questions one at a time and give participants time to write individually on each one:
    - i. What social identities do you hold? Consider any/all of these categories: race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, dis/ability, class, citizenship, religion, age, language, education credentials, size, etc.



1. Remind participants that they can choose which identities they wish to write about or share with others.

- ii. Which of these social identities give you privilege? Which of these identities make you a target of oppression? How do you experience power and oppression as a result of all of your identities? How does this change on the basis of context?

1. Provide examples if participants are confused.

- iii. Consider the population that you teach and the environment in which you teach. What are the social identities of your students? Which communities are you or your students situated in? What resources do you have access to?

- iv. What content do you teach most? How is that informed by your social identities?

- f. Next, ask participants to condense their answers to the questions in a positionality statement that they would be willing to share with others. (again, they do not have to share any identities that they do not feel comfortable sharing).
- g. Do a 6-minute pair share on the statements. Each person will get three minutes to read their statement, share about the process of creating their statement, state any challenges they faced in writing their statement, and one way that they might use their statement in the future.

## II. Goals/Objectives:

- a. CG1: develop an understanding of the ways in which their social location informs their roles as educators.
- b. CG2: critically consider the social locations and specific needs of their students.
- c. PG4: practice vulnerability and honesty when sharing.
- d. PG5: grow and utilize their critical consciousnesses.
- e. LO2: associate their social identities with systems of power, privilege, and oppression.

## III. Rationale:

- a. This presentation and exercise introduce participants to some of the core concepts of social justice. Likely, this will not be new information to everyone,

but it will put us all on the same page and give us some common language to draw from throughout the workshop.

- b. The positionality statement exercise provides participants with a practical, and tangible artifact that they can adapt and use for their work in different contexts.
- c. Sharing about social identities requires more vulnerability so this exercise will allow the participants to connect on a deeper level and will prime them for more sharing throughout the workshop.

## Lesson 5: White Supremacy Culture Characteristics Introduction + Activity (80 mins)

- I. Detailed procedure:
  - a. Present slides introducing white supremacy culture and Tema Okun's work on the characteristics (*full presentation in "materials" section*).
    - i. Use one of the characteristics—fear—as an example of the activity that will follow. Share your own experiences with fear in music education and ask if participants have any similar or different experiences with fear being used for power in a musical setting.
  - b. Have participants count off and split into groups (I'm choosing to do 5 groups)
    - i. I chose to do individualism, one right way/paternalism, perfectionism, sense of urgency, and worship of the written word.
    - ii. The number of groups will depend on the number of participants. You should pick the number of groups and the WSCCs that you wish to use based on the size of the workshop. Because there are 15 WSCCs, but I would not recommend doing more than 8 groups for sharing purposes. You can group some of the similar WSCCs together.
  - c. Assign each group one of the white supremacy culture characteristics (WSCCs).
  - d. Give participants 15 minutes to learn about their WSCC broadly. Do not yet consider music scenarios, just learn about the characteristic and how it manifests in society at large.
    - i. Participants will be given a QR code to a page on their WSCC that contains bulleted information about their characteristic, a link to Okun's webpage on the characteristic, and a TikTok on the characteristic.
      1. Warn participants that the TikTok contains profanity.
    - ii. Consider these questions as a group: How prevalent is this characteristic in popular culture? How is it portrayed in the media? Is it something that you would normally associate with whiteness or white supremacy? What connotation does this characteristic typically get? What do you associate with this characteristic?
  - e. Have each group share-out briefly on their characteristic so that the full group can understand all of the characteristics.
  - f. Pass out a large poster paper to all of the groups.

- g. Give participants 15 minutes to list specific manifestations of their characteristic in music education based on their experiences as a music student and music teacher.
    - i. Consider these questions: Where did you see this WSCC in your K-12 music education? Where did you see this in your preservice training program? How does this characteristic show up in your job requirements now? How does this characteristic show up in your standards? What behavioral management practices reflect this characteristic? How do your teaching practices perpetuate or challenge this WSCC? Try to be specific.
  - h. Do a quick go-around and ask each group to share one or two salient manifestations.
  - i. Take 5 minutes to stretch and take some deep breaths as a group. Analyzing ourselves in these ways can be heavy.
  - j. Ask participants to switch to a new characteristic (each group will rotate to a new “station”). Take 5 minutes to read and discuss what was written by the previous group.
  - k. Pass out another poster paper to each group.
  - l. Give participants 15 minutes to create a list of remedies for the manifestations of the WSCC in music education.
    - i. Consider these questions: What specific pedagogical tools have you used to challenge this characteristic? What repertoire or content could be incorporated to remedy this characteristic? What needs to change in music education culture or school culture in order to accommodate remedies for this characteristic? What do you *wish* you learned in your preservice program that would help you challenge this characteristic? How could remedying this characteristic benefit your students and their communities?
  - m. Thank participants for their contributions and tell them that we will return to look at the remedies at the end of the workshop.
  - n. Do a go-around and ask participants to share one word to describe their mood, emotional state, energy level, etc. after the morning session.
- II. Goals/Objectives:
- a. CG3: recognize the pervasiveness and normalization of white supremacy culture in society.

