

**RELATABLE MUSICAL EXPERIENCES AS METHOD: A  
CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PEDAGOGY FOR THAI CLASSICAL  
MUSIC PRACTICE**

Teerawit Klinjui

Independent Scholar, Thailand

(Teerawit.Kl@Gmail.Com)

**Abstract**

Practical-based learning is an essential pedagogical method in Thai classical music, as it enhances students' musical and performance skills, as well as their cognitive comprehension and cultural awareness. Nevertheless, these ambitious educational goals pose considerable challenges for both educators and learners in multiple aspects: i) How can learners learn to know and understand this musical culture? and ii) How can teachers guide students towards constructive practices? These structural issues often exhibit unique variations in each classroom. This paper aims to examine the implementation of culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP) in formulating learning strategies that augment the effectiveness of the educational process and enhance student performance outcomes. The essence of effective musical practice is predominantly linked to the ability of educators to communicate and engage with students while thoroughly comprehending their musical experiences, cultural context, and daily life background. These attributes are essential for cultivating an ecology of musical learning that is attuned to learners' perceptions and musical education and practices. CRP was instrumental in formulating pedagogical approaches in music education and fostering an inclusive learning atmosphere within the music classroom. Moreover, in addition to the educational process, CRP fervently promotes inclusivity, diversity, and novel approaches to understanding music and culture within a multicultural society.

**Keywords:** *culturally responsive pedagogy, Thai classical music, musical experiences as method*

## INTRODUCTION

Musical teaching and learning all over the world could proceed in various ways, and in each way, especially methods and processes of learning are influenced by the socio-cultural context. All the issues above have been concentrated on by many music scholars, such as music educators, musicologists, and ethnomusicologists, by examining in-depth a nexus of variables' practices in a musical learning ecology and transmission process in diverse complicated contexts (Campbell, 2004). At the end of the destination, the most challenged expectation of musical teaching and learning is promoting all main important dimensions of music learning, which are a) physical, b) emotion and attitude, c) social interaction, d) musical skills, and e) knowledge and intellectual (Sutthachit, 2018) completely and effectively. All of these "music education cores" played a significant role and challenged, as an epistemological, ontological, and methodological inquiry quest for everyone who is rolling inside and outside of the teaching and learning cycle, both formal and informal education, to rethink and consider how all educational goals in these halfway points of the 21st century and beyond are going to be successful.

Thai classical music has been embedded in school music curricula in Thailand's normal education policies since 1960 (Sutthachit, 2018; Chuppunnarat, 2019). In the past, learning about this musical culture was based on skill practice for knowing how to play and being a musician who can express a meaningful sound of music. Nowadays, although the school music curriculum was not aimed at forcing every learner to be a musician, but only to know and understand Thai classical music culture, these practices are still important as modes of learning and methods to complete learning expectations in the curriculum. Moreover, practical-based learning can foster the development of students' musical and performance skills, knowledge, and comprehensive understanding of cognition and culture through playing and practicing on an instrument. Nevertheless, before we go far to understand musical and cultural knowledge, a huge challenge is, we—as educators or teachers—how can we connect with learners and their experiences (including their fund of knowledge and cultural background) and then encourage our learners to engage in meaningful, responsive lessons and practices? This important question can also lead us to find new possibilities for valuable curriculum management and design, which can make learning go on continuously and properly.

At present, Thailand has various schools, both organized by the government and private owners; these educational organizations at least operate music education as an extra or core subject in the curriculum for every year. Almost every learner has been passed on to music class from early ages until their teenage years. All along the way they also obtained or perceived musical experiences through many music classes

and life on or out of campus, but most of the people, after the lesson, cannot relate what they learned from music; moreover, most of them do not know themselves why they needed to learn music. These epistemological problems are huge challenges for music educators, including teachers, to understand, explain, and find ways of thinking and practices or methods to solve these problematic contexts in an ecology of musical learning.

