

ABSTRACT

SALYERS, BETHANY LYN. The Phrygian Sonnet: The Effects of Using Music to Teach a Seventh Grade Poetry Unit. (Under the direction of Ruie Jane Pritchard.)

The purpose of this study was to understand what occurred when music was infused into a seventh grade poetry unit. Music was used as a co-text in this study, meaning that it was given equal time, energy, and respect as the poetry used in the unit. The unit was nineteen days long, during which, students learned about narrative, free verse, and lyrical poetry. The students also learned about author's intent, language use, mood, metaphor, interpretation, and the role of the audience. During this unit the students complete two projects that allowed for students to choose to work with either poetry or lyrics. While the use of music caused no significant growth in content knowledge, there was no negative learning effect either. Students found the unit to be engaging and appreciated the amount of choice given to them. Teacher observations, along with student statements, conclude that the use of music raised interest levels in the poetry unit and made it fun. The students also noted that a variety of lesson structure played a positive role in the overall effectiveness of the unit. The issues that were raised in the implementation of this study pertained to the allowance of explicit lyrics, time constraints, and managing the dual roles as both teacher and researcher. Finally, the teacher gained new insights into her teaching and came up with several recommendations for future implementation.

**THE PHRYGIAN SONNET: THE EFFECTS OF USING MUSIC
TO TEACH A SEVENTH GRADE POETRY UNIT**

by

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my family, whose love and support has never waned.
I love you Mom, Dad, Ron, Connie, Jeff, and Katie.

And to

Dr. Jewel Cooper and Dr. Beth Howells, who taught me how to think.
You are the teachers who changed my life, thank you.

PERSONAL BIOGRAPHY

Bethany Lyn Salyers was born on September 19, 1978 in Mansfield, Ohio to Karen Hadley and Troy Salyers. Shortly thereafter her family moved to Dublin, Ohio. She has one brother, Jeff, who is two years her junior, and a sister, Katie, who is 10 years her junior. When she was thirteen she moved to Chapel Hill, North Carolina with her mom, stepfather, brother and sister, where she attended Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools and graduated from Chapel Hill High School in 1997. She earned a B. A. in English Secondary Education from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro and her M. S. in Education from North Carolina State University.

Beth is currently a teacher in the Chapel Hill-Carrboro City School System. She has been a fellow in level two of the Capital Area Writing Project (NCSU), and has been a participant in the Rock N' Roll Hall of Fame Summer Teacher Institute in Cleveland, Ohio.

Beth is also an avid music fan and musician. She enjoys listening all music genres, but remains a loyal fan of The Beatles, matchbox twenty, Bob Marley, Madonna, Mozart, and The Dixie Chicks. She has been reading music since the age of eight when she began piano lessons. Beth played violin daily from 5th grade through her senior year of high school, and has been playing flute since 7th grade. She performed with the Chapel Hill High Orchestra in Graz, Vienna, Salzburg, and Innsbruck, Austria in 1996 and performed in the Chapel Hill High School Band in Williamsburg, VA, Gatlinburg, TN, and in Disney

World between 1994 and 1997. Beth originally attended UNC-Greensboro as a flute major.

In addition to music, Beth's other passion is traveling. She has visited 26 of the 50 states in America and has traveled to Canada, Mexico, France, Monaco, Austria, Spain, and Morocco. Her goal is to one day write for travel publications. Nothing lifts her spirits more than the adventure of travel.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

I conducted this study to determine if teaching 7th graders a poetry unit with music-infused lessons would raise their interest and enjoyment in the genre as well as achieve content knowledge. My study specifically addresses issues and responses of both students and the teacher that arise when music is used as a *co-text* in a poetry unit. I was curious to see if students without musical backgrounds would respond differently from those adept in music. I was also interested in analyzing the practical application of this unit.

Overview

I read, from cover-to-cover, two novels during my time in high school. Of course, I was assigned to read more than two novels; however, I chose not to. And when the English class was either in lecture or discussion mode, I could be found doodling in my notebook or memorizing the posters on the wall. One would probably not have predicted this behavior from me. As a child, I was read to daily, loved visiting the library, and was taught vocabulary with flashcards. My mother stayed home to raise my brother and me, in a White, middle-class suburb of Columbus, Ohio. When I began school, I was quickly taught to complete my assignments early and to work beyond the expectations of the teacher. So why would I suddenly become apathetic about the world of written language in English class, and how did I pull it off? It was because I learned the “game” of school quickly. I listened very well and (un)fortunately was able to piece together the story, the themes, and emotions of the novels from the discussion.

I figured that the purpose of reading wasn't really about the text itself, but what the text was trying to say, and this I could identify. But, I often questioned why the universal stories, themes, and emotions that we were discussing in the literature were only approached through the written text. I was curious as to why music, another genre that addresses universal stories, themes, and emotions, was never use as a way to hook students into these traditional literary topics. I attribute my fascination and faith in music as a literary text to being raised by parents who were constantly playing records in the house when I was young, the influence of my artist mother, and my extensive training in playing the piano, violin, and flute.

While I have matured in my approach to the written text and have subsequently become a fan of Shakespeare, Oscar Wilde, Nahid Rachlin, and Edmund Spencer (to name a few), I have not lost my passion in music as an alternative text to the literary canon and as a *co-text* for approaching traditional literary themes such as love, loss, and betrayal. I have chosen the profession of teaching because I think that in the wake of standardized testing, students are being taught how to pass tests as opposed to how to think and manipulate language. I see music as a way to bring the apathetic student back into the classroom and as a way of getting the student thinking, interpreting, analyzing, and creating, skills applicable to written text as well. I believe that the role of music within culture and history demand the involvement of music in education.

According to Larry Scripp in *An Overview of Research on Music and Learning* (2002), I take an *instrumentalist stance* that holds to the idea that music

“does not exist in a vacuum, that it is connected intrinsically to other subject areas and art forms, and that learning in music inevitably draws on and engages learning processes and fundamental concepts shared across many subject areas – often simultaneously” (Critical Links 2002, p.132). The other side to this argument is the *essentialist viewpoint*, where music teachers “focus only on the instruction of music’s own set of skills and literature and are not responsible for drawing out ‘extra-musical benefits’ from this instruction” (Critical Links 2002, p.132). While I do agree with Katz (1996) that enjoying music should be enjoyed for its own, I also believe that music should be used to explore and enhance social, political, and educational environments. It is important to note that I do not dismiss the idea of art for art’s sake, nor the idea of art, in this case, music, as a learning tool. I view these two perspectives as equally co-existing. Together, they represent the dynamic qualities and uses of music. Research is needed on this subject in order to pinpoint what pedagogical possibilities exist with and within music and how music can be exploited for classroom use.

I also acknowledge that my pedagogical perspective on teaching poetry with music is based in music pedagogy and not literary pedagogy. My literature review reflects this perspective. The musical perspective taken in this study was a natural progression in the planning and teaching of this unit, because of my passion for and background in music.

Significant research is emerging that suggests the benefits of music in providing answers to some of education's biggest issues, such as critical thinking, and student motivation. A major problem is the lack of connections between the research being conducted and the classroom teacher. Unless a regular classroom teacher sets out to do her own research on how music connects to her discipline, it is very unlikely that the ideas, findings, and strategies would be known. This is unfortunate because the research suggests that student performance is raised, motivation and interest are heightened, and verbal and thinking skills are improved through the use of music in the classroom (Critical Links 2001, p.153). Research supports using music in the classroom, but most of the research is about a neurological response to music, using terms unfamiliar to most educators, or only explains the results and not the lessons that were successfully implemented.

The classroom teacher does not have the time to spend hours at the library or online studying the effects of music on learning. However, the research is too valuable to go unused. What is needed are practical and reproducible lessons that are proven to work in the classroom in a format that is convenient and helpful for the teacher. The research study reported herein is an attempt to close the gap between research and the practices of classroom teachers. In addition to this issue, the current study addresses the gap between the content and student interest and motivation, as well as the minority achievement gap in grades and participation between minority and White students. Music is a possible solution for problems in these areas. Best

practices need to be explored, and research and teaching tools must be convenient and helpful to classroom teachers.

From my past experiences in using music in the English classroom, I have seen disengaged students become active learners. This suggests classroom and learning benefits to using music in the classroom. The current study identifies and distinguishes among positive effects in the affective domain, non-diminishing effects on learning (e.g., emotional aspects that do not water down content), and positive effects on gaining content knowledge. In order to research the idea of using music in a poetry unit for affective and cognitive benefits, I designed and implemented a music-infused poetry unit. The research data are numerical grades, teacher observations, surveys and questionnaires about student experiences, and student products.

The Need for Research

The research presented here is needed for several reasons: (1) educational researchers and cognitive scientists have reported on the benefits of music on learning, yet best practices have not been identified for classroom teachers to use conveniently; (2) a major goal in education is to teach the student not only content material, but also critical thinking skills and creativity. Preliminary research states that music is a vehicle for such skills, while research with a narrower focus is needed to refine and support the learning benefits in music; (3) student apathy about school is not a new concept; however, it is still a problem and with the wide popularity of music with teenagers, this medium should be considered as a tool for re-engaging the

student; (4) because the student's world is so inundated with media, i.e. the Internet, music television, MP3's, Discmans, etc., it is important that the student learn critical listening skills in order to distinguish and extract meaning and content from media.

In addition to these field-related reasons, this research is essential to my professional development as a teacher. I see my own reflection as a teenager in the attitudes and faces of many of my students today. I see the apathy, the boredom, and the lack of connection between lessons and the world. I became a teacher because I believed that I could help close the gap between content and reality and make my classroom a place where students feel as if they are truly being prepared for their future. What an enormous amount of potential each student holds, yet because of seemingly irrelevant texts, isolated lessons, and inaccessible content, the student is often not engaged and therefore does not perform to his or her full potential. However, I see music as a bridge between the real world and school-subject content. With the popularity of music television shows, downloadable music, and the culturally embedded history of music in every civilization, music is a promising educational tool for both teachers and students.

I am also concerned about the minority achievement gap present in the school where I teach. At every school in our district, a measurable difference is evident between the performance levels of minority students and White students on the end-of-grade tests, classroom grades and in classroom and school participation. Every teacher is responsible for bridging the gap in his or her classroom. However, it has been particularly frustrating to find that our staff development sessions on this issue

revolve around teachers' anecdotes, numerical representations of the gap, and information on generalized differences in learning styles for Blacks and Whites, yet there is no discussion of research or sharing of proven classroom practices. I feel pressure from my school district to mitigate the gap in my classroom and I personally feel that it is my job as an educator to do so. I also see the struggle of my colleagues and their similar frustrations with the lack of practical support and teaching methods concerning this issue. I want to be able to tell them that either, yes, music helps in my classroom and here is how it can help and this is how I incorporate it; or, no, music is not a successful tool in eliminating the gap in my classroom and we need to try other approaches while documenting our research. In my review of the literature, I discovered that classroom research to identify best practices for incorporating music in content area instruction is relatively rare.

CHAPTER II: RESEARCH CONTEXT

Role of Music in Education for Plato and Aristotle

Music in education is not a contemporary idea. It was a subject of debate within the educational systems of Plato and Aristotle, not about whether music should be included, but in what form and for what purpose. Music education in Classical Greece and in public education in the U. S. are similar in that both are highly controlled in their implementation, even though the educational system in Classical Greece was not democratic and in the U.S., it is. Although the governments and societies are different, it is interesting to see the tension between aesthetic and scientific education in both cultures.

Plato

In Plato's *Republic* (1999), the class system plays a major role in society, including education. At the top of the class system are the philosophers, who are identified as "lovers of wisdom and knowledge" (p.56). The warriors (soldiers) are further down in the class system and are the receivers of music education. Plato believed that music was education for the soul and athletics was education for the body (p.57). This education was intended for warriors because it would provide the favorable balance between the body and the soul (p.96). As we will see, Plato's discussion can be understood to support the argument that music be used as a way of learning and as a *co-text* for instruction.

Plato also believed that in order to create a clean city and to raise children to be orderly and brave, music needed to be censored. Plato believed that the Mixolydian and Lydian modes of music were too sentimental, and called the Ionian and Lydian relaxed and therefore not good for warriors. Plato was left with the Dorian and Phrygian modes, which Plato thought effective in producing brave and orderly men (p. 82). Following this same logic, Plato banned any instrument that had many strings and all instruments that are able to be played in all of the modes (p. 83). The fact that Plato goes so far as to name appropriate and inappropriate modes and instruments suggests that he believed the free exposure of music of certain types would lead a young person to be sentimental, soft, or a drunkard.

To keep this from occurring, Plato calls for music to be a part of a young person's education. By excluding such modes and undesirable instruments and allowing only those that promote endurance and good character, Plato is saying that music has the power to affect one's character. Apparently, for Plato, there was a measurable or observed effect from certain types of music, or at least the presence of a fear that there would be negative effects. The issue is not whether or not to include music in general education, for this inclusion of music is imperative for the education of the warrior according to Plato, but rather what to include or not include, or, in essence, what to censor. As Plato states, "I mean, more than anything else, rhythm and melody find their way straight to the deepest parts of our being. They take the strongest grip upon our souls, bringing us grace and beauty, if we are properly educated, and something quite different if we are not" (p. 86).

Plato goes as far as commenting on the consequences of not being exposed to music and only to athletics, stating that, “Even if there may have initially been some love of knowledge in his soul, if it has nothing to feed on by way of learning or inquiry, if it isn’t exposed to any discussion or to any other form of culture, it becomes feeble, deaf and blind, because it is starved and understimulated” (p. 97). Plato does not state that music alone will turn a youth into a respectable, balanced, and knowledgeable man, but only when accompanied by an education in athletics as well.

Aristotle

Unlike Plato, Aristotle (Jorgensen, 1996) believed in an educational system that was open to more than just the elitist population and one that was grounded in science. In *Politics*, Aristotle gives music a lesser role in education. He views the role of music as primarily for catharsis and therefore, subsequent to the sciences. However, Aristotle does call for the labeling of what is “appropriate” and “inappropriate” in music and in all of the arts just as Plato did (*Politics* 1984, 1340bl, ln. 33; Jorgensen, p. 2). The role of music in education in terms of catharsis was to provide a way to experience a release of emotion (*Poetics* 2000, sec. 1, part 8, ln. 8). In education, for Aristotle, is constantly being questioned as to what purpose music serves. For Aristotle, the possible educational values of music swing from intellectual enjoyment or leisure, to amusement (*Politics*, 1339bl, ln. 14).

