Popular Music and Sociocultural Empathy in the Elementary Classroom:

A Qualitative Ethnographic Study

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Contents

Abstract

This qualitative ethnographic study explores the undocumented effects of popular music on elementary students' social and cultural empathy. Previous studies have explored the effects of popular music on adolescent and college-age students, but no study has researched these effects in the elementary classroom. This study aims to show that learning about socially-relevant popular music in a social setting advances students' sociocultural and musical development. The researcher recruited eighty elementary-aged students from a private school in the Las Virgines School District in Los Angeles to participate in this study. The participants were sorted into subgroups by grade, and each subgroup was subject to four lessons, each of which focused on a different type of cultural popular music. With each subgroup, the researcher conducted a pre-lesson interview and a post-lesson group interview. After the research period, the researcher watched video recordings of the lessons and observed the students in their natural classroom setting. This study found that utilizing socially-relevant popular music for formal study in elementary classrooms positively affects students' development of social and cultural empathy. These results add to the existing body of literature and advocate for improving elementary music education curricula. For further research, one might perform this kind of study at a public school to determine the differences found between public and private schools or study student engagement with popular music versus other types of music to help determine if popular music is actually more engaging than other types of music.

Keywords: popular music, elementary education, social and cultural empathy, multicultural music, ethnography, elementary music.

CHAPTER 1: Introduction

Introduction

In the grand scope of music education, incorporating popular music into the classroom is a relatively new addition. Until the 1960s, music education primarily consisted of songbooks that focused on American folk songs, hymns, or music from the Western classical tradition.[1] Popular music did not debut as a valuable part of music education until the mid-1960s, when jazz and other popular styles began to appear in undergraduate classrooms. Later, after the Tanglewood Symposium and other key music education conferences, popular music began to make its way into high school and elementary classrooms. While popular music may be included in modern music education curricula, it is often used as a "special" lesson or as a supplementary tool to engage students. However, music educators did not typically consider popular music valuable for elementary instruction. In 2011, musicologist Simone Krüger performed a study with her undergraduate students, where she taught lessons on popular music and found that it increased the students' cultural empathy. This study advocated for educators to use popular music in their classrooms to help teach students cultural empathy. This kind of study, however, has not been performed at the elementary level. Since elementary students are still learning developmental skills like cultural and social empathy, using popular music in the classrooms to further these developments is critical. Therefore, in this study, the researcher demonstrates that praxially learning about socially-relevant popular music in a social setting advances students' social and musical development.

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[1] Bennett Reimer, *Seeking the Significance of Music Education: Essays and Reflections* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, 2009), 268.

Thesis Statement

Although the study of Western classical music is the standard educational model for many schools across America, integrating socially-relevant popular music into the elementary classroom provides students with a holistic music education that fosters social and cultural empathy. Further, integrating socially-relevant popular music into the elementary classroom allows music educators to train students and future music educators to recognize the value of multiculturalism in educational programs.

Theoretical Framework

The researcher based this qualitative ethnographic study on David Elliot's philosophy of praxial music education (PME) and Lev Vygotsky's theory of cognitive development. This study argues for including popular music in elementary curricula from the perspective that practicing popular music in social contexts provides students with an education that best reflects the holistic human experience. Royal Stanton defines American popular music as a genre "made for, sold to, and thoroughly enjoyed by a considerable majority of American listeners."[2] This type of music can include many sub-genres but primarily refers to music intended to be received and appreciated by a large audience.

A theoretical framework must have both a goal and a desired outcome. Musicologist Pamala Burnard states that the objective of "the praxial focus is on the promotion of genuine experiences of and for children as listeners, performers, composers, improvisers, arrangers, and

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[2] Royal Stanton, "A Look at the Forest," *Music Educators Journal* 53, no. 3 (1966): 39, https://doi.org/10.2307/3390841.

conductors."[3] Elliot's theory suggests that the *doing* of music helps students achieve the desired outcomes of music education, which are "self-other-growth, self-other-knowledge, human flourishing, and musical enjoyment."[4] As demonstrated by this study, active participation in popular music allows students to achieve these educational goals.

Elliot's theory suggests that bringing multicultural music into the classroom is vital to student development and can positively affect social and cultural compassion.[5] Most people define multicultural music as a type of music people associate themselves with to "proclaim their cultural-ideological preferences, beliefs, and values musically." [6] Multicultural music often helps tie individuals to a group of people who share similar ideals and experiences.[7] These types of music are known as multicultural "musics."[8] American popular music will always be inherently multicultural because America is a diverse nation comprising many cultures and sub-cultures. Thus, one can easily apply Elliot's theory to the inclusion of popular music in the American classroom. Further, one of the primary goals of music education is to promote interpersonal development. Through the study of American popular music, students are positively affected in their development of cultural sympathy and appreciation, which in turn allows students to develop their interpersonal relationships.

Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky discusses social and cultural development through his theory of the Zone of Proximal Development. Vygotsky views "human development as a

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[3] David J. Elliot, *Praxial Music Education; Reflections and Dialogues*, (Oxford, NY: Oxford University Press, 2005), 280.

[4] Elliot, *Music Matters,* 396.

[5] Ibid., 11.

[6] Ibid., 264.

[7] Ibid., 264.

[8] Ibid.

socially mediated process in which children acquire their cultural values, beliefs, and problem-solving strategies through collaborative dialogues with more knowledgeable members of society."[9] In other words, humans develop cultural beliefs, values, problem-solving, and social skills by engaging in discussions with more knowledgeable members of society.[10] Vygotsky states that the Zone of Proximal Development is "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem-solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers."[11] The Zone of Proximal Development (or ZPD) refers to the gap between what a learner can accomplish on their own and the level of achievement they can reach through the support of others. Along with Elliot's theory of praxial music education, Vygotsky's theory shows that practicing multicultural music in a social setting advances students' sociocultural and musical development.[12] This study will rely on Vygotsky's ZPD theory and Elliot's PME theory because they most accurately reflect the holistic nature of music in the human sociocultural experience.

Problem Statement

The study of Western classical music in the elementary classroom is the standard educational model for many schools across America. Musicians and Music educators have long seen Western classical music as the most musically sound and complex type of music. Therefore,

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[9] Saul Mcleod, "Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory of Cognitive Development," (August 18, 2022, Accessed December 6 2022), https://www.simplypsychology.org/vygotsky.html.

[10] Mcleod, "Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory of Cognitive Development."

[11] Lev L.S. Vygotsky, *Mind in Society; the Development of Higher Phycological Processes*, (Cambridge, MA; Harvard University press, 1978), 86.

[12] Vygotsky, *Mind in Society,* 86.

many educators believe studying these "great" musical works will give students the best musical education possible.[13] However, research has shown that, in some cases, studying music solely from the Western classical tradition can lower elementary student engagement and learning outcomes.[14] Further, solely teaching music from the Western classical tradition deprives students of opportunities to broaden their musical horizons and grow in cultural empathy and compassion. Recognizing this problem, musicologists have argued for including popular music in the classroom to expose students to musical and cultural diversity.[15] Studies have been determining the effects of integrating popular music into the classroom at the undergraduate level, but very little research has been conducted on the effects of such music in the elementary classroom.[16] The problem is that there is insufficient research on the impact of socially-relevant popular music in the elementary classroom or if such integration would affect students' cultural and social empathy.[17]

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[13] Bennett Reimer, *Seeking the Significance of Music Education: Essays and Reflections* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, 2009), 268

[14] Sharon Davis, "Informal Learning Processes in an Elementary Music Classroom." *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education*, no. 198 (2013): 23–50.

[15] David J. Elliot, Marissa Silverman, *Music Matters: A Philosophy of Music Education,* Second ed. (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2015), 264

[16] Simone Krüger, "Democratic Pedagogies: Perspectives from Ethnomusicology and World Music Educational Contexts in the United Kingdom," *Ethnomusicology* 55, no. 2 (2011): 280-281, https://doi.org/10.5406/ethnomusicology.55.2.0280.

[17] Davis, "Informal Learning Processes in an Elementary Music Classroom," 23; Manaju Durairaj, "Building Empathy in the Music Classroom" (October 21, 2016 accessed December 4, 2022). https://nafme.org/building-empathy-music-classroom.

Purpose Statement

This study aimed to determine the effects of socially-relevant popular music on the elementary classroom. Many undergraduate programs incorporate socially-relevant popular music into their classrooms and have noticed a shift in students' ability to empathize with other cultures.[18] Further, as many undergraduate programs focus on commercial performance, the study of popular music is often incorporated into the curriculum. However, elementary schools lack the same motivations to include socially-relevant popular music in their programs, leading to the lack of literature on this subject. One goal of this study is to address this gap in the available literature and propose an improved music education for elementary-age students. These students are the future of our society and are the nation's future leaders and music educators. If it is possible to provide a quality music education and affect students' compassion for other cultures by developing current music curricula, this type of education would greatly benefit society, as it would train future American citizens to have social and cultural empathy. This study defines socially-relevant popular music as music that has strong ties to popular culture and is culturally shared and understood by a group of people and will follow a qualitative ethnographic methodology. Eighty students from first through fourth grade, were studied to determine these effects in the elementary classroom.

Significance Statement

This study's findings will affect meaningful societal change and provide a basis for improving elementary music education curricula. Because America is a uniquely multicultural

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[18] Jennifer M. Mellizo, "Exploring the Effect of Music Education on Intercultural Sensitivity in Early Adolescence: A Mixed Methods Inquiry," *Music Education Research*, Vol. 21, no. 5, (2019): 282, 10.1080/14613808.2019.1665005.

nation comprising many sub-cultures, citizens must acquire cultural empathy to participate in and benefit the rest of society. Without cultural empathy, citizens cannot coexist or communicate with their neighbors, leading to a disruption of peace among communities. However, when citizens can empathize with others' cultural identities, they create a space for all to thrive. In the elementary classroom, teaching cultural empathy and compassion is vital to students' development, and in so doing, educators can create an environment that honors students' cultures and reflects the holistic human experience.[19] Musicologist David Elliot states that the ultimate goal of music education is to further "self-other-growth, self-other-knowledge, human flourishing, and musical enjoyment."[20] By incorporating socially-relevant popular music into the classroom, educators can provide an engaging education that teaches students how to be better people.

Further, this study will fill the gap in existing research on this topic. While studies have researched the effects of socially-relevant popular music on high school, undergraduate, and graduate students, no study has researched the effects of socially-relevant popular music in the elementary classroom. Studies have shown that exposure to socially-relevant popular music can increase students' intercultural sympathy.[21] One of the goals of this study is to determine whether elementary-aged students will also trend toward intercultural sympathy. Lastly, this study will address the gap in existing research on the musical integrity of socially-relevant popular music.

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[19] Rhoda Bernard, "Finding a Place in Music Education: The Lived Experiences of Music Educators with "Non-Traditional" Backgrounds," *Visions of Research in Music Education:* 22, no. 4, (2012): 2, https://opencommons.uconn.edu/vrme/vol22/iss1/4.

[20] Elliot, *Music Matters,* 396.

[21] Karen Howard, "The Emergence of Children's Multicultural Sensitivity: An Elementary School Music Culture Project." *Journal of Research in Music Education* 66, no. 3 (2018): 261–77, https://www.jstor.org/stable/48588923.

Qualitative Ethnographic Methodology

This study employs a qualitative methodology because the purpose of a qualitative study is the "collection of data in a natural setting sensitive to the people and places under study, and data analysis that is both inductive and deductive and establishes patterns or themes."[22] In other words, this methodology prioritizes the perceptions or lived experiences of the participants.[23] To implement this, the researcher will utilize open-ended questions to allow the participants to answer truthfully and openly. Further, this study will include an ethnographic focus. An ethnographic study aims to gather non-numerical data on "the shared and learned patterns of values, behaviors, beliefs, and language of a culture-sharing group."[24] For these reasons, the researcher will conduct her study in the students' natural classroom setting for more accurate data collection.

Research Questions

1. In what ways can socially-relevant popular music affect cultural empathy and understanding in the elementary classroom?

2. In what ways can socially-relevant popular music affect social empathy and understanding in the elementary classroom?

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[22]John W. Creswell, Qualitative inquiry and Research Design; Choosing Among Five Approaches, (Los Angeles, CA: SAGE Publications, 2013), 44

[23] Ibid., 42.

[24] Ibid., 90.

Hypotheses

1. Socially-relevant popular music can help foster cultural empathy and understanding in the elementary classroom by promoting student relationships and exposing students to multicultural music.

2. Socially-relevant popular music can help foster social empathy and understanding in the elementary classroom by promoting student relationships and exposing students to multicultural music

Core Concepts/Definitions

While many concepts are central to the study of elementary music education, two primary concepts are related to this study: socially-relevant popular music and sociocultural empathy. This study defines socially-relevant popular music as music that has strong ties to popular culture and is culturally shared and understood by a group of people. The researcher chose to use this specific term instead of simply using the term "popular music" or "socially-relevant music" because not all music that is popular at any given time will be socially-relevant, and not all music that is socially-relevant will be popular. Using this term clarifies the concept of music that is both socially-relevant and popular. Second, in this study, sociocultural empathy is defined as the ability to understand the feelings of others specifically related to social relationships and other cultures. This study aims to discover the undocumented effects of socially-relevant popular music on elementary students' sociocultural empathy. In doing so, this study seeks to suggest improvements for elementary curricula that would help students grow in sociocultural empathy and their love of music.

Chapter Summary

Despite the recent progress made in music education to include popular music styles and multicultural music, the primary educational model for schools across America remains the study of Western classical Music. While students undoubtedly have much to gain from studying such music, Western classical Music does not offer students many opportunities to grow in social or cultural empathy. For this reason, educators sought to determine if there was value in studying popular music in the music classroom outside of strictly musical reasons. Researchers like Simone Krüger and Jennifer Mellizo studied the sociocultural effects of multicultural and popular music on adolescent and undergraduate-age students. However, there is a gap in the research on this subject as this kind of study has not been performed at the elementary level. Therefore, this study shows that integrating socially-relevant popular music into the elementary classroom provides students with a music education that fosters social and cultural empathy. Further, this study demonstrates that integrating socially relevant popular music in the elementary classroom will make space for students and educators to recognize the value of multiculturalism.

CHAPTER 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The inclusion of popular music in the classroom significantly progressed in the mid-1960s with the development of the Civil Rights movement. As new laws ensured educational equality in schools, music educators had to include new and diverse types of music into their curriculum. Until this time, the study of Western classical music had been the primary teaching method in elementary schools. Jazz and other types of popular music had begun to be studied at the undergraduate level but had yet to make their way into elementary education. Royal Stanton was one of the first authors to argue that students learn better by studying popular music rather than classical music. His work "A Look at the Forest," published in 1966, maintained that the same musical techniques students learned through classical music were present in the different popular music genres.[25] Stanton contended that not educating American students about the music they heard in "real life" would be a disservice to American culture. Further, he argued that popular music is more easily communicated and learned by those in whose culture it originates, and it will always be relevant because, by definition, it is constantly evolving.[26]

Stanton's educational model was implemented in some elementary curricula, but his argument for inclusion came at the wrong time. Just four years after Stanton published his article, Bennett Reimer published his work *A Philosophy of Music Education*, which became the standard educational philosophy in America. Reimer argued for an aesthetic educational philosophy emphasizing the study of "great" musical works.[27] Because of this, Reimer's

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[25] Stanton, "A Look at the Forest," 37.

