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Using popular song lyrics to teach character and peace education

Stacy Shayne Corbett

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USING POPULAR SONG LYRICS TO TEACH CHARACTER AND PEACE EDUCATION

A Project
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
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in
Education:
Holistic and Integrative Education

by
Stacy Shayne Corbett
March 2007
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CHARACTER AND PEACE EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

With an increasing emphasis on standardized test scores and more and more exposure to adult issues and violence, there is a growing need for peace education.

As an adult, I have discovered the profound messages songwriters can convey to their audience. As I teacher, I have begun to consider music an incredibly valuable teaching tool. I am certain that song lyrics can reach the children of today. Through holistic instruction and by analyzing song lyrics, I believe students can learn lessons in peace education. Specifically, the purpose of this project is to develop an integrative unit for peace education that is based on analyzing song lyrics and developing critical literacy. This unit is being designed for fourth through sixth grade teachers in Chino Hills, California.
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Thank you to all who have supported me and helped me through this project. Thank you to the upper grade teaching team at Rolling Ridge Elementary for participating in my study. Jim, I am lucky to have such a supportive, encouraging partner, thank you.

I would like to thank the eighth cohort of Holistic Education: Integrative Studies. Each of you has touched my life and helped me to evolve as an educator and as a person. I give sincerest thanks to Dr. Robert London and Dr. Sam Crowell for their inspiring guidance and encouragement. Last, but definitely not least, thank you to my dear friend, study partner and supporter, Robin Russell. Without you the ride would not have been easy and would definitely not been as fun.
DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to my mother, who always filled our home with music, to the musicians who create music that moves the soul, and to everyone who believes in and works for peace.
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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

Need for the Study

Personal Rationale

I am seven years old, sitting on the couch watching television. My favorite commercial just came on and voices from the television sing out, “I’d like to teach the world to sing in perfect harmony...” Just then my mom calls for me to turn off the television, it is time to do chores. With that she puts an album on the record player and the sweet voice of Harry Chapin fills the house, “All my life’s a circle, sunrise ‘til sundown...” These lyrics along with many others spoke to me, even as a young child. Music has brightened my days and brought meaning to my life for as long as I can remember. Today, the lyrics of an inspiring song continue to speak to me while the melody warms my soul.

I want to share these meaningful life lessons with the children of today. I hope to spread the positive feeling and belief in peace through lessons taught in the public school classroom. The road ahead is not clear, challenges lie before me like roadblocks.
As a child, I did not face the kinds of issues that children today face. My mother stayed home and we all ate dinner together every night. We read stories and were immersed in principles of peace, tolerance, and compassion. Music filled our home. The melodies and lyrics of folk songs and rock and roll enveloped my being. The songs spoke to me and helped to form the person I am today. All of this has left me wondering, "Can song lyrics reach the children of today?"

Throughout my journey in peace education and the holistic vision, I have evolved as an individual and as an educator. My sense of being and understanding now stands on a relatively firm foundation. The idea for my project came to me years ago and has grown and developed through my studies and life experiences. What was once a pipe dream is now becoming an exciting reality. My vision for this project is to create an integrative unit for peace education that is divided into Ramon Gallegos Nava's (2001) five areas of wholeness:

1. The Whole Person - a person is an integral being
2. Wholeness in Community - quality of human relationships
3. Wholeness in Society - world citizenship, peace, sustainable environment
A Whole Planet - global awareness and respect for nature

The Holistic Kosmos - freedom, brotherhood, compassion, and universal love

The lessons within each area will be based on analyzing song lyrics and developing critical literacy while emphasizing peace and moral education.

Theoretical Background

Studies have shown that there is a need for and a benefit from providing our students with moral education. Many teachers and schools around the United States are implementing a variety of moral education opportunities for students. These programs include character education, peace education, and caring community among others. All moral worlds seem to prioritize "modeling virtuous behavior [as] a key component," (Joseph & Efron, 2005, p. 101). From there, the worlds become more divergent.

While some schools implement specific, organized programs, some teachers search to create their own curriculum. One way that teachers are teaching these lessons is through literature that can be "a springboard for pondering moral dilemmas and developing moral identities" (Joseph & Efron, 2005, p. 106). Folktales, novels, and short stories have all been used to teach values. Why not song lyrics?
Teachers of all grade levels from kindergarten to college have used song lyrics to teach a variety of lessons. Lyrics can provide a new, exciting way to teach. They have been used by some researchers (e.g. Marchionda, 1996) alongside textbooks as a means of developing critical literacy. Lloyd (2003) supports this concept, "[Song lyrics] can be used effectively in classrooms to provide the voices rarely heard in textbooks" (p. 22). Lyrics can reach students in a new way and can "stimulate debates, ... and promote examination of contemporary social issues," (Cooper, 1991, p. 57). By using popular song lyrics, teachers can take advantage of an opportunity to plan curriculum that adds depth to the study of reading while emphasizing life lessons.

Problem

With an increasing emphasis on standardized test scores and more and more exposure to adult issues and violence, there is a growing need for peace education.

As an adult, I have discovered the profound messages songwriters can convey to their audience. As a teacher, I have begun to consider music an incredibly valuable teaching tool. I am certain that song lyrics can reach the children of today. Through holistic instruction and by
analyzing song lyrics, I believe students can learn lessons in peace education. Specifically, the purpose of this project is to develop an integrative unit for peace education that is based on analyzing song lyrics and developing critical literacy. This unit is being designed for fourth through sixth grade teachers in Chino Hills, California.

Significance/Limitations

In a mechanistic society that is based primarily on standardized tests scores, there is a push from administration for teachers to teach to these tests with the sole resource of a mandated textbook. As teachers are forced to teach in this manner, innovative, creative teaching is indirectly discouraged. Topics outside of math and language arts are taught very little. Science, social studies and physical education are deemphasized while music, art, and moral education are sometimes thrown out altogether. At the same time, many students spend much of their time at home on computers or watching television. They are exposed to violence and spend less and less time with their families.

While these challenges may seem too great, they are the very reason that an integrative unit on peace
education is needed. I realize that I am limited, as I am only one person, but I hope to overcome this limitation and reach out to other teachers who will, in turn, reach out to more and more students.

Overview

In chapter two I present my review of the literature that covers three main areas: holistic education, moral development, and the use of song lyrics in the classroom. Books and articles highlighting each of these areas are explored. I begin with an exploration of holistic education. The holistic vision, according to Nava (2001) recognizes "the universe [as] a living network of relationships, whose components are simultaneously whole and part. Everything is interconnected" (p. 7). Further articles regarding character and peace education then complement holistic education research as they accent a variety of moral development programs. Several articles detail methods and theory behind integrating song lyrics into the classroom. All of these pieces of literature will be reviewed and applied to my vision.