Aristotle focuses on the idea that music in education is a sweetener for instruction (*Politics*, 1340bl, ln. 17). At first, one could read this assuming that Aristotle believed in the affective domain being activated for optimal learning; however, this is not the case. Aristotle finds little or no use for amusement in education because he believes that, "...they do not play when they are learning, as learning is accompanied by pain" (*Politics*, 1339al, ln. 28). Admittedly, for Aristotle, the use of music in childhood education is to keep the child quiet and entertained, much like a rattle, but it is quickly abandoned as a teaching tool or educational text when the child ages (*Politics*, 1340bl, ln. 26). The proper ages to stop instrumental instruction, according to Aristotle, is when the pupil has obtained just enough musical knowledge to allow him or her to judge music and appreciate what is good (*Politics*, 1340bl, ln. 35). Aristotle is suggesting here that the study of music should be undertaken by pupils when they are young in order to will develop an affinity with what is deemed appropriate, but would then leave music training once this knowledge was obtained. The pupil would then use his musical skill to differentiate between correct and incorrect forms (*Politics*, 1340al, ln. 17). This notion of affinity and familiarity will be discussed later in the study with regards to student critical listening skills.

Aristotle agrees with Plato in a classification of melodies (*Politics*, 1337bl, ln. 30). The Dorian is believed to be "ethical" and the "gravest and manliest" of the modes; while the Lydian is playful and stimulates excitement. The Phrygian is

believed to inspire (*Politics*, 1340bl, ln. 5). However, where Plato rejects the relaxed mode (the Lydian), Aristotle thinks it should be included for those men who have grown old; and he also believes in keeping the Lydian for the very young because it can help prepare the child for order and education (*Politics*, 1342bl, ln. 33). It is clear that Aristotle believes that certain kinds of music are appropriate for certain ages, whereas Plato rejects all modes that produce weak and cowardly effects on listeners and performers.

Role of Music in Public Education in the U. S.

First Implementations

Music did not enter the American public schools until the nineteenth century, 150 years after the birth of our nation (Brophy, 1992). The major trends concerning the role of music in public education in the United States shift between the scientific purpose and value of music education and the aesthetic or affective appreciation. This shift resembles the tension between Plato and Aristotle concerning the emphasis given to scientific and aesthetic education. According to Brophy (1992), in 1829, William Woodbridge, who had studied the Pestalozzi principles of the *Science of Music* in Switzerland, brought music education to this country. Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746-1827) was an educator from Switzerland who supported direct sense experience as an authentic form of instruction (p. 2).

Shortly after Woodbridge's return to the United States, he was joined by Lowell Mason, who taught vocal music, in hopes of implementing vocal instruction in the public schools as a way to strengthen brain function and improve

congregational singing on Sundays. In the late 1800's, it was believed that the study of music improved brain function because of the intricate and complex thought processes required to learn music. This early link between music and science became less important in the early twentieth century as a reason and purpose for music in education, because of growing interest in the child-centered curriculum.

Child-Centered Education

In 1916, John Dewey's notion of "child-centered" education sparked a move from needing scientific reasons to include music in the curriculum. The flexibility of a child-centered curriculum made it "no longer necessary to define and defend music's role in public school on purely scientific bases" (Brophy 1992, p. 6). Dewey's (1944) rationale for music in education was that music placed value on the intrinsic and affective. He states that music and all fine arts, including literature, "are not only intrinsically and directly enjoyable, but they serve a purpose beyond themselves...they reveal a depth and range of meaning in experiences which otherwise might be mediocre and trivial" (p. 238). For Dewey, the presence of music in education is vital for the existence of a democratic education. He believed that "a society which not only changes but which has the ideal of such change as will improve it, will have different standards and methods of education from one which aims simple at the perpetuation of its own custom" (Dewey 1944; p. 81). The goal of a democratic education and a child-centered curriculum that supports student choice is different than Plato and Aristotle's educational systems that called for uniformity

and censorship. Plato and Aristotle, as discussed previously, held a tight control over the curriculum and the types of music allowed in education.

James Beane (1997) expanded on Dewey's notion of the child-centered curriculum and made it a major component of his discussion of curriculum integration. Beane states that, "A curriculum organized around personal and social issues, collaboratively planned and carried out by teachers and students together...helps to create a democratic classroom as a context for social change" (p. 6). Beane's concept of curriculum integration entails that students have choice in their education and that no aspect of life is kept out of the classroom. This allowance promotes a democratic education and society by letting students learn of their society and how to change it. This notion of curriculum integration is also contrary to the more elitist notions of music in education and of the role education itself of Plato and Aristotle.

The tension between needing scientific justification for music and viewing the benefit of music as justification in itself was addressed by Karl Gehrken in 1915:

The art side and the science side of music need not necessarily be antagonistic, as some have seemed to assume, but may contribute something to the sum total of musical influence that we are seeking to exert upon the child. It is our belief, also, however, that when the science side is emphasized, it should always be as a means to an end and never as an end in itself...it is the art side of music with its somewhat intangible influence which we are seeking to cultivate rather than the science side

with its possibilities along the line of mental training and its more easily classified results. (Brophy, 1992)

This discussion validating the place of music education in the curriculum is a continuation of the tension started by Plato and Aristotle.

The idea that the study of musical aesthetics was worthy and needed in the U.S. public school curriculum came to a head in the 1960's with great concern for the education of the individual and the value of aesthetic education to the development of a child (Brophy 1992, p. 11). The 1960's were a time of debate concerning the justification for music education. The goal set by music educators was to expose students to the greatest of musical works in hopes that this knowledge would transfer to creative experiences of their own. However, this posed practical implementation problems and others believed that with other student problems, this goal was unattainable (Brophy 1992, p. 13).

Phrygian Music and Educational Standards

Another part of the debate in the 1960's concerning the use of music in education was the effect of using "Phrygian" or popular music in the classroom and a perceived weakening in standards. Katz (1996) refers to Allan Bloom, who blames "Dionysian" rock music and the looser standards such as "an emphasis on student rights, personal creativity, and free electives" as to why standards and achievement have fallen (p. 226). This argument suggests that because of the impact of 1960's youth culture, including the protest and drug-influenced music at the time, school

standards were lowered. The music of the 1960's could be categorized as "Phrygian" because of its wild and inspiring sounds and lyrics, which threatens the control by the dominant culture. Plato and Aristotle, however, did allow the inclusion of the Phrygian modes but only as a way to balance the relaxed modes, to teach bravery and to teach "correctness of style" to young children, as noted earlier in this chapter.

However, it is important to distinguish between the "Phrygian" description of popular music and the music theory use of the term Phrygian. The "Phrygian" term has been adapted to describe the popular music used in this study because of their frenzied sounds and themes and is likened to the Phrygian mode which is considered to be a frenzied mode.

The educators and policy makers in the 1970's and 1980's continued to debate the questions concerning the use and placement of music in education that were begun in the 1960's.

Value of Music Beyond Aesthetics

Tensions grew in the debate over music in education in the 1990's due to the implementation of site-based management. The role of music in education was further de-stabilized at this time, because the use of funds, placement of teachers, and the control of local and school-based administration concerning curriculum (Brophy 1992, p15). Without an advocate, music could be excluded from the curriculum.

The 1990's saw an increase in research being conducted in relation to how the brain learns and the potential effects of music. This will be discussed later in the chapter.

Educators and policy makers in the new millennium are currently debating the search of purpose, relevance, and value in music in education. In light of recent demands for accountability and use of standardized tests, the struggle to keep music in public education curriculum is becoming increasingly more difficult. This struggle is resulting in the search for scientific value within the study of music as it pertains to cognitive or moral development.

Although the placement of music in the public school curriculum is currently being determined by scientific support, the value-laden and non-scientific based curriculum of character education is finding its way back into the classroom. The founder of the American School System, Horace Mann, believed that "music was essential to the education of the young for the development of aesthetic appreciation, citizenship, and thinking" (Miller & Coen 1994, p. 459). The concept of character education is regaining popularity, since its decline in the early 20th century with the popularity of positivism, pluralism, secularization and the privatization of moral education (Lickona 1993). Lickona gives three reasons for the need for character education in public schools: (1) the "decline of the family" (2) "troubling trends in youth culture (3) "a recovery of shared, objectively important ethical values" (1993). With the rising popularity of character education in public schools currently, comes

the need for practical and effective ways to teach character education. This need has created another venue for music in the schools.

In summary, the major trends concerning the role of music in public education in the United States are budget cuts, increasing accountability mandates, and the tension underlying the purpose and role of music in education.

Current Brain Research on Music and Learning

The 1990's saw great advances in neuroscience research and more specifically, the possible educational applications for this research to the field of music (Wolfe & Brandt, 1998, p. 8.). According to Manfred Spitzer (1999), play is the “consequence of the ability to learn” (58). This occurs, according to Spitzer (1999), because “within play, input – output mappings can be repetitively changed, tried out, and learning without danger of suffering major injury from the wrong behavior” (57). The view of music as affective play, can suggest that music provides a safe way for students to learn new things. However, neuroscientists warn against making their research a backbone of an educational practice because the research is still so very new and changing. Since these new findings require the educator to be familiar with how the brain works, neuroscientists fear that superficial pedagogies will emerge (Wolfe & Brandt, 1998). However, educators Wolfe and Brandt (1998) state that those in the education field are in the best position to judge the relevancy or validity of upcoming brain research in relationship to “educational research, cognitive science, and long experience” (p. 10).

Emotional Intelligence

One aspect of neuroscience research that is well-supported is the concept of emotional intelligence (Gardner, 1993). Emotional intelligence is most likely composed of neural networks, which according to Eric Jensen (2001), are “the complex patterns of neurons that comprise our behaviors” (p. 30). These neurons connect with other neurons when “genetic or environmental stimuli” are present. Since music is an environmental stimulus that produces emotion, “the playing of music accelerates and enhances the ability of learners to make these rapid emotional assessments and to act accordingly”.

In fact, the stronger the emotion during the learning experience, the more the participant remembers of the learning experience (Wolfe & Brandt, 1998, p. 13). However, it should also be noted that if an experience produces an intensely threatening emotion, such as fear, then learning will be decreased. Jensen (2001) tells us that, “An area in the midbrain, the nucleus basalis, gives a weighted emotional meaning to our auditory input and codes it as important and worth storing in long-term memory” (p. 29). This suggests that the sounds, or auditory input, that our brain receives during an experience has a dramatic effect on the emotions produced by an experience. Therefore, it is reasonable to hypothesize that music, as an auditory input, has a large effect on whether experiences are stored in short-term or long-term memory. Steven B. Katz (1996) also discusses the role of musical style and how expectations of musical patterns can cause different emotional responses (p. 183). He states in a reference to Leonard Meyer (1956) that, “Expectations, and the conscious

effects that aural patterns give rise to, such as suspense, surprise, joy, frustration, doubt, anxiety, and certainty, are the emotional meaning of the music” (p. 185) Katz (1996) thus points to the importance of understanding the effects of the experience of music as emotional intelligence, as a form of knowledge in and of itself.

Memory

In addition to providing an emotional stimulus for learning experiences, music also aids in memory. According to Eric Jensen (2001), the four different ways that music can influence memory are, as semantically (a discussion of music or sight reading), episodically (remembering where were you when you heard or produced music), reflexively (an automated music response), or procedurally (the act of learning to play music).

Listening

Alfred Tomatis, a French psychologist, physician, and educator, believes that when the ear, or essentially the brain, is trained to actively listen to music, instead of hearing music passively, it stimulates other bodily systems to reorganize. (Jensen, 2001) It is also understood by Tomatis that higher frequencies cause brain functioning to speed up, while low frequencies cause the brain to release physical and mental stress. Robert Jourdain (1997) speaks to the relationship between pitch frequency and attention. He states that, “the range of frequencies where most melodies lie is also in the range in which speech consonants release most of their

energy” (p. 250). Jourdain goes on to discuss the fact that all listeners focus on “certain features of music while neglecting others” (p. 255). This means that any two people listening to the same piece of music would most likely remember different things about it, or in essence, they would each have different listening skills. Jourdain calls this *cognitive preference* (individuals will notice certain aspects of a piece of music, where others notices other aspects), and says that one’s listening skills can and will change with exposure and training (p. 255). As Plato and Aristotle predicted, these findings could have a an effect on engaging and teaching the hyperactive or lethargic student and on teaching critical listening skills.

Learning Transfer in Music and the Arts

According to James Catterall (2002), “transfer denotes instances where learning in one context assists learning in a different context.” The concept of transfer is based on the theory that the brain’s neural pathways, receptors, and various functions of the brain are reorganized by experience. This notion that experience changes how the brain functions is similar to Aristotle’s concept of catharsis, which states that through experience, especially that of drama and music, there is a transfer of detrimental feelings. For Aristotle, watching the play reorganizes the viewer’s emotional (and moral) character (Poetics sec. 1, part 6, ln. 8). The transfer of “auditory experiences...impact feelings, attitudes, memory, linguistic and rational responses, and autonomous responses” (Catterall, 2002) can show itself in several different forms. *Near transfer* refers to learned and resulting skills in similar contexts, and *far transfer* occurs when learned and resulting skills are unrelated.

Cognitive transfer refers to the transfer of academic skills, and *affective transfer* refers to intrinsic and/or extrinsic motivation that causes someone to use his or her skills. (see Figure 2.1)

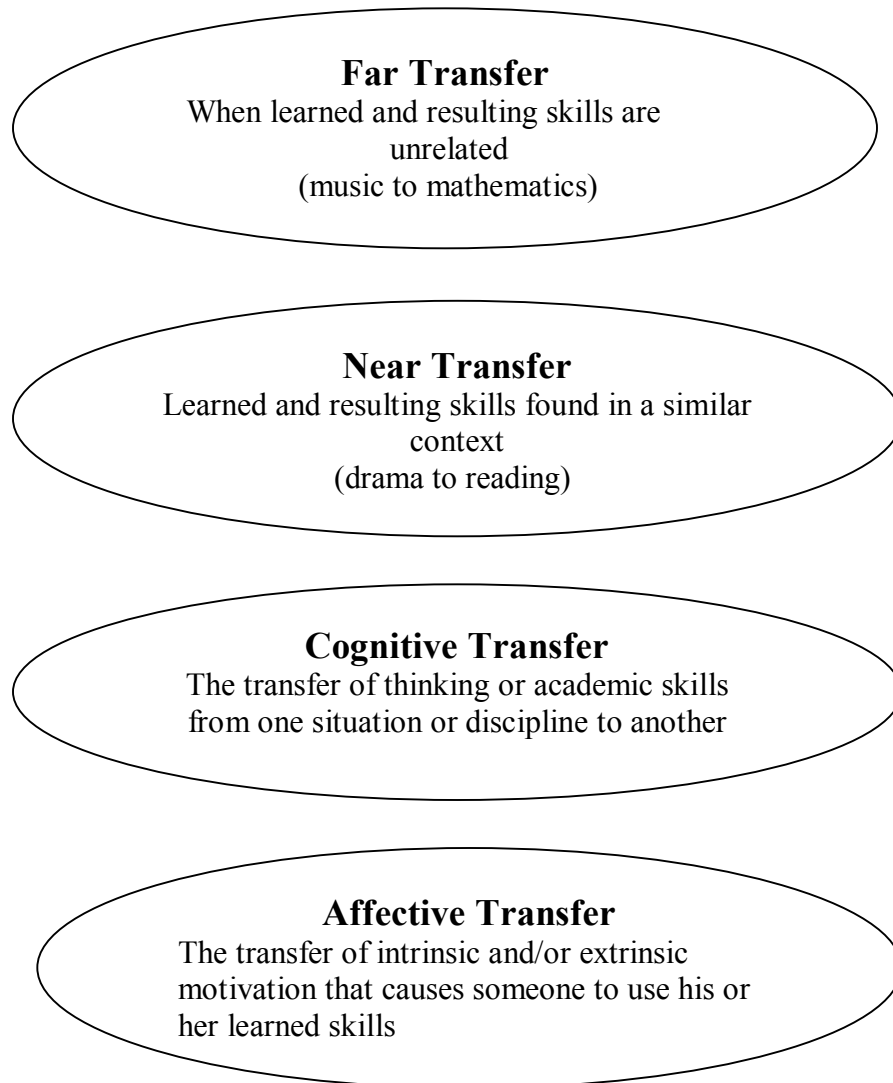


Figure 2.1 Categories of Transfer

Adapted from James S. Catterall's overview, "The Arts and the Transfer of Learning," in the *Critical Links: Learning in the Arts and Student Academic and Social Development* compendium. (2002)

The notion of transfer is still a highly controversial subject (Catterall, 2002).