[26] Ibid., 39.

[27] Reimer, *Seeking the Significance of Music Education,* 51.

educational philosophy largely excluded multicultural music and popular music.[28] Despite this,

Reimer's philosophy remained the most prevalent educational philosophy until Elliot proposed

his praxial music education in his work *Music Matters*.[29] Elliot's educational philosophy argues

that studying multicultural music in the classroom reflects the human experience.[30] While

Elliot's education philosophy more fully reflects the role of music in the human experience, both

philosophies are still being debated by musicologists and music educators today.

Effects of Multicultural Music in the Classroom

Researchers have conducted studies to determine the effects of multicultural music in

elementary, middle-school, high-school, and undergraduate classrooms, even though the

incorporation of multicultural music into the classroom is still relatively new in the timeline of

music education. Musicologist Simone Krüger performed an ethnographic study in which she

researched the effects of multicultural music in the undergraduate classroom. This study showed

that incorporating music from cultures initially perceived by students as "traditional, primitive,

and backward" led to the students' "changes in attitude and perspective toward world musics and

their makers."[31] Through exposure to multicultural music, students at the undergraduate level

were able to develop a greater level of cultural sympathy and understanding.

Jennifer Mellizo conducted a similar study on adolescent students. Mellizo's mixed

methods study explored the correlation between the study of cultural music and cultural

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[28] Thomas Regelski, *Implications of Aesthetic versus Praxial Philosophies of Music for Curriculum Theory in Music Education*, (accessed November 11, 2022) http://maydaygroup.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Regelski-Implications.pdf.

[30] Elliot, *Music Matters,* 264.

[31]Krüger, "Democratic Pedagogies," 281.

sensitivity in adolescent students.[32] First, Mellizo performed qualitative research through interviews and recordings. Then, she administered a quantitative test to determine the students' cultural knowledge after exposure to multicultural music. This study concluded that integrating cultural music in the classroom caused most students to be more culturally aware and sympathetic.

Kay Edwards narrowed the study of multicultural music in the classroom by researching achievement resulting from instruction in transcultural music in elementary-aged students. Her study reached a similar conclusion to Mellizo's study.[33] The study's results suggested that multicultural achievement "can include many forms of musical and extramusical learning, but that in-depth experiences can facilitate unique learning and depth of understanding about another culture."[34] Edward's study further demonstrated that incorporating multicultural music into the classroom positively affects students' ability to develop cultural understanding.

All three of these studies suggest that studying multicultural music in the classroom can help students develop cultural awareness and sensitivity. Elliot argues that American popular music is inherently multicultural because the American people are so diverse.[35] Therefore, by categorizing popular music as multicultural music, one may reasonably assume that studying popular music in the classroom would suggest similar results. Because America comprises many cultures and sub-cultures, the music that is popular at any given time will be intrinsically multicultural. However,

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[32] Mellizo, "Exploring the Effect of Music Education on Intercultural Sensitivity in Early Adolescence," 473.

[33] Kay L. Edwards, "Multicultural Music Instruction in the Elementary School: What Can Be Achieved?" *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education*, no. 138 (1998): 62–82. http://www.jstor.org/stable/40318939.

[34] Ibid., 62.

[35] Elliot, *Music Matters,* 115.

researchers have not yet conducted a study to evaluate the effects of integrating popular music in the elementary classroom. These studies provide a thorough foundation for further research, highlighting the research gap this study aims to address.

Finally, Boyle, Hosterman, and Ramsel quantitatively tested sociocultural factors and how they influenced students' music preferences.[36] Depending on the student's cultural life outside the classroom, music preferences within popular music differed. This study found that undergraduate students incorporated more cultural diversity in their music preferences than younger students who perhaps experienced less exposure to Multicultural music. However, this study also found that younger students preferred multicultural music they had heard often on the radio to unfamiliar popular music.[37] This study demonstrates the importance of studying multicultural music with young students

Social Effects of Popular Music in the Classroom

While integrating multicultural music into the elementary classroom has been previously researched, as shown in the studies of Krüger, Mellizo, and Edwards, the social and cultural effects of including popular music in the elementary classroom have not been as thoroughly researched. For this reason, musicologist Sharon Davis conducted a study exploring how elementary students engaged with popular music and classical music in an informal learning setting.[38] After performing a qualitative study, including video recording and interviews, Davis concluded that students could make informal musical decisions more quickly after listening to

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[36] J. David Boyle, Glenn L. Hosterman, and Darhyl S. Ramsey. "Factors Influencing Pop Music Preferences of Young People." *Journal of Research in Music Education* 29, no. 1 (1981): 55 https://doi.org/10.2307/3344679.

[37] Boyle, Hosterman, and Ramsey,"Factors Influencing Pop Music Preferences of Young People," 55.

[38] Davis, "Informal Learning Processes in an Elementary Music Classroom," 23.

popular music than classical music. She also discovered that students seemed more engaged in learning activities and maintained a stronger emotional connection when learning about popular music than classical music. However, this study excludes the mention of popular music in a formal educational setting. While Davis' study argues for popular music in the classroom based on informal learning, this study aims to discover the effects of including popular music in the elementary classroom for the purpose of formal study.

Amanda Minks also performed a study on the social effects of popular music in the fifth-grade classroom.[39] Her article discussed the social nature of music and the effects of socially enjoying popular music rather than learning about it in a formal setting. Minks contended that while children often enjoy music outside of the classroom, when they enroll in school, much of the music studied does not reflect the music they listen to in their daily lives. As a result, Minks states that many students can lose their ability to enjoy music by studying "school" music.[40] As this study aims to research the effects of socially-relevant popular music on elementary-aged students, Minks' article provides a solid basis on which to define socially-relevant popular music. Further, Minks' study will help the researcher demonstrate the importance of studying authentic music applications by incorporating popular music in the classroom. If, as Davis' study suggests, students are more engaged in learning activities when studying popular music, then educators need to be familiar with popular and multicultural music to encourage student development and facilitate learning through songs they enjoy in their daily lives.[41]

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[39] Amanda Minks, "Growing and Grooving to a Steady Beat: Pop Music in Fifth-Graders' Social Lives," *Yearbook for Traditional Music,* no.31, (1999): 77. doi:10.2307/767975.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Elliot, *Music Matters,* 264; Boyle, Hosterman, and Ramsey, "Factors Influencing Pop Music Preferences of Young People," 55.

Structural or Aesthetic Qualities of Popular Music in the Classroom

To determine whether popular music provides the same level of structural or aesthetic musical qualities (which include "melody, harmony, rhythm, timbre, dynamics, texture, and…organizational processes") as classical music, one must first understand the differences between these two genres.[42] Randall Allsup's article "Popular Music and Classical Musicians: Strategies and Perspectives" describes the difference between these two genres and how educators can approach teaching popular music through the application of various strategies.[43] Importantly, Allsup notes that there is a "difference between simply having popular music in the schools and educating through and with popular music."[44]

While these two genres differ greatly in style and content, James Parakilas, as well as Stanton and Elliot, argue for the inclusion of popular music in the classroom by suggesting that Western classical music and popular music are not as isolated as they may seem. In his 1984 study, "Classical Music as Popular Music," Parakilas argues that Western classical music was historically considered popular music. He, alongside Stanton, contends that all the Western classical "greats," like Bach, Mozart, or Beethoven, wrote music that was popular in their time.[45] Further, they argue that students must learn both classical and popular music in the classroom to create musical works that reflect their human experience. However, Parakilas proceeds to state that Western classical music defines modern popular music and suggests that modern popular music is less structurally

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[42] Elliot, *Music Matters,* 95.

[43] Randall Everett Allsup, "Popular Music and Classical Musicians: Strategies and Perspectives," *Music Educators Journal* 97, no. 3 (2011): 30, http://www.jstor.org/stable/23012588.

[44] Ibid., 34.

[45] James Parakilas, "Classical Music as Popular Music," *The Journal of Musicology* 3, no.1 (1984): 1–18. https://doi.org/10.2307/763659.

or aesthetically sound than Western classical music. He suggests that classical music includes special qualities that make it appealing to a universal audience, while popular music does not incorporate these qualities, making it appealing to fewer audiences.

While Parakilas' argument supports the inclusion of popular music in the classroom, he does not believe that popular music maintains the same amount of structural or aesthetic musical qualities as Western classical music.[46] However, his argument is mostly based on comparing avant-garde or twentieth-century classical musical works with Western classical works, and he fails to cite any quantitative or qualitative studies on which to base his study. This work provides thoughtful perspectives on the comparison of socially-relevant popular music to Western classical music and will help the researcher demonstrate the significance of my study.

To determine whether incorporating socially-relevant popular music into the elementary classroom will serve as a successful teaching model, one must consider its structural or aesthetic musical qualifications along with its social and relational implications. While there are many existing studies about the structural or aesthetic qualities of socially-relevant popular music, Timothy Warner's work *Pop Music - Technology and Creativity* compares the structural or aesthetic qualities of popular music with those present in rock music to teach the process of making popular music.[47] This type of comparative research is what this study aims to achieve. Few studies compare the differences between popular music and Western classical music, and the researcher addressed this gap in the literature by structuring this study similarly to Warner's.

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[46] James Parakilas, "Classical Music as Popular Music," 1; Stanton, "A Look at the Forest," 39.

[47] Timothy Warner, *Pop Music - Technology and Creativity: Trevor Horn and the Digital Revolution*, 1st ed., Routledge (2003). https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351218504.

The Educator's Role in Incorporating Popular Music into the Classroom

Finally, a discussion of the music educator's role in incorporating socially-relevant popular music into the classroom must be raised for future research. Frank Abrahams argues for the importance of music educator literacy in socially-relevant popular music and current technology by demonstrating how students connect to popular music. By showing how vital popular music is to students' social and musical development, Abrahams argues that educators must be responsible for educating themselves in popular music and technology to create meaningful music experiences for students.[48] Similarly, Sharon Davis and Deborah Blair argue that American teachers must educate themselves on how to teach popular music because of its relevance in students' lives and its potential for student learning.

Chapter Summary

The works of Stanton, Reimer, and Elliot provide a historical context for incorporating multicultural music in the elementary classroom. While musicologists and music educators are still debating the implementation of multicultural music in the classroom, its effects have been studied by researchers like Davis, Mellizo, and Edwards. Their studies suggest that incorporating multicultural music into the classroom can positively affect students' development of cultural sympathy. However, even though popular music is a type of multicultural music, the effects of popular music in the elementary classroom have not been thoroughly studied. While authors like Davis and Minks have researched the social and behavioral effects of popular music on elementary students, no thorough research has been conducted on the impact of popular music on

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[48] Frank Abrahams, "Another Perspective: Teaching Music to Millennial Students," *Music Educators Journal* 102, no. 1 (2015): 97–100. http://www.jstor.org/stable/24755637

the development of cultural sympathy in elementary students. Parakilas and Warner demonstrate the importance of popular music in the classroom, but its structural or aesthetic qualities, when compared to Western classical music, have been left relatively under-investigated.

Lastly, a discussion of the educator's role in incorporating popular music into the elementary classroom is necessary for further research. Through the studies of Abrahams, Davis, and Blair, it is evident that teachers have a responsibility to create meaningful musical experiences for students by integrating popular music into the classroom. This study is grounded in Elliot's theory of a praxial music education, in which the goal is to promote students' participation in the doing of music, and the desired outcome is to further student's development of "self-other-growth, self-other-knowledge, human flourishing, and musical enjoyment."[49] By incorporating this research from a praxial perspective, this study will determine if the effects of popular music on elementary students will further the outcomes of music education and offer students an education that holistically reflects the role of music in the human experience.

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[49] Elliot, *Music Matters,* 396.

CHAPTER 3: Methodology

Research Design

This study followed a qualitative ethnographic design. John Creswell states that "ethnography is a design of inquiry coming from anthropology and sociology in which the researcher studies the shared patterns of behaviors, language, and actions of an intact cultural group in a natural setting over a prolonged period of time."[50] In this study, the author performed an ethnographic study of the shared behavior of elementary students in their classroom setting to seek to understand the effects of socially-relevant popular music on students' social and cultural empathy.[51] The researcher chose to utilize a qualitative methodology because the goal of this study involves analyzing non-numerical data, which involves participants' perceptions, comprehension, insights, and world views.[52] While previous studies have been conducted to determine the effects of multicultural music in upper-level classrooms, the effects of socially-relevant popular music in the elementary classroom have been left relatively unresearched. Studies conducted by Simone Krüger and Jennifer Mellizo show that incorporating multicultural music into high-school and undergraduate classrooms can increase students' social and cultural empathy and interpersonal relationships.[53] Other studies by Sharon Davis and Amanda Minks have shown that incorporating popular music into the classroom has a positive behavioral effect

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[50] John W. Creswell, and J. David Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, (Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications, 1994), 22.

[51] Ibid., 146.

[52] Ibid.; Gabriel Woods, "Principle Perceptions on the Inclusion of Music Education and Professional Development Opportunities: A Qualitative Study, (Thesis, Liberty University, VA; 2021), 45.

[53] Krüger, "Democratic Pedagogies," 281; Mellizo, "Exploring the Effect of Music Education on Intercultural Sensitivity in Early Adolescence," 473. 10.1080/14613808.2019.1665005.

on elementary students. However, these studies have not focused on the social or cultural aspects of this type of music in relation to elementary students.[54] This study aimed to narrow the focus of these previous studies and examine the effects of socially-relevant popular music in the elementary classroom.

Data Collection Plan

Before beginning this study, the author contacted the school board where the study took place and received permission from the principal of the school to hold the study.[55] Then, the researcher obtained permission from Liberty University's IRB to perform the study. After obtaining permission from both schools, the researcher began preparations for the research to take place.

The research was conducted in the students' natural classroom setting, and video recordings of each portion of the study (pre-lesson group interviews, lessons, and post-lesson group interviews) were taken using a video recording device placed out of students' sight to observe student behavior in a natural context. Students were made aware that they were being recorded. Still, to preserve the integrity of the classroom setting, the device was placed out of sight to avoid distraction or data interference. This study gathered multiple forms of data, including informal pre-lesson group interviews, post-lesson interviews, and observations.

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[54] Krüger, "Democratic Pedagogies," 281; Amanda Minks, "Growing and Grooving to a Steady Beat: Pop Music in Fifth-Graders' Social Lives," *Yearbook for Traditional Music,* no. 31, (1999): 77. doi:10.2307/767975.

[55] Ibid; See Appendix B.