In chapter three I detail my methodology including the setting and context as well as the steps taken to complete the project. Steps include the review of the
literature, interviewing teachers, developing a unit, obtaining teacher feedback on sample lessons, analyzing the data, and making revisions. I extend upon this in chapter four where I outline the results from implementing my methodology. Detail is given about the teachers who were interviewed, their interview responses, the development of the unit, feedback on the sample lessons, and the implications of these results.

In chapter five I summarize the project including my purpose and the steps taken to complete the project. I further explore the significance of my project as well as the limitations of the project. I conclude the project in reflection and take a look forward into the future to review steps that can be taken to continue along my path.
CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Determined to make my vision a reality, I searched the archives and found an exciting amount of support for my project. The movement towards peace, holism, and sustainable environment is supported through Nava’s (2001) work, the Earth Charter Initiative, and many others (e.g. Lantieri, 2001). Articles on peace education, character education, and moral development enforce the need for implementing some sort of moral education. The value of using song lyrics in the classroom is highlighted in several of the articles. While some viewpoints differ from my own, an overwhelming amount supports and provides a solid basis for my project.

Holistic Education

For many years we have been robotically trudging through this mechanistic world, some of us crying out for change, but many of us not knowing what to do. Our society teaches us to value the material and to place our success on the monetary gains we have made. Without considering the true meaning of this, many have accepted it. My own mother-in-law once told us that success was how much money
you had. I countered, "Are you trying to tell me that some famous basketball star is more successful than someone like me, a teacher, who will touch the lives of hundreds of students throughout her career just because he makes more money?" That got her thinking. My point here is to emphasize the complacency that exists and the dire need to reevaluate where we are coming from and make a change. Sun Chief of the Hopi tribe describes his own experience of learning the European ways, "I also learned that a person is expected to think with his head and not his heart, and about his money and not his spirit," (Jacobs & Jacobs-Spencer, 2001, p. vii).

What led to this loss of spirit, to this dehumanization? History points to three philosophers, the creators of the mechanistic vision: Bacon, Descartes, and Newton who influenced "a fragmented, mechanical worldview, a worldview that was positivist, materialist, unilateral, etc., and which spread from science to the whole of society, influencing education, the economy, politics, and culture" (Nava, 2001, p. 9). This paradigm has been guiding our lives for centuries, and many are calling for a change because of the pervasive devastation it has caused. Today we face a "widespread destruction of our planet's natural resources; pollution of our cities and of
natural habitats; proliferation of new diseases such as AIDS; war; racism; extreme poverty; mankind’s incapacity to engage in joint global actions; corruption; profound dehumanization; an alarming increase in stress, depression, and other pathologies among children and youth” (Nava, 2001, p. 20). It is time for change, time for a shift. The need for a shift is supported by the Earth Charter, “At a time when major changes in how we think and live are urgently needed, the Earth Charter challenges us to examine our values and to choose a better way” (Earth Charter Initiative Secretariat, 2000, p. 2). Leaders and citizens from five continents have worked together to create the Earth Charter and it is supported and endorsed by organizations, governments, businesses, and people from all over the globe.

Nava (2001) describes “the birth of the emerging culture” (p. 21) that calls for many shifts within our culture. These shifts include “A shift from competition to economic cooperation; a shift from removing nature’s sacredness to restoring nature’s sacredness; a shift from consumerism to a culture of recycling, reuse, and reduction of waste; and a shift from an educational system for industry to an educational system for life” (p. 21-22) among others. With a shift to educating students for life,
instructors will be looking at the whole child and recognizing that learning can be an innate process. Effective instruction will include creating an environment where curiosity and exploration are encouraged and resources are made available. Creative, innovative teaching methods need to be implemented.

When these kinds of lessons are a part of their daily lives, students are more likely to pursue their own creative endeavors. "The student is not seen as a brain to be programmed, but as a human being with unlimited inner potential, a sensitive being oriented toward learning, a spiritual being in search of meaning, an aesthetic being capable of recognizing life's inherent beauty, who embodies the multiple dimensions of the human experience," (Nava, 2001, p. 44). The present state of our educational system is unfortunate. The No Child Left Behind Act initiated by the current administration has superintendents and school principals scrambling to get teachers to increase test scores, so much so that the scores of one test seem to be the only important thing in education. Many times teachers who teach to the test tend to overemphasize rote knowledge and excessive, meaningless drill. I never want to fall into this trap. I want my students to continually ask why and how and to explore the
depths of their innate ability. “Human beings seek meaning like ducks seeking water. Anyone who has observed children at play knows the kind of meaning they inject into objects or situations that, to the observer, mean something quite different” (Clark, 1997, p. 73).

As we look at the whole child, we also recognize that each child is a spiritual being. Linda Lantieri (2001) asks how we could nurture experiences so that our classrooms would be places that foster spiritual growth. Her vision includes “students and teachers...exploring and learning about what has heart and meaning for themselves. Different ways of knowing would be respected” (p. 8).

By nurturing this in our children, we would also “acknowledge interconnectedness, with one another and with all of life, by a commitment to ecological principles, environmental limits, and social responsibility” (Lantieri, 2001, p. 9). In addition to seeing the child as a whole, we need to begin looking at the whole community and the whole planet; as Nava (2001) points out, “We will need to move forward and be capable of living in interdependence, in other words, living together responsibly, respecting not only other people, but all living creatures and the planet as a whole” (p. 39). The
Earth Charter presents four principles for such a sustainable way of life:

I. Respect and Care for the Community of Life
II. Ecological Integrity
III. Social and Economic Justice
IV. Democracy, Nonviolence, and Peace

Through the creation of these principles, the Earth Charter calls for the nations of the world to "renew their commitment to the United Nations," (Earth Charter Initiative Secretariat, 2000, p. 43). They further remind us, "Let ours be a time remembered for the awakening of a new reverence for life, the firm resolve to achieve sustainability, the quickening of the struggle for justice and peace, and the joyful celebration of life," (p. 43).

In my opinion, as we come together in support of the holistic vision and the vision of the Earth Charter, we should begin to examine our methods of teaching and reach out to instill moral values and principles of peace within our students. We should begin to educate for global citizenship (Nava, 2001, p. 43). More than anything else, I want each student to leave my class as a better person. I want students to leave wanting to be better people, wanting to make a positive difference in the world. I have shared with my students an activity inspired by an Emerson
poem on success and a term coined by Marva Collins, "Citizen of the world." Together, my students and I read the poem entitled Success.