The debate resembles questions concerning the relationship between music and poetry (Katz, 1996). We can understand these issues concerning music and poetry by acknowledging the uncertainty of whether the transfer of skills between the two disciplines are examples of near or far transfer.

Howard Gardner (1993) suggests that the skills learned in the arts give students self-confidence, which transfers to self-confidence in other areas of their life. Music is also within Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences as a way of knowing that promotes a wide range of intelligences.

Music in the Classroom

This section of the literature review will summarize what practitioners are observing in classrooms when music is used as an instructional tool. This is in contrast to the literature reviewed previously that focuses on research conducted by neurologists on the impact of music on the senses. No formal research is available on the use of music as a learning tool. Anecdotal accounts comprise the body of professional literature devoted to the use of music in the English/language arts classroom. Studies such as the one reported herein, are needed to generate a grounded theory that proceeds experimental and control group studies.

Interest, Motivation, and Higher Order Thinking Skills

Brian Burgess and John Chase, a health teacher and social studies teacher, respectively, both use music to teach their students in Edmeston, New York. Chase is

the founder of Musicians United for Songs in the Classroom, a non-profit organization that promotes the use of lyrics and music as effective teaching methods. The reason why Chase began the program was because of “student apathy.” He states, as quoted by Menga (2001), that, “Most students don’t naturally gravitate toward history, yet they love their Walkmans. It’s ironic because they’re not even aware of the loads of references to history and social issues in songs. So I started to think about using songs to teach – instead of just books”. He calls the program “Learning With Lyrics.”

Burgess notes an increase in student enthusiasm when he incorporates music into health projects. For example, Burgess has each student choose a song that addresses a health issue and then research the health topic extensively and prepare a presentation for class. He states, as quoted by Ward (1999), that lyrics are “just one teaching method I use, but the approach works well because it is very student-centered”.

Robert McParland (2000) brings music into the classroom in order to analyze themes, evoke interpretations, teach point-of-view, and engage students in poetry (pp. 29-30). “The close parallels between the two forms of expression can provide an excellent opportunity to translate students’ interest in popular music into an appreciation for poetry” (p. 30), both aesthetic and critical.

Chase states that teachers “can help students develop higher order thinking skills through the use of contemporary music” (Ward, 1999). However, Chase does admit that the real draw for students is the fact that they are able to “play their chosen

song for the class during the presentation.” (Megna, 2001) This indicates the ability of the aesthetic (student choice, affective appeal) to influence the scientific (content knowledge, higher level thinking).

To teach poetry, music can be a valuable resource in attaining and maintaining student interest. Educators who use music as an interdisciplinary tool also see its potential to teach critical thinking skills. “Whenever musical activities are incorporated in the curriculum...teachers must account for the ways students form standards of judgment and develop foundations of competence with the materials and tools of the discipline” (Barrett, et al., 1997). To teach students to think critically about the music, they, Barrett, et al., have developed the facet model where students answer the following questions about the chosen song: Who created it? When and where was it created? What does it sound like? What kind of structure or form does it have? What is its subject? What is being expressed? What techniques did its creator use to help us understand what is being expressed? (p. 76). Barrett, et al. state that “interdisciplinary instruction...must be based on [a] strong sequential program of instruction in the individual art forms” (p. 76). This supports the inclusion of music and art education as an equal and permanent part of the school curriculum. The questions posed by Barrett, et al. served as guides for the survey questions used in the current study.

Jeff Duncan-Andrade and Ernest Morrell (2000) found success in teaching a hip-hop infused poetry unit in an urban secondary English class where the students were failing many of their classes even though they were bright kids. They used

popular hip-hop artists and their songs as a way of reaching these students and teaching them critical literacy skills needed to analyze canonical poetry. What they found was that the students became interested in the poetry and learned how to critically analyze poetry, as well as hip-hop music. Students' affinity with hip-hop, a "Phrygian" genre, aided in their learning of other genres. This illustrates the reasoning behind Aristotle's allowance of the Phrygian mode because of its ability to inspire (*Politics 1340bl, ln. 5*). These teachers noted that the students "were not only engaged and able to use their [learned] expertise...to make powerful connections to canonical texts, they also were able to have fun with learning about a genre of music and literature that they were familiar with"(p. 30).

In summary, the current research on music in education finds that music has the ability to emotionally affect the listener; that music aids in retaining memory; that a listener can improve his critical listening skills through music; that music might influence skill transfer; and that music has the ability to increase student interest in a content area. My research focuses on how students respond to the use of music in teaching poetry and what issues accompany such an implementation.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Research Questions and Goals

I conducted this study because I wanted to determine the effects of using music as an instructional tool and *co-text* in the teaching and learning of poetry. The term *co-text* in this study refers to music being used as a studied text given an equal amount of time and respect as the poetry used. Specifically, I investigated the effects of music on content knowledge, the role of student choice in the musical selections, on areas of the affective domain, and on variety in the lesson structure. This study was conducted during the first time that I taught the music-infused poetry unit and the first time that I conducted a teacher-researcher study. The unit involved students in learning basic poetry terminology, interpreting and translating poetry and music, differentiating between literal and metaphorical meanings found in poetry and music alike, and looking at the interplay of audience and language. The study also looked at how the students responded to the unit through student statements, and daily observations. The culminating project required the students to use all the skills they learned and practiced over the duration of the unit in a class presentation of students' interpretation of a song or poem of their choice. Although the unit incorporated the many objectives just mentioned, this study focused on two large questions:

1. How do students respond to music as a *co-text* in a poetry unit?
 - a. What are the effects of music on **content knowledge** in a poetry unit?

- b. What are the effects of giving the students **choice** in their poetry and musical selections?
- c. What effect does music have on **affective domains** of learning? (interests, motivation, engagement, likes, dislikes, and memorable learning events)
- d. What effect does **variety in lesson structure** have on students in a music-infused poetry unit? (placement of music within lessons, student groupings)

2. What issues accompany the use of music as a co-text in a poetry unit?

With these goals, I hope to develop a grounded theory on the successful use of music to enhance learning and attitudes in English/language arts classes. Thus, several specific areas were addressed in my research. For those teachers and scholars who believe that literary analysis is the more important (“scientific”) goal, this research of music as a *co-text* in a poetry unit also can be seen as entry points into content: (1) giving the students choice, in poetry and music; (2) attempting to gain student interest in poetry through the affective domain by using music; and (3) using a variety of teaching structures.

Content Knowledge

I was interested in the effect of using music as an instructional tool and its relationship to the amount of content knowledge that the students learned. While a positive effect was preferred, I was most interested in finding out if there were any

negative effects or non-diminishing effects on content learning. I was also curious to observe differences between White and minority students based on achievement scores, consisting of grades earned on the unit test.

Choice

As discussed previously, Dewey's (1916) notions of curriculum integration through a child-centered curriculum and a democratic education, although contrary to Plato and Aristotle, an important aspect of my research, included the role of choice for the student. I was interested in finding out what effect student choice had on enjoyment levels throughout the unit. I also felt that by giving students choice, I would eliminate the issue of appeasing everyone's musical preference in the classroom.

Affective Domain

Data for the affective domain included student responses to a questionnaire, three prompts, and field notes made from classroom observations.

I wanted to determine the affective capacity of music to catalyze student interests, motivation, engagement, likes and dislikes, and memorable learning events. A week prior to beginning this unit, I told my students that we would be starting poetry soon. This announcement was met with an overwhelming and unified groan. I was not expecting this initial feedback, but it became a motivation for providing students with a more pleasant and relevant view of poetry. The affective responses I

received from students concerning their views on poetry will be beneficial for educators interested in engaging resistant students in learning.

I was interested in examining the students' listening skills within the affective domain, to see whether their engagement varied according to the use of music in discussions and assignments and made some learning events more memorable than others. I believe that with the growing technologies and availability of music media, that young people need to be educated about not what to listen to, but how to listen critically and be able to extract meaning from what they are hearing. Critical listening skills are an important aspect of the affective domain, because listening to music evokes emotional and behavioral responses and the ability to know what is being heard would effect those responses.

Lesson Structure

Finally, to address the effects of lesson structure, I organized the lessons in a sequence: lessons without music, lessons using music as an introduction, lessons using music as central for the activity. Further, I varied structure by small or large group discussion and individual work. To discover students' response to structure, I used student surveys and recorded my observations of student comfort levels and participation in various lesson formats.

These two guiding questions, in addition to the four sub-questions, name music as a *co-text* along with traditional written poetry : (1) how do students respond to music as a *co-text* in a poetry unit? And, (2) what issues accompany the use of

music as a *co-text* in a poetry unit? I have done this because I am interested in relaxing the tension between those who believe that music should have to prove its worth within the context of another subject and those who believe that the value of music is intrinsic and should not be in need of external validation. This tension is similar to the tension between Plato and Aristotle's notions concerning notions of aesthetic and scientific education.

Content Knowledge: Refers to the knowledge and skills learned during the poetry unit. Specifically, knowledge and skills related to interpretation and terminology.

Student Choice: Refers to the choices given to all students concerning the specific texts (poetry and lyrics) studied during the unit.

Affective Domain: Refers to the interest levels, the observable behavior, and the opinions of the students throughout the unit.

Variety in Lesson Structure: Refers to the different amounts of music used and the different placements of the music throughout the unit.

Figure 3.1 Definitions of Terms Used in the Research Questions

Research Site

The research site is a college-town middle school in the Southeast that houses 6th, 7th, and 8th graders. The school was built in 1969 and opened for students in August of the same year. During the time when this study was conducted, the school consisted of 607 students, 64 certified staff, and 26 support staff. The student body was made up of 341 males and 266 females. Of the 607 students, 70% were white, 14% were African American, 6% were Latino, and 10% were of Asian descent or another minority. I have been teaching full-time at this school since August of 2002.

Participant Selection

Students

All participants were members of 7th grade classes I taught. I sent a letter of intent to each student's parents requesting permission to observe their child and use their work for this study (See Appendix A). I had a 100% return granting me permission.

I taught four classes of 7th grade language arts with a total of 98 students, 56 males, 42 females, 63 Whites, and 32 non-Whites. Two of these classes, my 4th and 5th period classes, were classified as regular language arts and the other two, my 8th and 9th period classes, were classified as advanced language arts. My 4th period class was also classified as a collaborative class, meaning that in this class there were students labeled 'exceptional' and that there was a collaborative teacher who worked with me during this period. There were 22 students in this period, 13 boys and 9 girls. The class was composed of four African Americans, 15 whites, and three

Latinos. Three out of the 22 students in this class were ESL. Thirty-six percent of the students in this class were labeled 'exceptional children'. This class was composed of great participators. The chemistry of this class was truly wonderful. In spite of the many personalities, all of the students worked well together and showed a collective interest in other students' backgrounds. As individuals, they were hyper and funny, and they worked harder than any other students I have.

My 5th period class contained 15 boys and nine girls, for a total of 24 students. Eleven of these students were White, eight were African American, three were of Asian descent or Middle Eastern descent, and two were Latino. Three out of the 24 students in this class were ESL. This class was quite rowdy as a whole. There were many groups of friends in this class and often I had to pull them back from socializing and get them on task. Also, there were many special needs students in this class. I had some who could be successful in the advanced classes and work independently, a few who had great difficulty with the English language, and many who questioned daily why they had to do work at school. However, it was apparent when they were engaged and interested in a lesson, they became very motivated and cooperative. This class demanded that I "sell" the lesson to them.

The 8th period advanced class consisted of 26 students, 14 boys and 12 girls. There were 22 White students, one African American student, and three Asian students. This class was full of intelligent and popular students. While they often preferred to socialize, it was not difficult to get them on-task. As a whole, they were well-rounded students who loved to participate in discussions and in lessons.

The 9th period advanced class was composed of 26 students, and like in 8th period, was made up of 14 boys and 12 girls. In this class, 18 of the students were white, four were African American, and four were of Asian descent.

The students in this class were high-achievers who liked to be pushed. Many of the students in this class aspired to attend Ivy League schools and spent much of their free time reading and studying. There were also a few students in this class, especially female, who needed extra support in terms of self-confidence. The students in the class put a lot of pressure on themselves and were only satisfied if they had a high 'A'.

Inclusion of My Own Students

There were three main reasons why I decided to conduct this action research with my own students. First, the time and schedule constraints that I was under did not allow me to work with other teachers and students at a level needed for such research. Second, I had never implemented this unit with students before and wanted to control the lessons. Finally, I wanted to do this research with my own students because I felt that I would be able to read their facial expressions, interpret their comments, and see improvements in their participation more accurately because I was familiar with their learning styles, interests, and backgrounds. I understand that this is also an area where the issues of validity and reliability arise; these are discussed at the end of this methodology section. I addressed validity and reliability by documenting their interests, background, and views through extensive surveying and

observations. I was also able to reflect on my presence in the classroom and in the unit through written observations of my own ideas, frustrations, and states of being. Finally, I conferred with several “critical friends” for this research – fellow teachers and my thesis committee.

Teacher

I was the only teacher implementing the music-infused poetry unit. However, since completing the unit, one of the other 7th grade language arts teachers has asked to use the unit, per request of her students, and during the writing of this thesis, she is beginning the music-infused poetry unit.