Our increasingly pluralistic and interconnected world highlights the impact of factors such as race, ethnicity, and culture on human learning; ways of learning directly play an important role in the learning process and are influenced by policies such as student-centred education. A fundamental premise of teaching is that students are unique in the way they learn. It is one of the reasons why designing instruction that incorporates a variety of strategies and approaches in order to meet the needs of diverse learning styles is a fairly common practice among teachers. Thus, in musical discipline, an engageable music classroom with a culturally responsive perspective significantly matters for all sectors because it not only can in-depth develop learners' skills and knowledge (Mckoy and Lind, 2022) by understanding them from their core but also includes constructing the comfort space for learning music and bringing their meaningful musical or even cultural-life background within teaching and learning. Valuable music experiences with proper lessons can bridge their learning gap, fulfil the core value of musical learning, and train them to be better people or even master musicians. Culturally Responsive Music Education (CRME) is about foundational theory and concepts for understanding how different culturally specific knowledge bases impact learning. It offers a perspective that recognizes the importance of including students' cultural references in all aspects of learning. Moreover, CRME is not only highlighted in theorizing content but also fostered to apply concepts into practices in the classroom, encompassing music learning from the beginning until the end of learning too.

Forward through this article, the meaningful learning methodology and circumstance above, to create and prepare learning strategies for a more successful learning process and performance outcome for students, I want to investigate how we might apply culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP) in Thai classical music teaching and learning. Additionally, I believe that the ability of teachers to connect with students, interact with them, and fully comprehend their musical experiences, associated cultural background, and everyday life background is crucial to successful musical practice. All of these qualities are essential and required to create a musical learning ecosystem that is familiar and sensitive to learners' perceptions, musical learning, and practices. CRP played a key role in developing teaching and learning strategies in music education and establishing a friendly learning atmosphere in music classrooms. Beyond the educational process, CRP is a primary supporter of

diversity, inclusivity, and creative approaches to music and culture education in a multicultural society.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

In this study, I focused on reviewing theoretical, foundational and practical issues in culturally responsive pedagogy in general education, specifically music education. By understanding this concept better, we can go through the following statements.

### **Culturally Responsive Pedagogy: A Brief Background**

Culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP) was officially well-known through academic works from many critical education scholars from the 1980s until now. But before appearing, CRP core was contributed by critical race theory (CRT) and multiculturalism educational paradigm influences. We need to go back further to learn some brief history, which is a part of this pedagogy's foundation.

Education is an important issue that humans have continuously focused on in all eras. In general, in the modern era, we often know that education is to create the development of learners both behaviorally and socially, but in the past, although there was an implication of human development, it was used to transmit certain ideologies and cognitive sets of those in power. In other words, education management is used as a tool of the authority to determine certain directions hidden in political and administrative ideologies. Especially in the management of education under colonial conditions. An important work that ended up predicting and liberating the ideology from the system of education management under the oppressive power of the colonialists was the work of Paulo Freire, a critical educator who proposed a perspective on critical education management that discussed "the education of the oppressed" or "The Pedagogy of the Oppressed." Freire criticized the social reality at the time that affected them, saying that the teaching and learning atmosphere was full of oppression and social injustice. Considered through the power relations between the oppressor and the oppressed in society. The main argument that Freire criticizes this type of teaching and learning system is that it is banking education. The teaching and learning arrangement is carried out in a one-way manner without the learners' interaction, as well as seeing the learners as an empty deposit account ready to receive currency deposits (Freire, 2016).

Freire also said that this kind of education, even though the oppressors claim to be doing it for the development and fulfilment of educated human beings as complete human beings. But on the other hand, this action destroys the humanity of both oneself and the oppressed within. In the end, what Fair criticized and wanted to

happen was to break free from oppression, create a critical consciousness, and bring people to enlightenment. Seeing the power of injustice that surrounds society. Understanding the oppressive power builds self-confidence to overcome oppression and overcome these things through dialogue (Freire, 2016; Prapasnobol, 2016). However, if we consider Freire's concept at that time and the current state of society in the 21st century, it may not be as clear as it was at that time, but Freire's work itself has been considered in many schools of thought, including multicultural education. This will be the source of the development of many educational management concepts that fight against power and social injustice. Freire's contribution as a critical educator who has created a ripple effect in the education society, moreover, can be said to be the origin of educational concepts that are built on many critical studies, such as asset-based pedagogy, which is an educational management concept that aims to see the various "capitals" that exist in the identity of learners, which are accumulated through the worldly interactions of individuals or learners. The experience accumulated directly and indirectly is meaningful and related to the management of teaching and learning from the curriculum level to the classroom.