To laugh often and much;
To win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children;
to earn the appreciation of honest critics and endure the betrayal of false friends;
to appreciate beauty; to find the best in others;
to leave the world a bit better, whether by a healthy child,
a garden patch
or a redeemed social condition;
to know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived.

This is to have succeeded. (Yuni Words of Wisdom, 2006)

Together, my students and I examined the meaning of the poem. We discussed the concept of Random Acts of Kindness, and the students were given an assignment. Every day for the rest of the year each student must record an act of kindness every day. It has been an interesting process, a time of growth and reflection. My favorite occurrence was one day after lunch when I opened my book
to read to the students and found a note Christian had hidden in there for me, "I hope you’re having a nice day, Ms. Corbett." It truly touched my heart. America’s senior astronaut, F. Story Musgrave described his walk to repair the Hubble Space Telescope in 1994, "The view of Earth – as something whole and interconnected – may be the most important thing to come out of the space program. That and a new sense of oneself as a ‘planetary citizen’ – a citizen of the globe...You have that big picture which can be really magical, of the entire forest as opposed to just one tree at a time" (Clark, 1997, p. 47). This is what I hope to instill in my students with an emphasis of holistic education. I hope they can see the entire forest, the entire community, the entire globe. I hope they can see beyond themselves.

Moral Development

Throughout my eleven years of teaching, character education has been the primary means of moral education in public schools. The primary mean of instruction is teaching isolated character traits as isolated lessons. Many educators see the need for developing students as moral individuals, but are their current approaches the most effective? Joseph and Efron (2005) bring to light six
moral worlds other than character education. They reveal that while the moral worlds vary, each has something positive to offer. For example, there is no judgment placed on any of these strategies, only the need for educators to decide what is relevant in their situation and provide instruction in that area. While the study highlights seven moral worlds: character education, cultural heritage, caring community, peace education, social action, just community, and ethical inquiry, I will only evaluate those that are most relevant to the purposes of my study.

Character Education is first highlighted as a program that believes “in establishing strong incentives for good behavior” (Joseph & Efron, 2005, p. 101). Schools utilizing character education may highlight certain character traits monthly, reward students publicly for acts of character, and/or implement character lessons into all areas of curricular study. There were two points within this description that struck me as meaningful. I am a firm believer in the idea that children develop behaviors they see modeled by significant adults in their life. Joseph and Efron (2005) agree, “modeling virtuous behavior is a key component of character education programs” (p. 101). They also argue, “A strength of the
character education moral world is educators’ belief that it is their responsibility to form character rather than remain indifferent to their students’ moral development” (p. 101).

Gordon Marino (2003) is one of those teachers concerned with developing moral virtues in his high school students. “Aristotle invites us to think about the connection between moral character and happiness” (p. 116). Marino extends this invitation to his students as they examine moral virtues within his high school classroom. Each year he begins his exploration of moral virtue with a question, “Which moral virtues do you believe are indispensable to the good life” (p. 116)? Responses typically include respect, compassion, wisdom, justice, honesty, and even a sense of humor. Marino prods his students in search of what he dubs ‘the missing virtue,’ “Is there something else?” (p. 116). Finally he gives in and asks, “What about courage?” (p. 116).

Through the decades, values have definitely changed. Marino (2003) thinks back to his own youth when “courage was touted as a keystone virtue” (p. 116). In post World War II America those who had courage, the courage to fight against genocide and facism were indeed valued and honored citizens. Fathers expected their sons to have courage in
dealing with bullies by standing up to them. As time passed, perhaps as these little boys grew up, values changed. Throughout the article Marino explores why courage is no longer an important moral value.

Marino (2003) points out that in the time of the Vietnam War, during a war that many people protested, courage to fight in a war was no longer a revered virtue. My perception of this is that more and more people began to look towards peace, tolerance, and compassion. Musical artists wrote songs about it, it was the basis for a mass movement in the United States. Courage was associated with fighting and was no longer a revered value.

It is my contention that associating courage with war is a mistake. Marino (2003) does point out to his students, “How can you be honest without courage? Truth telling, for example, only becomes difficult when there are unpleasant consequences for being honest” (p. 116). I am reminded of peaceful protestors such as Gandhi, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Oscar Arias. These leaders exuded courage as they fought peacefully for what they believed in: for equality, for justice, for peace. In my mind, these men are pillars of courage. This is the type of courage I would like my students to value.
The interpretation and value of individual character traits makes character education somewhat controversial, however. Critics ask if behavioral traits are the same as moral character and if “displays of virtues or desired traits truly encourage moral behavior” (Joseph & Efron, 2005, p. 102). Bergman (2004) presents the critiques of character education by Nel Noddings, “Whose values and which virtues are to be taught?” (p. 158). Bergman continues and explains Noddings’ critiques that maintain that for religious schools, the process of choosing virtues to focus on is easy, but in the public sector it is difficult to defend the inclusion of specific virtues (p. 158). These critics of character education are not critics of moral development, however. There seems to be widespread agreement that a focus on moral development in the school is needed.

In the words of Theodore Roosevelt, “To educate a person in mind and not in morals is to educate a menace to society,” (Gilness, 2003, p. 243). Jane Gilness is a language arts teacher who feels that as educators we should adhere to the words of our past president. Gilness has poured over research determined to seek out and develop the best plan for implementing character education into the classroom. She has struggled with a question that
many educators struggle with: "How can I use my position as an instructor to imbue my students with a strong sense of moral awareness and still commit to the job of teaching content at the same time?" (p. 243).

While her research continues, she narrowed down some components she found to be most valuable. One area Gilness (2003) focuses on is manners. While I think manners are important, I consider them a smaller component of something much greater. She refers to John Fletcher. Moulton and introduces her second component in her character education integration as "the domain of the obedience to the unenforceable" (p. 244). This phrasing is not appealing to me. I find it harsh and mechanistic. I much prefer words like peace, compassion, and goodness. While Gilness’s intent is positive, I do not agree with her technique.

Another component of Gilness’s (2003) integrated curriculum is ethical decision making. She utilizes critical thinking techniques, games, and reflection journals with her students. As a language arts teacher, literature becomes the primary tool in the quest for ethical decision-making. "All good literature explores universal themes that involve such ethical dilemmas as truth versus loyalty, the individual versus the community,
short-term versus long-term, and justice versus mercy” (p. 245). Literature thus provides the perfect context for these lessons. What I found ironic about Gilness’s points in ethics were her comments about ethics in the nation and in our leaders. Gilness cites A.K. Benjamin who states, “The good of a nation demands the consideration of serious ethical questions. If education ignores the value and moral aspect of the human psyche, where will society find citizens able to make moral decisions?” (p. 245). She further questions, “Do we want our future leaders to have acquired their decision making skills in an ethical vacuum?” It seems to me that our present leaders have never acquired ethical decision making skills; this may explain why they seem to devalue and demoralize the human psyche and education. Perhaps our current state of government is the proof that we are in dire need of character education.