Since I was the teacher and researcher for this study with my own students, I kept a journal of **observations and field notes** and created a researcher autobiography as a way to recognize and challenge my biases.

The daily observations were collected in my observation notebook. These observations were recorded every day of the six-week unit. I distinguished between my field notes, theories, and my state of being by going over the day’s observations after work and color-coding them with highlighters. I also reread all of my observations periodically and transferred those that pertained to affective responses (likes, dislikes, observable excitement or boredom, and other student opinions) to either the poetry or music into a separate writing journal. I did this in order to check for trends in the students’ affective responses during the unit.

The teacher reflections were made in two places. First, I wrote down my thoughts and reactions in the daily observation notebook while teaching, and second, I read those initial responses after each class and then expanded on these reflections by connecting them to previous days and the activity we had just completed. This second reflection was written in my writing journal.

I originally planned on having my research notebook on the front table in my room where I would record everything that I observed in my students' behavior, including their comments and disposition. This utopist plan was shortly abandoned after my first day of observations. It just was not possible. I am an animated teacher, who walks around the room and uses a lot of hand gestures. Staying beside a table and writing down everything I heard and saw was not realistic. After much thought, I decided that I would use copies of my lesson plans and any handouts for the day for later writing down remarks related to the activities or materials during each lesson. After each lesson, I would quickly jot down my thoughts on how the period went and how I was feeling. In the evenings, I would go back through the day's observations and organize them in an attempt to expose recurrent comments and observations in my research. Daily reflection on my own teaching and observations that I recorded provided a way to ensure that my lessons were close across all classes and that my mood did not affect my evaluations.

Researcher Autobiography and Assumptions

The context for a participant observer, according to MacLean and Mohr (1999), is "the multiple factors that contribute to the creation of the experiences that

you and your student have” (p. 120). Because I am holding roles as both teacher and researcher, I need to account for my relationship with my students, and my experiences in observing my students in order to know to what extent my research influences my teaching, and vice-versa. It is important to identify and reflect on my role and presence in the classroom as a participant researcher.

I was a first-year teacher and filled with determination, excitement, questions, and a feeling that I had nothing to lose. At the time of the study, I was in my last semester of classes for my Master’s of Science of Education degree in Curriculum and Instruction. I was also a participant in Level II of the Capital Area Writing Project, a national Writing Project site at NC State, and of the Rock N’ Roll Hall of Fame Summer Teacher Institute in Cleveland, Ohio.

The topic for my study is what led me to the Curriculum and Instruction Department. I was originally a graduate student in the English Department, but because of department focuses, I was unable to research the possibilities and effects of a music-oriented approach in the English/language arts classroom. Within the English department, I would have had to focus on the poetry as text, whereas the Curriculum and Instruction Department allowed me to focus on the teaching of the text. I have had the passion and curiosity to research and become knowledgeable about this topic, but until recently I was not sure how I would use this knowledge and make a contribution to the field. It was not until I began my full-time teaching career and started talking to other teachers that I realized how my work could be beneficial.

While there is a considerable amount of research concerning the use of music in the classroom, it is not easily available to teachers. Moreover, there is not a bridge between the research and practical classroom lessons using music, and teachers do not have the time to create this. Whenever I discussed my research interests with other teachers, they were always very responsive. They asked what I had found out about the topic thus far and wanted to know the results of my work when I completed it. The classroom teachers are interested in new pedagogical research and how to implement music into their teaching. However, they need the research presented in a way that is reliable, valid, reproducible, and practical. This is where the idea for the music-infused unit derived. I wanted to create the link between research and practice.

I had used music in my teaching previously, but not in connection with poetry. During my student-teaching, where I taught 10th and 9th graders, I had used “Imagine” by John Lennon, Richard Wagner’s “Die Walkure,” and Yiddish songs of concentration camp prisoners, to illustrate themes and the emotions of Eli Wiesel’s *Night*. Lennon’s piece was used to start a discussion about the loss of identity, which was themes employed in the novel, and the Wagner piece was used as an example of the kind of music that Hitler played for his troops before battle. The students identified why Hitler would choose such music to rally his troops and what kind of songs prisoners sang for survival. Through a mini-music theory lesson, students were able to discuss issues using musical terminology. During this unit, I saw students participate who had been disengaged in English class up to this point. These were football players who all but checked out of school during the off-season. However,

when I brought music into the classroom in conjunction with what we were studying, these students came alive. These students participated in the discussions concerning the music, and their enthusiasm seemed to have carried over into non-musically enriched discussions. The students were engaged with learning where previously they were not. I knew this was something special, but at the time I didn't know what to do with it.

I also used music with a group of 8th graders when I was an interim language arts teacher shortly after my student-teaching assignment ended. The two advanced language arts classes that I was teaching were also reading *Night*, and I used the same musical components that I had used previously with the 10th graders. In the two regular language arts classes, we read *Pigman* and I infused the music of DJ Jazzy Jeff and the Fresh Prince to emphasize some of the themes in the novel. Just as I had seen positive results from the high school students, I saw encouraging results from the middle school students. They were, on a whole, more engaged when I used music and they seemed to take discussions further than they had in previous days when music was not used.

When it came time to choose my thesis topic, I first thought about studying the role of women in Renaissance literature. While this topic is interesting to me, I am not passionate about it. I am passionate about the possibilities of using music in the academic classroom. My first full-time teacher position and the project of my thesis came into my life at the same time. While some told me to run the other way from this potential chaos, I knew that this was the opportunity that I had been waiting

for. This was how I could merge my passion for music and teaching the English/language arts. This was when I could move beyond passive observations of the effectiveness of music in the classroom and participate in the emerging conversations on this topic.

The only philosophical issue that I had to address was of my conflicting roles as teacher and researcher. I knew the time would come when I would have to make a tough decision. What would I do if the lesson I had planned did not run smoothly in my first class? The researcher in me would want to see the lesson continued for all remaining classes in order to observe additional student responses to it. However, the teacher in me wants to immediately make the necessary changes so that the lesson is more effective for the next class. On one side of the issue, how would a researcher gain reliable data if the lesson were constantly changing? But on the other side of the issue, how could a teacher knowingly teach a lesson that is lacking in coherence, fluidity, or organization? I resolved this issue the same way I resolved my lack-of-time issue: I acknowledged that my first duty is as a teacher. My priority was to the students as their teacher. This meant that my duties for teaching came before my duties as a graduate student and researcher. There are times when I changed the lessons from one period to another regarding the order, presentation, and timing so it would be beneficial for my students. I feel that this job responsibility of a teacher is important and needs to be accounted for in educational research, as well as this research study. I kept strict field notes and recorded daily observations to see if any of the small changes I made in lessons, or my expectations of learners intervened on

the validity and reliability of my research. I am confident that the change did not influence the research.

Descriptive Overview of the Music-Infused Poetry Unit

The music-infused unit was envisioned as a poetry unit that used music as a teaching tool and as a *co-text*. As in a traditional poetry unit, students read poetry and identified audience, specific language use, basic poetry terminology, learned interpretation skills, learned the differences between literal and metaphorical meanings, and also wrote their own poetry. Using my lesson plans and field notes, I ensured that music and poetry were indeed *co-texts*; that is that they were given equal time and respect throughout the research.

The delivery and practice of using poetry skills were not traditional in the music-infused unit, but were instead, more radical. The music was used sometimes as an introduction to the skills and sometimes to give the students practice in listening and analyzing language. The students were given the opportunity through two projects to choose their own pieces of music or poems. This is an important part of the unit, in that it recognizes the benefits of a student's personality, his or her likes and dislikes being validated in the classroom setting. Throughout the lesson, many different types of popular music were used, such as hip-hop, pop, rock, ska, folk, country, and comical. It was also a conscious choice to make sure that the artists chosen were not all from one race or gender. The students were encouraged to see the connections between lyrical music and poems by lining up examples of both. This was done in hopes of strengthening interpretation skills and building confidence.

However, because of the age of the students, 12 – 13 year olds, much of the design and objectives revolved around gaining their interest in poetry and trying to show them the connections between poetry and the music they listen to everyday.

Overview of the Implementation

I had designed a unit plan for 7th graders two weeks before the start date. I waited to implement the unit until we were well into the semester in order to gain a better idea of what activities would better serve my students. This plan was created in the last two weeks of October; therefore, I had approximately two months to get to know my students before implementing the unit. I knew, however, that the unit plan would most likely change during the course of the study. Since it was my first implementation of this unit, it had not been tested. This was my first time teaching 7th graders and I knew with this inexperience, my assumptions, plans, and goals would change. My initial goal was to teach form, terminology, and interpretation skills.

I changed my goals one-week prior to implementation because of the students' reaction when I announced that in the following week we would begin our poetry unit. I was met with a chorus of groans and the question-comment, "Why? Poetry is so boring." My goal from this point on was to get them interested in poetry and to enjoy it. In addition to these goals, I abandoned the emphasis on terminology and forms partially because of my new goal of gaining interest, and also because these content goals are more closely aligned with the 8th grade scope and sequence for our district than for the 7th grade scope and sequence.

The music-infused poetry unit was the only unit being studied during this time. I felt that in order to gain reliable data from my observations and data collection, the students needed to be focused on only one topic in the class and not be stressed out with many unrelated assignments.

The 7th grade schedule operates with partial blocking. On Monday, Tuesday, and Friday of a normal school week, we meet with each of our 4 classes for forty-four minutes. On Wednesday of a normal school week, I see my 5th period students and 9th period students for 90 minutes each. On Thursday of a normal school week, I see my 4th period students and my 8th period students for 90 minutes each. Therefore, my lesson plans are the same on Wednesdays and Thursdays.

My two afternoon classes are labeled “advanced”, and my morning classes “regular”, but for this unit the majority of the lessons were the same. The only places where instruction differed were in the 1st week of implementation. I used different poems to introduce interpretation for my regular and advanced classes. In addition to this, I also used lyrics in teaching interpretation for the advanced classes this first week. The lessons were identical for all other days of the unit.

The first week consisted of using quotes about poetry to introduce the unit and the teaching and practice of interpretation. Interpretation was defined as figuring out what the author was trying to say in the poem. I emphasized that there is not one correct interpretation for each poem, but instead, many possible interpretations to consider. I also emphasized that while their interpretation might be different from mine or others’ in the class, it is acceptable as long as there were contextual evidence

to support the interpretation. Each class went through two poems together, line-by-line, discussing possible interpretations. At the end of the week, for the advanced classes, I gave them the choice between Bob Dylan's "Times They are a Changing" or TLC's "Waterfalls" to interpret for meaning. I gave little direction with this assignment and let them work in groups. My reason for choosing popular music for this assignment was based on my desire to gain student interest in the activity.

The second week focused on identifying author's language and what makes it important. I started this discussion by having them identify their own language, in other words, the language that they speak when they are relaxed and comfortable. The block day was used to complete the "My Language – Your Language Project." This project required students to choose a song or poem, identify the author's language (word choice, syntax), and translate it into their own language. This also required them to interpret what the author was trying to say and relate the message to either their own language or the language of the dominant culture, Standard English. Freire (1987) argues for the inclusion and acceptance of a student's native language (p. 74). The importance of the role of the teacher in allowing the student access to his or her native language is expanded on by Jeff Duncan-Andrade and Ernest Morrell (2000),

Educators must fully understand the broad meaning of student's empowerment, one that enables students to interrogate and selectively appropriate those aspects of the dominant culture that will provide them with the basis for defining and transforming the wider social

order. Student's language must not be viewed as subordinate and antagonistic to the dominant language (7).

I prefaced this project with sharing three examples. I took the song "I Used to Love H.E.R." by Common and translated two stanzas into standard English, and had an 8th grade female translate Walt Whitman's "Song for Myself" and Emily Dickinson's "I'm Nobody" into 8th grader-speak. The students finished this project during the block time. At the end of this week, we discussed intended audience using television and music examples.

The 3rd week into the unit focused on poetry and music about gender. This subject was introduced through a discussion of controversial quotes concerning gender. The students first read Marge Piercy's poem "Barbie Doll" and then listened to and read the lyrics of No Doubt's "Just a Girl." The students identified the authors' language, the intended audience, and discussed meaning, word choice, and stereotypes. The block days were used to give a practice writing test and Friday was used to have students write their own poetry concerning current issues, such as gender stereotyping. The reason why the practice writing test was given over the block days was due to my absence from the classroom.

The 4th week of the music-infused poetry unit was a non-instruction week. On the Monday of this week the students shared the poetry that they had started on Friday and finished over the weekend. Tuesday was spent in activities unrelated to the unit with the entire grade level.

Plans for the 5th week of the unit included learning about narrative poetry and the difference between literal and metaphorical meaning: however because of an ice storm, we were not in school Thursday, Friday, or the following Monday. We did cover narrative poetry and in conjunction with this the students wrote narrative stories about a time in their past. I introduced narrative poetry by reading aloud Ernest Lawrence Thayer's "Casey at the Bat" and having a discussion about the common traits found in narrative poetry. Next, the students took turns reading Robert W. Service's "The Cremation of Sam McGee" and finally, I played the song, "Goodbye Earl" by the Dixie Chicks. The last two activities were accompanied by comprehension questions.

The 6th week of the unit focused on the difference between literal and metaphorical meaning. I introduced this concept with Paul McCartney's "Blackbird". The students made lists of literal and metaphorical aspects of the lyric in order to distinguish the two meanings and their context clues. To further practice these skills, we looked at "Fog" by Carl Sandburg and "Life" by Naomi Madgett. I also introduced free verse by using Walt Whitman's "Miracles," and moods by playing the following three songs: "Walk This Way" by Aerosmith and RUN –DMC, "Three Little Birds" by Bob Marley, and "Lunch-Lady Land" by Adam Sandler. The remainder of this week was spent on introducing and working on their final presentation-project. The presentation-project required the students to choose a song or poem and identify the following: intended audience, mood, the language used, and the form (if it happened to be narrative or free verse). They also had to determine if

there were a metaphorical meaning and, if so, what it was. The students had to interpret the song or poem they chose and tell why they chose it. Students had the choice of working alone or with a partner.

The last week of the unit contained a poetry test and the individual/group presentations.

Data Collection

This study lasted for 19 days, from November 2002, when I began the first day of the music-infused poetry unit, until December break of 2002, when I ended the unit with my students. I collected data on a daily basis through student statements, student work samples and grades, teacher observations, and field notes.