In the subsequent period, multicultural education (ME) has been vigorously advocated following the calls for human rights, political liberty, and fundamental human welfare for individuals of colour, minorities, and diaspora communities in the United States. Education is driven at both the policy and operational levels through the work of many scholars from approximately the 1990s to propel and support ME as a tool for developing student cultural competencies and improving their academic achievement. Gloria Ladson-Billings (1995), an educator and linguistic anthropologist, observed general education in the United States. Observation is required in the classroom of Black and White teachers at this school. The student population is African-American and American. Based on the study, we discovered the effective and successful teaching of the school curriculum. Billings then redesigned the curriculum based on observational models, which focused on cultural experiences for learning management. It also stated that this teaching style is more than teaching that encourages academic achievement, according to its purpose. It is also a teaching style that helps develop openness for learners to understand and accept their personal identity well through three key principles: 1) cultural competency development, 2) critical consciousness development, and 3) academic achievement development. At the same time, these principles also emphasize a critical perspective, which is to challenge existing knowledge of beliefs. Learners' experience and cultural background leads to new knowledge or solutions of knowledge, which is a challenge to the existing teaching style in schools that may ignore the importance of ethnic prejudice, identity, and culture to develop more

positively. Billings explained this form of teaching as "Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP)" (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

Geneva Gay developed the CRP teaching framework in 2000, quickly gaining popularity in education and other related sciences. The salient characteristics of this concept include 1) embracing cultural diversity irrespective of varied origins and relational nuances, 2) fostering comprehension and support for the learner's background, 3) bridging the disparities between home and school environments to promote unity among learners, 4) employing a diverse array of pedagogical strategies, 5) instilling in students a sense of pride in their cultural identity, and 6) incorporating cultural knowledge resources across all subjects in the teaching and learning process. In the end, it can be concluded that culturally responsive pedagogy in the state of practical action could be defined as culturally responsive teaching (CRT), a form of teaching that focuses on teaching in the classroom that considers multiethnic cultural issues in a principled and formal manner. They also emphasize understanding and accepting various differences and having critical thinking skills on knowledge, beliefs, and social realities (Gay, 2000).

In summary, the main aim of CRP and CRT is to create a classroom that belongs to everyone and a classroom that sees the importance of all cultures that learners bring from their home or their culture to the classroom to raise the academic expectations and learning success of all learners. Or it is made different in the education system by integrating learners' cultural knowledge and cultural heritage. The family and the community are involved in determining the teaching model. School Policies and School Guidelines For an instructor to develop himself or herself into teaching according to the learner's culture, there must be three important competencies or elements: knowledge, attitude, and skill. Culture and attitude include valuing cultural diversity, which is acceptance and respect. Differences in ethnicity, race, religion, customs, gender, and communication styles. Cultural traditions, values, and skills are the knowledge gained from the first component of the curriculum and teaching. In addition to the three performance aspects mentioned above, teachers need to work with families and communities to provide quality teaching. Cultural sensitivity or cultural consistency makes learners efficient and effective.

### **Culturally Responsive Pedagogy Movement in Music Education**

As mentioned above, CRP and CRT also play an important role in the music education field, although the development of thought and principle has been a bit slower than in general education, but at the same foundation, conflict and dialogue of change are also likewise to the civil rights movement. From the late 20th to the

early 21st century, the Tanglewood Symposium, endorsed by the Music Education National Conference (MENC) and numerous other associations and foundations, represented a significant transformation milestone. The symposium sought to examine the design of an innovative music education tailored for the diverse ethnic landscape of contemporary American society across all states (Campbell, 2004; Mark and Madura, 2019). Early on, CRP was referenced and incorporated into multicultural music education as a foundational concept for designing teaching and learning management in music classrooms. Incorporate all musical cultures pertinent to students to enhance teaching and learning within the basic education system. By promoting and enhancing the significance of individuals' identities, narratives, and musical heritage, which should be reflected in the curriculum and lessons. To utilize it as a framework for the development of music educators and musicians among both pre-service and in-service teachers, facilitating an understanding of the intricate social conditions associated with multiculturalism (McKoy et al., 2007). In addition, in the beginning, multicultural-oriented teaching and learning in music education was driven by the concept and practice of multicultural music education, which focused on the study of music content with diverse musical cultures, like teaching world music from a multicultural perspective.