While I don’t entirely agree with Gilness’s methods and theories, I do agree with her final point, “We can’t isolate character education as a separate discipline” (Gilness, 2003, p. 245). Character education is something that should be completely integrated, it should be a part of who we all are, what we model and what we think about in all that we encounter.
The third aspect that Gilness (2003) discovered emphasizes this need for an integrative moral education: it is the necessity for a sense of community within the classroom, “a teacher cannot begin to think about fostering character without first creating a positive classroom climate” (p. 243). She sites John Dewey, “The best and deepest moral training is that which one gets by having to enter into proper relations with others” (p. 243). Gilness describes her techniques for implementing this sense of community. She offers direct but unannounced lessons about eulogies and speaking well about others. She finds that these lessons bring the students together. Clark (1997) supports this need for community, “When we are members of a learning community, we are free to express ourselves in whatever modes we choose, knowing that the community is enriched by our presence” (p. 54). When students are truly a part of a learning community, they are more likely to take risks. In doing so, they may reach further intellectually and creatively.

Another aspect of community building in Gilness’s (2003) classroom is “giving students ownership of the curriculum” which promotes “a positive classroom climate and gives them a sense of being a vital part of a
strongly agree with the need for developing a classroom community, it enables students to feel safe, to take risks, and to bond with one another and the teacher. Nava (2001) further supports "Freedom of choice" (p. 42) as one of his basic principles in holistic education, "Freedom of choice encompasses freedom of inquiry and expression, and freedom for personal growth."

Another moral world presented by Joseph and Efron (2005) centers around community. Caring Community focuses on relationships, closeness, community, and caring. Rather than rewarding students for acts of character, "these behaviors are considered the norm of the classroom culture" (p. 103). One teacher sums this climate up perfectly when guiding students in developing, "Ways to be in Room 8" (p. 103) rather than developing a list rules that outline what not to do. This practice focuses on positive relationships rather than negative consequences. The Caring Community model also emphasizes service learning projects and an emphasis on these values through literature. This moral world offers many benefits to all. "Students who are nurtured are more likely to expand their sphere of caring from friends, teachers, and families to others in their communities" (p. 103).
This kind of interconnectedness reaches a deeper level in peace education. "Peace Educators teach that all lives and actions matter and that students are connected to all life through a vision of peace, harmony, and Earth stewardship" (Joseph & Efron, 2005, p. 104). The aim of peace education is to develop a sensitivity of and appreciation for the outer world. Peace education holds that by becoming more sensitive towards the outer world we will also become more in tune with our inner worlds: ourselves and our relationships. Focus is placed on "valuing and befriending the Earth, living in harmony with the natural world, recognizing the interrelatedness of all human and natural life, preventing violence toward the Earth and all its peoples, and learning how to create and live in a culture of peace" (Joseph & Efron, 2005, p. 103). Peace education considers the whole child, the whole community, and the whole world. These levels of wholeness are interrelated, each complements and relies upon the others.

Each of the moral worlds presented by Joseph and Efron (2005) has its strengths. As educators, I believe we have a moral obligation to integrate some sort of moral model. The characteristics of The Caring Community and Peace Education are models I believe in and utilize within
my classroom. Through modeling and both direct and integrated lessons these values can become a part of the school climate. Literature can be “a springboard for pondering moral dilemmas and developing moral identities” (p. 106). We can create “loving, familial classrooms” (p. 106) by modeling and emulating peace and tolerance. The six moral worlds articulated in this article can bring profound change to our schools and “deserve serious consideration on the part of educators” (p. 106).

Song Lyrics

Music moves the soul. It evokes emotions and has the power to transport us through time. Music binds together a generation while spanning across generations. Through their music, artists express ideas and emotion that are conveyed poetically. Why would teachers not take advantage of such an awesome opportunity for learning? Through music, teachers can make connections that may not be possible through any other means.

Cooney examined such teaching methods. Cooney’s study was supported by previous research including Luebke’s 1995 study in which Luebke states, “Popular music can be a valuable resource in introducing students to poetry: lyricists use many of the same conventions poets have used
for centuries" (Cooney & Milner, 1997, p. 42). Music can make these conventions come alive for students, thus increasing the depth of their learning.

Cooney and Milner (1997) completed his study with four ninth grade English classes. Two of the classes were given lessons analyzing song lyrics as a part of their regular poetry unit. The other two classes were not. All classes were given pre- and post-tests constructed by the researcher. Results conveyed a significant "difference between the experimental and control groups, and therefore the addition of song lyrics in a poetry unit does have a positive effect on students' learning of poetic devices" (p. 43). What I found more meaningful were some observations made inside a classroom receiving the treatment. Students were quoted as sharing such insights as, "I found a hyperbole!" (p. 44) and "This whole song is personification!" (p. 44). Cooney cites, "Music is a powerful learning tool for poetry, rock and rap music especially for the young," (p. 41).

Marchionda (1996) also supported the hypothesis that music is a meaningful learning tool. Though her techniques varied from Cooney's, they yielded similar results, specifically that "Song lyrics taken from contemporary music can provide motivational texts for junior high/high
school students due to young adults' interest in popular culture and themes presented in song lyrics" (p. 4). Translating this work into instructional materials, Marchionda established her teaching guide based on DRUMS (Directed Reading Music Strategy), a means of teaching reading by weaving the study of song lyrics into the regular curriculum. The lessons within Marchionda's unit reflect a standard method of teaching reading. Directed Reading Activity (DRA), was originated by Betts in 1946. The strategy goes through several steps before, during, and after reading aimed at a complete and thorough understanding of the material read. The goal of DRUMS is to "lead to the teaching of reflective thinking skills, increased reading comprehension and vocabulary, along with increased motivation for learning" (p. 3). By including music and the analyzing of song lyrics in the regular reading curriculum, teachers increase their capacity of truly reaching their students. The integration of song lyrics brings the real world into the classroom; students can relate their personal lives to their studies and thus gain a more relevant and meaningful understanding.

Teachers who implemented Marchionda's (1996) study noted some inspiring instances of how students were affected by the DRUMS unit (p. 3). One teacher described a
student who had never been interested in reading becoming actively engaged after a few DRUMS lessons. This particular student approached the teacher and asked if he could bring in some song lyrics for evaluation. As teachers, we never know what might reach a student. It may be a story we read, a poem, a play, or it may be a song. Another teacher shared that students were asking for more DRUMS lessons. Their enthusiasm for learning, the excitement they had for the study of song lyrics convinces me that this may be a worthwhile teaching method.

