Grow Your Own Music Educators?: The Potential for Pre-College Music Teacher GYOs

by Dr. Adrian D. Barnes

Introduction

The current teacher workforce lacks diversity and is made up of majority non-minority teachers (Department of Education, 2016). This is especially true in urban settings where the student population is predominantly Black and Latinx. A lack of diversity is also true in specific disciplines like music education where there is an underrepresentation of teachers of color (TOC) and an underrepresentation of students of color enrolled in music courses at the K-12 level overall (Delorenzo & Silverman, 2016). This should be cause for concern, as music educators who are TOCs are known to act as institutional agents, role models, cultural brokers, mentors, and bearers of social capital for students of color. Additionally, current music educators of color are vital to potentially bringing about more students of color into music education (Walker & Hamann, 1993). This is vital in areas like urban communities where TOCs are greatly needed.

TOCs from urban areas normally maintain a certain amount of social and cultural capital, as well as an understanding of how to navigate the potential barriers and difficulties that stand in front of the young people of color from distressed urban communities. In addition, TOCs from urban communities also understand the value and community cultural wealth (CCW) that students and their communities offer. This is essential to teaching and connecting with students of color from urban areas and gives way to the implementation of culturally responsive teaching and culturally relevant approaches in teaching.

Since TOCs will continue to serve as role models, mentors, cultural brokers, and holders of CCW, it will become vital that the field of music education take much more aggressive and calculated steps to diversify the music educator workforce. This can be done by recruiting and growing music educators of color who maintain a significant amount of cultural capital and sociocultural understanding, are from urban communities, and are prepared to teach in urban communities. This will require music education preparation programs to cultivate an acute interest in not only diversifying the music education workforce, and the music educator workforce in urban areas, but also addressing the infrastructure that prepares them. This can be done by following the model of other institutions of higher education (IHEs) who have problematized the lack of TOCs and the lack of TOCs in high-needs areas by developing and implementing initiatives to assist in increasing the representation of TOCs.

Equity-based initiatives that attempt to diversify the teacher workforce, especially those that attempt to create TOCs who work in urban settings, go by many names, and are often called pipeline programs, pathway programs, “home-growing” programs, or “home-grown” programs. The most common pipeline programs are called Grow Your Own, which will be discussed later in this article GYOs (Coffey, Putman, Handler, & Leach, 2019; Gist, Bianco, & Lynn, 2019; Valenzuela, 2017;). GYOs employ specific theoretical beliefs to guide the systematical, and programmatical practices employed to diversify the teacher workforce. These beliefs normally reside under the umbrella of Critical Race Theory, and attempt to upend inequalities as it relates to education. However, while GYOs have been used holistic approach to bring about more TOCs into the teacher workforce we have yet to see GYOs that target future music educators. The purpose of this article is to discuss the underrepresentation of TOCs in music education, present the purpose and theoretical underpinnings of GYO programs, and present ideas on music educator programs can established university-led GYOs with urban communities.

Low Numbers of TOCs in Music Ed

There is a shortage of TOCs in music education (Delorenzo & Silverman, 2016). There are many reasons why this may be the case (i.e., low numbers of students enrolled in music programs across the country, access, etc.) as there is a shortage of TOCs at large. It would seem that the absence of TOCs may be due to the overall underrepresentation of students of color in higher education at large. This may be due to some of the more

common barriers known to impact the ability of students of color to reach higher education at all. These issues can vary from deficiencies in educational background, language barriers, social and economic barriers, lack of career counseling, etc. (Perna, 2000). As it relates to music education, Delorenzo & Silverman (2016) postulate that low numbers of TOC in music education could be due to an underrepresentation of students of color in school music programs (Delorenzo & Silverman, 2016). Further, in one study done by Elpus & Abril (2011) they found that after surveying 750 schools that the music programs were overwhelmingly White. When this study was reassessed, numbers still demonstrate low numbers of Black or African American students (13%) and Latinx (17%) enrolled in music ensemble (Elpus, Kenneth & Abril, 2019). These numbers should be a cause for concern as the current demographics of students of color is growing at a far greater rate than that of TOC. Without an intense emphasis on growing music educators who are TOCs we may continue to see even fewer numbers of students of color within music programs across the country.

TOCs who are music educators are known to act as role models and even assist students of color in their academic progress while in school and their retention in a music programs Hamann & Walker, 1993; Hamann, & Cutietta, 1997; Walker & Hamann, 1995). Additionally, TOCs who are music educators hold an immense amount of capital, especially if they teach students of color or work in urban areas. While there seems to be minimal research that demonstrates the capital that TOC yield at the post-secondary level, it would seem safe to assume that this idea is more than likely the case at minority serving institutions like Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) where most, if not all, of the ensemble directors /music educators are Black.