In 2007, scholarly research by Abby Butler, Vicky L. Lind, and Constance L. McKoy introduced a framework for Culturally Responsive Music Education (CRME) for music teachers and educators, which is based on the Culturally Responsive Theory Concept established in general education by Gloria Ladson-Billings and Geneva Gay. This concept still aims to examine the learners' cultural background to understand and be aware of making the meaningful schooling process for students you are responsible for. The primary topics addressed were race, culture, and ethnicity, which influenced the variables in educational management throughout the entire process of music learning. The principal issues are categorized into five sub-areas, each delineating the requirements that must be acknowledged and consistently addressed in CRME learning management.

### *Teachers*

The important factors are the key variables in the CRME teaching and learning administrative process, and in teaching and learning, it is essential to rely on teachers with key qualifications to be effective and truly involved in CRME teaching and learning. It has identified 6 characteristics of teachers who are ready for culture-oriented teaching and learning: (1) Teachers need to have socio-cultural awareness; (2) have an open perspective and understand learners from diverse backgrounds, transcend differences, or see them as problems that need to be overcome over others; (3) teachers should believe in themselves and encourage themselves to be

responsible, as well as the idea of leading to educational change by themselves first; (4) understand that learners can acquire knowledge in many areas and overlap; (5) understand the identity of learners; and (6) use this basic knowledge to design teaching based on what learners already have or experienced. At the same time, they must manage teaching and learning that takes them beyond what they are familiar with, or centred knowledge (Villegas & Lucas, 2002).

### *Student*

For cultural teaching and learning. Understanding and knowing the learners is important for the instructor because such issues can directly affect the management of music teaching and learning. Based on the work of Leblanc, who has studied the factors and variables that affect music preference, it has been found that gender, ethnicity, race, and age affect music preference (Leblanc, 1987, cited in Butler et al., 2007). Another thing that should be considered is the appropriate learning style for learners. In order to bring knowledge to learners, that knowledge can be conducive to the development and design of individual musical experiences. These matters need to be fully realized, especially identity development, for learners to know their identity and self-worth. This will lead to good music learning in the future.

### *Content*

The importance of content is another important variable. Coursework and classroom activities must be designed to suit the learning conditions and classroom ecology. These are sensitive issues in cultural teaching and learning, such as music. It requires planning the design of the content in the curriculum with a source. For CRME, the main issues of ethnicity, race, and culture should be considered. In other words, music classes may be forbidden for learners who have religious beliefs about music as a taboo for them, for example. Therefore, it can be seen that the curriculum and its content need to be designed by instructors who understand the learners and the classroom context, because at the end of the day, the curriculum is like a guide map for what to teach and how to teach towards the end result according to the set learning objectives. In general education, Geneva Gay also recommends multiculturally focused learning to cater to an ethnically and culturally diverse population. The three points are 1) to use content consisting of multicultural issues in teaching and learning, 2) to focus on teaching and learning that is appropriate to learners from all cultures, and 3) to use multicultural issues in teaching and learning management in all areas. Courses that combine cultural issues with the academic content of the subject (Gay, 2002; Butler et al., 2007).

### *Teaching and learning*

Teaching and learning are the cornerstones of education. There are many different forms of teaching and learning, especially today. Choosing the right teaching and learning management approach or method for learners is something that needs to be realized and accomplished. This is because the instructors themselves cannot know whether the teaching and learning we choose to create or design can be used sustainably. Because today's learners are more culturally and ethnically diverse. Therefore, teachers are very aware of the social situation, and the design of teaching and learning with a variety of teaching methods and teaching content may also positively affect learners. Because limiting the method and content of teaching and learning management to one specific place is the last place. It may not be suitable for all learners of all ages.

### *Context*

An important issue to consider is that teaching and learning are extremely challenging when they are culturally oriented or relevant. The subject of cultural differences is not overlooked or ignored. Instead, it is necessary to understand the level of differences, such as individuals, such as teachers and learners, or the macro level, such as where they live from birth and other localities that need to perform their duties in the area. For example, Benham's (2003) essay discusses the limitations of teaching music in one of his elementary schools. In the classroom, Benham is seen as an outsider by his own learners, and even though he is a teacher, the situation makes his teaching and learning as well as various activities He then tried new ways to reach learners and abandon his outsider status. Benham begins to understand learners through understanding their social context, as well as values, beliefs, and stories related to culture, and then enables them to understand learners better and interact more positively through such understanding studies (Benham, 2003, cited in Butler et al., 2007).