Musicians "seem to be interpreting the world through music and communicating with 'others who share their priorities, hopes, fantasies, ways of wit, and ways of coping with loss'" (Marchionda, 1996, p. 5). These hopes, fantasies, ideals permeate the soul of the listener. This type of storytelling reaches us like no other. It adds a depth to the study of reading and life lessons that is difficult to match. Why not use it in the classroom?

Luebke (1995), a high school teacher, supports the hypothesis that providing students with learning activities based in music can yield powerful results in his criticism of Bloom’s earlier studies. Bloom berates the “kind of music [students] listen to” (p. 2) and maintains that “rock music has one appeal only, a barbaric

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appeal, to sexual desire” (Luebke, 1995, p. 4). While Bloom appreciates Mozart and Wagner, he says that rock music does not create meaning in life or allow listeners to experience meaning as Wagner’s compositions do.

There are bits of truth in Bloom’s interpretation of rock music. Some songs do lack value and focus purely on sexual desire; but to say that “rock music is a symptom of an ‘emptiness of values’” (Luebke, 1995, p. 4) is far too great a generalization. Rock artists such as John Lennon, Bob Dylan, and Michael Franti convey visions of peace, justice, and tolerance through their music. “Imagine all the people living life in peace” is hardly a sign of an “emptiness of values” (p. 4).

Luebke (1995) utilizes popular music in his classroom as a means of enriching and supplementing his curriculum. Popular music is used in the evaluation of poetry and “as a kind of mnemonic device to teach about theme or character” (p. 6). Music can give depth to a topic that we are already studying and potentially reach more students; it can “give students a window on the work they are studying” (p. 6). Themes such as socialization, diversity, and social conventions can be explored through music. Luebke uses song lyrics to support concepts conveyed in literature that is a part of his core curriculum. Students
further explore music as an art form and draw connections between the literary concepts and their own lives.

Knowing the impact music and its lyrics have had on my life, I feel strongly about using these lyrics as a complement to my core curriculum. Concepts conveyed in a song can reflect the same concepts conveyed through literature or social studies books. Music in the classroom can only enrich student learning and as Luebke points out, "we can have fun in doing so" (1995, p. 11).

Popular songs can be used to teach lessons on American history, moral virtues, literary imagery, and freedom of speech. "The lyrics are a reflection of our culture" (Cooper, 1991, p. 56) by using them as teaching tools we can inspire discussion, reflection, and open our students eyes to the diversity of lyrics that exist. Furthermore, "educators can use the lyrics of popular songs to facilitate meaningful learning for students" (p. 56). These lessons can be easily integrated into social studies or language arts.

Cooper (1991) suggests that a timeline of song lyrics once constructed could easily portray our history. Why not integrate these into regular instruction? Song lyrics of various generations are primary sources of information. While they may not always be entirely factual, many times
they convey a feeling of the time. In recent decades song lyrics have become a forum for "strong ideological statements covering a variety of subjects" (p. 56). Songs convey feelings and opinions about freedom, peace, brotherhood among many other virtues while calling for social change.

Teachers can use these lyrics "to stimulate debates, to encourage essays, to illustrate time lines, and to promote examination of contemporary social issues" (Cooper, 1991, p. 57). The analyzation of song lyrics can also be a means of increasing communication and understanding between teacher and student and amongst students. Music has the power to bring people together and build community.

The lyrics of many songs are a clear picture of the free speech that is our right. Students can debate issues of freedom of speech and censorship and explore universal questions such as moral standards and political perceptions. Song lyrics can also be evaluated for literary imagery, poetic devices, story lines, and perspective. As Cooper puts it, "Popular music contains a goldmine of teaching topics" (1991, p. 59) that can allow us to "see ourselves and or students in a new, revealing light" (p. 56).
Purcell (1992) takes advantage of this goldmine in his high school Spanish class. Purcell recognizes that songs have been used in the classroom for years, but also reminds us that songs do not have to be only an occasional treat; "What may be more of a novel idea is to plan to incorporate them into the curriculum on a regular basis so that songs become a learning device to reinforce some important curricular aspect..." (p. 192). In implementing "the often-neglected dimension of 'right-brain' activities" (p. 192), he teaches vocabulary, listening skills, grammar, and pronunciation. A rote skill like pronunciation is brought to life by listening to music. Students are exposed to "the syllable-timed rhythm of Spanish" (p. 193) which may enable them to develop "a feel for Spanish rhythm and intonation patterns" (p. 193). Purcell is able to reach students who would otherwise struggle to connect with the new language by simply bringing popular Spanish music into the classroom. Songs can be used to teach a wide variety of educational topics, from simple to complex; this is a great advantage of using songs in the curriculum.

Cultural sensitivity is another area Purcell focuses on when using song lyrics in the classroom. "Songs, after all, grow out of the culture, and so reflect patterns of
daily life, festive occasions, religious observances, and political concerns, as well as personal and social relationships" (Purcell, 1992, p. 194). Learning about a song through both popular and folk music can be an effective way of learning about a culture. Folk music seems to be used with more regularity and is valuable as it "represents a way of life and traditions expressed musically" (p. 194). We should not ignore the value of popular music, however. "The classic popular song demonstrates melodies and themes that at some point were — and often still are — popular with a large segment of the culture" (p. 194). Music speaks to people on a deep level, using song in the curriculum, therefore, "is an effective means to enliven the daily lesson plan" (p. 196).

Baumlin (1998) explores the television filled society we are living in and contemplates how as educators we can use this to our benefit. She takes the use of music in the classroom into another realm as she has students analyze not only the lyrics, but entire music videos. She holds that music videos can be "short and discrete unit[s] that can easily be adapted to the time constraint of classroom viewing" (p. 2) while bringing about discussion of values. We can also reach students "in their own world; moreover,
we may help students gain more control over ‘symbols of their culture’" (p. 2).

Baumlin (1998) developed a three-day lesson on evaluating a previously chosen collection of music videos. Videos chosen highlighted themes of sexism, decadence, rights, and integrity. Activities in the lessons included discussion, note-taking, brainstorming, and analysis. There was an emphasis on students’ inventive processes and a deep examination of themes. A culminating project required a description of the video including components of imagery and symbolism and analyzing the underlying themes and values. Student insight in their papers was both in-depth and meaningful.

Whether students were avid MTV watchers or were not previously involved in music in this way, positive results were consistent. In fact, “non-fans gave themselves most freely to the assignment” (Baumlin, 1998, p. 10). While some parents were wary of the project initially, one parent shared later that the assignment actually bettered her relationship with her son, “instead of forbidding his watching MTV she could teach him how to ‘read’ videos and discriminate among them” (p. 10). Music has the ability to provide an in-depth understanding of morals and cultural
themes while having the capacity to bridge the gap between generations.

