
Pairing Linguistic and Music Intelligence

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ABSTRACT:

Music is a catalyst for developing critical reading, writing and understanding skills. Can music in the language class room setting improve students' reading and writing skills? The answer is yes. In linguistic classrooms, music as a catalyst prepares students of all ages to learn to read and write and to understand literary history, in addition to offering teacher practical strategies for transforming the educational environment. Further in this paper I shall be discussing in more elaborated form in context to pairing linguistic and musical intelligence.

Keywords: Education, Intelligence, Linguistic, Music, Skills.

INTRODUCTION

Statistical results of case study research have suggested that pairing music and linguistic intelligence in the college classroom improves students' grades and abilities to compose these statements for research papers in courses that emphasize reading and writing skills. Grounded in educational theories, as well as offering practical applications pairing two intelligences advances student potential. Based on multiple intelligence theory (Gardner 1993), the Mozart effect (Campbell 2001), and participation as precedent to learning (Bateson 1975), the conclusion may be drawn that integrating music into elementary, middle school, high school, advanced placement, and college linguistic classrooms, as well as into virtual classrooms, enables students to learn to read and write.

Listening to instrumental music as well as songs with lyrics before and during lectures, presentations and virtual lecture asynchronous lessons offers practical solutions for teachers. In fact use of music in elementary school through college and in traditional as well as alternative classrooms, stimulates students to think beyond the text book. Pairing musical intelligence with linguistic intelligence activities creates a connection between the two intelligences. Using music and lyrics, students can develop critical thinking skills for analyzing and writing about literature.

Educational researchers find that songs initiate cognitive processing. Songs in the linguistic classroom initiate bimodal instruction and positively move cognitive functioning.

“Music is processed in the right side brain and speech in left”, (Ludin – Nelson 1997, 84).

Music awakens the right side of the brain, the creative side, as an : element in this process. Students listen to music, read passages, and then analyze those passages based on intrinsic

music intelligence. The result is self efficacy that leads to student learning, successful outcomes in achievement, and ultimately, transformation in the classroom.

The importance of transformation in the literature classroom can go beyond the basic skills of critical reading and writing. When researching literature, students can draw correlation to culture, music and poetry. Kramer (2001) acknowledged that songs can illustrate points and initiate discussions that empower instructors to find a common bond between language and cultural studies. Furthermore, transformation is vital in the development of students as thinkers and doers, and as individuals who are responsible and knowledgeable about their own cultures. Benefits to the classroom include changes in student motivation, focus on historical background of literary works, bases for primary sources of lessons, and specific framework designs as well as positive transformational changes in classroom patterns.

CLASSROOM MOTIVATION

Incorporating music that is representative of students' cultures can help them relate to the rhetoric in literary passages they read. For example, modern songs with lyrics such as: "A Thousand Miles" by Vanessa Carlton hold cultural and contextual meaning and metaphor. Students compare songs to current multicultural literature and demonstrate of her works to the works of modern songwriters.

Students of all ages can be motivated to learn to read and write with the use of songs. The works of Beatrix Potter can be sung to teach concepts to younger students. Literature selected by teachers offers older students opportunities to learn metaphor and language skills through patterns that resemble songs. Bringing a guitar into the classroom and studying excerpts from song lyrics can improve reading comprehension and writing about works of literature.

LITERATURE COMPREHENSION

Literature can be taught to all ages through music. For instance, a teacher could draw connections between the work of Greek playwright Sophocles and music. Music can be applied to break through the barrier of confusion, to bridge the gap to a new understanding of how culture can open the mind, and to help students learn about literature. For instance, a student might create an alternate assignment about how the works of rap band relate to Chinua Achebe, a contemporary African American author.

DESIGNING SPECIFIC LESSONS

Pairing linguistic and music intelligence triggers the brain's cognitive functions demanded for reading and writing. The lesson plan, with emphasis on integration, prepares students to read and write in a creatively constructed curriculum that can satisfy requirements and yet be sensitive to critical thinking processes. Short essay discussion journal lessons, like the example that follows, can be designed for college students:

Thesis: the song "If you're Gone" by Rob Thomas from the album Mad Season relates thematically to sonnet by William Shakespeare.