Nevertheless, based on the preceding narrative and the CRME conceptual framework, it can be succinctly noted that the evolution of the concept and its expansion are accompanied by the integration of advantages derived from general education. Despite being a gradual yet steady process, CRME represents a pedagogical framework in music education that transpires within the socio-cultural milieu of the United States, characterized by racial diversity. Furthermore, the ongoing impact is the trend of asserting various rights. Historically, there were ongoing conflicts for authority and societal significance at both the political and administrative tiers and within the public sphere. The CRP, CRT, and CRME exhibit distinct ideological and practical concepts within society and may function as a paradigm for culturally oriented pedagogical management in other contexts by

providing a framework for the development of innovative teaching methodologies. It depends on the context. The nature of governmental power and politics, along with the socio-cultural conditions of the region

## METHODOLOGY

This article reflects two years of experience as a music teacher at an Hua Hin, Thailand private institution. This study employed the classroom-ethnographic research method (Bhrammaputra, 2023) for this examination. As a music teacher, upon concluding a lesson, I consistently composed a post-session note to document all pertinent details and concerns regarding the completed lesson, students, and classroom context. Simultaneously, I positioned myself as a researcher by conducting ethnographic fieldwork in the classroom; the researcher utilized collective methods, including observing student behaviour and their way of learning, and then participant observation by joining their shared musical experiences discussion in the music classroom. To address the research questions, I systematically analyzed the data from the post-lesson notes by categorizing it according to specific issues pertaining to learners' musical experiences and culturally responsive methods and pedagogy in Thai classical music instruction. Reflective writing is utilized to articulate the critical insights and dimensions of teaching and learning methodologies within the classroom. Moreover, supported by the literature review and holistic classroom data, I presented all findings and conclusions in a rich narrative way, which included theorizing discussion throughout the passage to understand culturally responsive teaching and cultural competencies encouragement in students.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### **Musical experiences of learners: Deepen into their fund of knowledge**

In this section, as a music teacher, I aim to articulate my positionality within the classroom and provide an ethnographic narrative method to explore various aspects of student musical experiences. Additionally, I seek to highlight and present the memories and knowledge of students with extensive musical backgrounds.

I have had an opportunity to work as a music teacher in a private school for the last two years. This school is in Hua Hin, Thailand, a small, beautiful town with popular landmarks and wonderful nature. A diverse array of individuals populates this location; while some are transient visitors, the majority have opted for long-term residence. By these geographical and populational contexts, the school needs to prepare a proper curriculum, teachers, and classrooms to handle and deal with Thai

and non-Thai students, who are enrolled and expected to succeed in a generally standard education. As a teacher for Thai classical music, I was required to devise appropriate lessons and activities to accommodate students' diverse musical experiences, encompassing knowledge acquisition and skill enhancement. Furthermore, the classroom comprises individuals from various origins; predominantly Thai, yet some hail from abroad. It is essential to recognize and consider the significance of nationalities, languages, and the students' diverse backgrounds. I must understand them more profoundly than merely their names and origins; exploring their individual experiences in greater depth is essential. Consequently, I began to ponder, "How can I guide them towards happiness and acquire meaningful experiences in Thai classical music?" This inquiry compels me to explore pedagogical strategies that can facilitate effective learning and hold significance for students.

"To know what he/she loves and hates is about exactly knowing him/her well." This statement suggests that acknowledging a person's background and character traits is essential for thoroughly comprehending their preferences, personality, and motivations. Like my situation, the researcher must thoroughly comprehend my students, including their identities and experiences. The fund of knowledge principle, articulated by Moll et al. (1992), emphasizes the significance of students' cultural backgrounds, which can be integrated into the classroom and may directly or intricately influence the teaching and learning process. This action research presented ways for teachers to identify the unforeseen attributes or potential within students and to recognize that students are not merely passive vessels awaiting external fulfilment. In line with these concepts, I resolved to instruct them in playing Thai classical music instruments while also engaging them in the instruments and repertoires, allowing them to derive enjoyment from performing and expressing musical compositions through their knowledge, skills, and genuine passion.

