

## **Both the Vehicle and the Road**

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Throughout the course of secondary and post-secondary education, we, as teachers, scholars, academics and lifelong learners take for granted the power of language. We see it in all facets of our daily lives including newspapers, television, facebook posts, personal readings and textbooks. However, we do not often take the chance to understand the significance language and words withhold. As a young child and adolescent, I saw MD, JD, BA, PHD, BEd, professor, doctor, associate and other labels plastered countlessly beside the names of many. However, it was not until mid-adolescence that I began to understand what roles and importance these letters indicated.

Now, with pride, after entering my teacher education training at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto, I am able to write: *Ryan Persadie, BMus, BEd* and soon to be: *OCT* (Ontario Certified Teacher). However, I do not solely place these letters beside my name to indicate the academic experiences I have had or to proclaim the *alma mater* where I received my education. In essence, these letters, as little as they may be, demonstrate an individual's achievement, his/her experiences in the attended academic institutions and are reflective of the groups, peoples and communities aligned with these institutions who guided, mentored and led these individuals to success. When I write down BMus, BEd and OCT, I acknowledge, express gratitude and identify with the educators, leaders and mentors who have taught, supported and enhanced my learning experience as a growing educator and ever-learning human being. As a developing music and history educator, I would like to discuss one mentor relationship I have gained as a pre-service teacher in particular, that has been vital to my career thus far.

Dr. Leslie Stewart-Rose, senior lecturer and assistant professor in the faculty of education's department of Curriculum, Learning and Teaching is one of the hugely influential educators I have had the privilege of learning from and forming a relationship with during my time at OISE. As stated by Steven Spielberg: "the delicate balance of mentoring someone is not creating them in your own image, but giving them the opportunity to create themselves." I feel this quotation is strongly reflective of the relationship that has formed between Dr. Stewart-Rose and I. Within my own teaching philosophy, I strongly believe that an educator should not be a dictator and an all-knowing entity. Rather, teachers should adapt their teaching as an ongoing, collective and constructivist process that uses differentiated and culturally responsive pedagogy to involve the student in the learning that is taking place. As a result, I too, as the teacher learn from the students in a system whereby they become somewhat of a co-teacher.

Dr. Stewart-Rose laid the foundation for the practise of the "co-teacher" through her pedagogy every day. Through many discussions at the beginning of the school year, Dr. Stewart-Rose and I began to talk about the ways in which social justice, marginalization, oppression and equity were missing in current education. I displayed my strong passion and research for social justice education and culturally responsive pedagogy in both the arts and other subjects during these conversations. She continually acted as my mentor, engaging in discussion about our ideas, what she had seen in her own teacher practise and brought forward what I had thought about the issues that concerned equity through my own teaching experiences. As a result of this, she gave me the opportunity to lead a conversation/workshop on social justice in music entitled: "Tunes, Chunes and the Act of 'Musicing'": Multicultural Music Pedagogy for Equity, Inclusion and Social Justice." In allowing me to conduct this, Dr. Stewart-Rose not only provided me the opportunity to research, discuss and engage with my mentors but gave me the chance to divulge

my ideas to my classmates. In addition, following the success of the first workshop, Dr. Stewart-Rose also gave me the opportunity to present to her other section of her music curriculum class in which I received great praise and gratitude from my fellow colleagues and classmates. Many of my peers even recommended this workshop be proposed for a music education conference due to its importance for Canadian music pedagogy. This was extremely significant, insightful and rewarding for me to hear.

As seen in the Spielberg quotation, Dr. Stewart-Rose provided me with the overview of music pedagogy throughout the year as well as supported and allowed me the opportunity to expand my own ideas and thoughts concerning the type of teacher I wanted to be. It was with this, among other countless instances of support from Dr. Stewart-Rose that I was able to gain admittance to an MA in Social Justice and Music at the Faculty of Music at U of T for the upcoming year. Through her efforts, Dr. Leslie Stewart-Rose not only gave me the vehicle and toolbox to lay the foundation for current music pedagogy but paved the road in which I could establish and expand myself within my own ideas, frameworks and teaching practise.