The theme connection in the works of art centers upon use of love as a treasure for the writer to hold onto but an item that can be lost. Rob Thomas writes, ‘I think I’ve already lost you’ and Shakespeare comments, ‘So long lives this’. Both writers want the aesthetics and thematic idea of love to last forever. If that love ends either abruptly or in time, the writers suggest that they might be devastated. In addition, both writers talk to the loved one as if in a thought process. They may not actually state these ideas to the loved one, but seem to show the reader private intimate inner thoughts. Therefore, art in this manner has purpose to show the reader the inner state of the lover. Consequently, language means love and also acts as a clear metaphor for two artists.

Rob Thomas, a song writer and musician, and William Shakespeare, a literary figure of merit, both use language as metaphor to show the relationship of the lover and the loved. They use rhymed and metered language to fit words into patterns to portray the longing and powerful inner state of the lover. Similarly in Indian context “SurDas Pad” & “Meera Pad” are the good example of this.

In the next illustration, a college student responded positively to the pairing of music and linguistic intelligences to write the following about Tolkien Zepplin:
Literature as well as music can be healing devices. In this research paper, I will show similarities in mood, theme, setting, as well as general story lines in the works of Led Zepplin and J.R.R. Tolkien.

Many of Led Zepplin’s songs seem to capture the same imagery of a world that is somewhat parallel to ours yet unspoiled by advancement and technology. Many know this as middle earth. While the underlying themes might seem to be similar, Led Zepplin does make several direct references to Tolkien’s masterpieces.

MUSIC TRANSFORMS

Modern music in the classroom transforms the classroom and allows students to learn literature, reading and writing, based on tile theory that cooperative participation precedes knowledge (Bateson 1975). Music transforms students’ minds and prepares them to learn. When students participate in listening to music and select their favorite music, they become prepared to learn about literature, writing and computer skills appropriate for writing.

Students may even base research papers on songs to achieve positive results. A student in an English college class related to the pairing of music and linguistic phenomenon. Drawing un Irish ballads, he focused his linguistic on analysis of events in World War 2 that were directly named in the songs. Then he proceeded to write historical, descriptive research essays throughout the entire class. His initial response to the music prompted him to find an outlet for his theme –war. He read, wrote, and succeeded because of his pairing of two intelligences.

SONGS AS PRIMARY SOURCES

To help students attain successful reading comprehension and ability to write, teachers might include connections to music that are representative of students' cultures. In this way, the rhetoric found on the page can be extended to the cultural understanding of the student. For example, on the elementary level, children can sing along with music in the language classroom to learn that writing about their experiences can be fun. The teacher can incorporate music to teach fiction by showing that the story in the song is the same as the story found in the textbook. Most importantly, music as a catalyst can help students find a way to relate to the literary message and encode language through sound.

To demonstrate the use of primary sources, teachers can incorporate balance and design in the curriculum through music. For example, a teacher might offer students the chance to select a favorite song. The song title is the primary source, requiring students to consult MLA style documentation during the research process. Next, students may find the lyrics to the song and paste excerpts into a journal. For younger students, teachers can use a simpler version of this journaling technique to enhance reading assignments. For students of all ages, music works as a catalyst in the writing classroom, because it emphasizes the critical thinking skills necessary to prepare students to write.

Integrating songs as primary sources for learning in the linguistic setting engages student participation. The technique also strengthens the relationship between teacher and students and establishes behaviors of mutual cooperation. Through structural interactions, students initiate language development and increase their participation.

CONCLUSION

Pairing intelligences extends to motivational issues, comprehension goals and specific lessons geared to achieving academic success. Rooted in educational theories of multiple intelligence, the Mozart Effect, and cooperative participation, pairing linguistic and music intelligences to improve and develop reading and writing skills is applicable in classrooms of all academic levels and types. Further, pairing linguistic and music intelligences can enrich classrooms, advance student potential, engage students, and enhance student learning.

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