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U.S. Preservice Music Teachers' World Music Preference and Its Transfer to Untaught Pieces

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Abstract

In contemporary music classrooms, it is crucial to broaden student's music preference to culturally diverse songs in order to nurture openness and intercultural sensitivity. Studies showed that familiarity is correlated with students' preferences for Western music pieces and world music pieces (LeBlanc, 1982; Yoo, Kang, & Fung, 2018). While it is impractical to help students to familiarize with all world music pieces in music classes, music teachers may expect students to transfer their familiarity and preference to other world music pieces in a similar style.

Transfer can occur from one task to another when both tasks shared similar features (Haskell, 2000). Shehan (1985) tested whether elementary student's preference for non-Western music genres transferred to untaught pieces of the same genre. Transfer did not occur in her study. The exposure period, the extent of immersion, types of music, and research participant's developmental stage could be variables to explore further.

The purpose of this study was to investigate whether transfer occurred from one world music genre taught pieces to untaught pieces of the same genre among preservice music teachers. Eighty-three preservice music teachers were provided a high-immersion, culturally-diverse music curriculum in a semester. Participants learned 18 African, Asian, and Latin American folk songs in small teams from culture-bearers via video conferencing. Then they team-taught the same songs to their peers. Before and after the curriculum intervention, their preferences for 18 taught and 18 untaught pieces were tested.

A repeated-measures ANOVA with three within-subjects factors (Time: Pre vs. Post, Teaching: Taught vs. Untaught, and Continent: Africa, Asia, and Latin) was computed. All main effects were significant ($p < .001$); interactions between Teaching and Continent ($p < .001$) and between Time and Teaching ($p < .05$) were also significant. The three-way interaction effect was significant also ($p < .001$). The Bonferroni method was used in *post hoc* comparisons and yielded significant differences in the preferences for music across all three continents.

While there were significant increases in preferences for the taught pieces across all continents, preferences for the untaught pieces yielded significant increases too. We infer that the preferences for the taught pieces were transferred to the untaught pieces as a result of learning only the taught pieces. Whereas Shehan (1985) studied upper elementary students in the traditional classroom setting, we studied preservice music teachers, who took the roles

of learner and teacher, allowing for deeper interpretation and immersion that enabled the transfer.