The three student statements were responses to prompts, given to each student to complete in class. Each of these statements contained questions that asked the student to reflect on the activities and materials used in the past week and a half. The first statement was given after the first five days of the unit. (See Appendix B for prompts)

Grade Comparisons

For this study, I focused on the music-infused poetry unit final test. I chose this test because the grade would represent the learning and skills acquired over the course of the unit. I prefer activities and assessments that show an ability to use thought processes to memorizing correct answers. This end-of-unit assessment reflects this philosophy. (see Appendix C)

I ran the student achievement data using a two-way analysis of covariance factorial analysis. The fixed variables were race (Minority, White) and music active (Non-actives, Actives). The dependent (or outcome) variable was the posttest score (final unit test). Using covariance, the posttests means were adjusted to account for any group differences apparent in the pretest group means.

Documents Collection

Documents collected in this study were items produced by me and items produced by my students. Survey questionnaire, prompts, evaluations of the unit, and a unit test were instruments I created for data collection. The initial survey consisted of 34 questions administered prior to beginning the unit. This survey addressed students' musical background, their favorite kinds of music, how often they listened to music, and other topics having to do with their relationship with music (See Appendix D).

I administered three catalysts to elicit student statements, each with several prompts for student responses to the unit as it unfolded. These prompts were given on November 8th, November 25th, and December 17th, 2002. Prompts addressed student interest, opinions concerning difficulty, format of discussions, and memorable learning events (See Appendix B). These provided me with student responses concerning their observations, opinions, and learning thus far. I also collected their interpretations of the poems/lyrics we studied in class and gave them a final poetry quiz, which contained the third and final student survey, concerning their opinions on the music use in the poetry unit. (see appendix C) The

music-infused poetry unit then ended with an individual or partner presentations that addressed interpretation, language use, audience, mood, and form of either a poem or song of the student's choice. To maintain reliability, I used a rubric in grading these presentations. (see appendix E)

My researcher journal and field notes, previously described in this section, were also a part of the documents I kept. During the data collection period, I continually read, reread, and wrote assumptions on what I was observing. I maintained a research journal in which I outlined what I saw occurring in my classroom, my own assumptions and expectations, instances when those assumptions and expectations were questioned, and short narratives on my evolving views and knowledge on using music in the classroom. I also kept a notebook that contained daily lesson plans, along with observational notes on student reactions and performance.

Validity Issues

To ensure data validity, I used an approach referred to as triangulation, defined as having multiple sources to support a finding. In other words, many different angles were used in trying to find either contradictions or support for the finding (MacLean & Mohr, 1999; Hubbard & Power, 1993). In this study, these angles were grades, observations, student products, various class structures, and multiple lesson formats.

I also sought to ensure validity by proof of researcher trustworthiness. I kept a detailed journal reflecting on my questions, concerns, observations, expectations,

assumptions, findings throughout the study, analysis, and reporting of the findings. I also kept a journal of relevant literature research, which I reread periodically and wrote reflective memos. These reflective memos provided me the chance to think through the assumptions and observations I was making in my classroom in regards to the findings of other researchers.

A third way I strengthened trustworthiness is by discussing the teacher-researcher role with two of the members of my graduate committee. The issues of priority, validity, organization, relevance, and question framing were discussed in these meetings. I also discussed my observations and assumptions with the collaborative teacher in my 4th period class in order to gain her perspective and hear feedback. These persons served as “critical friends.”

Finally, in order to maintain statistical validity, I employed the use of a SAS statistical program in order to account for error and variable within my data.

Reliability Issues

When I began my music-infused poetry unit, I was unaware that a colleague of mine would be implementing this unit with her own students three months later. However, she was well into the unit when I began my final data analysis and first writings of my study. I was able to ask her questions concerning experiences in implementing the unit and about the student responses in order to verify the reliability of my questions or findings. Also, I addressed reliability by maintaining the same lessons across all classes in the study, and using a rubric to assess student achievement.

Limitations of the Study

In order to present my study in its full context, I must identify the limitations of this study. This also aids in ensuring trustworthiness in my findings.

The first limitation was that I was the only teacher implementing this unit. I refrained from having other teachers participate in the research because I wanted to try the unit myself first, and make the necessary adjustments and modifications to ensure its success for another teacher's use.

The second limitation was that I was unable to conduct student interviews because of time constraints. The nineteen-day unit took place over seven weeks because of Veterans Day, Thanksgiving break and an early December snowfall that kept us out of school for three days. Originally, the plan was to begin the unit well enough in advance so that the unit would be over by Thanksgiving break, but I fell ill in late October and it forced me to take days off and push back the start of the unit. I was unable to leave substitute plans for this unit because of my needed presence for the observations. Because of this late start, we did not conclude the unit until the last day before winter break. This left no time for formal student interviews, so I made it a priority to make my way around the classroom several times during each class period recording student comments. This worked especially well when the students were working on the projects because I was able to hold short one-on-one discussions with them.

Risk to Participants

There was little risk to the participants of the study. The use of music in the study posed only the threat of forcing students to think differently. The students were learning content set forth by the North Carolina Standard Course of Study. All students were made aware of their participation in this study through written formal consent.

CHAPTER IV: ANALYSIS OF DATA

This chapter will contain my findings in response to the research sub-questions that directed this study. I will present results according to findings from statistical analysis for question one, about content knowledge, and then findings from qualitative analysis for questions two – four, about choice, affective domain, and lesson structure.

After the findings are presented, I conclude the section with a discussion of those findings, which creates a basis for a grounded theory. The data are organized and presented by their relationship to my guiding research questions: How do students respond to music as a co-text in a poetry unit?; What issues accompany the use of music as a *co-text* in a poetry unit?

Findings: Research Question 1

How do students respond to music as a co-text in a poetry unit?

The findings to research question 1 are presented by sub-questions. To determine findings for sub-question a concerning cognitive effect from the use of music, end of unit scores were compared between the active and non-active music students and minority and White students by running a two-way analysis of covariance factorial analysis on a SAS statistical analysis program. To determine findings for sub-questions b, c, d, I referred to student responses and products, and teacher observations and field notes.

Table 1: Profiles of Active and Non-Active Students

Total Responses = (x)							
Active Music Students n = 15	Play Instrument	Sing	Dance	None			
Musical Activities	14	3	6	0	(21)		
	Hip Hop/Rap	Pop	Reggae	Oldies	Alt.	None	
Favorite Band/Artist Genre	8	7	0	1	1	0	(17)
Frequency of Listening	1< x/day 12	1/day 3	3/wk 0	1/wk 0	2/mo 0	1/mo 0	Never 0 (15)
Watch Music Television	MTV 12	MTV2 6	VH1 6	BET 5	None 0	(29)	
Non-Active Students n = 15	Play Instrument	Sing	Dance	None			
Musical Activities	0	0	1	14	(15)		
	Hip Hop/Rap	Pop	Reggae	Oldies	Alt.	None	
Favorite Band/Artist Genre	3	0	1	0	1	7	(12)
Frequency of Listening	1< x/day 4	1/day 3	3/wk 2	1/wk 4	2/mo 1	1/mo 0	Never 1 (14)
Watch Music Television	MTV 4	MTV2 2	VH1 2	BET 6	None 2	(16)	

In order to gain a full range of student perspectives, I analyzed the 98 student surveys and distilled the 15 active music students and 15 non-active music students. I created two profiles that represent the extremes in the

amount of musical knowledge and experience students bring into the classroom.

The active music students were identified by holding all of following qualities: all 15 read music, either sing or play an instrument; all could name their favorite musical group or artist; all 15 listen to music several times a day; and all 15 watched musical televisions shows regularly, with a total of 29 viewings.

In contrast, among the 15 non-active students, none played an instrument or sang with an organized choir. Only eight could name a favorite band or genre as compared to all 15 active music students. Only seven non-active students listened to music once a day, as compared with 15 active music students. Finally, non-active students averaged one music television viewing regularly, for a total on 16 viewings, as compared to 29 for active music students.

The identified active music students are more social than those identified as non-active. In the pre-unit student survey, the active music students stated that their priorities are friends, having fun, playing sports and earning good grades. The non-active music students in general stated that they enjoy solitary activities, earning superior grades, playing on the computer, and did not spend as much time with friends.

There were differences in prior musical knowledge and experiences between the active music students and the non-active music students. However, statistical analysis does not indicate differences in achievement.

*Sub question a: What are the effects of music on **content knowledge** in a poetry unit?*

Table 2 provides descriptive statistics for posttest means across all groups.

The mean score ranges from 95.33 to 97.33, for only a two-point difference. This indicates that all students across all classes (collaborative, regular, advanced) performed well.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics for Posttest Means

Race	Active	Mean	Standard Deviation	N
Minority	Active	95.33	8.80	6
	Non-Active	96.44	2.92	9
	Total	95.40	5.70	15
White	Active	97.33	5.70	9
	Non-Active	96.00	3.85	6
	Total	96.80	4.93	15
Total	Active	96.53	6.88	15
	Non-Active	95.67	3.20	15
	Total	96.10	5.29	30

Through the two-way analysis of covariance factorial analysis, it was determined that there were no significant differences in performance according to race or prior familiarity with music ($p < .05$) (See Table 3).

Table 3. Analysis of Variance Summary for Race and Active Status

Source of Variance	Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	F	Probability
Between Groups					
Race	11.76	1	11.76	0.39	< .05
Active	2.69	1	2.69	0.09	< .05
Race by Active	3.76	1	3.76	0.12	< .05
Within	789.56	26	30.37		
p = < .05					

*Sub-question b: What are the effects of giving the **students choice** in their poetry and musical selections?*

Students were given choices about what poetry or music they wished to interpret for two unit projects. Table 4 provides the percent of students (45%) who desired more choice concerning poetry, and the percent of students (75%) claiming that choice in music made the unit fun. Most of the student responses about choice are positive.

*Sub-question c: What effect does music have on **affective domains** of learning?*

The domains investigated included expression of student interests, likes, dislikes, motivation, and memorable learning events. Table 4 provides the percent of students making positive comments in the affective domain

about the unit; specifically, 90% agreed that the use of music made the unit more engaging.

*Sub -question d: What effect does **lesson structure** have on the student in a music-infused poetry unit?*

Structures investigated were using music as an introduction or as a main focus of the lesson; placement of music as prior to or following poetry; and individual or group work. As Table 4 summarizes, 87% of the students referred large group discussions of poems. Student preference concerning structure of lesson sequence was mixed.

Findings: Sub-questions b, c, & d

Table 4 represents results taken from three student statements, student evaluations, and teacher observations.

Table 4: Effects of Choice, Affective Domain, and Lesson Structure

	Survey	Observations
Student Choice	<p>45% of the students volunteered their wish to have more choice in the poetry selections, even though that question was not specifically asked.</p> <p>75% of the students stated that being able to choose their own music made the projects more fun.</p>	<p>A student was overheard telling another student, “Hey, this will actually be fun. You get to pick any song you want.”</p> <p>Many students in each period were excited to share with their classmates what song they were choosing to work with.</p>
Affective Domain	<p>90% of the students commented that the music made the unit more fun.</p> <p>75% of the students stated that the use of music changed their opinion of poetry in a positive way.</p> <p>85% remembered most the music-infused lessons.</p>	<p>All students were attentive and there were no groans when we were using music during the lesson.</p>
Lesson Structure	<p>87% preferred large group discussion of poems.</p> <p>40% of the students preferred to interpret lyrics and then poems, and 45% preferred poems and then lyrics. Their reasons depended on whether they liked to work on harder tasks first or second. The opinions were mixed as to whether the lyrics or poems were more difficult. 15% of the students said that the order would depend on the specific song and poem.</p>	<p>The students seemed to be more engaged when music was being used, no matter when in the lesson.</p> <p>As long as the assignment introduction was clear and an example was given, most students succeeded no matter what order the music and poems were in.</p>

Results for question 1, based on student statement prompts and classroom observations, indicate that three areas affect the responses of students to the music-infused poetry unit: choice, affective domain, and structural variety.

Findings: Research Question 2

What issues accompany the use of music as a co-text in a poetry unit?

Investigation of daily lessons, field notes, observations, and my teacher's journal revealed three pedagogical issues that were addressed in order to implement this unit successfully. The three issues are: (1) the placement of the music within the unit, (2) the allowance of explicit lyrics, and (3) teacher confidence. These will be elaborated on in the discussion section.

Discussion: Research Question 1

How do students respond to music as a co-text in a poetry unit?

There was no difference according to race or background in content learning. However, analysis revealed that across all groups, three factors determined overall impact of the unit: student choice, affective domain features, and variety in lesson structure. The discussion of findings for this question will be presented by sub-questions.

*Sub-question a: What effect does the use of music have on **content knowledge** in a poetry unit?*

Content knowledge was measured by examining the mean scores of students on the unit test. As Table 2 shows, the range of mean scores across

groups is 95 – 97, showing only a two-point difference. This reflects the success of the music-infused poetry unit in that all students were successful. Note that all scores are out of a possible 100, and that all students performed in the B+/A range. While music did not have a positive causal effect on content knowledge (as determined by the SAS analysis), positive affective responses derived from qualitative measures from students across all groups suggest that the infusion of music did have an effect on their attitudes during the unit. Affective responses fell into three categories: (1) the role of student choice; (2) the role of student interest; and (3) the variety of structure found in the unit. The student's affective responses will be discussed later in this chapter with regards to a theory grounded in these data.

Students in this study were grouped into three levels: collaborative, regular, and advanced. According to studies summarized by Allan A. Glatthorn in the *Handbook of Research on Teaching the English Language Arts* (1991), most high-ability group classes experience more demanding curriculum, a more cooperative learning environment, and better work habits (p. 446). However, in my homogeneously grouped classes, I found that the students in the lower ability classes worked just as hard, if not harder, and were more cooperative compared to students in the advanced classes. The only place where instruction differed was in the introduction of poetry interpretation when I used shorter and simpler poems on the first day, than I used in the advanced classes. This was done only to teach the concept of interpretation and from day two through the end of the unit, all students at all levels were given identical instruction and assignments.

In the music-infused unit, Whites and non-Whites performed equally (see Table 3). I believe the lack of difference in performance is due to students being able to bring in experiences from the popular youth culture to the classroom culture. Duncan-Andrade and Morrell (2000) state that, “Hip-hop music and culture are a logical bridge between popular culture and the school culture. Given its academic nature and cultural relevance for many urban youth, hip-hop music may provide the necessary cultural frame from which to start effective discussions of literature and literary terminology” (p. 8). It is from this theory that I gained my interest in testing the use of music, including hip-hop, in a poetry unit. I believe in the teacher coming to the student, instead of waiting for the student to come to the teacher. And I think that connecting school curriculum to the real world is a teacher’s primary goal. “If the ultimate goal is for students to be able to analyze complex literary texts ...hip-hop music can be seen as a bridge linking the seemingly vast span between the streets and the world of academics” (p. 22)

One role of music in this unit, contrary to Plato’s use of music education for soldiers only, was to be a bridge for all students, especially minority students, in making poetry and the study of language relevant and useful in their lives. Another reason why popular music, especially hip-hop, was used in the unit was because it is the music that the students listen to and therefore an appropriate type to use. This reasoning is similar to Plato’s belief that certain music was appropriate for certain classes. This research goal has been achieved; the analysis of content learning did reveal that White and non-White students had similar achievement. Moreover, all

students – minority or Whites – showed similar learning and responses in the surveys and observations.

