Addressing Diversity in Academia

Maria C. Fava
Western Michigan University, maria.fava@wmich.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/instructional-development-grants

Part of the Higher Education Commons

WMU ScholarWorks Citation

This Poster is brought to you for free and open access by the Office of Faculty Development at ScholarWorks at WMU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Instructional Development Grants by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at WMU. For more information, please contact maira.bundza@wmich.edu.
Support of diversity, inclusion, tolerance, free inquiry, and academic freedom is essential to the very project of research, but also, especially in light of the recent wave of racist, xenophobic, and antiracism activities on campuses and in cities across the nation, to our core activity of teaching.

We can legitimize systems that are thoughtfulness and mutual respect. But traditional teaching structures and approaches often do not help us to face classroom challenges generated by cultural differences among students.

We strive to answer this question by using a variety of teaching methods based on thoughtfulness and mutual respect. But traditional teaching structures and approaches often do not help us to face classroom challenges generated by cultural differences among students.

To help scholars/professors to address this issue, professional organizations, such as the American Musicological Society, have formed various committees and study groups, which organize meetings, workshops, and round tables focusing on diversity and on suggesting ways to improve student learning through instructional and curricular redesign and innovation.

The question we as instructors should address is:

How do we eliminate, or at list limit, students’ experiences of marginalization and at the same time help them understand that individual experiences, values, and perspectives influence how we all construct knowledge in our field?

The need for more concrete answers led to the organization of a symposium by Project Spectrum, a coalition of graduate students and faculty members, on October 31-November 1, 2018 in San Antonio, TX.

The Symposium addressed issues of diversity and inclusion in the fields of music theory, musicology, and ethnomusicology, and it aimed to develop concrete tools to inspire systematic change within these academic fields.

The way in which we answer these questions at the institutional level determines if we address this problem according to A or B.

Our critical analysis of institutional structures concluded that who is in power determines the way in which we look at racism in our field:

- These systems, though, are often feet of oppression; they do not solve the problems at the source, they just put band aids on them.

Thus, we were asked to define the role that we as instructors play in this system of power.

We were faced with the reality that we have two choices:

1. We can legitimate systems that are already ruling our institutions.
2. We can be the change from within.

Addressing Race: Getting Out of the Institutional Box

The Symposium demonstrated, conversations about race, ethnicity, and intersectionality are most effective when both underrepresented and majority members of our various Societies are in dialogue.

With the help of initiatives such as those proposed by Project Spectrum we can create spaces in which to bridge this gap and cultivate the strategies necessary to achieve our goals.

How do we address the relationship between racism, power and poverty in our classrooms? We were asked to think about the following questions:

- Where do we find and who are the poorest people? Why are they poor?
- Should we fix the social structure?
- Should we fix the people?

The most important step, though, is recognizing the problem, because if we deny it, we do not deal with it.

Maria Cristina Fava
Assistant Professor of Musicology
School of Music
Western Michigan University

Email: maria.fava@wmich.edu

Power and Racism

Our Role in This System of Power

Race, Prejudice, Power lead to Racism!

We can undo racism if we work on changing the way we approach these three factors.

We can undo racism by being liberating gatekeepers of our institutions and changing the relationship between "internalized superiority" and "internalized inferiority" in our departments and classrooms.

Poster Presented by:

Maria Cristina Fava
Assistant Professor of Musicology
School of Music
Western Michigan University

Email: maria.fava@wmich.edu