Consequently, I initiate the first session with a straightforward survey by establishing an inviting educational atmosphere and integrating students' musical recollections and experiences into the classroom. The researcher request that they compose three succinct keywords about their experiences, inspirations, curiosities, preferences, and aversions. Subsequently, following the activity, I deepened my understanding of them through a mini-game in which I arranged them in a circle. I select specific keywords from the board and prompt everyone, in turn, to articulate thoughts associated with the provided keyword based on their prior responses. I allowed them to articulate and reiterate the sound while engaging in a brief discussion about the emotions associated with those sounds, free from judgment. This process enabled the integration of all class members' behaviours and fostered an

understanding of each other's backgrounds. Thereafter, I commenced a discussion on "music and songs in our daily lives" and encouraged all participants to recount their personal experiences. Naturally, all my students are in this present age; they are all digital natives, and most of their musical experiences are quite similar; all their perceptions come from digital platforms such as TikTok, Facebook Reels, Instagram Reels, and so on. In doing so, I was able to extract useful information from the conversations, which I then integrated into the lesson plan, and I also investigated possible musical repertoires that could be appropriate for the class.

All details and processes were carefully designed to improve the comfort and relevance of music lessons for students, allowing them to recognize lessons that aligned with their previous experiences or knowledge. Upon acquiring an adequate understanding of the students and their backgrounds, I formulate all relevant lessons, encompassing both content and musical repertoires. Despite potential objections concerning the significance of music education in relation to dialogue, surveys, or comprehensive investigations of individuals' backgrounds and knowledge, I assert that these meticulous efforts are essential. They cultivate a constructive learning environment, allowing all participants to feel empowered in their education and exchange their experiences, thus enhancing respect, comprehension, and connection. As an educator attuned to the dynamics of the classroom and curriculum, I unequivocally assert that understanding your students prior to instructing music is advantageous.

An additional concern regarding the accessibility of music for learners pertains to the selection of instruments. In teaching and learning Thai classical music, students primarily anticipate and feel pressured to achieve proficiency in playing music. Consequently, teachers must ascertain the specific musical instrument to be employed in teaching and learning for musical practice. Thus, I, as a teacher, chose ideophones and membranophones—*Piiphat* and *Kruang Nang* (ปิพhatและครุ่งนัง) for my student. This is because with both types of instruments, most of them are fixed in tune, and it is easier to produce sound by striking the mallet to the desired pitch. In contrast to string instruments, which necessitate precise finger placement to produce sound and require a well-trained ear to auditory nuances, and also wind instruments, which depend on breath control to influence sound quality, the complexities of these instruments may be challenging to grasp and could demand more practice time than the course allows. Therefore, choosing instruments of the type of ideophones, such as the xylophone—*Ranaad Eak* and *Ranaad Thum* (ระนาดเอก ระนาดทุ่ม), the rounded gong—*Khong Wong Yaii* and *Khong Wong Lek* (ฆ้องวงใหญ่ และ ฆ้องวงเล็ก), or even membranophones, for example, two-faced duo drums—*Klong Kheak* (กลองแขก), will be able to help solve such problems. Furthermore, by consistently engaging in fundamental practice for a period such as mallet-struck weight, learners may acquire sufficient skills to perform

music. It can also facilitate the development of the psychological connection between learners and musical instruments. For instance, experiencing the sentiment of "I can also play music" or feeling at ease while grasping a mallet and seated at an instrument that the learner can play. I contend that this represents a significant technical and psychological rationale; despite being merely a pre-teaching process, it is crucial in teaching and learning design, serving as a fundamental principle that facilitates the smooth operation of all subsequent processes and optimizes outcomes. A considerable number of students also take pleasure in practicing *Piiphat* and *Kruang Nang* (ปี่พะต์และคร่วงหนัง). I trained them both personally and as an ensemble. Regarding personal practice, ensure that they can execute it accurately. Upon completing personal training, they engage in listening exercises, articulate musical expression, and enhance their collaborative skills through ensemble performance.



**Figure 1: A personal *Piiphat-Gong Wong Yai* training.**

(Source: Teerawit Klinjui, 2024.)



**Figure 2: A *Piphat* ensemble training.**

(Source: Teerawit Klinjui, 2023.)