In response to the minority achievement gap, I sought to determine the effects of using music in instruction on student participation. My field notes revealed that Black students seemed to be able to hold discussions about a piece of music or set of lyrics without having a written assignment to go along with it, whereas White students became off-task or were seemingly bored when there was no written assignment with the music.

There were two comments made by an advanced Black male student that reconfirm the success and validity of using music as an instructional tool and co-text in the classroom. He stated early on in the unit that, “I hate poetry because it makes me feel dumb.” However, more consistently than any other student I had, he offered deep and clear interpretations of the poems and lyrics. His interpretations were fully thought through and made good use of the contextual evidence and possible metaphors. He once came up to me to ask if he was doing the interpretation correctly, and I noticed that he had completed the entire poem’s interpretation very well, while the rest of the class was still struggling with the first stanza. I told him he was doing an excellent job. This same young man also commented on his eagerness to complete the presentation project after I had introduced it to the class. I asked him what song he was going to use and if he had any questions about the process before we parted for the weekend. He replied, “No, no questions. I can’t wait to do this project. I will have it done by lunch time tomorrow.” His enthusiasm for the project and his skills

in poetry highlighted a visible growth in confidence in the language arts classroom. Overall, the music-infused poetry unit proved to be well-accepted among the Black students in my classes as evidenced by their class participation and high test scores.

*Sub-question b: What are the effects of giving the students **choice** in their poetry and musical selections?*

In keeping with Dewey's concept of a *child-centered curriculum* (1916), I decided to let students have choice in the selection of project texts. Although student choice goes against Plato and Aristotle's pedagogical-elitist beliefs, giving my students choice turned out to be one of the most successful decisions I made in this unit. According to Cheryl Spaulding (1992), student choice plays a major role in a student's sense of motivation. It is a perception of control that gives students a feeling of meaningfulness (p. 10). My students were allowed to choose either a poem or a set of lyrics for both projects. I understand the need for people to have the opportunity to express themselves through their own music. Every generation is represented by one or a few specific musical genres because it is the music that speaks to the youth at the time. I felt it necessary to validate the students' voices by allowing them choice in this matter. The students appreciated this responsibility. One student responded, "Music is a good way to learn poetry, because you get to use your own music and put it in your own words." Another student stated, "Because we had heard the music before, we were more excited about interpreting it." Positive remarks such as these reflect the success of the unit and the value of letting students have choice. Not only did the students learn about poetry, but they also learned about listening for meaning

in their music. This demonstrates that students have a cognitive preference in their listening. I believe that allowing students choice is one way to accommodate for this preference.

The greatest success to come out of this project was the work of a Black girl who prior to the unit averaged coming to class only two to three times a week. She did not have a stable home, was failing all of her classes, and had behavioral management difficulties. However, in the poetry unit she got to work immediately, did not get up and talk to her friends, came in during lunch to finish, and earned her first 'A' of the school year! The smile on this girl's face when I told her that she had earned herself an 'A' represents the reason why people become teachers. She told me afterwards that she enjoyed the project because it was fun and because she was able to choose what song she wanted to translate. It is amazing to see potential fulfilled just by making learning fun and giving the student validation through choice.

At the end of the first week, the advanced students interpreted song lyrics in groups, who then made class presentations. The presentations of these lyrics surprised me. The students who were supposed to be watching and listening to these brief interpretations of lyrics were not paying attention at all, as recorded in my teachers' journal. I was expecting them to be engaged while listening to their classmates discuss lyrics, but instead I saw note passing, drawing, talking, and some joking around. I think that perhaps the short presentation was not directed enough. I think it would have been more successful if the students had been able to choose from more than two sets of lyrics. The fact that there were only two sets of lyrics to choose

from also posed a problem because, once each song was presented in front of the class, the interest was gone. Many students commented that they would have preferred being able to bring in their own set of lyrics to interpret.

Student surveys indicated that 75% credited choosing music as making the unit more fun (See Table 4). Another example of the successful effects of student choice occurred in the “My Language – Your Language Project.” I think this is due to the fact that I had several examples showing what I expected and that I allowed the students to choose their own set of lyrics. The students were engaged while working on this project and I did not have to ask for a student’s attention in any of my four classes while giving its explanation. My journal reflects my enthusiasm about student participation. In this lesson, I used an example of translating a hip-hop song first, which immediately grabbed their interests, because most of my students are hip-hop fans. This was the hook into the assignment and it worked. As soon as I asked my students to get started, they immediately got to work and most finished during the block period. There was no complaining during the entire period and all classes worked quietly. What I found exceptionally pleasing was the fact that the students were anxious to show off their work and that they were willing to help others. This lesson turned out to be a wonderful display of the power of student choice.

In student responses to my surveys, I learned that 45% of the students wanted more choice in the poems the class interpreted (See Table 4). This is an interesting comment on the part of the students because in my efforts to have music and poetry as *co*-texts, I allowed the same amount of choice on the poems and music. “It would

have been better if we could have chosen our own poetry too.” This comment was stated by almost half of the students on surveys when asked what the worst aspect of the unit was. For both projects, “My Language – Your Language Project” and the culminating presentation, each student was given the option of choosing between a song or a poem. As for the music and poetry used in daily lessons, I made the selections. I did this primarily in order to teach major concepts to the entire class at the same time; however, I see that I could have given the students more choice in the poetry and songs used when practicing these skills. To make this an effective and efficient unit for next time, I would briefly distribute copies of many different poems and songs the day before I plan to use them, and poll the class as to which ones they prefer to study. I would then collect the ‘possibilities’ and make copies of those that won the popular vote and would be discussed the next day.

*Sub-question c: What effect does music have on **affective domains** of learning in a poetry unit?*

In this study, affective domains included interests, motivation, likes and dislikes, and memorable events.

When asked in the third survey if their opinion of poetry had changed as a result of using music in the unit, most students (75%) said yes (See Table 4). One student stated that, “[At] first I hated poetry, but it’s not that bad.” The majority gave responses such as, “Yes, It was good poetry.” One student stated that, “Yes, I didn’t like it [poetry] at all, but now I realize that all the songs I like are poems put to

music.” Another student commented that, “Yes, now I can understand it [poetry] better.” It was observed through these statements that most students had either not previously considered music as a form of poetry, or that, in general, the use of the music made their overall opinion of poetry improve.

While most did state a changed opinion of poetry toward the positive, some students did not. Their comments suggested that they either already knew that music was a poetic form or that it did little to change their overall opinion of poetry. Three students gave comments such as, “No, I knew previously about lyrics being poems” and “Not really, I still don’t like poetry.”

While there was some disagreement among students concerning a change of opinion, the students were unanimous in their responses to the question, “Do you think that using music and lyrics is a good way to learn about poetry?” Every student responded positively. Their responses included statements such as, “Yes, I think it is a good way because a lot of people like music” and “Yes, because it is more difficult than just poetry and it puts my brain to work.” The comments from many students reflected sentiments such as, “Yes, because it helps you relate the two together” and “Yes, because it is fun and it gets people’s attention.”

When asked what they best remembered from the unit, 85% of the students responded that the music-infused lessons were most memorable, specifically the interpretations we did as a class, or the song “Goodbye Earl” and narrative poetry. (See Table 4). The students specifically noted activities that included music such as “Blackbird,” learning literal and metaphorical meanings, and learning about mood.

Some students focused more on the “My Language – Your Language Project.” It was interesting to see that while many different activities were remembered about the unit, all but one of the best-remembered activities was music-based.

The best lesson or activity in the unit according to the students was listening to songs. Ninety percent of the students (See Table 4) wrote comments such as, “It [listening] was more fun than just reading it [poetry] out of the book.” Other students thought that the “My Language – Your Language Project” was the best. Only one student thought that a non-music based lesson was the best thing we did. This student enjoyed writing a narrative from her past the most. Other activities noted were the narrative lesson with “Goodbye Earl” and the interpreting we did as a class.

When asked about the worst activity or lesson from the unit, all but one of the students considered the narrative writing to be the worst. This, of course, was an extension of the narrative poetry lesson that I taught and not poetry or music itself. These same students also thought that there were too many poems to interpret over the course of the unit. More than half of the students thought that writing their own poetry was the worst aspect. One student commented on how hard the interpreting was and therefore thought it was the worst part.

Within the goal of wanting to study the effects of using music on the affective domain, I looked at the possibility of making my students active listeners to their music. I believe that with the rising popularity of music videos since the early 1980’s, the focus of music has gone from the lyrics, melody, beat, and the idea of an

album concept or message, to image, marketing, and the profit of the hit-single.

While I do not think this is either positive or negative, but part of the evolution of popular music and culture, I do think that young listeners born in the last 20 years do not have the critical listening skills that their parents have. I come to this conclusion because the music of the 1960's was driven by politically charged lyrics, lyrics that led a movement of change. And while there are many current popular lyrics that deal with topical issues, the majority of my students know what type of shoe an MC is wearing before knowing what the message of his song is. Overall, the majority of the students enjoyed the lyrics because they were familiar to them and interpreting them did not cause worry as the poems did.

*Sub-question d: What effect does **lesson structure** have on the students in a music-infused poetry unit?*

I used several structures for placing music in the unit: poetry without music, music to introduce poetry, music without poetry, and poetry to introduce music.

For example in using poetry without music, I typed up the poem on the left hand side of the page and put lines on the right hand side for the student to write in his or her reaction and interpretation. We discussed each poem as a class, going line by line or stanza by stanza, and coming up with multiple possible interpretations. I only called on students who had raised their hands because poetry interpretation is a difficult and intimidating practice and I didn't want to create an

atmosphere of stress or panic for those less comfortable. I was hoping that as time went on, the number of hands would rise.

After one week of interpreting poetry, students were asked their opinions of the structure we were using to do so. When I asked students about the class discussion approach to interpretation, I was met with validation. Only ten students out of the 98 involved in the study would have preferred looking at the poems in small groups or individually. The remaining 12 students enjoyed the group discussions, stating reactions such as, “I got to hear other peoples’ perspectives and it got my own ideas going.”

In analyzing lesson plans and their effect on students, I considered going from group work to individual work and vice-versa, and also where music was placed in the lesson.

The majority of students (87%) agreed that discussion of the poems as a group was the best approach (See Table 4). As a whole, they enjoyed hearing other students’ opinions and it helped those who were confused figure out possible meanings. One student likened the approach to a debate, which he found favorable.

My teacher journal describes a disappointing lesson where I did not hold a whole class discussion prior to having small group work. When the advanced language arts classes looked at the lyrics of Bob Dylan and/or TLC towards the end of the first week into the unit, they did so on their own in small groups and I did not have to repeatedly ask them to get back on task.

All of the students however, needed more direction with the lyrics than I expected. I believe that this occurred because we had not yet gone over the interpretation of lyrics as a class. I gave them little instruction for this assignment, because I wanted to see how well they adapted their poem interpretation skills to a set of lyrics.

Even though the groups did require more assistance than I had originally anticipated, I was pleased to see that their questions were of content and not process. Some of the ideas presented in these lyrics gave students trouble, but they did understand how to at least identify possible ideas. After we worked through some of the language together, the students did a good job at finding possible interpretations.

What I found common among the majority of the students were the initial feelings of boredom and assumptions that the interpretations would be hard. However, all students said that the class discussion approach did make the activity more enjoyable and not so intimidating. As a result of my study, I now think that transfer for middle school students works best going from larger group to small group, rather than vice-versa. This finding would exemplify Catterall's (2002) *cognitive transfer* of skills, or *affective transfer* of motivation.

Advanced language arts students were asked two questions concerning the placement of music in the unit. The first question was, "What did you think about the lyrics that I gave you to interpret in groups?" And, "Were they easier or harder to interpret than the poems?" Based on the initial questionnaire, I had assumed that active music students would be at ease in interpreting song lyrics. However, this was not borne out in the data analysis (See Table 2).

Interesting about their responses to this question was that many active music students were split in their reactions. Perhaps the difference in responses has something to do with the fact that the active music students read music and play music and are therefore more comfortable in using music actively, but do not have equal practice elasticizing their verbal skills.

The second question asked of the advanced students was, “Do you think that it was easier to start with the poems and move to the lyrics or would it have been easier to move from lyrics to poems?” I found that there was no agreement among students in response to this question. The students’ preference stemmed more from their perspective on teaching strategy, than on the specifics of poetry and lyrics. Some thought that one should start with the hardest task and move on to the easier task, while others thought that one should begin with what is familiar and then move on to what is more challenging. 15% of the students made the observation that it would depend on the lyrics and poems being used (See Table 4).

One student stated, “[Lyrics were] for listening and sounding good, not as much for understanding, [like poetry].” This comment took me by surprise. Comments such as these support the need to demonstrate other approaches for teaching poetry. While one component of music is for the enjoyment of sound, it is not the only component and it interests me that the concept of listening for meaning is foreign to many students.

Research Question 2: What issues accompany the use of music as a co-text in a poetry unit?

In an attempt to recognize the instrumentalist and essentialist views concerning the use of music in education (Scripp, 2002), I chose to use music as a co-text in the music-infused poetry unit. I refer to the term *co-text* in meaning that the value placed on poetry and the value placed on music, including the time spent with each medium, were equally distributed. I did not use one form as an end, but rather used both poetry and music as a means to each other.

Important issues arose when first planning and then carrying out this unit. Where do I put the music? I had to justify the objectives and placement of the music used. I also had to find a stance in this study concerning the element of choice for both myself and my students. I had to decide whether or not music should be censored for the classroom. I also had to explore my own confidence in teaching a music-infused unit.

Placement of Music in the Unit

I decided to place the music after an initial introduction to poetry and interpretation. I wanted to obtain a basis for a comparison of students' behavioral reactions during the traditional poetry-only introduction and the later music-infused lessons. I was able to gauge their initial reactions to poetry and the difficulty level they experienced through daily observations and student surveys. I found that the students were unenthused, to say the least. At first, there were many

who held confused and frustrated looks on their faces. However, by going over the poems as a class and making it a safe environment for sharing opinions, the students became quite insightful and interested in the poems.

I found that this also provided me the opportunity to separate poetry and music as different types of one art form; the platform varied so that each type was seen as deserving of appreciation for the unique qualities it holds. It is important to me, as an art lover, to recognize the intrinsic value of individual art forms. While I did want to show the similarities between music and poetry, hopefully as a way to transfer interest from music to poetry, I also wanted to not overshadow their own unique qualities. Katz (1996) proposes that one experiences the rich wholeness of music prior to translating it into a personal experience or interpreting its meaning. I wanted my students to experience music non-referentially, as well as to interpret it.