Pre-Lesson Group Interviews

The Pre-Lesson Group Interviews consisted of the researcher asking the participants from each grade three questions. This portion of the study took approximately five minutes, occurred directly before each of the four lessons, and occurred during the students' regularly scheduled class time. All participants were asked the same three questions regarding the cultural background of a given musical example. These questions included

1. What have you heard about (insert cultural background of musical example)?

2. What do you know about said culture?

3. What kind of music do you enjoy outside of the classroom?

These questions were asked to determine the students' previous knowledge of a given cultural group before the implementation of socially-relevant popular music. The pre-lesson questions were posed immediately before the start of each of the four lessons. Creswell states that "interviews involve unstructured and generally open-ended questions that are few in number and intended to elicit views and opinions from the participants."[56] For this reason, the three pre-lesson questions were designed to be open-ended to encourage students to voice their perceptions, comprehension, insight, and world views about a given cultural context. Directly after the pre-lesson group interview, the lesson portion of the study began. The lesson portion lasted approximately thirty minutes in duration and included a musical example and cultural presentation to expose students to popular music from diverse cultural backgrounds. No data was collected during the lesson time to ensure the students received a quality music lesson, but after the lessons concluded, the researcher conducted observations on the recorded lessons to ensure that all data was recorded thoroughly and accurately.

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[56] Creswell & Creswell, *Research Design*, 212.

Post-Lesson Group Interviews

Immediately after the lesson portion of the study concluded, the post-lesson group interviews began. During these post-lesson group interviews, three questions were posed to determine the student's opinions and level of social or cultural compassion after learning about a given musical example and its cultural background. Only three questions were posed to serve the students' attention span and to allow students to express their perceptions, comprehension, insight, and world views about the given cultural context.[57] These questions were asked in a face-to-face group setting after each of the four lessons. Questions included

1. What did you learn about (insert given musical example's cultural background)?

2. Why do you think it is important to study (insert given musical example's cultural background) music?

3. How do you think your understanding of (insert given musical example's cultural background) will help you relate to people from this cultural background?

Student responses were recorded and were utilized later in the observation stage.

Observations

After each lesson concluded, the researcher waited a period of one week before beginning observations on the class. The researcher reviewed the video footage from each lesson and from each grade in order to make observations about student reactions and interactions with the given musical example in each completed lesson. Before reviewing the video footage, the researcher noted the date, musical example, grade of participants, and lesson length before writing

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[57] Creswell & Creswell, *Research Design*, 212.

observations on the class. After notes were taken, a summary of the observations was typed.[58]

Creswell states that during observations, the researcher should write "field notes on the behavior

and activities of individuals at the research site."[59] These notes were created in a semi-structured

manner, using preplanned questions to organize student responses.[60] These questions included

the following:

1. How do the students react (positive or negative) towards the example given?

2. How do the students correlate the cultural background described to their lived
   experience?

3. How do the students interact socially with the given example?

These questions were structured to allow the researcher to evaluate non-numerical data in an

organized manner.

<div align="center">Sequence Purpose</div>

This sequence of data collection methods was selected to best evaluate students'

improvement in social or cultural compassion based on the integration of socially-relevant

popular music in the classroom setting. First, pre-lesson group interviews were conducted to

assess students' knowledge of a given culture before learning about it. Interviews were

conducted face-to-face in a group setting rather than in a one-on-one setting because studies

show that "children may experience a sense of safety in numbers, particularly when discussing

sensitive issues, and they may feel less pressured to answer every question as others are also

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[58] See Appendix A.

[59] Creswell & Creswell, *Research Design*, 212.

[60] Ibid.; See Appendix A.

responding."[61] The Sage *Handbook of Qualitative Data Collection* states that "group or individual interviews should be akin to natural, informal conversations that allow children to speak freely about the particular aspects of their lives under study."[62] By performing group interviews, the researcher was able to help the students feel more comfortable responding to questions, and the researcher was better able to observe the students in their natural classroom setting. Next, the lesson portion took place before the post-lesson group interviews were conducted. These post-lesson group interviews were conducted to evaluate the effects of popular music on the student's social and cultural empathy after they learned about a given example. While the researcher asked the participants "big" questions about society to further their personal and relational development, she phrased them in a way that children could easily understand.[63] Finally, the researcher reviewed the video footage from each of the lessons in each of the grades and made written observations to explore and record the students' reactions to a given musical example.

<div align="center">Data Analysis</div>

To analyze the data gathered from this study, the researcher followed Creswell's five steps to qualitative data analysis to best evaluate the data. These steps are:

1. Organize and prepare the data for analysis

2. Read or look at all the data

3. Start coding the data

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[61] Colin MacDougall & Philip Darbyshire, "Collecting Qualitative Data with Children" in *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Data Collection*, edited by Uwe Flick, (London, UK; SAGE Publications Ltd, 2018), 7.

[62] MacDougall & Darbyshire, "Collecting Qualitative Data with Children," 7.

[63] MacDougall & Darbyshire, "Collecting Qualitative Data with Children," 12.

4. Generate a description and themes

5. Representing the description and themes[64]

Once the researcher collected the data, she conducted Initialization, which included preparing and organizing the data to be analyzed.[65] This involved digitally transcribing all the audio recordings from the study, including pre-lesson group interviews and post-lesson group interviews, and typing out field notes. The researcher continued the Initialization phase by following Creswell's steps two and three, first reading the observation notes and transcripts of the group interviews and then recording potential codes for various topics discussed by the participants.[66] After this, the researcher performed axial coding by reviewing the list of codes, grouping them into larger categories, and drawing connections between categories and subcategories of data, starting to form themes in the data.[67] Next, the researcher conducted Rectification by distancing herself from the data for a period of time to control sensitivity and then reappraising the data, generating overarching themes in the data.[68] Finally, the researcher conducted Finalization, which included producing a narrative that connects themes from the data to the overarching narrative.[69] The researcher completed Finalization by writing an interpretation of the data by "summarizing the overall findings, comparing the findings to the literature, discussing a personal view of the findings, and stating limitations and future

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[64] Creswell & Creswell, *Research Design*, 212.

[65] Anselm Strauss, & Juliet Corbin, *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory,* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc., 1998), 103.

[66] Ibid.

[67] Ibid, 110.

[68] Ibid.

[69] Ibid.

research."[70]After interpreting the data, the researcher checked the validity and reliability of the data through qualitative validity, clarifying bias, presenting negative data, and peer debriefing.[71] After the validity and reliability had been tested, the author wrote the final qualitative report.

Participants

This study aimed to determine the social and cultural effects of popular music on elementary students in Los Angeles County. The estimated number of elementary-aged students enrolled in public schools in Los Angeles County for the 2021-2022 school year was 2,602,407.[72] To determine how this study would affect a large population, the researcher selected a sample group of eighty elementary-aged students from an elementary school in the Las Virgenes Unified School District to represent the population of elementary students in Los Angeles County. In this study, the sample and subgroup sizes were sufficient to produce Data saturation, which occurs when the "total amount of participants (sample saturation) and/or the time limit (time saturation) are reached."[73]

These participants were selected through their convenience to the researcher. The researcher works in this school district and has formed relationships with students, parents, and staff. Thus, the researcher implemented a non-probabilistic convenience sampling method to recruit participants. This type of sampling allowed the researcher to collect data efficiently and

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[70] Strauss, & Corbin, *Basics of Qualitative Research,* 110.

[71]Ibid.

[72] "Fingertip Facts on Education in California," California Department of Education, (published September 1, 2022, accessed November 26, 2022). https://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/ad/ceffingertipfacts.asp.

[73] Jeovany Martínez-Mesa, González-Chica, David A., Duquia, Rodrigo P., Bonamigo, Renan R., and João L. Bastos, "Sampling: How to Select Participants in My Research Study?" *Anais Brasileiros de Dermatologia 91*, no. 3 (2016): Accessed November 22, 2022. https://doi.org/10.1590/abd1806-4841.20165254.

acquire parent consent more quickly than other types of sampling. To recruit participants, the researcher obtained consent to hold the study from the principal of the school where this study took place. Then, the administrative team of the school where this study took place reached out to the parents on the researcher's behalf and informed the parents about the study. Included in this email was a parental Opt-Out form for parents to send in if they chose not to have their student participate in the study.[74]

In studies that involve elementary students, researchers must typically acquire consent from the participants and their parents. The United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) regulations state that minors cannot provide "legally effective informed consent," which the HHS requires all study participants to provide.[75] However, due to the minimal risks this study posed and the direct benefits it provided (which include increased social and cultural empathy, a greater understanding of popular music, a greater understanding of other cultures, social-emotional development, and peer bonding), parental consent was not required for this study. The Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) states that "If your study is minimal risk, requiring signed parental consent to be returned for all participants could inhibit your ability to conduct your research, and [if] the district/school where your study will take place grants permission, parents may be asked to only sign the consent form if they prefer that their child/student not participate."[76] For this reason, the researcher obtained permission from the school and sent parents an Opt-Out form instead of a consent form.

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[74] See Appendix F.

[75] NIH Office of Extramural Research, "Protecting Human Research Participants," (2018), 25.

[76] Liberty University Institutional Review Board "Consent Docx" Liberty University, (2023). https://www.liberty.edu/graduate/institutional-review-board/

Once the Opt-Out forms had been received, the participants were placed in subgroups by grade. This study sampled mixed-gender participants between the ages of six and ten years old, or from first through fourth grade, and included four subgroups, one for each grade. The age, number of participants, and gender of participants were recorded in table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Example Study Demographics

Age of Participants	Number of Female Participants	Number of Male Participants	Total Number of Participants
6 years of age	00	00	00
7 years of age	00	00	00
8 years of age	00	00	00
9 years of age	00	00	00
10 years of age	00	00	00

The researcher selected the number of participants for the sample size and subgroups based on John Creswell's *Research Methods,* in which he states that "sample size depends on the qualitative design being used (e.g., ethnography, case study)…. Ethnography examines one single culture-sharing group with numerous artifacts, interviews, and observations."[77] As the researcher performed an ethnographic study of elementary students in Los Angeles County, the number of participants chosen was larger than most other qualitative methods. However, to better facilitate the study, the researcher divided the large number of participants into subgroups by grade. Each subgroup contained between fifteen and twenty-five student participants and

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[77] Creswell and Creswell, *Research Design,* 212.

included, at minimum, five female participants and five male participants. The grade, number of students, and gender of participants were recorded in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2: Example Subgroup Demographics

Grade	Number of Female Participants	Number of Male Participants	Total Participants
1st Grade	00	00	00
2nd Grade	00	00	00
3rd Grade	00	00	00
4th Grade	00	00	00

Each grade was subject to the same four lessons, taught over a two-week period, about different types of popular music. While each grade was subject to the same treatment, the age gap between the first and fourth grades resulted in some inconsistent data between the subgroups. Any differences between the subgroups were recorded.

Instrumentation

The data collection instruments administered in this study consisted of four pre- and post-lesson group interviews and observations. While conducting both the pre-lesson group interviews and the post-lesson group interviews, the participants were asked the same three open-ended questions in their natural classroom setting. In qualitative research, the researcher "collects information on instruments based on measures completed by the participants or by observations

recorded by the researcher."[78] For this reason, the researcher implemented group interviews and observations as the instruments for this study. Further, as Creswell observes in his work *Research Methods*, the qualitative researcher is often the instrument through which he or she can collect data. Creswell states that "qualitative researchers collect data themselves through examining documents, observing behavior, or interviewing participants. They may implement a protocol—an instrument for recording data—but the researchers are the ones who gather the information and interpret it.[79] These instruments create internal validity, as each instrument contributes to the study equally, but will also be validated through qualitative validity, clarifying bias, presenting negative data, and peer debriefing.

Group Interviews

Since the early 1980s, qualitative researchers have recognized the importance of research interviews.[80] Ethnographic studies, in particular, often revolve around sensitive or personal cultural topics. Thus, the qualitative interview became an invaluable instrument for obtaining access to insights that would otherwise be impossible to ascertain. The purpose of this instrument in this study was to measure the participants' social and cultural empathy before and after incorporating popular music into the classroom. This instrument was implemented in similar studies by researchers like Simone Krüger, Rhoda Bernard, and Sharon Davis, demonstrating the importance of qualitative interviews in a research study.[81]

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[78] Creswell and Creswell, *Research Design,* 16.

[79] Ibid., 212.

[80] Kathleen Cowles, "Issues in qualitative research on sensitive topics," *Western Journal of Nursing Research*, 10, (1988). 163–165.

[81]Krüger, "Democratic Pedagogies," 280.

When creating the interview questions, the researcher verified that they aligned with the study's problem statement, purpose statement, and research questions.[82] Each of the open-ended questions allowed the participants to elaborate on their knowledge and opinions of the given culture before learning about it. These questions also gave the researcher insight into the participants' musical basis.[83] The researcher strictly asked these three questions to ensure that each test group received the same treatment, which helped focus the data.

The purpose of these questions was to discover if the participants' social or cultural empathy had changed after the integration of popular music in the classroom. As this study aimed to discover whether the inclusion of popular music in the classroom affects elementary students' sociocultural empathy, asking questions to evaluate the students' growth in this area is essential to this study. Further, as Vygotsky's theory of ZPD shows, there is a gap between the amount of sociocultural development students can achieve on their own and what they can achieve when surrounded by more knowledgeable peers.[84] These questions helped to determine what level of development students can achieve on their own and what level of sociocultural development they can achieve after learning about multicultural music in a peer group. The researcher also obtained the professional opinion of her advisor and implemented any feedback given to ensure the questions aligned with the purpose of the study.

These questions were asked in a face-to-face group interview setting. The researcher chose to implement group interviews rather than one-on-one interviews because studies show that children "may experience a sense of safety in numbers, particularly when discussing

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[82] Woods 50; See appendix A and C for Pre-study and Post-study questions.

[83] Creswell & Creswell, *Research Design*, 212.

[84] Vygotsky, *Mind in Society,* 86.

sensitive issues, and they may feel less pressured to answer every question as others are also responding."[85] Further, as stated in the *Sage Handbook of Qualitative Data Collection*, "group or individual interviews should be akin to natural, informal conversations that allow children to speak freely about the particular aspects of their lives under study."[86] Because the participants in this study are children, the researcher performed group interviews to increase student comfortability, encourage student participation, and better observe the participants in their natural setting. The interviews lasted approximately thirty minutes or until data saturation occurred.

Observations

Qualitative observations are "one of the oldest and most fundamental research methods approaches. This approach involves collecting data via one's senses, especially looking and listening in a systematic and meaningful way."[87] The application of this instrument in ethnomusicological studies was first documented around the 1930s by ethnomusicologist A.M. Jones, who desired to understand African music.[88] Later, in the late 1970s, musicologist John Baily began to document the importance of this instrument in ethnographic studies more fully.[89] The purpose of qualitative observations in this study was to gather data about participants' growth in social and cultural empathy. The participants were observed in their natural classroom

[85] MacDougall & Darbyshire,"Collecting Qualitative Data with Children," 7.

[86] MacDougall & Darbyshire,"Collecting Qualitative Data with Children," 7.

[87] McKechnie L. E. F. Observational research. In Given L. M. (Ed.), *The Sage encyclopedia of qualitative research methods* (pp. 573–577). Thousand Oaks, CA: (2008). p. 573

[88] David Racanelli, "Participant Observation," *The Sage Encyclopedia of Music and Culture*, (2019), 2.