- b. CG4: examine specific music teaching practices and analyze their relationship to white supremacy culture.
  - c. CG5: imagine, create, and compile practical tools for dismantling white supremacy in music education.
  - d. All process goals
  - e. LO2: associate their social identities with systems of power, privilege, and oppression.
  - f. LO3: identify the primary characteristics of white supremacy culture through an understanding of their manifestations in society.
  - g. LO4: list music education practices that represent and remedy the white supremacy culture characteristics.
  - h. LO5: reflect on their experiences as a teacher and a learner in music education settings.
- III. Rationale:
- a. The WSCCs are a helpful tool for exposing the ways in which many of our normalized practices, expectations, and standards can be traced back to white supremacy. They are accessible in this way because most people know what perfectionism (for example) looks like, but they may not understand why it allows for the perpetuation of white supremacy. The resources provided help to make those connections.
  - b. Sharing in small groups allows all of the participants to discuss their teaching experiences and practices in a relatively low-stakes environment.
  - c. Balancing the manifestations and the remedies allows participants to recognize both what they are doing well and what needs more attention.
  - d. Participants can learn a lot from each other in these groups. Especially considering there will be varying identities and levels of experience, participants can learn from drastically different experiences and perspectives while working together to make music education better as a field.

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## Lesson 6: Critical Hip-Hop Pedagogy Introduction (50 mins)

- I. Detailed procedure:
  - a. Preface this portion by stating that critical hip hop pedagogy is one of the many frameworks for enacting anti-racism in our teaching spaces.
  - b. Present slides on the foundations of critical hip-hop pedagogy, its relationship to anti-racism, and possible challenges or missteps in the teaching of hip-hop (*full presentation in "materials" section*).
    - i. On the "Foundations" slide, present the first section of bullet points, then watch to 2:43 in the ["Who Burned the Bronx" video](#).
      1. Preface the video by saying that it shows the context from which hip-hop was born.
        - ii. When reviewing the forms of hip-hop (collage, flipping something out of nothing, staying fresh) give some examples of possible applications.
  - c. Explain that one of the ways that we can teach our students critical thinking and literacy skills is through lyric analysis.
  - d. As an example, play the song "I Can't Breathe" by H.E.R. (*you can choose any hip-hop song or artist that has relevant lyrics about racism*) and provide the lyrics on the slide show. Tell participants to jot down one line from the song that stood out to them while they listen.
  - e. After the song ends ask participants to volunteer to share the lyrics they noticed.
  - f. Ask participants about the meaning of the song. What statement is she trying to make? How is she representing her community? What action is she calling for? How is white supremacy challenged in this song?
  - g. Explain that this process of analyzing lyrics allows us to make meaning of the music and develop our critical thinking skills. Participants can do this in their own classrooms.
  - h. Finish this portion by showing participants [Dr. Bettina Love's TED Talk](#) on hip-hop and student success. This video connects many of the themes of critical hip-hop pedagogy and the workshop overall.
    - i. Tell participants to jot down any practical wisdom or tools that resonate with them as they watch.
- II. Goals/Objectives:

- a. CG5: imagine, create, and compile practical tools for dismantling white supremacy in music education.
- b. PG5: grow and utilize their critical consciousnesses.
- c. LO6: develop methods for incorporating hip-hop music, culture, pedagogies, forms, and/or tools in their classrooms.

III. Rationale:

- a. Critical hip-hop pedagogy combines many different social justice core concepts and music education concepts, all while centering a culture that originated in Black communities. This makes it a really great framework for developing an anti-racist music education.
- b. The lyric analysis exercise allows participants to practice a skill that they could then use in their classroom or learning space.
- c. The TED Talk allows participants to learn from someone new and allows for a synthesis of many of the themes of the workshop.
- d. Participants did a lot of sharing a group work before lunch, so this gives them a break to listen and engage differently.

