

Bailey Baggio

Professor Benedict

Music 1800

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The Potent Power of Pedagogy in Music: A Response to Jacobo Nitsch's Lecture

What I most appreciated about Jacobo Nitsch's lecture was how he took something that was so positive and rewarding to him as an individual (being a famous pop star) and turned his power as famous figure into something that could be used to help other people around him. A large majority of famous people will embrace the social hierarchy and often neglect either impoverished, uneducated, homeless, abused or other groups that could use a helping hand. Jacobo is part of a minority in popular artists who has recognized that his power as an acclaimed musician could be used to teach music and build programs that are designed to support and give opportunities to youth that would otherwise, never have access to musical programs and instruments.

Jacobo is someone that I believe would have helped others regardless of his position in the music industry. He talks about studying abroad and how difficult it was for him because of the language barrier between his native language, Spanish, and the language of the United States, English. This insight Jacobo shares allows us to reflect on three major things about Jacobo's character: 1) that Jacobo is driven and inspired to learn despite the difficulties of being not able to effectively communicate with English speakers all the time 2) He is open and willing to learn new things that would not only be foreign to him, but also quite challenging like learning a new language or travelling to another country 3) He is preparing to make change in not only his own familiar neighbourhood, but on an international scale. Jacobo did all these things in

ways that were also different from our projected conventionalities, and he strived for creativity while approaching learning and education as he mentions in his talk.

So what can we learn from Jacobo from a pedagogical perspective? I think the first major thing is to always use your position of power, whether it be as a member on student council, to an internationally acclaimed musician, to promote and advocate for groups that may not be able to speak for themselves or have equal opportunities. We should not be scared to do things like travel to a foreign country just because there may be challenges like a language barrier or new cultures and practices to learn. The same goes for teaching; we have to recognize that a classroom will be diverse and that all students will have different cultures, religions, practices, beliefs, possibly even languages that we will have to grapple with and adapt to according to the student's needs. We have to remember that we, as educators, cannot and will not ever know everything and we therefore, must always be open to learning, trying, and exploring things that are unfamiliar to us. We finally, must think beyond our classrooms and have a broader lens that continues into the entire school, school board, community, province, nation etc. We cannot be so narrow minded as to think that our classroom is the only medium we need to promote education. As educators, we need to be constantly teaching, sharing our ideas, and making our pedagogical voice heard beyond the ears of the students in our classrooms. While it may seem hard to project our teaching ideals and make a difference nationally or globally, we need to still try by taking our position of power as educators and projecting our beliefs as far as we can.