It is clear thus far that song lyrics can be used to reach students on their level, to examine culture and historic value, and to teach literary elements. Carol Lloyd (2003) takes the analyzation of song lyrics and their literary elements to a higher level. Lloyd’s article both inspired me and ignited something inside. She challenges the status quo and provides much proof for the need for critical literacy. We must give our children the ability to critically think and decipher information. Lloyd writes that song lyrics “can be used effectively in classrooms to provide the voices rarely heard in textbooks” (p. 22). Song lyrics are used alongside textbooks as a means of developing critical literacy. Critical literacy enables us all to read the world, we evaluate social situations and understand our role in society. Students can begin to see that they are not separate from society, but are a part of the whole.

By understanding their relationship to society and the world, students can “begin to understand the concept of active citizenship” (Lloyd, 2003, p. 22). By centering our classrooms around critical literacy, students will not only analyze other people’s works and ideas, but they will
begin to formulate their own opinions and viewpoints. We will teach them more than just knowledge, we will teach them how to interpret and how to apply it to other contexts. Lloyd cites Macedo as arguing “that literacy in the United States is constructed to anesthetize the mind” (p. 23). I couldn’t agree more. I am beginning to realize that I am not alone. More and more teachers are calling for critical literacy in the classroom. Studies have shown that “when teachers provide sociohistorical information related to the text” (Lloyd, 2003, p. 23) for example, song lyrics, and incorporate the arts, then written and verbal responses given by students are more thorough.

As we integrate critical literacy into our classrooms, we must realize that it is not something to be taught in isolation. We need to integrate “the relationship of one subject to another, and the relationship of subjects to everyday life” (Lloyd, 2003, p. 24). Lloyd provides strategies for implementing critical literacy through song lyrics within six topics: the environment, U.S. history, economics, U.S. government policies and practices, racism and racial issues, and international events and conditions. She points out that she does not “provide an exhaustive review of song lyrics” (p. 25) but provides “some examples to encourage educators...
to incorporate these into relevant lessons and to find other songs that provide students with a politically contextualized understanding of important issues” (p. 25).

Lyrics incorporated by Lloyd come from a variety of music genres and can be used in a variety of grade levels. While some of these lyrics are not appropriate for 5th graders, they would provide for great discussion in a high school classroom.

In developing a unit in peace education, only some of Lloyd’s ideas apply to my context. All of her ideas are inspiring, nonetheless. My hope is that the principles of critical literacy will continue to spread. As more and more teachers open their eyes to the changes needed and do something to make a difference, a shift in paradigm may truly begin. This is what I pray for and along with educators like Carol Lloyd, I aim to be one of those educators who is truly making a difference in the world.
CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

In this chapter I will describe the setting for the project as well as the steps of the methodology to evaluate the effectiveness of the project. The purpose of this project is to develop a curricular unit that teachers can use to integrate peace education and critical literacy into the regular curriculum. In my methodology, I hope to assess the need for development of such a curricular unit in peace education, while accumulating data that will further aid in the evolution of the unit. From there, I will develop a unit and obtain feedback on sample lessons from teaching professionals.

Setting and Context

This unit is being developed for elementary school teachers at Rolling Ridge Elementary School in Chino Hills, California. The five upper elementary educators I interviewed for my project are full-time teachers at Rolling Ridge Elementary. Teachers at Rolling Ridge work as a team, cooperatively planning and working towards meeting the needs of all students. Students at Rolling Ridge come from middle to upper-middle class families and
most have very involved and supportive parents. These conditions together create a positive, cohesive working environment. Daily life at Rolling Ridge is more than just the business of a school – it resembles the dynamics and the closeness of a family.

Despite this positive environment, students today still face a harsh, ever-changing world in which they are forced to make difficult decisions at younger and younger ages. This unit based in peace education aims to further complement and enrich the current academic curriculum while preparing students for the real world. In a continuously shifting mechanistic world, even students from the most well-grounded families can benefit from lessons that not only look at the local culture, but also reach beyond and consider the global community.

Steps and Procedures

Step 1: Reviewing the Literature

Through my study of journals and books I have developed a foundational resource guide for my Master’s Project. The articles and books were chosen to aid me in supporting my ideas to create a unit on teaching character and peace education through the use of song lyrics. Literature gathered was categorized into three sections:
holistic education, moral development, and the use of song lyrics in the classroom.

Step 2: Interviews

I interviewed fourth through sixth grade teachers at Rolling Ridge Elementary School. The teacher interviews consisted of the following predetermined interview questions:

1. Have you ever used song lyrics as a learning tool in the classroom? If so, how have you used them?
2. Do you teach lessons on character education?
3. What resources do you use to teach these lessons?
4. If presented with the lessons utilizing song lyrics, would you consider using them within your classroom?
5. Are there any song lyrics you would suggest using within this unit?

The purpose of the interviews was to assess the need for the unit. The following procedure was implemented:

Five upper elementary educators at Rolling Ridge Elementary were interviewed. The teaching experience of these educators ranged from eight to twenty years. Interview participants answered questions on the need for
moral education and whether they would implement such lessons into their own classrooms.

**Step 3: Developing a Unit**

Based on the literature review, interviews, and experience teaching upper elementary students for the last 11 years, I developed a draft of a unit that teaches peace education through the use of popular song lyrics. The integrative unit I developed was based in holistic education and was divided into Ramon Gallegos Nava’s (2001) five areas of wholeness:

1. The Whole Person - a person is an integral being
2. Wholeness in Community - quality human relationships
3. Wholeness in Society - world citizenship, peace, sustainable environment
4. A Whole Planet - global awareness and respect for nature.
5. The Holistic Kosmos - freedom, brotherhood, compassion, universal love

The lessons in each area were centered around analyzing song lyrics and developing critical literacy while emphasizing peace and moral education. The unit is one I plan to use and modify throughout my career as an educator.
Step 4: Sample Lesson Review

To gather feedback on the quality of the draft of the unit, I interviewed fourth through sixth grade teachers at Rolling Ridge Elementary. These educators are my colleagues, the partners I teach with every day.

The following procedure was implemented: Seven upper elementary educators at Rolling Ridge Elementary read and provided feedback on my unit outline and a sample lesson including worksheets. The teaching experience of these educators ranges from eight to nineteen years. Participants gave oral feedback on the lessons. In particular, I asked for recommended revisions, positive attributes, as well as suggestions for additions. I took notes on their responses so that I would be able to apply their feedback to the revised draft of my unit (See Appendix B).