[89] Racanelli, "Participant Observation," 2.

setting so the researcher could better document student answers in their natural environment. This instrument has been employed in numerous studies by researchers like David Racanelli, Jennifer Mellizo, Ruth Stone, Amanda Minks, and many others.[90] For example, in Jennifer Mellizo's study, she employs observation as the primary instrument to collect data on cultural sensitivity in adolescent students. In this study, the researcher observed the students in their natural setting by writing observations in a field notebook, noting possible codes for topics discussed, and recording all student answers through a video recording device placed out of sight to ensure the integrity of the environment remained intact.[91] The researcher's observations of each grade were informed by three open-ended questions, which aided the researcher in organizing student answers and behavior.[92] The researcher also sought the counsel of her advisor, who verified that these questions aligned with the problem, purpose, and methodology of this study. The internal reliability of this instrument was also tested and verified by an advisor.

Procedures

Before beginning this study, the author acquired approval from the Liberty University Institutional Review Board or IRB (see Appendix E), as well as the principal of the school where this study took place (see Appendix I).[93] Next, the researcher informed the parents about the research study via email sent by the school administration. After this, the researcher acquired participant consent. HHS regulations state that children cannot provide "legally effective

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[90] Jennifer M. Mellizo, "Exploring the Effect of Music Education on Intercultural Sensitivity in Early Adolescence: A Mixed Methods Inquiry," *Music Education Research*, Vol. 21, no. 5, (2019): 473, 10.1080/14613808.2019.1665005.

[91] See Appendix D for a Sample Field Note Template.

[92] See Appendix B for Observation Questions.

[93] See Appendix E for IRB Approval.

informed consent," which is required of all study participants. However, due to the minimal risks and direct benefits of this study, in addition to receiving permission to hold the study from the principal of the school where the study will take place, participant assent and parental consent were not required. Instead, an Opt-Out form was given to parents, which they could sign and return to the school office if they desired for their child not to participate. The Opt-Out form (See Appendix F) included a summary of the study, a review of the procedures, an explanation of any risks associated with the study, and an explanation of how data confidentiality was maintained. Once the researcher received all parent Opt-Out forms, she chose times and dates for the study to take place.

During the study, the researcher video-recorded all pre- and post-lesson interviews and the group lessons. The researcher conducted four group lessons, including pre and post-study interviews with each of the four grades. The pre-lesson interviews and post-lesson interviews were conducted during the students' regularly scheduled class time but before and after the actual lesson portion of the class. These lessons occurred over a two-week period, and the estimated time that the pre-lesson group interview, lesson, and post-lesson interview lasted was about forty minutes. Each group interview lasted approximately five minutes, and the group lesson lasted approximately thirty minutes.[94]

The lesson portion of the study included four lessons, each concerning a different type of cultural popular music (see Appendix G for Lesson Plans). The four musical artists studied were BTS, John Legend, Taylor Swift, and Guaynaa, all of which had songs featured in the Billboard Top 100 song list for 2023.[95] Each of these artists represents a different cultural group

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[94] See Appendix G for Lesson Plans.

[95] "Billboard Hot 100" Billboard Media 2022. https://www.billboard.com/charts/hot-100/.

represented in today's popular music. In the first lesson, students studied BTS and South Korean

culture. In the second lesson, students studied John Legend and African American Music. The

third lesson introduced students to Taylor Swift and American Country Music, and finally, the

fourth lesson taught about the Puerto Rican artist Guaynaa and South American culture. These

lessons took place in an environment where the students feel comfortable and natural; in this

case, they occurred in the students' music classroom. The researcher took care to choose songs

from these popular artists that are free from adult themes and contain appropriate themes for

elementary students. As an extra layer of protection for the students, the researcher used the

"Kids Bop" version of these popular songs. "Kids Bop" is a company that produces "Family-

friendly" covers of popular songs.[96] The researcher then presented her selected songs to the

school board for their approval. This procedure allowed the researcher to ensure emotional safety

for the students and provide examples of songs that are socially-relevant to the students.

The researcher also followed Los Angeles County CDC guidelines by ensuring that the

number of people in the classroom does not exceed half of the size limit.[97] The researcher

recorded all interviews and lessons through a video recording device, placed out of sight, and

physically recorded her observation notes in a notebook after the study was finished.[98] The

researcher utilized three questions to help organize her observations (see Appendix B). After the

study, the researcher digitized the observation notes from the lesson, as well as her notes and

student responses from the pre and post-lesson interviews, to prepare for data analysis. After the

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[96] KidzBop.Com, https://kidzbop.com/home/.

[97] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) "Covid-19" https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/treatments-for-severe illness.html?s_cid=11799:covid%2019%20treatment%20guidelines:sem.ga:p:RG:GM:gen:TTTC:FY23

[98] See Appendix D for Sample Field Note Form.

notes were digitized, the researcher shredded the physical copies of the observation notes for

participant privacy. The researcher then digitally organized the transcription data by grade.

In this study, data privacy was maintained through the implementation of a locked

electronic external hard drive. The hard drive only contained the study materials and was

password protected. Further, the linking list was stored on a separate password-protected hard

drive. All transcriptions and video recordings, which were initially downloaded to the

researcher's computer, were transferred to the external hard drive and deleted from the

researcher's personal device upon the conclusion of the study. However, the research materials

and video recordings will be kept for three years after the conclusion of the study before they are

deleted completely, in accordance with Liberty University's policies.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness in a research study is defined as "the degree of confidence [a researcher

has] in data, interpretation, and methods used to ensure the quality of a study."[99] In this study,

trustworthiness was achieved through the employment of a variety of different constructs, which

aid in increasing the reliability of both the data and the results. The first method of

trustworthiness that the researcher utilized in this study is qualitative validity. Qualitative

validity evaluates whether the findings are accurate from the perspective of the researcher,

research participants, and readers.[100] In order to ensure that the researcher did not lead the

participants to a pre-determined conclusion, the researcher had all lesson plans and pre- and post-

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[99] D.F. Polit and C.T. Beck, "Essentials of nursing research: Appraising evidence for nursing practice" 8th ed, (Philadelphia, PA: Wolters Kluwer/Lippincott Williams & Wilkins, 2014), 14.

[100] Creswell & Creswell, *Research Design*, 212.

lesson interview questions approved by her thesis committee, which included two members of

the Liberty University School of Music faculty. Next, the author clarified any bias that she

brought to the study to reflect honesty to the readers. The author also presented any negative data

from the study that may be contrary to the positive themes discovered in the data.[101] By

presenting this data, the researcher aims to assure the readers that there is no hidden data that

would affect the study's validity. Finally, the author utilized peer debriefing, in which she

involved a peer with the educational qualifications to assess and review the study so that the

study would have the perspective of someone other than the researcher.

Ethical Procedures

Certain ethical procedures were followed in this study. The first ethical procedure the

researcher followed was obtaining approval to hold the study from both the Liberty University

IRB and the principal of the school where this study took place (see Appendices E and I). This

study presented minimal risks to students, which means that "the probability and magnitude of

harm or discomfort anticipated in the research are not greater than those ordinarily encountered

in daily life."[102] Although parent consent and student assent were not required for this study due

to the direct benefits for students and the approval from the principal of the school where this

study will take place, the researcher sent an email to the parents containing a summary of the

study, review the procedures, explanation of any risks associated with the study, and an

explanation of how data confidentiality will be maintained. The researcher also sent an Opt-Out

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[101] Creswell & Creswell, *Research Design*, 212.

[102] National Institute of Mental Health, "NIMH Guidance on Risk-Based Monitoring," https://www.nimh.nih.gov/funding/clinical-research/nimh-guidance-on-risk-based-monitoring#:~:text=Minimal%20Risk%20to%20subjects%20means,that%20confidentiality%20is%20adequately%20protected.

form to parents to utilize if they did not wish for their child to participate in the study. The parents of all participants may remove their student from the study at any point without repercussions.

Student privacy was maintained in a variety of ways. First, all video recordings of students were stored on a password-protected hard drive accessed only by the researcher. The researcher will also utilize a linking list, which was stored on a separate password-protected computer hard drive in order to avoid data corruption. The digital records from the study will be deleted three years after its completion in accordance with Liberty University's policies.

Chapter Summary

The purpose of this study was to explore the effects of socially-relevant popular music on elementary students' socio-cultural empathy. This study followed a qualitative ethnographic design, where the researcher studied eighty elementary students, grades one through four, from a school in the district where she works and collected data through group interviews and observations. The researcher followed specific ethical procedures in order to ensure that student privacy and data confidentiality were maintained. This chapter provided an overview of the study's methodological design by explaining the research design and data analysis procedures used. Chapter four will provide a presentation of the study's results.

CHAPTER 4: Research Findings

Introduction

In previous studies, researchers have recognized the importance of socially-relevant popular music in developing socio-cultural empathy. At the high-school and graduate levels, studies have shown that incorporating socially-relevant popular music into the classroom has positively increased students' socio-cultural empathy. The purpose of this qualitative ethnographic study is to explore the undocumented effects of socially-relevant music on elementary students' socio-cultural empathy. After receiving consent from the Liberty University IRB, the researcher conducted the study through a series of group interviews, lessons, and observations. This chapter provides a presentation of the study's results as well as a discussion of the major themes found in the data.

Result Calculation

The researcher conducted group interviews with each grade immediately before the start of each lesson and directly after the lesson. These interviews were video recorded and later transcribed digitally. Text analysis occurred from these interviews, including sorting data based on themes found within the participants' words or writings. Observations also occurred after the lessons and group interviews. After the researcher made her observations, she digitized her notes and looked for themes in the data to compare to the text analysis results from the group interviews. By establishing patterns and similar themes throughout the data, the researcher developed general themes and finally discovered emergent themes, which serve as the study's results.

Description of Participants

Participants in this study were students in the Las Virgines School District between the ages of six and ten years old. The amount of female and male students per age group is listed in Table 3, demonstrating the age range of all eighty participants.

Table 4.1: Study Demographics

Age of Participants	Number of Female Participants	Number of Male Participants	Total Number of Participants
6 years of age	5	3	8
7 years of age	13	8	21
8 years of age	10	6	16
9 years of age	12	9	21
10 years of age	4	10	14

The number of female and male students per grade is listed in Table 4: Subgroup Demographics.

Table 4.2: Subgroup Demographics

Grade	Number of Female Participants	Number of Male Participants	Total Participants
1st Grade	16	6	22
2nd Grade	14	9	23
3rd Grade	10	6	16
4th Grade	6	13	19

Pre-Lesson Group Interview Results

At the beginning of each Lesson Period, the participants took part in Pre-Lesson interviews designed to gauge their prior knowledge of the given cultural background. During the Pre-Lesson group interviews, the researcher asked the participants three open-ended questions,

1. Have you heard of (insert cultural background of musical example) before?

2. What do you know about said culture?

3. What kind of music do you enjoy outside of the classroom?

These questions helped the researcher determine the students' baseline level of knowledge and served as a foundation to compare with the students' post-lesson group interview results.

Question One

First, the students were asked, "Have you heard of (insert cultural background of musical example) before?" The researcher intentionally designed this question to be open-ended in order to remain unbiased and to gather information more accurately. The answers to the first question varied, but the students' experiences and reactions developed into subthemes, which formed a response to the first question. After studying the data, participants fell into one of two categories. They had either never heard of the given cultural background (which in this study includes South Korean culture, African-American culture, American Folk and Country culture, and South American culture), or the participants had heard of the cultural background but were unable to produce any information about the given culture or its music.

Question Two

Next, the participants were asked, "What do you know about said culture?" Except for American Folk and Country culture, the students could not produce any information about the given cultures. When discussing American Folk and Country music, students responded to this question primarily with the phrase "This is what my parents listen to," a phrase repeated by students thirteen times throughout the different subgroups. Other than being able to name a few country songs, students could not produce any other information about this type of music or its cultural history. Figure 4.1 demonstrates the percentages of participants with prior knowledge of the given cultural background and the percentage of students with some previous knowledge of the given cultural background.
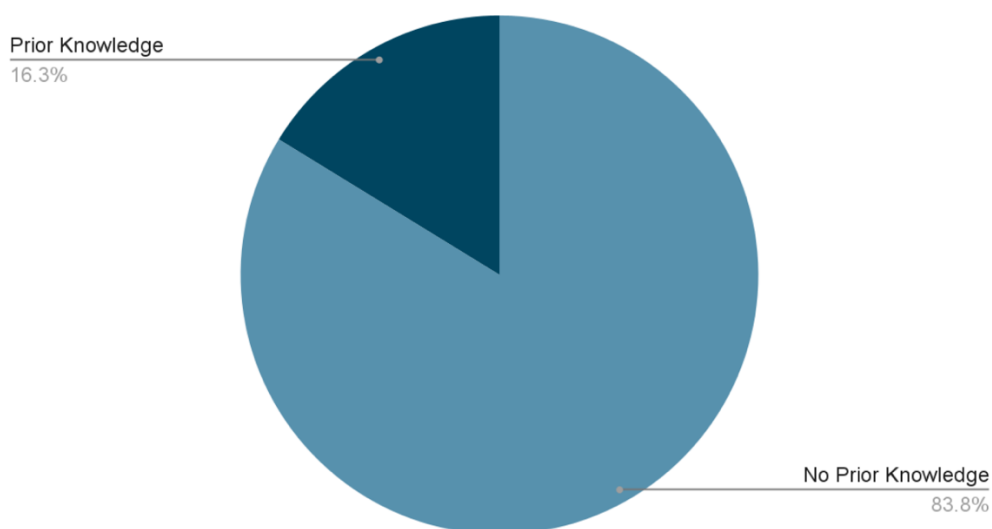

Figure 4.1: Percentages of Participants with Prior Knowledge of the Given Cultural Background

Question Three

Finally, they were asked, "What kind of music do you enjoy outside of the classroom?" The students' responses were documented and recorded in Table 6: Music Preference

Breakdown. This chart demonstrates that 76.8 percent of the participants preferred to listen to Pop music, 15.9 percent were Unsure about what their favorite type of music was, 4.9 percent preferred listening to Classical music, and 2.4 percent preferred to listen to Rock and Roll.
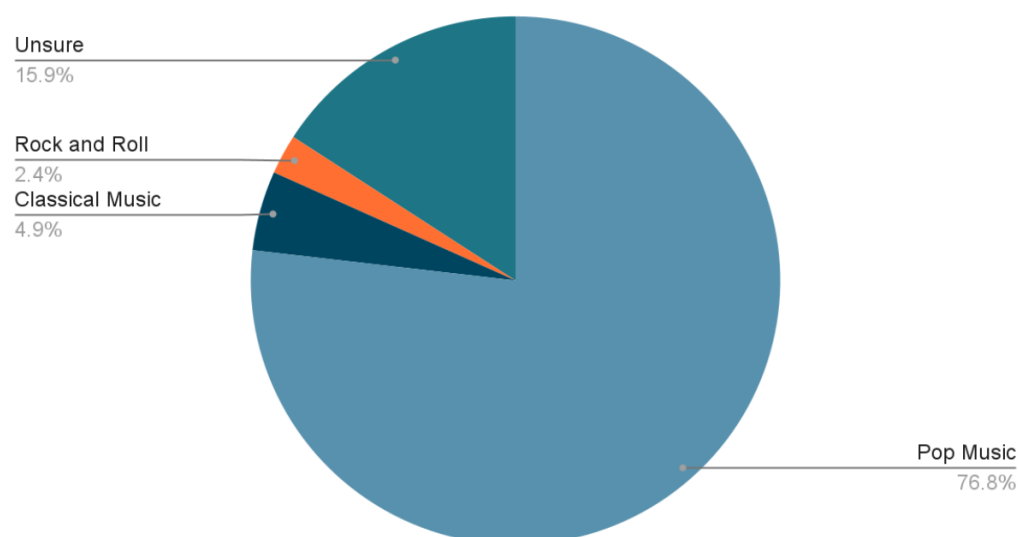
Figure 4.2: Music Preference Breakdown

The results of the Pre-Lesson Group Interviews demonstrated that the majority of the participants had little to no prior knowledge of the cultural backgrounds of the music they most enjoyed.