TOCs are capable of having a level of sociocultural understanding of students of similar backgrounds, can provide culturally relevant experiences, and act as institutional agents for students from urban areas. An assumption can be made TOCs who are from and teach in urban areas understand and value CCW. Understanding CCW is probably one of the more important skills as a TOC working in an urban area and is essential to assisting in creating or growing a GYO program. However, there are few, if any, music education GYO or home-grown programs or research that suggest a model for the use of a GYO program in music education. Nor are there community-based or university-based GYO music educator programs which are based out of urban communities. This is perhaps because much of the research in GYO programs does not focus specifically in music education. Or, possibly because urban communities value of music education may differ from those of music educators. Or, maybe the field of music education has not systematically problematized the low numbers of TOC within music ed. However, it seems that now, more than ever, would be an ideal time to begin to create music educator pipelines that bring about more TOCs to music education and in high-needs urban areas through the implementation of a GYO program.

What is a GYO?

GYOs are teacher pipeline initiatives created as early as the 1970s to diversify the teacher workforce and increase the representation of TOCs within urban communities. More specifically, GYOs are initiatives that can be community-based, district-based, or university-based, and attempt to diversify the teacher workforce in high-needs urban communities through teacher academies, urban education programs, teacher preparation programs, and other methods to certify more teachers of color.

Community-based GYOs are initiatives that are started organically by a community to address issues made relevant by a community. Normally, because of the general nature of GYOs, and the theories that define it, the issues have to do with education. One of the more famous community-based initiatives is the Chicago-based, federally-funded (Title VII) Logan Square Neighborhood Association (LSNA) (Skinner, Garreton, & Schultz, 2011). This organization was developed out of the 1988 School Reform Law (Skinner et al, 2011).

University-based GYOs that are led and first initiated by a university, however, can be housed and/or directed by a community. An example of a successful university-based GYO would be the partnership between LSNA and the Bilingual Education Program at Chicago State University to create Neuva Generación (Skinner et al, 2011). This GYO was created to prepare bilingual teachers to teach in a predominantly Latinx community. Another well-known GYO, a teacher cadet program is the Armstrong Atlantic State University (AASU) Pathways to Teaching program. This was a grant funded program that started in 1989 to bring teachers of color into the teaching profession (Lau, Dandy & Hoffman, 2007).

District-led GYOs are ones in which the school district acts as a liaison between communities and universities for the purpose of establishing a GYO. A more recent GYO that is district led would be the Patterson Teachers for Tomorrow (PT4T) (Hill & Gillette, 2005). This program is a collaborative project that began during the 1999-2000 school year, with the establishment of Future Teacher of America (FTA) clubs in the three largest high schools in Patterson, NJ. Each club is led by one faculty advisor selected by school principal and one William Patterson university faculty.

Targeted Populations

GYOs can range from high school summer academies to undergraduate teacher preparation programs that either create a pipeline or focus specifically on certifying students, paraprofessionals, and emergency certification candidates of color to become teachers in urban areas. These programs may also be referred to as home-growing, urban teacher academies, or pipeline programs. No matter the name, they all have a similar focus to diversify the teacher workforce and increase the representation of TOCs in urban settings.

One significant difference in GYO programs is the targeted population. GYOs are known to normally target four different populations: (1) Emergency Certification, (2) Paraprofessionals, (3) Current Undergraduates of Color, and (4) Pre-collegiate Students (Skinner, et al, 2011; Villegas, & Clewell, 1998; Valenzuela, 2017). For example, urban teacher academies may focus on creating TOC pipeline programs by taking high school juniors and seniors from urban communities, whereas some GYOs may focus on TOCs already enrolled in higher education. Additionally, another targeted population by GYOs are emergency certification candidates. Emergency certification candidates are candidates who are pushed through the certification process for high-needs content areas. These are normally degree holding recipients teaching through Teach for America programs, and those alike.

Two key elements of GYO programs are how they are established and where they are housed. There are normally two formats for how they are established. Programs are either established from a community-based initiative or a university-based initiative. The main difference is that community-based GYOs are ones that are led by and initiated by a community, school district or other appendage of a community and work in conjunction with an IHE. University-based GYOs are established or initiated directly at an IHE and work in conjunction with the community.

The final three aspects of a GYO, which are the most pertinent, are as follows: (1) Where programs are housed, (2) what is taught and how it is taught, and (3) who is teaching. These aspects are important for the following reasons:

- When a GYO is housed in a community, the impact can be uplifting, empowering, economic, and educational.
- Teaching culturally relevant content in a way that is culturally responsive and relies on the CCW of a community can be liberating.
- When the facilitators of a GYO are TOCs it can be uplifting and empowering to the students of color in GYO.