In my opinion, this feedback from fellow teachers would provide valuable data. The most important resource in planning and developing curriculum are teachers. All too often curriculum is developed without consulting teachers, those who would have the most meaningful insights. Individuals who have never been in the field or have been out of it for years usually do this type of
planning. In developing my methodology I am confident that teachers are the perfect data source.

**Step 5: Examining the Data and Revising the Unit**

Once the interviews were conducted, the unit developed, and the sample lessons reviewed I examined the data for patterns and considered suggestions that would enable me to fine-tune the unit.

Discovering the answers to the interview questions provided guidance in developing my project while affirming a need for moral education. The lyrics of a meaningful song can touch a person's heart and soul and inspire creative thought. Based on the data I completed a final revision of the unit (See Appendix B).

Future supplemental follow-up possibilities include teacher questionnaire, teacher feedback on implementation of lesson, implementation of unit including student pre- and post-tests, teacher observation of class discussions, student journals, and essays.
CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Introduction

My goal for this project was to create an integrative unit for peace education that is based on analyzing song lyrics and developing critical literacy. A review of the literature aided in creating a strong foundation for this unit. Five upper elementary teachers from Rolling Ridge Elementary School were interviewed to determine teacher and student needs. These interviews aided the development of my curricular unit. After I completed a draft of the unit, seven upper elementary teachers then reviewed sample lessons from the unit to give input for further revisions.

In this chapter I will analyze the results of my review of the literature and describe the characteristics of the developed unit. I will also report the findings of interviews conducted, identify patterns and suggestions, and report the impact this research has had on the development of my unit. Finally, I will report the feedback from the review of sample lessons and discuss how that data affected my revision of the unit.
Steps and Procedures

Step 1: Reviewing the Literature

Literature from three main areas was gathered. Articles on peace education, character education, and moral development emphasize the need for implementing some sort of moral education. The value of using song lyrics in the classroom is highlighted in several of the articles.

In each of the three areas of review, I identified some general principles that guided my development of the unit. Inspiring articles and books highlighted the need for holistic and peace education. All seemed to be in agreement that something needs to be done to bring peace and value to our children in the fast-paced, changing society in which we live. The need for a shift in paradigm is supported by the Earth Charter, "At a time when major changes in how we think and live are urgently needed, the Earth Charter challenges us to examine our values and to choose a better way" (Earth Charter Initiative Secretariat, 2000, p. 2). Leaders and citizens from five continents have worked together to create the Earth Charter and it is supported and endorsed by organizations, governments, businesses, and people from all over the globe. Throughout my review of the literature, there
seemed to be widespread agreement that a focus on moral
development/peace education in the school is needed.  
These powerful insights into peace and holistic education formed the basis for the general principles on
which my unit is based, but one book has particularly inspired the foundation of my evolving curriculum. Ramon
Gallegos Nava’s (2001) work in Holistic Education has provided an organizational theme that defines the
integrative unit. This theme is based in holism, seeing the child as a whole, looking at the whole community and
the whole planet; as Nava points out, “We will need to
move forward and be capable of living in interdependence,
in other words, living together responsibly, respecting
not only other people, but all living creatures and the
planet as a whole” (p. 39).

One way to teach these life lessons is through the use of song lyrics in the classroom. My review of the
literature found support for using song lyrics as a teaching tool. The majority of sources found concurred
that popular songs can be used to teach lessons on American history, moral virtues, literary imagery, and
freedom of speech. These general principles guided my development of the interview questions as well as the
development of my unit.
Step 2: Conducting the Interviews

Five teachers were interviewed as part of the methodology. The five teachers who participated in the study were chosen because they are my colleagues and I greatly respect their teaching styles. We work closely together everyday with the same student population for a common goal. These teachers are experienced and can potentially provide great insight as to the needs of the students. Interviews were conducted to obtain face-to-face feedback regarding the questions and to secure teachers to review sample lessons. All five teachers have a California Clear Credential and Masters degrees. Three of the five have Masters in Administration.

Teacher A has been teaching 4th grade at Rolling Ridge Elementary for four years. Prior to coming to Rolling Ridge she taught 3rd and 5th grade for five years in another district where she also served as GATE (Gifted and Talented Education) coordinator.

Teacher B has been teaching 4th grade at Rolling Ridge for the past six years. Before that she taught 4th grade for 5 years at a school very much like Rolling Ridge. Her first four years of teaching experience were at a Title I school in Los Angeles.
Teacher C is a 6th grade teacher. She has taught grades 2, 5, and 6 at Rolling Ridge for the past twelve years. She is a Grade Level Chair and Student Council Advisor. Prior to coming to Rolling Ridge, she taught grades 1 through 5 in the Ontario/Montclair District for seven years.

Teacher D is a 6th grade teacher who has taught at Rolling Ridge for the past twelve years. She is a GATE teacher and a Master Teacher to new teachers in the district. Prior to coming to Rolling Ridge, she taught in Los Angeles Unified School District for one year and at a low socio-economic elementary school in Chino for three years.

The last participant, Teacher E, has been teaching 6th grade at Rolling Ridge for the past eight years. Before that she taught 3rd grade in private school for one year. She currently serves on a district curriculum review panel with a focus on social studies.

These five participants were asked the following questions:

1. Have you ever used song lyrics as a learning tool in the classroom? If so, how have you used them?
2. Do you teach lessons on character education?
3. What resources do you use to teach these lessons?

4. If presented with the lessons utilizing song lyrics, would you consider using them within your classroom?

5. Are there any song lyrics you would suggest using within this unit?

Of the five teachers participating in the interviews, four have used song lyrics in the classroom. Song lyrics were used to teach a variety of lessons including poetic/literary devices, math, historical events, and current events. Of the songs used, some were not from popular music, but were songs focused on teaching specific lessons. The teacher who had not previously used song lyrics in the classroom would be interested in implementing lessons in the future.

All five teachers reported teaching lessons in moral education. These lessons were both embedded in the current curriculum and given as separate, independent lessons. Three of the five teachers considered honesty the most valuable moral lesson to be learned. This was followed closely by respect. One teacher said, “Once you have respect all other values follow.” Another shared, “Respect for self, others, and the world.” Responsibility, positive
attitude, and 'Do unto others' were mentioned in the interviews.