## Lesson 7: Composition Workshop (40 mins)

- I. Detailed procedure:
  - a. Recall this quote from Dr. Love's TED Talk: "when we deny students the opportunity to express their culture in classrooms, we are spirit murdering them" (13:48).
    - i. Explain that using hip-hop in the classroom can allow students to express their culture and center joy and exploration.
  - b. Introduce DAWs: Digital Audio Workstations (DAWs) provide us with tools for composing hip-hop in the classroom in easy, accessible, low-cost ways. In order to gain better familiarity with these tools, participants will be given the opportunity to make their own compositions.
  - c. Give participants 20 minutes to experiment with Bandlab and Soundtrap (two DAWs) and create a short musical composition. They can work independently or collaborate with others.
    - i. Remind participants that the point of this is exercise to center joy and playfulness in music-making. Try to release the need for "perfection."
  - d. After the 20 minutes are up, ask some debrief questions to the full group:
    - i. What did it feel like to make music without rules? How did your own self-expression come through in your composition? How can providing accessible tools to our students allow them to bring their whole selves into the classroom?
  - e. Ask for some brave volunteers to share their compositions.
- II. Goals/Objectives:
  - a. CG5: imagine, create, and compile practical tools for dismantling white supremacy in music education.
  - b. PG4: practice vulnerability and honesty when sharing.
  - c. PG6: show their engagement in the workshop by actively participating in pair sharing, large group sharing, activities, and surveys.
  - d. LO6: develop methods for incorporating hip-hop music, culture, pedagogies, forms, and/or tools in their classrooms.
- III. Rationale:



- a. This activity gives participants an opportunity to practice with a hip-hop pedagogy tool that they can then bring to their classrooms.
- b. Shows participants that they can make hip-hop in their learning spaces with minimal resources.
- c. Provides a tool for bringing students' culture into the classroom.
- d. Allows participants to do something fun and playful after a lot of work throughout the day.

## Lesson 8: Envisioning Activity + Closing (60 mins)

- I. Detailed procedure:
  - a. In order to synthesize the day and create momentum for the future, we will end the workshop with some action planning.
  - b. Give participants 10 minutes to do a quiet gallery walk to look at the posters from the WSCC activity and reflect on what they learned throughout the day. As they do this, they should make a list of practical strategies for attending to their own positionality and the positionality of their students, recognizing and remedying white supremacy culture in music education, developing a critical consciousness in themselves and their students, and bringing hip-hop culture into the classroom.
  - c. After their gallery walk and reflection, ask participants to construct an action plan (20 minutes): (do these one at a time so participants don't get overwhelmed)
    - i. What is one anti-racist practice you can incorporate into your classroom/learning space this week?
    - ii. What 2-3 anti-racist elements can you incorporate into your curriculum for next semester?
    - iii. One of the main ways that we create large-scale transformation is through our relationships with others. How will you share what you learned today? Can you talk to student parents? Colleagues? Community members? Administrators? Board members?
    - iv. Hopefully, you feel inspired to create meaningful change after attending this workshop. How will you keep your passion alive? How will you hold yourself accountable? What reminders can you offer yourself when you're feeling burntout?
  - d. Come back to the full group and ask participants to share some of their responses.
  - e. To close out the workshop, review everything that we accomplished and thank participants for their work.
  - f. Share resources used throughout the workshop so that participants can return to them as needed.
  - g. Ask participants to fill out a brief feedback survey based on their experience of the workshop.

- h. As participants are packing up and leaving, show the video of the [Conservatory Lab Charter School 5th grade Climate Change Rap](#). This video is entirely student produced and shows an inspiring example of youth participating in community action through hip-hop (and it's cute).

II. Goals/Objectives:

- a. CG5: imagine, create, and compile practical tools for dismantling white supremacy in music education.
- b. LO7: create a plan for enacting anti-racism in their classrooms in short-term and long-term ways.

III. Rationale:

- a. Because this workshop is centered around practical applications for anti-racism in music education, it is important that participants leave with a concrete plan for implementing what they learned.
- b. I chose to put the envisioning activity at the very end because it allows participants to reflect on everything they have learned throughout the workshop.
- c. I chose to incorporate a feedback survey to support my reflexivity and growth as a facilitator.

## Materials

Participants asked to bring the following to the workshop:

- Headphones
- Computer or smart phone with Soundtrap or Band Lab app/internet account  
(participants can also share if this is not possible for everyone)
- Note-taking materials (electronic device, journal, paper and writing utensil, etc.)

Materials used in the workshop:

- Poster paper and markers
- Slides:  
<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1DwBJgNA89zzeJX3KWdvHu5Y8wJzobehWwkokO6k0cp0/edit?usp=sharing>
- WSCC Activity google drive link:  
[https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1caFK\\_97zi8B6HCSXUKM8zzVFET0ovGBz?usp=share\\_link](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1caFK_97zi8B6HCSXUKM8zzVFET0ovGBz?usp=share_link)
- Who burned the Bronx video:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x3Tyj0AQu0o&t=103s>
- “I can’t breathe” by H.E.R.: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vKps0oU9Yj0>
- Dr. Bettina Love TED Talk: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tkZqPMzgvzg>
- Conservatory Lab Charter School Climate Change Rap:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bYuqzj8SZG0&t=3s>
- Survey: [https://umassherst.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_bIYtVLh1mn170Gy](https://umassherst.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_bIYtVLh1mn170Gy)