Furthermore, these three aspects are essential to GYOs because they are vital to framing the philosophical and theoretical structure of a GYO.

Theoretical Underpinnings of GYOs

Of all the elements that make-up GYOs, the most important are the philosophical and theoretical ideas that frame them. This is most likely because of the following two reasons: (1) The theoretical and philosophical framing define the purpose of a GYO and its strategic and programmatic structure, and (2) historically, the theoretical and philosophical framing of GYOs attempt to up-end systemic discriminatory and unjust practices as it relates marginalized youth in education (Alinsky, 1989; Skinner, et al, 2011; Young & Berry, 2004). The second reason is particularly important because the theories and philosophies used to frame GYOs are equity-based, embedded in social justice, and focus on breaking down oppressive systems as they relate to education. Therefore, Critical Race Theory (CRT) seems to be the best overarching theory to frame GYOs, as they often include many other theories.

As continued below, it will be shown that the theories selected by a GYO are used to frame, guide, and direct what practices are employed.

It is often difficult to pinpoint one specific theoretical belief for a GYO, as structural, theoretical, and instructional beliefs of programs often vary from place to place. As stated above, many GYOs' missions and overall purposes are framed by certain theoretical beliefs and may be based on a range of ideological and even pedagogical beliefs. Some of the theories can be current or date back to the early 20th century. These would be theories such as social reconstruction, which postulates that neighborhoods can be changed by community involvement. Or, Saul Alinsky's idea of community organizing to promote drastic changes within a community, and Dewey's idea that public schools, as community institutions, were meant to prepare students to contribute to their communities (Hill & Gillete, 2007). Without truly understanding and implementing these theories, it is difficult to devise a GYO, or any community-based initiative. Further, without understanding the historical and cultural aspects of a community, it is not possible to devise a truly equitable GYO.

As stated before, at the core of most GYOs and home-growing teacher pipeline programs is the theory of social reconstruction (Skinner et al 2011). However, the next most essential theory is the theory of Community Cultural Wealth. (CCW). CCW is the aspirational, familial, social, linguistic, resistant, and navigational capital that innately exists within the fabric of communities of color. Understanding and valuing these forms of capital are critical as urban communities are often devalued. Additionally, there is often an over-emphasized focus on negative issues within some urban communities (Yosso, 2005). Of course, some of the more well-known theories adapted by GYOs are Critical Race Theory (CRT) which acts as an of the umbrella for other theories such as LatCrit, teaching as political practice, critical pedagogy, race uplift, other mothering, and social justice pedagogy. Each of these theories operate differently within GYOs and impact the functioning and programmatic, structural, and strategic processes within GYOs. It must be noted that Booker T. Washington's and W. E. B. Du Bois theory of "racial uplift" is one of the more underlined theories at the core of all GYOs because it focuses on bettering the life of Blacks (Hill & Gillette, 2005).

Lastly, the next most essential part of the theoretical structure of GYOs, other than where the program is taught, is what is taught and how it is taught as it relates to pre-collegiate initiatives and certification programs that target students of color. This also includes a host of theories such as culturally responsive teaching, culturally relevant content, and others, to connect with students and assist in them connecting with future students. This is a crucial aspect of GYO programs because while they still lean on more formal approaches to teaching and the well-known educational theories, GYOs makes use of CCW and places value on the information that students of color from urban communities bring to the academic table. This is a key idea behind CCW in which we value the knowledge brought forth from urban communities, and also the idea of critical pedagogy in which we question who controls the knowledge and what are the characteristics of those who control the knowledge (Sheared & Sissel, 2001).

Music Ed GYOs

There is very limited research which seeks to understanding how to diversify the field of music educators in urban areas through creating teacher pipeline programs (Delorenzo & Silverman, 2016). While there have been strides in understanding how to teach in urban settings and how to prepare music educators to go into urban settings, there are very few articles discussing how the field of music education has yet to examine GYO programs which develop music educators from urban areas to teach in urban areas (Robison, Tiger, Williams, Hoffman, & Eros, 2020). However, while there are teacher preparation programs to prepare music educators that do focus on preparing teachers to teach in urban areas, minimal literature discusses how to recruit pre-colligate students from urban communities (Anderson, Steven, & Denson, 2015). Further, while research has yet to demonstrate that GYOs are being used, it does not imply that music education teacher-preparation programs have not begun to examine GYOs as an option, nor does it suggest that music education pipeline programs do not already exist. These initiatives could simply be proceeding at a smaller scale or has yet to be written about, or simply because GYOs overall are under-researched (Gist, Bianco, & Lynn, 2019). It is also safe to assume that there could be other barriers, more closely related to music education as a discipline, that may make creating a music education GYO difficult. These barriers can include a shortage of music educators of color, lack of university-based connections with urban communities, a lack of funding (a limitation in all GYOs), and, as stated earlier, a shortage of students of color enrolled in K-12 music ensembles.