Post-Lesson Group Interview Results

After the lesson portion of the study finished, the researcher conducted a 5-10 minute post-lesson interview group. During this time, the researcher asked the participants three open-ended questions to evaluate what (if anything) the students had learned and how they responded to the given material. These questions were

1. What did you learn about (insert given musical example's cultural background)?

2. Why do you think it is important to study (insert given musical example's cultural background) music?

3. How do you think your understanding of (insert given musical example's cultural background) will help you relate to people from this cultural background?

The researcher utilized group interviews instead of one-on-one interviews to ease students' nerves and get the most accurate data from the students in their natural classroom environment.

Question One

The first question the researcher asked the participants during the post-lesson interview was, "What did you learn about (insert given musical example's cultural background)?" Many students responded with facts they had learned about the given culture during the lesson portion and showed a significant increase in knowledge regarding the given example's cultural background. Most students responded positively with increased knowledge about the given culture. Still, other students could not produce any information about what they had learned. The percentages of students who were able to produce information, as well as the percentages of students who could not produce information, can be viewed in Figure 4.3.
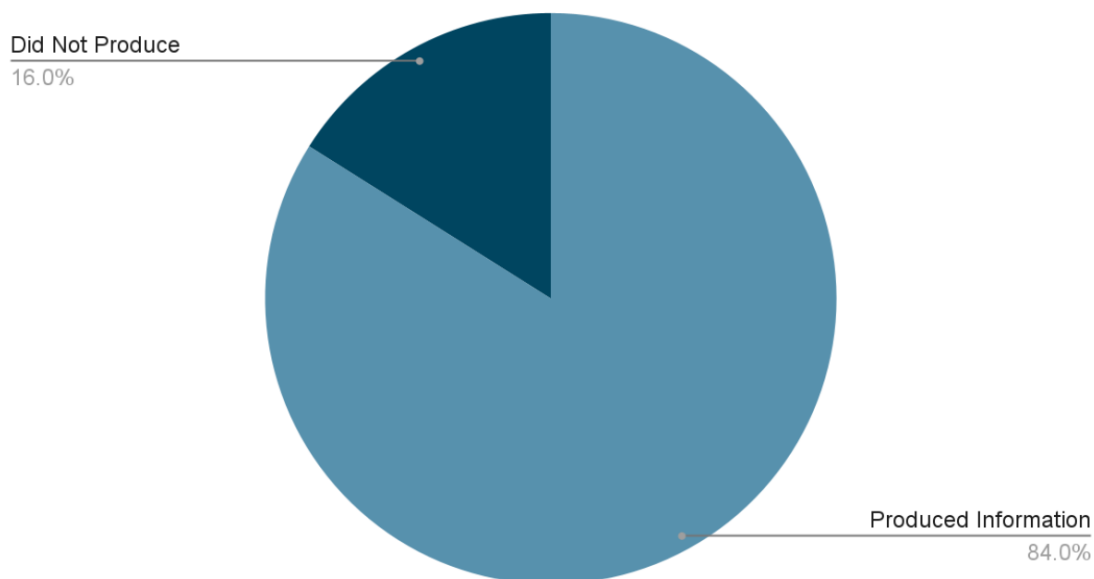
Figure 4.3: Post-Study Interview Q1 Results

Question Two

The second question the researcher asked the participants was, "Why do you think it is important to study (insert given musical example's cultural background) music?" When answering this question, participant answers varied including answers such as "so we can learn about things we didn't know before" and "so we can understand other cultures."[103] However, approximately twenty percent of students said they "didn't know."[104] Though the students' answers varied, the researcher was able to draw a similar theme from the students' answers. This theme was that studying the cultural backgrounds of popular music is essential because "it helps us to understand each other better."[105] Many students noted that they did not know anything

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[103] Student Transcripts. November, 6, 2023.

[104] Ibid.

[105] Student Transcripts. November, 16, 2023.

about a given culture before the start of the lesson. However, the students also stated that

learning about the given cultural example might help them better relate to people from that

culture. Other students noted that it might be important to study music from other cultures so that

people can be kinder to one another, which directly led to the final question.

Question Three

The third and final question asked was, "How do you think your understanding of (insert

given musical example's cultural background) will help you relate to people from this cultural

background? Though the students' answers varied depending on the lesson material, an

overarching theme could be drawn from the answers. Student answers revealed that over 85

percent of participants found that studying and understanding the cultural history of popular

music would help them "be nicer to people from other backgrounds and understand them

better."[106] The other 15 percent of students could not answer the question because they were

unsure how to answer.

Observations

After the lesson portion concluded, the researcher reviewed the video recordings and

made observations based on three guiding questions, which included

1. How do the students react (positively or negatively) toward the example given?

2. How do the students correlate the cultural background described to their lived

   experience?

3. How do the students interact socially with the given example?

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[106] Student Transcripts. November, 14, 2023.

Based on these questions, the researcher observed the students during their lessons. After making her observations, the researcher digitized the observation notes and analyzed the results to see if any themes emerged. Upon analysis, an answer to each of these three guiding questions emerged.

Question One Observations

The first question the researcher asked herself when observing the recorded lesson times was, "How do the students react (positively or negatively) towards the example given?" The researcher collected data on the students' reactions by reviewing the video-recorded lessons and typing out the reactions of each participant to the given musical examples. Looking broadly, the students reacted positively to the cultural history and musical examples in a given lesson. The students' reactions to each lesson demonstrate that over 94 percent of students showed a positive reaction to learning about socially-relevant popular music in the classroom.

Lesson One

The first lesson's topic was South Korean culture and the band BTS. At the beginning of the lesson, students in every grade and of both genders who knew of BTS beforehand demonstrated a very positive reaction to learning about this band and their culture. Students in every grade and of both genders who did not know this band beforehand showed some apprehension but an overall positive attitude toward learning about this band. Only a few students reacted negatively to learning about BTS and South Korean culture. These students were primarily in the oldest age group, and a few stated that they did not want to learn about BTS because it was "cringy." In other words, they felt they were too old for this type of music.

The data results for students' reactions to learning about BTS and South Korean Culture are shown in Figure 4.4

Figure 4.4: Lesson One Student Reactions at the Beginning of Lesson

Toward the end of the lesson, the researcher observed students' reactions to the given musical example and marked any differences from their responses at the beginning of the lesson. These observations showed that 70 percent of students who did not want to learn about BTS or South Korean culture demonstrated a positive reaction towards participating in a praxial music activity, and some verbally expressed their enthusiasm by saying things like "This is so fun" and "I like this song" to their peers.[107] The other 30 percent of students reacted neutrally to the musical example and activity presented.

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[107] Student Transcripts. November, 6th and 8th 2023.

Lesson Two

  The topic of the second lesson was John Legend and African-American Music Styles. At the beginning of the lesson, the researcher observed that 85 percent of students had a positive attitude toward learning about this lesson topic. Observations showed that the other 15 percent of students had a neutral reaction toward learning about this topic. Table 4.7 shows the data recording the students' reactions to the musical example and cultural history presented at the beginning of the lesson.

Neutral Attitude
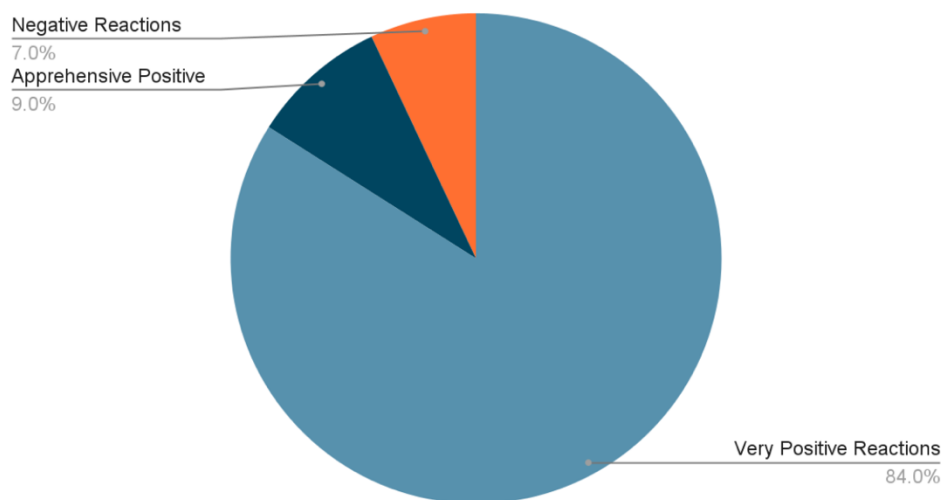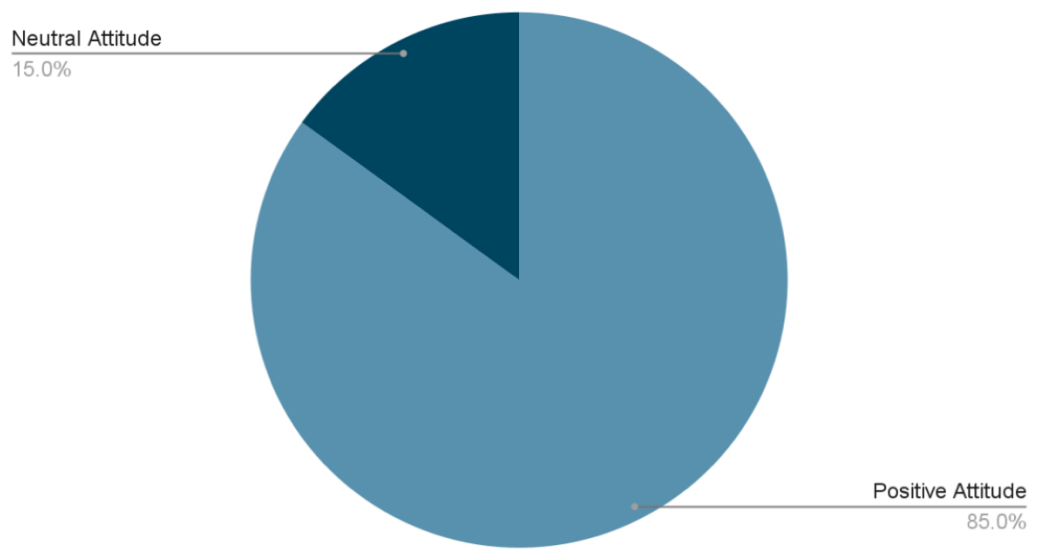15.0%

Positive Attitude
85.0%

Figure 4.5: Lesson Two Student Reactions at the Beginning of Lesson

Toward the end of the lesson portion, the researcher again observed their reactions to the given musical example and musical activity, and 90 percent of the students who showed a neutral reaction towards the given musical example showed a positive reaction to the musical activity,

including saying to their friends that "This lesson is the best one so far" and "I like John Legend now."[108]

Lesson Three

The topic of the third lesson was Taylor Swift and American Country Music, and the students' reactions were slightly different from the first and second lessons. Observing the participants' reaction to this lesson at the beginning of the lesson time revealed that 96 percent of female students showed an extremely positive reaction to learning about Taylor Swift and American Country Music. The other 4 percent of female students reacted positively to learning about this lesson topic but with less enthusiasm than their female peers. However, only 65 percent of male students reacted positively to this lesson topic. The other 35 percent of male students expressed apprehension about learning about this topic because it was "too girly."[109] In Table 4.3, the data results for the students' reactions at the beginning of the lessons can be found.

Table 4.3: Lesson Three Student Reactions at the Beginning of Lesson

Gender of Participants	Extremely Positive Reaction	Positive Reaction	Apprehensive Reaction
Female Participants	96%	4%	0
Male Participants	0	65%	35%

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[108] Student Transcripts. November, 10, 2023.

[109] Student Transcripts. November, 13, 2023.

Toward the end of the lesson period, the researcher observed the students again and compared their reactions with those observed at the beginning of the lesson. The observations showed significant positive growth in the reactions of the male students to the given musical example. Eighty percent of the male students whom the researcher initially observed as expressing apprehension about the given topic had a positive reaction towards the given musical example and activity at the end of the lesson. The other 20 percent had a neutral reaction towards the example and activity.

Lesson Four

The fourth and final lesson topic was Guaynaa and Latin American Music and Culture. At the beginning of the lesson, the researcher observed the students to have a positive attitude toward the given musical example and the cultural background. The data revealed that 91 percent of students showed a positive attitude towards the given musical example and cultural background. Five percent of students showed a neutral reaction toward the given example, and 3 percent demonstrated an apprehensive reaction. The data results for the students' reactions during the fourth lesson are shown in Figure 4.6.
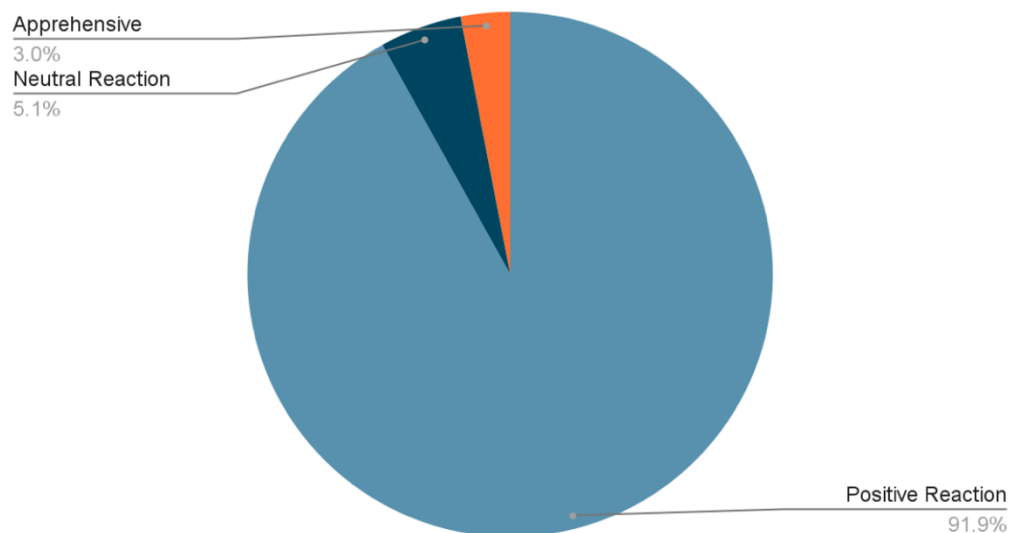
Figure 4.6: Lesson Four Student Reactions at the Beginning of Lesson

Toward the end of the lesson, the researcher observed the students' reactions to the given musical example and activity. The researcher observed that 100 percent of the students who initially showed a neutral reaction towards the given example had a positive reaction towards the musical activity and given example. The researcher observed these students saying things like "This is so much fun" and "I didn't know I liked South American music, but I do know," and other statements demonstrating their enjoyment of both the musical example and the musical activity.[110] The researcher also observed that of the 3 percent of students who showed an apprehensive reaction toward the given example, 100 percent of them showed a neutral reaction toward the lesson.