All the above statements highlight the essential benefit of how music educators and teachers should carefully plan suitable activities and lessons for students, even if it's just a tiny step, as well as clearly visualize the dynamics of their roles within the teacher-student relationship and among peers in the classroom setting. Effective communication throughout all activities enables teachers to bridge gaps and gain a profound understanding of student identities; furthermore, respect for humanity can be cultivated gradually (Nawarat, 2018; McKoy and Lind, 2022). Moreover, Thai classical music initially appeared to be an inaccessible subject due to its association with a particular culture, which may not be integrated into students' daily experiences. Incorporating these activities can dismantle outdated representations and generate new value, facilitating accessibility and providing each class member with their own space during the lesson.

### **Responsiveness to Musical Experiences as a Method: An Implementation for Thai Classical Music Practices from Foundation to Up-Next Levels**

The demand for more significant, student-centered learning in modern music education has sparked renewed interest in methods that prioritize responsiveness to musical experiences. This article examines how responsiveness to musical experiences can be redefined and recontextualized as a pedagogical method in Thai

classical music teaching and learning. In this stage, I aim to examine the implementation of this experiential and reflective method across various educational levels from my private school experiences, ranging from foundational to advanced or subsequent stages of learning. This transition has the potential to rejuvenate Thai classical music pedagogical approaches by integrating students' fund of knowledge and encouraging profound cultural and emotional involvement.

As a Thai classical music teacher, I have adopted a culturally responsive pedagogical approach by initiating students' musical learning through repertoire drawn from popular songs on social media platforms such as TikTok. This strategy is grounded in the recognition of students' cultural experiences and everyday engagement with music, reflecting the concept of "funds of knowledge" (Moll et al., 1992) and supporting the creation of meaningful, student-centered learning environments. I aim to foster motivation, build foundational instrumental skills, and gradually transition toward authentic Thai classical repertoire by beginning with music that resonates with learners' identities and interests. This process develops technical proficiency and encourages deeper cultural understanding and identity formation. Such practice aligns with key principles of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy, which emphasizes the integration of students' cultural backgrounds into teaching to promote both academic and socio-cultural competence (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Nieto, 2010; Nawarat, 2018).

During that period, I endeavoured to analyze students' musical consumption patterns by observing their content on social media platforms and engaging in talk with them during lunch or after school regarding their musical preferences and the reasons behind them. Through this informal data collection, I documented the song titles obtained from dialogue and listened to the entire list. I decided to incorporate just a short melodic phrase, which was the same on TikTok or Reels, into the lesson for instrumental practice. The well-known song "*Badboy – Song Yang Bad* (ບ່າດບ່າຍແບບດັບ)" a prominent pop-rock hit by the Thai duo "Paper Planes," is prevalent across nearly all social media platforms, and undoubtedly, all of my students are familiar with it. Nevertheless, by following the culturally responsive approaches, one of the important things that needs to be concerned with is "cultural accuracy" (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Gay, 2002; McKoy and Lind, 2022; Chaiwanichsiri, 2025). In this case, even "*Badboy*" is from another genre of musical culture compared to Thai classical music, but there are some reasons and arguments that can explain why I choose this musical piece: a) To engage learners with unfamiliar content, the most effective approach is to incorporate elements they recognize, such as a song from their musical background. Perhaps as a "medium" to facilitate, sustain, and conclude the teaching and learning process. b) About genre, I as a Thai music teacher, am always concerned about the suitability of the chosen song. By carefully analysing and choosing a

musical that is accurate, *Badboy*'s musical elements and meaning in this case are not fostering stereotypes, racism, and misinterpretation of each of themselves and Thai musical culture.

This learning design aims to cultivate musical knowledge while fostering cross-cultural awareness directly and holistically. We will be able to create necessary awareness and understanding of Thai classical music directly with a positive representation by allowing them to practice Thai classical instruments with songs that they are familiar with. Then lead to learning songs that come from the culture of Thai classical music in the following class. I argue that the designed learning mentioned above is an inductive learning style that starts from something outside the range of Thai classical music culture, such as a pop-rock song from TikTok that can be played on classical Thai instruments. This will holistically enhance the capacity to learn and foster a conducive environment for engaging with the essence of Thai classical music; additionally, it may promote camaraderie among students and familiarity in their daily interactions.