From a curricular standpoint, if music education programs are to create collegiate GYOs which focus on paraprofessionals and emergency certification candidates, there would need to be an evaluation of a candidates' musicianship, or an audition process (including a music history and music theory evaluation) in order to remedy limitations where necessary. Further, if a candidate is not up to par in their musicianship, playing, and other critical areas, this could potentially prolong the ability to put paraprofessionals and emergency certification TOC candidates back into their communities as music educators. Additionally, the types of musicians that are accepted into a traditional music education teacher preparation program must be reevaluated are planning to diversify the music teacher workforce as many musicians in communities may not be traditionally trained.

At a more basic level, the underrepresentation of TOC in music education at the secondary and higher education level overall may also impede an upstart of a GYO. This is because when planning a GYO, the facilitators are critical to communities of color seeing their community being served (Skinner et al, 2011). This not to suggest that all facilitators of a GYO must be TOCs, especially if they understand the CCW within a community, but representation of TOCs within a GYO is vital. This is critical to the philosophical and theoretical ideals (specifically racial uplift) of GYOs mentioned earler.to the philosophical and theoretical practices mentioned previously which are engrained in the fabric of a GYO.

Another potential reason for an absence of a GYO in music education teacher-preparation program could be because of a lack of push from the top down to lead these initiatives. Without the leadership of a dean or chair to address the absence of TOCs in music education, it is a more arduous task to establish a GYO which will need funding to help the program function. This is not singular to music education, as many attempts to diversify student populations at higher education institutions fall short without the help of top-down leadership (Clements, 2009).

As it relates to community engagement, the assumption could be made that a lack of GYOs in music education higher education could be because music education teacher preparation programs lack of connection with urban communities nearing their institutions. As stated above, GYOs can start as community-based initiatives and be joined by a neighboring institution. Furthermore, GYOs are housed in urban communities, again requiring music education programs to establish a relationship with neighboring urban communities. However, a music department would need a very strong presence in a community for these types of relationships to be established.

Conclusion

The ground is definitely fertile for music education teacher preparation programs to establish GYOs. The ground is also fertile to begin to establish university led partnerships which focus on increasing the representation of TOCs in music education. This is mainly because GYOs are effective in increasing TOCs, and because the known decrease of involvement by students of color in music programs at the secondary and post-secondary levels has been documented (Coffey et al 2019). There is also a chance for music educators to be innovative in their approach at diversifying the teacher workforce in high needs communities by integrating non-traditional practices and non-traditional music ensembles to garner greater numbers of students of color. Further, music educators may have an advantage in garnering greater numbers of students of color over other disciplines, as music educators of color have been known to act as role models to students of similar backgrounds (Walker & Hamann, 1993). However, there must be more TOCs to help fulfill this goal.

Before attempting to diversify the music education teacher workforce in urban communities through GYOs, there are a few considerations that need to be made by music education teacher preparation programs. First, considering the target population is important. Music education teacher preparation programs must decide to target emergency certification candidates of color, paraprofessionals of color, current undergraduates of color, and pre-collegiate students of color. Secondly, they will need to find a community to serve and leaders within the community to act as cultural brokers and to make the appropriate connections with important community members. Thirdly, they will need to select and adapt specific theories to frame and govern the purpose, programmatic and strategic goals of their GYO. These are the most important considerations in establishing a GYO.

At the macro level, there must be a concerted effort by music education teacher preparation programs to address a few vital areas of concern. Music education programs must establish a strong presence in neighboring urban

communities. This must be separate from the often-mandatory visit to urban settings required by some teacher preparation programs. Music education teacher preparation programs must continue to integrate culturally responsive teaching with social justice teaching pedagogies that inspire future music educators to continue to address issues of equity in music education. Music education teacher preparation programs will need to continue to adapt the theoretical and philosophical views of GYO programs which makes the music educator a teacher and an institutional agent. Lastly, there must be an examination of curricular needs in music education, and music departments at large, that integrate traditional and non-traditional ensembles and non-traditional pedagogical approaches that work well for students of color at primary, secondary, and post-secondary levels.

At the moment, there are very few GYOs that focus on diversifying the music teacher education workforce. However, that is not to suggest that they do not exist and are not successful in bringing about more TOCs into music education. As mentioned before, the study of GYOs, not matter the focus, is an under-researched area. Therefore, there is a very good chance that music education GYOs exist and have yet to be published. It is my hope that this article entices others to bring their ideas and practices to the forefront so that it can be used as best practice or inform the research on how best to go about recruiting TOC into the field of music education and diversify the teacher workforce at large.

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