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[110] Student Transcripts. November, 17, 2023.

Summary

Putting this data together reveals that 84.3 percent of the participants reacted positively to learning about the given musical example and cultural history at the beginning of the lesson. Further, by the end of the lesson, more than 94 percent of students demonstrated positive reactions to the lesson. The student's reactions to the lesson at the beginning and end demonstrate that the music taught in these lessons was, in fact, music that they enjoyed. Still, more importantly, it demonstrates that as students learned about a given musical example and its cultural history, they were more likely to enjoy that type of music and participate in the given activity. This enjoyment is key to how they interacted socially with one another regarding a given musical example, which was an important factor in answering the first research question.

<div align="center">Question Two Observations</div>

The second question the researcher used to observe the participants during the lesson portion was, "How do the students correlate the cultural background described to their lived experience?" To evaluate this, the researcher studied the transcripts of the students' conversations during the pre-lesson group interviews, lesson time, and post-lesson group interviews to determine if the participants related the given cultural examples to their lived experiences. The results showed that more than 80 percent of students related the given cultural history to their own lived experience, which increased their ability to relate to one another socially.

Lesson One

The topic of the first lesson was BTS and South Korean Culture. During the lesson period, the researcher observed many students conversing with their peers in which they related the given cultural history to their own lived experience. Many students could relate to some of the information presented because they had a close friend or relative from South Korea, or they could relate to some of the facts presented. For instance, when learning about the school system and types of food provided by school lunches in South Korea, many students related to this, as they are in school and eat school-provided lunches every day. Other students related the band BTS with some of their friends or loved ones who enjoyed listening to BTS. Still, other students related to other facts given in the presentation and offered examples from their own lives. One student in the class is from South Korea and could easily compare the lesson to his lived experience. Approximately 64 percent of students verbally related the given cultural history or musical example to their own lives during the lesson portion of the study. The other 36 percent of students did not verbally relate the examples to their lived experiences. After the lesson, in the post-lesson group interviews, students continued to relate the lesson to their own lived experiences, and there was an increase in students who related the given example to their own lives. Approximately 78 percent of students verbally related the given example to their own lives during the post-lesson group interviews, and only 22 percent of students did not verbally relate the examples to their lived experiences.

Lesson Two

Lesson two's topic was John Legend and African-American Music Styles. During the lesson period, when learning about different African American music styles like Gospel and

Jazz, some students relate this music to their own lived experiences, as many of them had parents or grandparents who listened to these styles of music. Two of the African-American participants could easily relate the lesson and musical example to their own lives and showed excitement when informed of the lesson topic. Other students had friends or loved ones who were African-American and were able to relate to the given cultural history because it related to their lived experiences with others. Most students related to the musical example given, as most students listened to John Legend at home and could relate the musical examples to their own lived experiences. During the lesson period, approximately 80 percent of students verbally relate the given cultural history or musical example to their lived experience in some way. The other 20 percent of students did not verbally relate the given cultural history or musical example to their own lives. After the lesson portion concluded, more students related the examples to their lived experiences during the post-lesson group interviews, and approximately 84 percent of students could relate the examples to their own lives in some way.

Lesson Three

The topic of the third lesson was Taylor Swift and American Country Music. During this lesson, students relate the given example and cultural history to their lives the most out of any other lesson. Still, as all participants currently reside in America, this was not unexpected. During this lesson, many students related the lesson to their own lives by telling friends that "this is my favorite song" or talking about how their parents love country or folk music.[111] Other students related the music to their own lives even when they did not personally enjoy the musical example by saying, "My sister loves this song," or relating the example to friends and family

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[111] Student Transcripts. November, 13, 2023.

members who enjoyed the given type of music. During the lesson portion of the study, 98 percent of students verbally related the given example to their lived experience, and only 2 percent of students did not verbally relate the example to their own lives. There was no change in the percentage of students who related this example to their own lives during the post-lesson group interviews.

Lesson Four

The topic of the fourth and final lesson was Guaynaa and Latin American Music and Culture. During this lesson, most of the male students related the given cultural example to their own lives after learning that football (American soccer) is the most popular sport in Latin America. Other students with parents from Latin America were excited to share their own experiences with Latin American culture and music. Still, other students related the given example to their own lives, saying, "This is my favorite song."[112] In this lesson, the students who related the given example to their own lives appeared to focus better on the lesson, which seemed to increase their enjoyment of the musical example. During the lesson, approximately 70 percent of students verbally related the given example to their own lives, and 30 percent did not relate the given example to their lived experience. After the lesson, in the post-lesson group interviews, more students related the given example to their lives after learning about it. In the post-lesson group interviews, 79 percent of students related the example to their own lives, and only 21 percent did not verbally relate it to their lived experiences.

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[112] Student Transcripts. November, 16, 2023.

Summary

In total, over 80 percent of students related the given cultural history and musical example to their own lived experiences in some way. Most students correlated the given example to their friends or family members, but some directly related to the given example. By relating the lesson to their lived experiences, students were able to form an emotional connection with the given material, which in turn would help them socially interact with the given example, as will be shown in the next question.

Question Three Observations

The third and final question the researcher used to guide her observations was, "How do the students interact socially with the given example?" To determine this, the researcher reviewed both the video recording of each lesson (including the pre- and post-lesson group interviews) and the transcripts of student conversations to see if similar themes emerged. While looking at the data, one key theme emerged. Reviewing the data demonstrated that students related to each other with more compassion and understanding when they related over a shared interest. By far, the most compelling evidence for this was seeing how the students related socially to their peers after learning personal information about them, such as their cultural history or their music preferences. Using this question to guide observations revealed that over 87 percent of students related to one another socially after learning about their peers' cultural history or musical interests.

Lesson One

During the first lesson, the topic of which was BTS and South Korean Culture, one of the students in the third-grade class who was adopted from South Korea said to his peers, "I am so excited we're learning about where I'm from."[113] After this statement, some of the students were left confused and asked him to explain. After making sure he felt comfortable, I invited him to explain, and he told the students about being adopted from South Korea and that he didn't remember much from being there, but he still liked learning about it. After hearing this, the other students in his class were very enthusiastic to learn more about South Korea and BTS and showed significant interest in the lesson and given examples. One student, who remarked that this lesson was "stupid" at the beginning of the lesson time, went over to his classmate, apologized for saying that it was stupid, and said that he was "really excited to learn about BTS now." After the lesson period, during the post-lesson group interviews, the students almost unanimously stated that it is important to study music from South Korea so that they can better understand people like their friends.

Lesson Two

The topic of lesson two was John Legend and African-American Music Styles. Many students with African-American family members or friends expressed excitement to learn about this topic during the lesson. Two African-American students in the class also expressed excitement about the lesson topic. During the pre-lesson group interviews, one of these students said, "This is so cool; we never get to learn about black pop stars, and John Legend is my

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[113] Student Transcripts. November, 7, 2023.

favorite." [114] During the lesson portion, the researcher observed many students referencing their family members or friends while learning about a particular type of African-American music that their loved ones enjoyed. Making the connection between their friends and family and the given example increased the interest of these students in the lesson. The researcher also observed other students singing along to the musical example and having fun in their peer group.

Lesson Three

The third lesson was on Taylor Swift and American Country Music. Most students were excited to learn about her and listen to her early music during the pre-lesson interview. During the lesson portion, the researcher observed many students relating the given musical example to their family or friends who enjoyed that type of music. Other students were observed talking about their hometown and relating the given example to the music they listened to in their hometown. When the researcher finally played one of Taylor Swift's songs during the lesson, students could not contain their excitement and gathered in groups to pretend to perform this song to each other. After the post-lesson group interviews, right before students would be dismissed, one particular group of female students was observed going up to another female student who was not originally in their friend group and saying, "I didn't know you liked Taylor Swift, you should listen to her new album with us later." [115] The majority of students interacted with this lesson topic by relating to the given example and cultural history with their friends in class.

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[114] Student Transcripts. November, 9, 2023.

[115] Student Transcripts. November, 13, 2023.

Lesson Four

The topic of the final lesson was Guaynaa and Latin American Music and Culture. During this lesson, the students primarily interacted socially through conversations with their friends about how they "like this song."[116] The class that showed the most significant social interaction was the third-grade class, in which one student whose parents came to America from Brazil demonstrated excitement at learning about Latin American history and culture. During the pre-lesson group interview, the student remarked, "This is my first time studying South America at school."[117] The other students in his class then became excited to learn about the given example. They appeared more interested in learning about this topic after hearing about the social connection to their peers.

Summary

The student's social interactions are crucial to understanding how socially-relevant popular music can affect student's cultural empathy in their classrooms. In each lesson, a prominent theme was that the students were more likely to enjoy the musical example when they could socially relate to it through one of their peers or with their other friends. For example, in the first lesson, students were more excited about the topic after hearing excitement from one of their peers who came to America from South Korea. Some students even apologized for saying that learning about South Korean history was "stupid." In the second lesson, students could relate the given example to their friends and family members. During this lesson, the researcher observed students showing more interest in the lesson after making these connections. In the

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[116] Student Transcripts. November, 13, 2023.

[117] Student Transcripts. November, 15, 2023.

third lesson, students formed new relationships after discovering that other students enjoyed the same music as they did. Finally, in the fourth lesson, students showed more excitement and engagement with the given topic after hearing how it related to one of their peers. The data demonstrates that over 87 percent of students showed increased compassion when they related to their peers over a shared interest.

Chapter Summary

In this study, the researcher utilized three primary modes of data collection. First, she conducted a pre-lesson group interview. After the lesson portion, she conducted a post-lesson group interview, and finally, she observed the lesson portion via a video recording. In the pre-lesson group interview, the researcher asked three questions about the students' favorite types of music and their prior knowledge of the given cultural context. Studying the student data from these pre-lesson group interviews revealed that most students had little knowledge of the cultural history of their favorite types of music. In the post-lesson group interviews, the researcher also asked three questions to better understand the understanding of a given culture after the lesson and to determine what (if anything) they learned from the lesson. The results of this group interview show that the majority of students showed an increase in knowledge about the given topic and believed it was important to study so that they could learn to be "kinder to each other."

Finally, when making observations, the researcher asked three guiding questions to help sort the data. The first question she asked was, "How do the students react (positively or negatively) toward the example given?" Observations showed that over 94 percent of students reacted positively to learning about socially-relevant popular music in the classroom. The second question the researcher asked was, "How do the students correlate the cultural background

described to their lived experience?" The data shows that over 80 percent of students related the given example to their own lived experience in some way. The final observation question that the researcher asked was, "How do the students interact socially with the given example?" The data revealed that over 87 percent of students were observed as having more compassion and excitement about a given topic when they learned how it was meaningful or exciting to one of their peers. Through studying the data, subthemes emerged, which eventually formed a response to the primary research question, as will be demonstrated in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5: Conclusion

Summary of Study

This study focused on developing elementary students' sociocultural empathy by utilizing socially-relevant popular music in the classroom. This type of study has been performed at the undergraduate, graduate, and high school levels but has not been studied at the elementary level. This study aimed not only to address this gap in the available literature on popular music and elementary music education but also to propose an improved style of music education for elementary-age students. For this reason, the researcher focused on determining whether or not studying socially-relevant popular music in the classroom would affect elementary students' sociocultural empathy. These students are the future of American society and are the nation's future citizens, leaders, and music educators. A music education that affects students' compassion for other cultures would greatly benefit society, instilling future American citizens with social and cultural empathy.

Summary of Procedure

This study followed a qualitative ethnographic design in which the researcher studied eighty elementary students, grades one through four, from a school in the district where she works. The researcher collected data through pre- and post-lesson group interviews and observations. Further, the researcher followed specific ethical procedures to ensure student privacy and data confidentiality were maintained. These procedures included obtaining permission from the Liberty University IRB and the IRB of the researcher's school. The researcher also utilized other measures to maintain data confidentiality (outlined in Chapter 3) to ensure student safety.

Summary of Findings and Results

Pre-Lesson Group Interview Summary and Conclusions

Summary

The researcher collected data through pre- and post-lesson group interviews and observations. The data from the pre-lesson group interviews revealed that most students had little knowledge of the cultural history of their favorite types of music. This information was critical to the study because it established the students' foundation of knowledge. This information is also vital to understanding elementary students' formation of social and cultural empathy because students are more likely to have less empathy for a culture they've never heard of or learned about when compared with one they are familiar with. The students' lack of knowledge on the subject demonstrates that the students had a minimal bias going into each lesson because most had never heard of the cultural example before the lesson.

Conclusions

Music preferences come from people's listening experiences. These experiences are also intrinsically tied to a person's sociocultural identity. [118] Nearly every person has a type of music they prefer. Most often, their preferences are shaped by what they were exposed to, either in their social circles or in their cultural experiences. [119] Elementary students are the perfect examples of this because they are at an age where their preferences about almost everything are solely shaped

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[118] Krüger "Democratic Pedagogies," 293.

[119] Boyle, Hosterman, and Ramsey, "Factors Influencing Pop Music Preferences of Young People," 55.

by their parents and peers. While adults' music preferences are often highly influenced by their parents and peers, they have also typically been exposed to a wider variety of multicultural music simply because of their age. Elementary students are often too young to have been exposed to various music types. Thus, their music preferences are inevitably linked to their sociocultural identity.

The results of the pre-lesson interview indicate that most elementary students need to be exposed to multicultural music by their parents or peers. When discussing the formation of empathy in the elementary classroom, musicologist Lynda Laird states, "Important factors that may influence empathy include perceived similarity to the other person, nurturance, culture, and neurological function. The first perceived similarity asserts that people feel for a person in need to the degree that they perceive them to be similar to themselves." [120] The primary factor affecting the development of empathy is perceived similarity. However, perceived similarity requires that a person sees another person as similar to themselves; this often requires one person to relate another person's experiences to their own experiences. Students who have never been exposed to other cultures may find it more difficult to empathize with someone from an unknown culture because they cannot relate the other person's experience to their own life. The pre-lesson interviews established that most elementary students are unfamiliar with multicultural music, and their music preferences are shaped by their listening experiences.

