Chapter 12
Sounds of Cultures:
Strategies for Global, Intercultural, and Transformative Education Through Music

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ABSTRACT

Interactions between nations, migration, and the increasing impact of media, among other reasons, have generated a multicultural reality in large areas of the planet. This situation requires, among other aspects and needs, an education focused on understanding diverse cultures, tolerance, and mutual respect as guidelines to achieve civic and social competence. Education should aim for each individual to better understand the surrounding world to improve their understanding of themselves and others (Delors, 1996). This work is a compilation that gathers various opinions on what culture is; multiculturalism and interculturality; intercultural education and the role of music within it. Thus, it highlights the special contribution that music education holds for acquiring the aforementioned civic competence, being an important educational resource for achieving fairer and more equitable societies in the third millennium.

INTRODUCTION

This paper is based on the thematic axis that advocates for music education, at all educational levels, to facilitate students' acquisition of intercultural competence. Thus, didactic-musical strategies are suggested and discussed to achieve global and intercultural education through the implementation of transformative activities in the classroom. To do this, basic concepts of culture, music, education, inter- and multiculturalism, and intercultural education are reviewed; the prominence of music as a cultural element of society is highlighted; various considerations on the use of music as an educational and formative tool in

the understanding of diverse cultures are provided; various multicultural musical activities are proposed to enhance the comprehensive education of students. The objective is for them to become future active citizens in a pluricultural society, respectful of the different cultural manifestations in a globalized, plural, and diverse world. Current society is obligated to intercultural socialization, as it is culturally diverse, and for this, it is necessary to adopt an attitude open to coexistence (Volk, 1998).

Culture

Edward B. Tylor, an English anthropologist, defined culture in 1871 as "... that complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, arts, morals, law, customs, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society" (Lévi-Strauss, 1992, p. 368).

An updated concept of culture can be found in the definition proposed by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, in the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (UNESCO, 2001): Culture should be regarded as the set of distinctive spiritual and material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize a society or social group and that encompass, in addition to arts and letters, ways of life, living together, value systems, traditions, and beliefs (para. 5).

According to García (2004), the concept of culture has undergone various interpretations throughout history: from Classical Antiquity (referring to the cultivation of the land and subsequently to human faculties), to the German Enlightenment interpretations of the contemporary age, which highlighted European superiority. In the 20th century, culture was understood as a complex system of knowledge, beliefs, and artistic expressions, evolving towards its consideration as a varied set of ideas, artistic productions, and traditions that help interpret reality and guide vital actions of individuals. In this sense, anthropology understands culture as a tool for achieving social changes and transformations (Escobar, 1999). On the other hand, the constructivist trend of the 1970s, particularly Pierre Bourdieu, defined culture from the standpoint of identity, as "a tool of differentiation that increasingly appears as an element of the strategy -not necessarily conscious- of social actors, especially if they are involved in social or political struggles" (Cuche, 1997, p. 25, cited in Podestá, 2006).

Each interpretation has contributed to a deeper understanding of culture as an integrating element of various spheres of human life. In culture, various factors intertwine such as social values, human rights, and even economic aspects, being a powerful influence on the development of a society (Sen, 2004). Therefore, culture is a set of symbolic, economic, and material elements that influence the social and family actions of the individual, shaped by historical development and education throughout human life. Because it is people who make culture a human reference, expressing art, providing identity, being a behavioral pattern, and becoming a way of life; in short, culture emanating from human life in society becomes a symbol, a group representation, practices, values, and a power element (Martínez et al., 2016).

The concept of culture is not univocal and admits multiple definitions (Olivé, 1999). Pérez-Aldeguer (2013) considers it to refer to the perspective with which each person interprets the world, whether coinciding with others or not. Hence, diversity is a characteristic and common feature in human groups (Aguado et al., 2008). Therefore, "the universal cannot be postulated in abstract by any particular culture, it arises from the experience of all the peoples of the world, each of which affirms its identity. Cultural identity and cultural diversity are inseparable" (UNESCO, 1982, 5).

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