Issue of Explicit Lyrics

I did have to devise a stance on the issue of explicit lyrics, because compromise is key to the success of implementing this unit in the classroom (Fletcher, 1987). The compromise on this issue was that students could not use lyrics that promoted illegal acts, such as sex (the students are minors), drug use, and violence. As for the presence of profanity, the student was allowed to use lyrics that contained profanity but had to black out the words with permanent marker. I realized that much of the music popular with middle school aged students contains profanity. The use of popular music and the allowance of explicit lyrics in the classroom today

are comparable to the inclusion of the Phrygian mode –a more dissonant and passionate musical form - in Plato’s educational system as a way to produce “brave and well-balanced warriors” who are knowledgeable of their culture. I wanted to take this opportunity to teach my students how to look at the lyrics and meaning of the songs in a critical way, in other words, teach critical listening skills as opposed to telling them that the music was inappropriate and forcing them to listen to these songs in “secret” and not learn what the artist is singing or rapping about.

This proved to be one of the most important decisions I made in this study. During the “My Language – Your Language Project,” a student stated the following when interpreting and translating a popular song by controversial rapper Eminem: “I have heard this song many times, sung along at times, and even read the lyrics before, but I didn’t realize how bad it was.” This student was referring to the nature of the topic and the language used. This is media literacy success and reflective of Aristotle’s idea that the study of music would prove beneficial in teaching aesthetic values (Politics, 1340bl, ln. 36).

Issues of Teacher Confidence

As recorded in my journal, one of the issues I was anticipating when planning the implementation of this unit was the opinion that music is not a valid text for the classroom. I feel pressure in having to defend my teaching methods in regards to using music. Even as long ago as Aristotle, music and the arts were seen as subordinate to the sciences. The perception that using music in the classroom is

superficial and weak is verbalized by Fletcher (1987): “The creative methods push in the early 1960s created a notion that playing records was an easy way out for lazy teachers” (p. 174). I think this is interesting because while I oppose this notion, I have also found that it does not hold up in the opinions of many current educators. Most teachers to whom I have talked to about this see using music as extremely time-consuming in the planning stages and difficult to implement successfully. I do agree with these teachers that using music in the classroom does prove to be time-consuming, while it is also quite difficult to determine how to use a piece of music to its full potential. Breaking down this unspoken disparagement of using the arts in the classroom is a drive for my study. I found that deeply rooted confidence in one’s teaching and a willingness to try new things are essential parts of implementing a successful music-infused unit.

I also had to come up with ways of showing the effects of using music in poetry unit. Music is not efficient. This puts music in an unfavorable light in regards to the quick feedback characteristic of standardized testing that is currently popular (Fletcher, 1987). Fletcher states that, “Radically new outlooks, strategies, and pooling of facilities are needed if music in schools is to lead to progressive ability and is ultimately to prove ‘accountable’...[so that music does] not to appear frivolous or futile to people who belong to a more severe or ambitious culture” (p.138). I decided to use student scores on the final test to determine whether or not all students were acquiring content knowledge. I also decided to conduct the study during the second quarter of the school year, as opposed to during the first quarter, to have a history

with these students in order to accurately observe their behavioral reactions. While the statistical data provided support that content is not diluted, I feel that the most convincing data come from student comments and behavior.

The issues that arose out of this study centered on the placement of music and on the teacher's role in making decisions about the use of music. I found that by giving up control of some of the music used, the unit became a more meaningful experience for my students. This also took away some of the pressure of accommodating every students' musical taste in my planned lessons.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION

The findings from my study have led me to devise a theory about whether to include music in teaching poetry and how to successfully infuse music into a poetry unit. This theory is based on student scores on content learning, and three affective results determined through qualitative analysis: (1) allowing for student choice, (2) appealing to the affective domains of the students through interest, motivation, engagement, and memorable learning events, and (3) providing a variety of lesson structures. These three domains were found to have positive effects on students' satisfaction with the music-infused unit. These findings support other research about successful learning environments that do not include music (Glatthorn 1991; p.438 - 453). My theory, borne out of the data from my students, holds that music does not water-down the curriculum. In fact, student achievement data in the study indicate that across all groups – placement in advanced, regular, or collaborative classes; race; and music background – students performed at very high levels. Therefore, I conclude that music has no negative effects on learning content. Moreover, qualitative data indicate considerable positive effects.

Recommendations for Teachers

One of the reasons for conducting this study was to create a practical and reproducible music-infused poetry unit for other teachers that was grounded in current research. However, there is one aspect of that was beyond the scope of this study: the amount of teacher training needed to successfully implement a music-

infused unit. I felt comfortable and confident in my abilities to deliver a successful music-infused lesson because I have a long history in reading, playing, studying, and listening to music. However, issues that would face teachers who do not have experience in music is something that needs to be addressed in future research. Is a well-written, tested, and available unit plan enough? Or is teacher training in music essential?

The experience of teaching this unit and collecting data for this study naturally leads to reflection. In reflecting on the various aspects of this unit, such as student choice and instructional strategies, I have five recommendations for future implementations of this unit.

1. In order to facilitate the students' desire for choice, I would let students vote on what poems they are interested in interpreting. I would do this by briefly distributing copies of several different poems the day before I planned on using them. I would then poll the class as to which they were most interested in and collect the 'possibilities' and make copies of those that won the popular vote. These would then be discussed the next day in class.
2. In order to make the transition between poetry to lyrics smoother for students, I would go over a whole class interpretation of lyrics before having students do so in small groups or on their own. I believe that by doing this, the skills required in interpreting poetry would more readily transfer over to interpreting lyrics.

3. When having the students do small group presentations on their interpretation of a given set of lyrics, I would give the students more direction and more choice. I think it would have been more successful if the students were able to choose from a wider range of lyrics and had more guidance as to what was desired in the presentation.
4. I definitely recommend the teacher using examples of the finished product when explaining the “My Language – Your Language Project.” I used a hip-hop song for my first example and I had every single student’s attention.
5. For future implementations, I would take the time to teach a short music theory lesson that specifically addressed terminology. I feel that this would put the non-active music students and the active music students on equal ground.
6. I recommend a variety of structures for lessons, including whole-class, small group, and individual presentations. Further, the teacher needs to vary where music is used – as introduction, focus, or concluding aspect of a lesson. At times, I suggest that music be used solely for listening and appreciating – not as a springboard for interpretation.
7. I recommend that music be used truly as a *co-text* – meaning that it be given equal respect and time in the unit.

My Professional Growth from Implementing this Unit

In conducting this research while teaching full time, I was not only able to gain a firm grasp of related literature concerning the use of music in the class, but also the needs, limitations, and realities of a classroom teacher. So often research, policy, and curriculum are handed down to teachers that have been created by someone who is not even an educator, let alone a classroom teacher. Those with the power to make changes in policy and curriculum seldom have a connection to the real classroom. I hold the same feelings of frustration as many other classroom teachers do when they are told how to manage their classrooms, and how to teach their students by someone who has possibly never taught in his or her life. This is one of the reasons why I wanted to conduct a study of my own classroom, to identify best practices for the students and teacher.

I was also changed by the data analyses. I knew that the daily observations and reflections would lead me to a new perspective of my students and my teaching, but I was surprised when I found myself intrigued by trends or lack of trends among the active and non-active music students. I believe that the act of identifying trends or a lack thereof does improve one's teaching in so many ways. For instance, if a trend is developing and the teacher is aware of it, then she or he can respond knowingly in a positive way. This will be an essential task if educators are to find the reasons behind and the solutions to the minority achievement gap.

Finally, I became a more efficient worker, both as a teacher and a researcher. Teaching full-time, going to school full-time, and writing a thesis taught me how to

ask for help, maintain my sense of humor, take needed time for myself, budget my time appropriately in order to accomplish all tasks, and to see how my studies, research, teaching, and personal and professional growth are all interrelated.

Recommendations for Future Research

Although more descriptive studies are needed, experimental studies using treatment and control groups would provide comparative data on the effects of music on learning.

1. Does the musical background of the teacher have a major effect on the success of a musically-infused unit?

What I found was that my comfort level with music played a major role in implementing the unit. The students, as a whole, are very knowledgeable about the current music scene and asked many questions concerning permission to use various artists or songs. It was a major time-saver that I was familiar with all of the songs they brought to me, because I could immediately approve or reject them. It was also helpful to be familiar in talking about music to others on a level deeper than liking or disliking something. This comfort level with the terminology, the history, and different styles made it easy for me to transition the class from poetry to music. I was also able to draw on this knowledge when answering student questions or explaining concepts in different ways to those who were having difficulties in their understanding.

However, I was the only teacher implementing this unit and I think further research is needed to determine the amount of background musical knowledge (and what kind) is needed and how to facilitate teachers in acquiring this knowledge.

2. Do active-music students earn better grades because of their involvement in music? Are advanced students more interested in learning and performing music? And at what levels of musical knowledge and experience do students begin transferring their knowledge to other subject areas?

These questions emerged after I had finished my data analyses and I realized that there were more advanced language arts students in the active music group than in the non-active music group. Thirteen of the active music students were in advanced language arts classes, and only eight of non-active music students were in an advanced language arts class. Prior to the music-infused unit, all of the active music students outperformed the non-active students in all areas measured (participation, Heroes test, poetry test and the presentation) except for the Independent Reading project. It would be interesting to study two or three students throughout an entire school year who had different musical backgrounds and to determine the effects of their musical knowledge or lack thereof on specific tasks, such as spatial reasoning, spatial temporal reasoning, cognitive development, quality of writing, self-efficacy, and reading comprehension, all which are supported through multiple and unrelated studies (Deasy 2002).

3. What are the most favorable conditions for using music as an instructional tool and co-text?

In order to gain support for music in education and to make music a more accepted and prevalent co-text in the classroom, specific skills need to be identified along with the best practices to develop these skills.

4. How long is content knowledge retained when taught with and in the context of music?

This question was beyond the scope of this study. It would be beneficial to know the long-term memory effects of using music in the classroom.

Final Points

The use of music as an instructional tool or *co-text* arose out of my own apathy towards English/language arts classes in middle and high school and seeing disdain on the faces of high school students during my student teaching experience. I decided to implement a music-infused poetry unit with the 7th graders I was teaching during my second and final year of graduate school, and to study the affective and content knowledge effects for my thesis.

The music-infused poetry unit was successful in gaining the interests of the students and turning their groans into motivation. This unit was student-centered in that it gave students choice and recognized their voices as valid opinions. The use of music and the constant reiteration of there not being one correct interpretation made the classroom environment safe for students to express themselves and ask questions. The students learned about interpretation, the uses of language, literal and metaphorical meanings, and had fun doing it, perhaps because it was fun. Some may agree with Aristotle in believe that learning is not to be fun, but I ask, “Why not?”

I had three personal-professional goals in mind when I began this project: (1) to create a music-infused poetry unit that was grounded in current research and reproducible for other teachers, (2) to study the effect of using music as an instructional tool and co-text on student learning and motivation, and (3) to acquire more knowledge about the current research and the possibilities of using music in the academic classroom. The study gave me the opportunity to address each of these goals.

It is also important to note that the music-infused poetry unit coincides with middle school concepts and goals. Middle schools embrace the team concept which includes interdisciplinary work and curriculum integration as common occurrences. The use of music in the poetry unit connects the subject of music to the subject of language arts without compromising the objectives of either discipline. This unit also succeeds at giving middle school aged students a positive experience with poetry, which will hopefully make their future studies with poetry more enjoyable.

While this study comes to a close, the effects it has left on me as a teacher and a researcher are everlasting. I was recently asked by a colleague how I managed to conduct a research study, write the corresponding thesis, and still teach full-time. I was struck by the realization that I had not thought of this before. I replied, almost automatically, "I guess it is because they are all related. It doesn't matter if I am grading papers, creating lesson plans, or analyzing observations and data, I am still working towards the same goal: student learning and teacher development." I was intrigued by my own words after I said this, because it sounded as if I had spent hours

conjuring up this simple, yet profound, answer, even though I had never thought about it. This is where the proof lies in my own maturing as both teacher and researcher during this study. I had been thinking about it. I had been internalizing the processes, the limitations, the objectives, and the data for over nine months and while I may not have vocalized the connection between teacher and researcher, I knew it internally.

Music is powerful in its construction, purpose, and performance. This is why a soundtrack accompanies every major event in our lives. “Pomp and Circumstance”, “Happy Birthday,” “Here Comes the Bride,” “Take Me Out to the Ballgame,” Handel’s “Messiah,” you know these songs. You have memories of these songs. What about the first time you hear John Lennon’s “Imagine”? Or was it another song for you that opened your eyes, ears, and soul to the poetry of music? “Popular music, which permeates out culture and the lives of kids, is an extremely helpful tool for engaging their interests” (McParland 2002, p. 27). I contend that not only does popular music have this power, but also classical, reggae, ska, hip-hop, and world music. McParland describes using music as a hook. This “hook” has a direct connection with the teaching of poetry. If all students were naturally fond of poetry then the phrases, “I don’t know what it means,” or “This is stupid,” would never be heard by English language arts teachers. The fact that these, plus many other comments of dislike are heard in response to poetry shows the need for something to get students interested. Music is the hook. As seen in my observations and research at the middle school level, all students are musically intelligent at some level and I

believe that from this intelligence comes an interest. Creating an interest for students is becoming more crucial everyday for a successful classroom because of differentiation and diversity. Students are already coming from different cultures, languages, economic backgrounds, and intelligences where lies the unification of some sort, something to interest and engage all students? I submit that the answer is in music.

Once the interest of the student is gained, it is the job the teacher not only to maintain that interest, but to motivate the student to do something with it. Here comes the second role of music in the academic classroom, to motivate. Duncan and Morrell (2000) have found that “students are able to more effectively learn when motivated and hip-hop music is a tremendous motivating force for urban youth” (p. 22). The reasoning behind hip-hop as an effective motivating factor stems from Freire’s theory (1998) that “literacy must initially be taught in the language of the people” and be “continually reflective of one’s culture (pp. 5-6). By providing a relevant context in which poetry will be interpreted, students will become motivated.

The interest is there. Take a look at the number of CDs sold everyday around the world, the fact that every nation has an anthem, and soundtracks accompany our lives. It would be a shame to let music - such a unifying source - go untouched in our classrooms.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A:
Study Permission Letter

9-27-02

Dear ,

As some of you know, I am finishing up my Master's degree at North Carolina State this year and in doing so I will be writing a thesis. My thesis research will look at using music in the English/Language Arts classroom as a learning tool. The questions that I will be addressing in my research are:

1. Does the use of music in the English/Language Arts classroom motivate student to participate more in class and produce high-quality work?
2. Does the use of music in the English/Language Arts classroom raise the student's interest level in the subject area and in school in general?
3. Is music a useful tool in teaching the English/Language Arts? (With special emphasis on writing, reading comprehension, and the closing of the minority achievement gap)
4. Does the use of music in the English/Language Arts classroom teach students how to be critical listeners?