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[120] Lynda Laird, "Empathy in the Classroom: Can Music Bring Us More in Tune with One Another?" *Music Educators Journal* 101, no. 4 (2015): 57. http://www.jstor.org/stable/24755601.56

Observations Summary and Conclusions

Summary

The second method of data collection that the researcher implemented was the use of observations. The researcher utilized video and audio recording devices to record the study. The researcher then reviewed the videos and made observations about the students based on three guiding questions. The observations revealed that studying popular music in the elementary classroom led to positive growth in social and cultural empathy, forming an answer to the first two research questions.

Observation Question 1: Conclusions

The results of the researcher's observations demonstrated that over 94 percent of students reacted positively to learning about socially-relevant popular music in the classroom. One African-American student even came up to me after the lesson on John Legend and African American music and culture and thanked me for teaching about black musicians in school, stating, "That was pretty cool. I can't wait to tell my mom about music today." When learning about a new culture, student's reactions can influence their ultimate development of empathy. Students with a positive reaction were more likely to develop perceived similarity than those with a negative reaction. The students' reactions also affected their engagement in the lesson. At the beginning of the lesson, the researcher observed that 84 percent of students had a positive reaction to the lessons. However, by the end of the lessons, the researcher observed that 94 percent of students had a positive reaction, and the remaining 6 percent of students had a neutral reaction to the lessons. This growth indicates that as the students learned about the given musical example and cultural history, their engagement and enjoyment of the lesson increased.

One example of this occurred during the lesson on John Legend and African-American music. During this lesson, a few female students from one grade expressed that they didn't "want to learn about this, [because] his music is boring."[121] The researcher observed the female students making comments like "Ew, his music is cringe," "Ugh, I hate music class today," and "This is for boys." The researcher also observed some female students telling the male students who were more excited to "Be quiet." However, during the post-lesson group interviews, the researcher observed the same female students asking, "Can we learn about his other songs next time?" Other female students stated, "I like John Legend," and one student went so far as to apologize to a male student for telling him to "Be quiet" and said that John Legend and African American music "Wasn't actually that bad." Examples like this can be seen in almost every lesson. Demonstrating that after learning about the musical artist and cultural background, the majority of the students' opinions changed in favor of the given lesson.

Observation Question 2: Conclusions

The second observation question was, "How do the students correlate the cultural background described to their lived experience?" Correlating the given culture to their own lived experience is key to the students' development of perceived similarity, which is the primary way people develop empathy. While some students related the given example to their lives by talking about a friend or family member who liked the given musical example, others were able to relate the lesson to their own cultural experiences. For instance, one student whose parents came to America from Brazil said that he was excited to study the Puerto Rican artist Guyanaa because it

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[121] Student Transcripts. November, 2023.

was his "first time studying [music from] Latin America at school."[122] Others related the example to their own lives because they actually enjoyed the music presented. The data showed that over 80 percent of students related the given musical example to their own lived experience in some way.

Further, other students who saw or heard the connections their peers made to the given example were more likely to enjoy the given lesson because they saw the impact it had on their peers. The best example of this comes from the lesson on BTS and South Korean culture. One of the students in class was adopted from South Korea, and at the beginning of the lesson, many students remarked that learning about BTS and South Korea was "stupid." Yet, at the end of the class time, that student went over to his classmate and apologized for saying that his culture was stupid and said that he was "really excited to learn about BTS now." During the post-lesson group interviews, the students almost unanimously stated studying multicultural music is important so that they can better understand people like their friends. This change occurred because the students began to develop perceived similarity with South Korean culture. Having already established perceived similarity with their South Korean peer made the process of perceiving South Korean culture as similar to their own even easier. Thus, studying popular music and its cultural background can lead to the development of perceived similarity in elementary students. This data suggests a partial answer to the first research question: "In what ways can socially-relevant popular music affect cultural empathy and understanding in the elementary classroom?" Observations suggest that students develop an increase in perceived similarity when studying popular music and its cultural backgrounds.

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[122] Student Transcripts. November, 15, 2023.

Observation Question 3: Conclusions

The third observation question was, "How do the students interact socially with the given example?" The researcher observed that over 87 percent of students had more compassion and excitement about a given topic when they learned how it was meaningful or exciting to one of their peers. The previous question demonstrated that students increased in perceived similarity between themselves and other cultures. This question aimed to determine if (through the study of social-relevant popular music) students would increase in perceived similarity between themselves and their peers. Laird states, "Experiences of individuals and relationships with one another are vitally important to understanding empathy." [123] Observing the students in each lesson made it clear that students were able to develop empathy for their peers through the development of perceived similarity. The level of perceived similarity that students have for their peers is already established, as they spend a large amount of time together each week and are often close friends with their peers. However, students actually grew in perceived similarity when they could see how important a song or genre was to their peers.

For instance, when beginning to study Taylor Swift, many of the male students remarked that they "hated Taylor Swift," and they did not want to learn about her since "Taylor Swift is so cringe." [124] However, after seeing the interest and excitement that the female students displayed, some of the male students began to enjoy the lesson, and during the post-lesson group interview, a few stated that "I like Taylor Swift now," and "This [lesson] wasn't so bad." [125] These male students developed perceived similarity with their peers after seeing how much their peers

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[123] Lynda Laird, "Empathy in the Classroom," 58.

[124] Student Transcripts. November, 13, 2023.

[125] Student Transcripts. November, 13, 2023.

enjoyed the musical example. Since perceived similarity is the primary way students develop empathy, this data demonstrates that elementary students can learn to have social empathy by learning about popular music in the classroom.

<div align="center">Post-Lesson Group Interview Summary and Conclusions</div>

Summary

The post-lesson group interview results demonstrate that studying popular music led not only to increased knowledge on a given topic but also increased social and cultural empathy. The data from post-lesson group interviews showed that most students demonstrated an increase in knowledge about the given topic and believed it was essential to study the cultural backgrounds of popular music so that they could learn to be "nicer to people from that culture." Students also found it necessary to study music from other cultures so that they could relate to their peers in more meaningful ways.

Conclusions

The participants' reactions to each lesson emerged as subthemes, which formed a response to both research questions. The data showed that in response to the first research question, learning about popular music in the elementary classroom can help students develop perceived similarities with other cultures, thereby increasing their cultural empathy and understanding. Similarly, learning about popular music in the classroom also helps students develop perceived similarities with their peers, leading to growth in social empathy and understanding. The data collection portion of this study suggests that students' musical experiences impact their ability to form sociocultural empathy. By broadening their musical

horizons, students can have more listening experiences and gain compassion for other cultures and their peers.

Results and Literature

This study fills the existing gap in the available literature about this subject. The effects of popular music in the classroom and students' sociocultural empathy have been documented at different educational levels but not at the elementary level. This study closely aligns with Elliot's praxial music philosophy and Vygotsky's ZPD theory. Elliot believed that studying multicultural music in the classroom is critical for students of every age because these types of music are a reflection of the human experience. [126] In order to help students become well-rounded people with empathy for all cultures, it is essential that multicultural music be studied in the classroom. While socially-relevant popular music is not always the same as multicultural music, studying the cultural backgrounds of socially-relevant popular music can have a similar effect on students. Further, Vygotsky's ZPD theory states that students' growth in knowledge is significantly higher when surrounded by more knowledgeable peers. The observations in this study demonstrated an agreement with Vygotsky's theory. Students were more likely to grow in knowledge and sociocultural empathy when they learned about a given culture or musical example from their peers. For instance, most students who had a negative reaction to learning about Taylor Swift and American Country Music at the beginning of the lesson had a neutral or positive reaction to the lesson after learning about why it was important or interesting to one of their peers.

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[126] Elliot, *Music Matters,* 264.

Cultural Empathy and Multicultural Music

This study has results similar to Simone Krüger's, Jennifer Mellizo's, and Kay Edwards's studies, all of which found that studying multicultural music in the classroom has a positive effect on students' development of sociocultural empathy. [127] Though this study did not utilize strictly multicultural music, the cultural backgrounds of socially relevant popular music were studied, and the researcher observed results similar to those of these studies. In her conclusion, Krüger states that as a result of the study, "Some students even began to reevaluate their own culture and started viewing Western concepts and beliefs in new ways." [128] The same was true for this study, simply at the elementary level. For instance, upon finding out that South Korean elementary schools provide free and nutritious lunches for students every day, many students were observed saying things like "America should do that" and "That's so yummy, I wish I could have hot lunch every day." [129] When learning about BTS and South Korean Music and Culture, another student said, "I thought BTS was dumb, but now I don't know why I don't listen to them more." These students were reevaluating their beliefs about their own culture in light of the new information presented. Though these examples are small, and the breadth of information shared about the new topic might not be adequate for an older child to make an informed evaluation of other cultures, the process happening here is very similar to what Krüger experienced in her study, simply at a younger age-appropriate level.

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[127] Krüger, "Democratic Pedagogies," 281; Mellizo, "Exploring the Effect of Music Education on Intercultural Sensitivity in Early Adolescence," 473; Edwards, "Multicultural Music Instruction in the Elementary School," 62-65.

[128] Krüger, "Democratic Pedagogies," 295.

[129] Student Transcripts. November 8, 2023.

Further, Boyle, Hosterman, and Ramsel's study concluded that students' cultural life outside the classroom influenced their music preferences. They found that undergraduate students had more diverse musical preferences because they had more exposure to multicultural music than elementary students.[130] Similarly, this study found that elementary students' musical preferences were intrinsically linked to their sociocultural experiences, which was one of the compelling reasons that urged the researcher to perform this study. By exposing elementary students to music that is engaging (socially-relevant popular music) and studying its multicultural history, students will be able to not only broaden their musical horizons but also learn to have empathy for people from all cultures. In this study, sociocultural empathy is defined as the ability to understand the feelings of others specifically related to social relationships and other cultures.

<div style="text-align:center">Social Empathy and Popular Music</div>

The studies of Davis and Minks demonstrated that incorporating popular music into the elementary classroom for informal study increased student engagement in the lesson and increased students' social connections with one another.[131] Similarly, this study found that utilizing socially-relevant popular music in the elementary classroom for formal study not only increased student engagement but also helped students develop social empathy. The data shows that, overall, 94 percent of students demonstrated a positive reaction to learning about socially-relevant popular music. Further, 100 percent of students who had initially apprehensive reactions

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[130] Boyle, Hosterman, and Ramsey, "Factors Influencing Pop Music Preferences of Young People," 55.

[131] Davis, "Informal Learning Processes in an Elementary Music Classroom," 23.

to a given lesson demonstrated a neutral or positive reaction to the given culture or musical example after the lesson time. The students' reactions to the lesson demonstrate that learning about socially-relevant popular music for formal study increases student engagement during the lesson. However, this study did not compare student engagement results from other lessons.

This study also found that studying socially-relevant popular music helped students to form social bonds and social empathy. During the lesson and post-lesson group interviews, the researcher observed the students developing perceived similarity with other students in a variety of ways. Whether students developed perceived similarity because they saw other students enjoying the kind of music they enjoyed or because they learned about another student's cultural background, it is evident that studying socially-relevant music in the elementary classroom leads to an increase in perceived similarity in elementary students.

Structural or Aesthetic Qualities of Popular Music

Though this study did not compare the structural or aesthetic qualities of popular music with what is typically known as "school" music like Allsup or Warner's studies, this study did come to a similar conclusion as Parakilas, Stanton, and Elliot: that popular music ought to be incorporated in the elementary classroom because it is a reflection of the universal human experience. Parakilas argued that popular music should be included in elementary studies while arguing that it does not contain the same structural or aesthetic qualities as classical music.[132] The comparison between these types of music could be used for future study. Additionally, this study agrees with the findings of Abrahams, Blair, and Davis, who argue that it is essential for

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[132] James Parakilas, "Classical Music as Popular Music," 1.

music educators to be fluent in socially-relevant popular music and music technology so that they can better serve their students.

Summary

This study fills the gap in the available literature on the subject of popular music in elementary education and the development of social and cultural empathy by studying an un-researched age range and using popular music for formal study. In doing so, the researcher came to similar conclusions as many other authors, in that studying popular music in the elementary classroom can lead to increased social and cultural empathy. The goal of each lesson was to present information on new cultures and new music so that students could begin to develop perceived similarity, which, in turn, would aid them in the development of sociocultural empathy.

Limitations and Future Research

This study followed a qualitative ethnographic research design. While the results of this study suggest that popular music has a positive impact on students' empathy, it is possible that a number of factors may be influencing students' reactions. Using the example of the lesson on Taylor Swift, one of the more popular students came over to a less popular student and said, "I didn't know you liked Taylor Swift; you should listen to her new album with us later."[133] Though the more popular student may have developed perceived similarities to the less popular student and sought out a social bond because of this, it is possible that the less popular student may have felt pressure to like the same music, making the data unclear. Further, if a popular student was adamantly against a certain kind of music, it may influence the other

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[133] Student Transcripts. November, 13, 2023.

students' opinions of that music. In this study, during the BTS lesson, one of the popular male students said that he "hates BTS because it is too girly."[134] While at first, the other male students agreed with him and expressed their disinterest in the subject, as the lesson went on, and because the female students showed excitement about the lesson, many of the male students changed their minds and expressed their enjoyment of the lesson during the post-lesson group interviews.[135] The researcher observed some students talking to their friends and stating, "I thought BTS was dumb, but now I think I should listen to a few more songs." [136] Though the students were initially influenced by a popular student's opinion, by the end of the lesson, their opinions changed. Though the researcher did not encounter a popular student completely influencing the other students' point of view in her study, it is certainly a plausible danger for future studies.

Additionally, there are areas of study beyond this study's scope, which would be extremely helpful in informing the data in this study. For instance, this study does not compare student engagement when learning about socially-relevant popular music to student engagement in other lessons, either utilizing multicultural music or not. For further research, comparing the two may clarify whether or not socially-relevant popular music is more engaging than other types of music in the elementary classroom. For future study, one may also compare popular music's structural or aesthetic qualities with classical music to see if popular music can offer the same level of technical music education as classical or other types of music. Considering the benefits of popular music, as demonstrated in this study, it is essential to determine if there is

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[134] Student Transcripts. November, 7, 2023.

[135] See page 50.

[136] Student Transcripts. November, 6, 2023.

educational value to popular music beyond the sociocultural. This study also studied students from a private school in the Las Virgines school district of L.A. County, but performing the same study at a public school might lead to different results because of the curricular differences between private and public schools. Finally, drawing from the insights gained by this study, it is evident that socially-relevant popular music does have a positive effect on the development of elementary students' sociocultural empathy. For this reason, there is a need for engaging curriculums that utilize socially-relevant popular music as a teaching tool.

Why Study Empathy?

The primary aim of this study was to see if teaching elementary students popular music could help them develop empathy for their peers and other cultures. As demonstrated by this study, it is possible to help students learn empathy through the study of popular music. But why teach empathy at all? The goal of teaching empathy to students is so that they can learn to have successful, fulfilling relationships and so they can become well-rounded and emotionally intelligent human beings to create a more compassionate, kind, and godly world.