I structured the lesson by incorporating this song as a target for foundational technique practice, akin to *Tii Khoo Paad* (ຕີຂູ້ປາດ), which refers to the fundamental action of a musician generating sound on *Phiiphat* instruments by using both right and left hands while holding the mallet to strike on a notation position that is one octave apart. Subsequently, I explain the how-to and let them try *Tii Khoo Paad* along together with me by using oral transmission, which is the classic way of teaching and learning in many musical cultures (Wade, 2004) that shall facilitate learners and teachers constructing and continuing a dialogue with a rich perception and understanding of musical practice deeply through demonstrating a short melodic phrase of the *Badboy* song and letting them repeat the action. This song exemplifies both technique and the fundamental structure of the pentatonic scale, facilitating a seamless transition to the subsequent lesson, in which I will let them practice a traditional Thai pentatonic composition in the next step.



**Figure 3: Badboy Song**  
(Source: Teerawit Klinjui, 2025)

While slowly but steadily practising, students can recognise the song in their head and the instrument's action. Furthermore, when certain individuals encounter difficulties during practice, the familiar melody facilitates stress alleviation and promotes tranquillity, thereby assisting them in "connecting the dots" in their practice with diminished confusion, as they gain awareness of their current position in the progression towards completing the melodic phrase. Subsequently, following practice, I commence working on a new piece, specifically "*Pleng Chawaa*," a traditional Thai composition historically practised and performed in Thai classical music. Initially, I suggest employing the same technique utilised in the preceding song before proceeding with the lesson.



**Figure 4: *Chawaa Song***  
(Source: Teerawit Klinjui, 2025)

This example illustrates the continuity and interrelation of techniques, methods, melodic patterns, and the pentatonic sound system. This music teaching and learning is structured through a cognitive process incorporating CRP principles, emphasising the cultural connection between the music and the learners' backgrounds. To underscore the pursuit of knowledge and profound learning for students. Furthermore, when educators contemplate this example process at a more intricate level, it may facilitate the advancement of practical Thai classical music education or even socio-cultural issues. This represents a sophisticated level of learning that necessitates effective instructional design.

Eventually, the implementation of comprehensive strategies allows students to swiftly engage, execute, and learn efficiently through a uniform musical practice methodology. This is supported by Chaiwanichsiri's (2025) research on high school music educators' perspectives and methodologies concerning culturally responsive teaching in musical theatre production, which highlights the importance of selecting a repertoire that resonates with students' cultural backgrounds to enhance their comprehension and appreciation of both their own and diverse cultures (Chaiwanichsiri, 2025). Furthermore, it enhances their comprehension and familiarity with Thai songs by illustrating the relationship between melodic scales and the

integration of classical or traditional instrumental techniques into popular culture. It also demonstrates that popular songs can be performed using traditional instruments. Nevertheless, meaningful learning has happened, and they continue to perceive the music they play and keep going with their instrument sustainably.

## CONCLUSION

Learning and practising music through a culturally responsive approach does more than enable the development of knowledge, skills, and a positive disposition towards music. It is also a crucial component of socio-cultural competency development, as it involves participating in musical practice or even interacting with others in the classroom. CRP is a student-centered pedagogical approach that acknowledges the significance of cultural factors influencing an individual's learning. The culture of learners, including language, ethnicity, culture, and learning style, is an important basis for teachers' teaching and learning design. The primary objective of the pedagogy is to establish an inclusive classroom that acknowledges the significance of each culture that students contribute from their homes, thereby elevating expectations and addressing educational limitations. The objective is to ensure that students from racially, culturally, economically, or otherwise diverse backgrounds feel acknowledged by integrating their cultural knowledge and heritage into the educational framework, school policies, and guidelines. For a teacher to effectively instruct in alignment with the learner's culture, three essential competencies must be present: knowledge, attitude, and skill. Culture and attitude include valuing cultural diversity, which is acceptance and respect. Differences in ethnicity, race, religion, customs, gender, and communication styles. Cultural traditions and skills values are the introduction of knowledge gained from the first component into the curriculum and teaching music. In addition to the three competencies mentioned above. Teachers need to work with families and communities to ensure that teaching that is culturally sensitive or culturally relevant to learners is efficient and effective.

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