

Desert Skies Symposium 2025 Conference Summary
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From February 20-22, 2025, I attended the Desert Skies Symposium for Research in Music Learning and Teaching, held at Arizona State University in Tempe, Arizona. At this conference, I presented my study titled Harmony in Diversity: Enriching Pre-service Music Education with Culturally Responsive Approaches to Senior Immigrant Communities. My research explores how pre-service music teachers can develop cultural competency and inclusive teaching strategies by engaging with senior Chinese immigrant communities through music programs.

A key highlight of my experience was participating in a two-hour roundtable session, which was structured into three 20-minute discussion rounds. This format allowed me to present my research multiple times to different groups of scholars, educators, and graduate students, receiving diverse perspectives and constructive feedback. The interactive nature of the roundtable discussions provided an excellent opportunity to address specific questions about my research design, data collection, and pedagogical approaches in real time. Additionally, participants offered valuable insights into overcoming challenges related to intercultural communication and engagement in music education.

During my presentation, I shared key findings from my study, which focuses on a culturally responsive choir program designed to foster social engagement and emotional well-being among elderly Chinese immigrants. The research also examines how participation in such programs influences pre-service teachers' understanding of multicultural education and their ability to implement inclusive teaching practices.

Beyond my own presentation, attending other paper sessions and networking with scholars committed to equity and inclusion in music education was incredibly enriching. The symposium fostered meaningful discussions on the transformative role of music in bridging cultural and generational gaps, reinforcing the importance of culturally responsive pedagogy. Through interactive discussions and feedback from fellow researchers and educators, I gained valuable insights into refining culturally responsive music education models. The symposium provided a platform to engage with scholars who share a commitment to equity and inclusion in music education, fostering meaningful conversations on the role of music in bridging generational and cultural divides.

As part of the post-travel requirements, I have attached a photo from my conference participation. This experience has been invaluable for advancing my research and professional development, and I sincerely appreciate the Herbert E. Carter Travel Award, which supported my attendance at this symposium.