I will respond to these questions by doing daily classroom observations, structured interviews, using surveys about your child's personal interests and talents, and looking at student work derived from lessons using music. I assure you that my research will not interfere with instructional time. On the contrary, I believe that my detailed research, observations, and reflections will prove to be beneficial in creating successful practices in the classroom. The individual observations and interviews that I will conduct with students will help me identify strengths and weaknesses in their learning and in return, will help me guide them to their highest potential.

My thesis research will last from Oct. 7th through Nov. 6th, 2002. My finished product will include library research on music and learning, my observations and research in the classroom, a curriculum model for using music in the English/Language Arts classroom, and sample work from students. **Sample work from students, and research gathered through observations and/or interviews will not bear the student's real name, nor will any descriptions be used that could identify the student in any way. All materials will be kept in a locked secure area. Grades will be reported in the aggregate, not individually.**

I, of course, will not include any student in this research (in any way or form) without parental permission. I would be greatly appreciative if you would give me permission to interview, observe, use his/her sample work (anonymously) in my thesis. If you object to your student being part of this research, I will completely respect and honor your wishes.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter. If you have any questions or comments please feel free to contact me any time.

Sincerely, Beth Salyers

_____ I give Ms. Beth Salyers permission to make observations, interview my child, and use samples of _____'s work for her thesis research. I have read the permission/information letter and understand that my child's identity will be withheld from all research.

_____ I do not give Ms. Beth Salyers permission to make observations, interview my child, nor use samples of _____'s work for her thesis research.

Parent's Signature: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX B:
Student Statements

NAME:

PERIOD:

What I Think Statement:

Friday, November 8, 2002

1. What did you think of the two poems we looked at as a class? If you enjoy them? Why or why not?

2. When you first saw the two poems and I said that we would interpret them what were your initial reactions? Were you stressed? Excited? Bored? Worried? Confused? Tell me about any and all emotions you felt at this time AND please tell me why!

2. How was the format for how we discussed the poems in class? Did you like going over them as a group? Why or why not? What way would work best for you?

3. For periods 8 & 9 only: What did you think about the lyrics that I gave you to interpret in groups? Were they easier or harder to work with than the poems? Why?

4. 8 & 9 only: Do you think that it was easier to start with the poems and move to the lyrics or if it would have been easier to move from lyrics to poems? Why?

Thank you for your input! Please put your name at the top and turn it in to the bin!

Name: _____

Date: _____

Period: _____

“I think” Statement

Answer the questions below thoroughly and honestly. Thank you for your help!

1. What did you learn about your language? What are characteristics of your language?
2. Did you find it easy or difficult to translate a poem or song into either standard English or your language? Why? What was easy? What was difficult?
3. If I had told you what you were doing with the song/poem before you made your selection...would you have still chosen the same song/poem?
4. What did you learn about language from doing this activity?
5. In your opinion, is it easier to interpret/figure out the meaning of a poem or of a song? Why?
6. Think back to the audience/language activity that we did. (Remember when we listened to a song(s) in class and tried to interpret the words, meaning and audience and then for homework you did this two more times?) Did you find it easy or difficult to pick out words and meanings from the song(s) from the radio? Why?
7. Did this activity (of interpreting words, meaning, and audience) get easier for you as you did more? Why or why not?

(Final “I think.... statement” at the end of the unit test)

SURVEY: This part will not be graded, it is just to help me out! Thank you for your help! Be honest!!!

1. What do you remember best about our poetry unit?
2. What was the best thing we did? What was the worst thing we did in your opinion? Why?
3. Was your opinion of poetry changed at all with the use of music during our unit? How & why?
4. How do you personally go about interpreting a poem?
5. What skills do you use or what examples do you refer to (from class) in your mind when interpreting poetry? Please be specific.
6. Do you think that using music and lyrics is a good way to learn about poetry? Why or why not?
7. What was easy about this quiz...and why? What was difficult about this quiz...and why?

Thank you for answering these questions honestly!!!!!!

APPENDIX C:
Poetry Unit Test

Name: _____

Period: _____

Poetry Quiz – December 17th, 2002

A. Match the definition on the right to the correct term on the left.

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| _____ 1. Free Verse | A. A figure of speech in which something is described as though it were something else. |
| _____ 2. Narrative Poem | B. Poetry not written in a regular rhythmical pattern, or meter. It can be any length. |
| _____ 3. Metaphor | C. The feeling created in the reader by a literary work or passage. |
| _____ 4. Mood | D. A poem that tells a story |

B. Fill in the blank with the intended audience for each example.

5. NBC Evening News with Tom Brokaw _____

6. Tom & Jerry Cartoon _____

7. the following lyrics: _____

Yes it's true that I believe
I'm weaker than I used to be
I wear my heart out on my sleeve
And I forget the rest of me

Yes there's times I've been afraid
And there's no harm in that I pray
Cuz I'm more frightened everyday
Someone will take the hopes I have away

C.

8. What is true about all narrative poems? _____

9. What are three characteristics of a free verse poem? (be specific)

- i. _____
- ii. _____
- iii. _____

Extra Credit: (3 points each)

1. What three narrative poems did we look at/hear in class?

2. What free verse poem did we read in-class?

D . Give the literal and metaphorical meanings for the following poem:

10. "The Negro Speaks of Rivers" by Langston Hughes

I've known rivers:

I've known rivers ancient as the world and older than
The flow of human blood in human veins.

My soul has grown deep like the rivers.

I bathed in the Euphrates when the dawns were young.
I built my hut near the Congo and it lulled me to sleep.
I looked upon the Nile and raised the pyramids above it

I heard the singing of the Mississippi when Abe Lincoln
Went down to New Orleans, and I've seen its muddy
Bosom turn all golden in the sunset.

I've known rivers:
Ancient, dusky rivers.

My soul has grown deep like the rivers.

Literal Meaning

Metaphorical Meaning

E. Interpretations!!!! Interpret the following poems:

10. "Dreams" by Langston Hughes

Hold fast to dreams
For if dreams die
Life is a broken-winged bird
That cannot fly.

Hold fast to dreams
For when dreams go
Life is a barren field
Frozen with snow.

11. "My Papa's Waltz" by Theodore Roethke

My whiskey on your breath
Could make a small boy dizzy
But I hung on like death:
Such waltzing was not easy.

We romped until the pans
Slid from the kitchen shelf;
My mother's countenance
Could not unfrown itself.

The hand that held my wrist
Was battered on one knuckle;
At every step you missed
My right ear scraped a buckle.

You beat time on my head
With a palm caked hard by dirt,
Then waltzed me off to bed
Still clinging to your shirt.

APPENDIX D:
Pre-Unit Survey

Name: _____

Period: _____

Date: 8-22-02

Please answer the following questions honestly and completely.

1. Your birthdate is: _____
2. Your favorite food is: _____
3. What three adjectives describe you best?
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
4. Do you consider yourself to be creative? Why or why not?

5. In what ways are you creative? Check all that apply.
 - a. Dance _____
 - b. Sing _____
 - c. Play instrument _____
 - d. Draw/Paint _____
 - e. Sculpt _____
 - f. Write _____
 - g. Tell Jokes _____
 - h. Act _____
 - i. Dress/Clothing _____
 - j. Design _____
 - k. Sports _____
 - l. Other _____
6. In what kind of setting do you produce your best work at school? Check all that apply.
 - a. Completely quiet classroom? _____
 - b. In Groups of friends? _____
 - c. In assigned groups? _____

- d. With music in the background? _____
- e. With people talking? _____
- f. Outside? _____
- g. In desks? _____
- h. On the floor? _____
- i. Other? _____

Please specify: _____

7. In what kind of setting do you do your homework in ?

- a. In a quiet room alone? _____
- b. In front of the T.V.? _____
- c. With music on? _____
- d. In a room with many people in it talking? _____
- e. In a room with other people doing homework? _____
- f. Other? _____

Please specify: _____

8. What is your most prized possession?

9. What is your best quality?

- a. Respectful _____
- b. Responsible _____
- c. Kind _____
- d. Honest _____
- e. Never give-up _____
- f. Helpful _____
- g. Self-disciplined _____
- h. Courageous _____

10. Do you play a musical instrument? Sing? Or Dance? If so, what do you do and where does this activity take place?

11. How often do you listen to music?

- a. Never _____
- b. Once a month _____
- c. A couple times a month _____
- d. Once a week _____
- e. Three times a week _____
- f. Once a day _____
- g. Many times a day _____

12. Do you watch...

- a. MTV _____
- b. MTV2 _____
- c. Soul Train _____
- d. VH1 _____
- e. CMT _____
- f. 106 & Park _____
- g. Austin City Limits _____
- h. Blues Express _____
- i. Rap City _____
- j. TRL _____
- k. Behind The Music _____
- l. Top 20 Countdown _____
- m. HTV _____
- n. BBC _____
- o. Others: _____

13. Which of the following kinds of music do you listen to?

- a. Hip-Hop _____
- b. Pop _____
- c. Classical _____
- d. Reggae _____
- e. Folk _____
- f. World _____
- g. Salsa _____
- h. Rock _____
- i. Oldies _____
- j. Jazz _____
- k. Blues _____
- l. Metal _____

- m. Grunge _____
- n. Ska _____
- o. Tejano _____
- p. R n' B _____
- q. Old school rap _____
- r. New Wave _____
- s. 80's _____
- t. Alternative _____
- u. Show tunes _____
- v. Fusion _____
- w. Techno _____
- x. Beach _____
- y. Soundtracks _____
- z. Drum Corps _____
- aa. Swing _____
- bb. Country _____
- cc. Bluegrass _____
- dd. Other: _____types of music you listen to
 cont'd..._____

14. Do like to participate in class?

- a. Yes _____
- b. No _____

15. Do you read outside of class?

- a. Yes _____
- b. No _____

16. If you answered "yes" to questions 15, what kinds of things do you read?

- a. Newspapers _____
- b. Books _____
- c. Magazines _____
- d. Computer Screens _____
- e. Maps _____
- f. Textbooks _____
- g. Other _____

Please specify: _____

17. What do you like to do in your free-time?

18. What is your favorite movie?

19. Who is your favorite musician/band?

20. Do you like to go to concerts?

a. Yes _____

b. No _____

21. Do you participate in any sports? If so, which ones?

22. What is your favorite thing about English/language arts?

23. What is your least favorite thing about English/ language arts?

24. Do you have any pets?

25. What is the best book that you have ever read?

26. What do you want to do when you grow-up? (after high school)

27. What profession do you think you might like to have when you are older?

28. Where were you born?

29. Who do you cheer for during b-ball season?

30. Who do you cheer for during football season?

31. And what about baseball season?

32. Any soccer fans out there? Who do you support?

33. What other sports are you an avid fan of?

34. If you could be any animal, what would you be and why?

In this column, I would like for you to tell me anything else about you. You may expand your answer from a previous question or tell me something entirely new. It is up to you....what do you want me to know about you?

APPENDIX E:
Presentation Guidelines and Rubric

Name: _____

DUE DATE: 5th & 9th Periods = Wednesday, December 18th
4th & 8th Periods = Thursday, December 19th

Class time to work on project: Friday, December 13th (most of the period)
 Monday, December 16th (at least half of the period)

Steps: (check off the following steps as you complete them)

_____ 1. Find a partner and write his/her name & number here:

_____ 2. Choose a song or poem. You may search the internet, look in literature/poetry books in class, ask someone for ideas, or find a song/poem from your own collection. However...no profanity...no inappropriate subjects...ask if you are unsure about a particular song/poem. Write the title & artist/author of the song/poem that you have chosen here: _____

_____ 3. Obtain a copy of the lyrics/poem that you have chosen. www.ohhla.com; www.lyrics.com; www.lyricsworld.com;

_____ 4. Answer the following questions on a separate sheet of paper. (“I don’t know”, “Stuff”, “Because I think so”, etc...are NOT acceptable answers...I want strong and supported opinions here! Impress me!!!)

- A. Who is the intended audience? Why do you think this?
- B. Describe the type of language used in this song/poem. Be specific.
- C. What is the mood of the song/poem? Why do you think this?
- D. What is the tone of the song/poem? Why do you think this?
- E. Is it an example of free verse? Is it an example of a narrative poem?
- F. Does the song/poem contain a metaphor? If so, what are the literal and metaphorical meanings?

_____ 5. Interpret the song/poem. You will need to decide whether to interpret line by line or stanza by stanza. Your interpretation should be written out on a separate sheet of paper. This will take the most time...and I encourage you to spend class time working on it so I can answer any questions you might have.

_____ 6. Staple the lyrics/poem, your answers to step 4, and your interpretation to this sheet of paper.

(Continued on Back)

7. Prepare to present your song/poem with the class. You will need to cover the following:

1. Play the song, read the lyrics aloud, or read the poem aloud
2. Share your answers to the questions in Step 4. Yes, all of them.
3. Give the class a summary of your interpretation
4. Tell the class why you and your partner chose this song/poem

****Below is a copy of the rubric that I will be using to grade your presentation. Please take a look at it so you are aware of what I will be looking for.**

Information

Good Job!!!	Adequate	Needs Improvement
Song/Poem Presented (either played or read aloud) (5 points)	If read aloud (lyrics or poem), reader was not loud enough or was not serious in the delivery (3 points)	Song/Poem Not Presented At All (1 point)
All 6 questions in Step 4 were thoroughly answered (12 points)	Some questions were not answered, or answers were vague and difficult to understand (8 points)	Most of the questions were not answered, or all answers were vague and difficult to understand (2 points)
Summary of interpretation was presented (10 points)	Summary was presented, but was difficult to understand at times (7 points)	Summary was not presented or was completely incoherent (2 points)
Reason why this song/poem was chosen was presented (3 points)	Reason given was, "Because I like it"... (tell me WHY you like it) (2 points)	Reason given was, "I don't know." (1 point)

Good Job!!!!	Adequate	Needs Improvement
Clear, consistent rate of speech (5 points)	Some speech too fast or too slow...some words were unclear (3 points)	Most words were too fast, too slow or unclear (1 point)
Spoke loudly enough so those in the back row to hear (5 points)	At times the volume was too loud or too soft (3 points)	Difficult to hear throughout the presentation (1 point)
Standard English used consistently (5 points)	Standard English Variance –No more than 5 usage errors (3 points)	Standard English Variance --More than 5 usage error made (1 point)
Appropriate eye contact made throughout presentation (5 points)	Appropriate eye contact some of the time (3 points)	Little or no eye contact made (1 point)