Empathy is the key ingredient in successful friendships and relationships. Not only does empathy help children form connections with others, but it equips them with the tools needed to reduce conflicts, regulate their emotions, and form relationships. These are all skills which are essential to a successful adult life. Studies show that empathy begins in the physical body; as scientist and educator Mary Gordon notes,

> Neuroscience tells us that the flow of sensations upward from the regions below our thinking cortex… create the basis for empathy. We literally feel in our lower neural circuits what we see in someone else. Driven initially by "mirror neurons" that permit us to enact behavioral imitation and emotional simulation, we move and feel in ways that reflect what we see in someone else. It is this openness to our own embodied response that creates the foundation for feeling another's feelings. Moving upward into our

awareness-creating prefrontal cortex, we begin to sense our internal world and attribute what we feel to what we may perceive inside someone else.[137]

In other words, a person's brain works to allow them to imitate the emotions of others, which they are then able to categorize based on their own lived experience. This process is very similar to that of perceived similarity. As Laird states, "perceived similarity asserts that people feel for a person in need to the degree that they perceive them to be similar to themselves."[138] By using popular music as a tool to help students develop perceived empathy for the many different cultures of the world, it is possible to help students develop empathy not only with their peers but with people from all cultures. Doing so is critical not only to the student's personal life but to the long-term success of the world. Today's elementary students are America's future leaders, parents, voters, and educators. To create lasting positive change in the world, educators must seek to help students grow in knowledge and social emotional development.

Final Conclusions

This qualitative ethnographic study aimed to determine whether socially-relevant popular music can help elementary students develop social and cultural empathy. The data suggests that not only does studying socially-relevant popular music in the elementary classroom have a positive effect on students' development of cultural empathy, but it also has a positive effect on students' development of social empathy. By exposing students to the cultural backgrounds of the music they know and love, the researcher provided opportunities for students to develop

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[137] Mary Gordon, *Roots of Empathy; Changing the world Child by Child*, (New York, NY: The Experiment, LLC, 2005), xiv-xv. https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=C31-dSOwEiEC&oi=fnd&pg=PR1&dq=why+teach+empathy+to+kids&ots=B_XvABq3ek&sig=LQXVbA9ET1V1X07N5XFN4DGjWBI#v=onepage&q=why%20teach%20empathy%20to%20kids&f=false

[138] Lynda Laird, "Empathy in the Classroom," 56

perceived similarities and thus develop empathy for their peers and people from other cultures. This research suggests that integrating socially-relevant popular music into elementary education curricula can be a valuable and effective tool for fostering empathy and cultural awareness in the next generation. The implications of these results emphasize the potential of music education to contribute to the broader goals of promoting understanding and empathy in society.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Pre-Lesson Questions

1. Have you heard of (insert cultural background of musical example) before?

2. What do you know about said culture?

3. What kind of music do you enjoy outside of the classroom?

Appendix B: Observation Questions

1. How do the students react (positive or negative) towards the example given?

2. How do the students correlate the cultural background described to their lived

   experience?

3. How do the students interact socially with the given example?

Appendix C: Post-Lesson Questions

1. What did you learn about (insert given musical example's cultural background)?

2. Why do you think it is important to study (insert given musical example's cultural background) music?

3. How do you think your understanding of (insert given musical example's cultural background) will help you relate to people from this cultural background?

Appendix D: Sample Field Note Template

Field Note Form

Date:

Musical Example:

Participants:

Length of Observation:

Notes:

Summary:

Appendix E: IRB Approval

IRB #: IRB-FY23-24-520
Title: Popular Music and Sociocultural Empathy in the Elementary Classroom: A Qualitative Ethnographic Study
Creation Date: 9-26-2023
End Date:
Status: Approved
Principal Investigator: Kelsey Packman
Review Board: Research Ethics Office
Sponsor:

Study History

Submission Type	Initial	Review Type	Expedited	Decision	Approved

Key Study Contacts

Member	Lori Danielson	Role	Co-Principal Investigator	Contact	
Member	Kelsey Packman	Role	Principal Investigator	Contact	
Member	Kelsey Packman	Role	Primary Contact	Contact	

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Appendix F. Sample Opt-Out Form

Parental Opt-Out
Popular Music and Social Emotional Learning in the Elementary Classroom
Kelsey Packman,
Student at the Liberty University School of Music

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Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

Your student is invited to participate in a research study. To participate, he/she must be a student at Ascension Lutheran School, be currently enrolled in 1st, 2nd, 3rd, or 4th grade and be between the ages of six and ten. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to allow your student to take part in this research project.

What is the study about and why are we doing it?

The purpose of the study is to determine the effects of socially-relevant popular music on the elementary classroom. Many undergraduate programs incorporate socially-relevant popular music into their classrooms, and have noticed a positive shift in students' ability to empathize with their peers, and a positive development in their social-emotional awareness. However, this type of study has not been conducted in an elementary age classroom. This study aims to address this gap in the available literature, and propose an improved music education for elementary age students. These students are the future of our society and are this nation's future leaders and music educators. If by developing current music curriculum, it is possible to provide a quality music education that would positively affect students' compassion for others, this type of education would greatly benefit society as it would use music to train up children to have social emotional awareness so they can become well-rounded human beings.

What will participants be asked to do in this study?

If you agree to allow your student to be in this study, I will ask her/him to do the following:
1. Participate in four in-person, video recorded lessons with their peers in their grade, that will take 25-30 minutes. These lessons will take place during school hours and will be video-recorded.
2. Participate in group discussions which will occur during their regularly scheduled lesson time. These group interviews will be held directly before each lesson portion, and directly after each lesson portion. These group discussions will also be video-recorded and are expected to last 5 minutes each. There will be 4 pre-lesson group interviews and 4 post-lesson group discussions in total.

How could participants or others benefit from this study?

The direct benefits participants should expect to receive from taking part in this study are increased social and cultural empathy, a greater understanding of popular music, a greater understanding of other cultures, social-emotional development, and peer bonding.

Benefits to society include future citizens and leaders who have developed social and cultural empathy and suggestions for future elementary music curriculums.

What risks might participants experience from being in this study?

The expected risks from participating in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks your student would encounter in everyday life.
I am a mandatory reporter. During this study, if I receive information about child abuse, child neglect, elder abuse, or intent to harm self or others, I will be required to report it to the appropriate authorities.

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Published reports will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

- Participant responses will be kept confidential by replacing names with pseudonyms.
- Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in focus group settings. While discouraged, other members of the focus group may share what was discussed with persons outside of the group.
- Data will be stored on a password protected external hard-drive, and can only be accessed through a password protected computer. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.
- Video Recordings will be stored on a password protected external hard-drive, and can only be accessed through a password protected computer. These recordings will be stored for three years and then erased. Only the researcher and members of her thesis committee have access to these recordings.

Is the researcher in a position of authority over participants, or does the researcher have a financial conflict of interest?

The researcher serves as a teacher at Ascension Lutheran School. To limit potential or perceived conflicts, all lesson plans will be approved by the researchers advisory team. This disclosure is made so that you can decide if this relationship will affect your willingness to allow your student to participate in this study. No action will be taken against an individual based on her or his decision to allow his or her student to participate in this study.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether to allow your student to participate will not affect your or his/her current or future relations with Ascension Lutheran

School or Liberty University. If you decide to allow your student to participate, she/he is free to not answer any question without affecting those relationships.

What should be done if a participant wishes to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw your student from the study or your student chooses to withdraw, please contact the researcher at the email address included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw her/him or should your student choose to withdraw, data collected from your student will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study. Focus group data will not be destroyed, but your student's contributions to the focus group will not be included in the study if you choose to withdraw him/her or your student chooses to withdraw.

Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

The researcher conducting this study is Kelsey Packman. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact her at ---------------------. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Dr. Lori Danielson, at ----------------------.

Whom do you contact if you have questions about rights as a research participant?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the IRB. Our physical address is Institutional Review Board ------------------------; our phone number is --------------, and our email address is ------------------

Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.

Your Opt-Out

By signing this document, you are agreeing to allow your student to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the researcher using the information provided above.

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to allow my student to participate in the study.

If you would prefer that your child NOT PARTICIPATE in this study, please sign this document, and return it to Mrs. Angress in the school office by 11/6/2023.

_____
Printed Child's/Student's Name

_____
Parent/Guardian's Signature   Date

Appendix G: Lesson Plans

LESSON PLAN

Grade: 1-4	Subject: Music	Date: TBD

Topic: BTS and South Korean Culture	Lesson 1 of 4

Lesson Focus and Goals:
- Understanding South Korean Culture
- Praxially participating in playing popular music
- Grow in social and cultural empathy

Materials Needed:
- MP3 of Kids Bop version of "Butter."
- Bluetooth Speaker
- Slideshow on BTS and South Korean Culture and Fill in the Blank Print Outs
- Boomwhackers and "Butter" Play Along

Learning Objectives:
- Greater understanding of South Korean culture
- Praxial connections to popular music

Structure / Activity:

Greet students, recap study, and conduct pre-lesson group interview.

Pass out Fill in the Blank Print outs based on grade.

Introduce BTS and Korean Culture with slideshow.

Collect Print outs,

Pass out Boomwhackers and go over rules

Play through "Butter" with Boomwhacker accompaniment, then collect instruments.

Conduct Post-Lesson Group Interview

Assessment:
The Post-Lesson Group Interview will act as the assessment for class. The questions asked will include:
1. What did you learn about BTS or South Korean culture?
2. Do you think it is important to study music from South Korea? Why or Why not?
3. How do you think your understanding of South Korean culture will help you relate to people from this cultural background?

LESSON PLAN

Grade: 1-4	Subject: Music	Date: TBD

Topic: John Legend and African American Music Styles	Lesson 2 of 4

Lesson Focus and Goals:
- Understanding the history of African American Music Styles
- Praxially participating in playing popular music
- Grow in social and cultural empathy

Materials Needed:
- MP3 of Kidzbop version of John Legend's "Love You Now"
- Bluetooth Speaker
- Slideshow on John Legend and African American Music Styles
- Rhythm Sticks / Hand Drums

Learning Objectives:
- Greater understanding of African American Soul Music and its history
- Praxial connections to popular music

Structure / Activity:

Greet students, recap study, and conduct pre-lesson group interview.

Pass out Fill in the Blank Print outs based on grade.

Introduce John Legend and African American Music Styles with slideshow.

Collect Print outs.

Distribute Rhythm sticks for grades 1-2 or Hand drums for grades 3-4

Teach "Love You Now" and recreate rhythm. Then play along using instruments.

Conduct post-lesson group interview.

Assessment:
The Post-Lesson Group Interview will act as the assessment for class. The questions asked will include:
1. What did you learn about John Legend or African American culture?
2. Do you think it is important to study African American music styles? Why or Why not?
3. How do you think your understanding of African American music styles will help you relate to people from this cultural background?

LESSON PLAN

Grade: 1-4	Subject: Music	Date: TBD

Topic: Taylor Swift and American Country Music	Lesson 3 of 4

Lesson Focus and Goals:
- **Understanding American Country Music**
- **Praxially participating in playing popular music**
- **Grow in social and cultural empathy**

Materials Needed:
MP3 of Taylor Swift's "You belong with Me"
- **Bluetooth Speaker**
- **Slideshow Taylor Swift and American Popular Music**
- **Country Music Composing Print Out**

Learning Objectives:
- **Greater understanding of American Popular Music**
- **Praxial connections to popular music**

Structure / Activity:

Greet students, recap study, and conduct pre-lesson group interview.

Introduce Taylor Swift and American Country Music on slideshow.

Explain Country Music Song Writing Activity, sort students into groups of two.

Pass out Song Writing print-outs.

Collect print-outs and have each group perform their song.

Conduct post-lesson group interview.

Assessment:
The Post-Lesson Group Interview will act as the assessment for class. The questions asked will include:
1. What did you learn about Taylor Swift or American Country Music?
2. Do you think it is important to study American Country Music? Why or Why not?
3. How do you think your understanding of American Country Music will help you relate to people from this cultural background?

LESSON PLAN

Grade: 1-4	Subject: Music	Date: TBD

Topic: Guaynaa and Latin American Music and Culture	Lesson 4 of 4

Lesson Focus and Goals:
- Understanding Latin American Music and Culture
- Praxially participating in playing popular music
- Growing in social and cultural empathy

Materials Needed:
- MP3 of Kids Bop version of "Cumbia a la gente," and mp3 of rap background beat.
- Bluetooth Speaker
- Slideshow on Guaynaa and Latin American Music and Culture
- Rap Writing Print Outs and word cards

Learning Objectives:
- Greater understanding of Latin American Music and Culture
- Praxial connections to popular music

Structure / Activity:

Greet students, recap study, and conduct pre-lesson group interview.

Introduce Guaynaa and Latin American Music and Culture on slideshow.

Explain Rap Writing Activity.

Pass out Rap Writing print-outs and word cards.

Play rap background beat and have each student perform their verse they created with the given word cards. Then collect print-outs.

Conduct post-lesson group interview.

Assessment:
The Post-Lesson Group Interview will act as the assessment for class. The questions asked will include:
1. What did you learn about Guaynaa and South American Music and Culture?
2. Do you think it is important to study South American Music and Culture? Why or Why not?
3. How do you think your understanding of South American Music and Culture will help you relate to people from this cultural background?

Appendix H: Sample Recruitment Letter

Dear Ascension Parents,

As a graduate student in the School of Music at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Master's degree. The purpose of my research is determine the effects of popular music on elementary students' social-emotional development, and I am writing to invite your child to join my study. This study offers a unique opportunity for your students to grow in social and cultural empathy and study music that they know and love.

Participants must be students at Ascension Lutheran School, be currently enrolled in 1st, 2nd, 3rd, or 4th grade and be between the ages of six and ten years old. Participants will be asked to take part in four in-person video-recorded group lessons with their other peers from their grade. These lessons will last no longer than 30 minutes, and will take place during regular school hours. Participants will also participate in 4 pre-lesson and 4 post-lesson group interviews, which will take place during their regularly scheduled lesson time. Each group interview will take approximately 5 minutes. These interviews will also be video-recorded. It should take approximately two weeks to complete the procedures listed. Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but participant identities will not be disclosed. Video footage will ONLY be reviewed by Kelsey Packman and will not be shared with anyone.

If you would like your child to not participate, please sign the attached Opt-out form and return it to me via email.

An Opt-Out document is attached to this email. If you would like your student to Opt-Out of participating in the study, please sign the Opt-Out form below.

Sincerely,

Kelsey Packman
Music Teacher

Appendix I: School Approval

Kelsey Packman <

Appproval

Rich Gregory   Mon, Sep 11, 2023 at 9:42 AM
To: Kelsey Packman <

Kelsey,

We are thrilled you will be doing a Master's research project on campus. God bless you.

God's peace, Rich
--

FPSchoolLogoColor.jpg

Rev. Rich Gregory
Principal

LEAD - INSPIRE - SERVE
Ascension Lutheran School is dedicated to nurturing each student, providing academic excellence and creating bold, compassionate leaders who inspire and serve others in their walk with Jesus Christ

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