Step 3: Developing a Unit

I have developed a unit (See Appendix A) that is consistent with research found in the Review of the Literature and with feedback given in teacher interviews. I was incredibly moved as I read Ramon Gallegos Nava's Holistic Education: Pedagogy of Universal Love (2001). His words, philosophies, and research spoke to me while complementing and expanding upon my own vision. It is his five areas of wholeness that are the organizational foundation of my unit:

1. The Whole Person - a person is an integral being
2. Wholeness in Community - quality human relationships
3. Wholeness in Society - world citizenship, peace, sustainable environment
4. A Whole Planet - global awareness and respect for nature
5. The Holistic Kosmos - freedom, brotherhood, compassion, universal love

Lessons analyzing song lyrics were divided into the five areas of wholeness, aimed at teaching students these values and exposing them to a variety of music and ideas.
These lessons support the classroom environment I strive to maintain as well as my belief in integrated instruction, as they correspond with language arts, social studies and science lessons.

Step 4: Sample Lessons Reviewed

Seven teachers were given sample lessons to review for the Methodology. Five of the teachers who participated in this part of the study were chosen because they are my colleagues and were participants in the interviews. One additional teacher was not available for interviews, but was available and willing to review sample lessons. Another teacher was added to this component of the study because she is new to the upper grade teaching team. The two additional participants are the teachers I work most closely with on a daily basis. All of these teachers and I work together with the same student population for a common goal. These teachers are experienced and can potentially provide great insight as to the needs of the students. All seven teachers have a California Clear Credential. Three of the seven have Masters in Administration. The additional two educators both teach fifth grade and have experience teaching diverse student populations.
Teacher F is a fifth grade teacher who has been teaching at Rolling Ridge Elementary for twelve years. Before coming to Rolling Ridge she taught for ten years in both public and private school. She has both a multiple subject credential and a severely handicapped credential. She also teaches high school Sunday school and as a part of her ministry, she volunteers in a Youth Authority Prison. At Rolling Ridge, she has served as grade level chair and helped to develop and implement an ability grouping program in the primary grades.

Teacher G is a fifth grade teacher who is new to Rolling Ridge Elementary. Prior to coming to Rolling Ridge she taught grades one through five in two lower socio-economic areas for eight years. She has a Masters in Reading and is in charge of our Accelerated Reader program. She has trained parochial school teachers in reading assessment, is actively involved in the California Reading Association, and has worked with a Literacy Clinic that teaches first through twelfth grade students.

All seven participants expressed interest in implementing the sample lesson and unit in their own classroom. Reasons varied from “It is something new that students would really enjoy,” “It is a wonderful, high-level, and high interest lesson,” and it is a “great
tool for analyzing music as a literary form; it pushes students to look for deeper meaning with a hopefully more enjoyable medium.” One teacher even added, “This lesson allows for freedom of expression and then invites them to analyze the true meaning of the author’s lyrics.”

Step 5: Examining the Data and Revising the Unit

The five teacher interviews conducted offered affirmation as well as suggestions that enriched the unit.

Suggested song lyrics for moral development lessons were: “What a Wonderful World,” “Respect,” “High Hopes,” “Children Will Listen,” “Living Years,” “You’ve Got a Friend,” “Ebony and Ivory,” and “Run River Run.” Teachers offered supportive comments, “Any learning resources you’ve discovered - please share! Sounds great to use song lyrics to teach - kids love music,” and expressed interest in using such curriculum.

I will evaluate the lyrics of the recommended songs to determine whether they will fit into my curriculum. I was inspired by the other teachers’ enthusiasm and eagerness to see the unit.

After the unit was developed, seven teachers reviewed the unit outline and a sample lesson including student worksheets. Teachers offered suggestions and many words of encouragement. Suggestions for improvement included minor
grammar and spacing corrections. One teacher suggested adding on an art component while another suggested that students may need practice listening with eyes closed beforehand in order to focus clearly during the lesson. I have considered these recommendations in my revision of the sample lesson. An art component exists in the lesson as optional follow-up. I have elected to not formally add any pre-lessons of closed-eyed listening, as I would like the lesson to be open-ended enough so that teachers could elect to do this or not in order to best meet the needs of students within any classroom. My small survey has confirmed the need for a unit such as this based in peace education. Said one teacher, "The notion of teaching peace speaks to me not only on the level as a person/professional but spiritually and as a mom as well."

Data collected thus far clearly conveys a need for moral education in the classroom at all instructional levels. While the list of moral values collected is diverse, many of the traits are closely related and there were definitely common themes in the choices. Teachers shared a variety of resources used to teach moral development, but seemed eager to discover new lessons.

The majority of teachers surveyed are presently using song lyrics as learning tools in the classroom. While they
are using the song lyrics in a variety of ways, all would be willing to implement moral education lessons using song lyrics. The participants unanimously supported the idea of using song lyrics as a means for teaching moral development. The data is clear thus far: a curricular unit created to teach moral values using song lyrics would be a meaningful tool for these and similar teachers.

I plan to further develop my methodology by distributing and collecting questionnaires on a broader scale and by implementing sample lessons. By testing lessons I hope to gain knowledge of what is effective and what is not. Colleagues may also provide a different viewpoint that will add to the depth of my study.
CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

Summary

With an increasing emphasis on standardized test scores and more and more exposure to adult issues and violence, there is a growing need for peace education.

As an adult, I have discovered the profound messages songwriters can convey to their audience. As a teacher, I have begun to consider music an incredibly valuable teaching tool. I am certain that song lyrics can reach the children of today. Through my study I hoped to assess the moral needs of students through their teachers and the effectiveness of using song lyrics in the curriculum. The lessons developed are based on analyzing song lyrics and developing critical literacy while emphasizing peace and moral education.

I poured through journals and books that have become a foundational resource guide for my Master’s Project. The articles and books were chosen to aid me in supporting my ideas to create a unit on teaching character and peace education through the use of song lyrics. Literature gathered was categorized into three sections: holistic
I interviewed five educators of upper elementary students from Rolling Ridge Elementary School. They were asked a list of predetermined questions that would guide in further development of the unit.

Based on the literature review, interviews and experience teaching upper elementary students for the last 11 years, I developed a draft of a unit I will be able to use throughout my career as an educator. The integrative unit I have developed is based in holistic education and is divided into Ramon Gallegos Nava’s (2001) five areas of wholeness:

1. The Whole Person - a person is an integral being
2. Wholeness in Community - quality human relationships
3. Wholeness in Society - world citizenship, peace, sustainable environment
4. A Whole Planet - global awareness and respect for nature
5. The Holistic Kosmos - freedom, brotherhood, compassion, universal love
The lessons in each area are centered around analyzing song lyrics and developing critical literacy while emphasizing peace and moral education.

Seven upper elementary educators from Rolling Ridge Elementary were given sample lessons to review. They reviewed the lessons and offered oral feedback on modifications and ideas to expand upon and revise the lessons. In general, the feedback from the educators indicated that the materials were likely to be effective and a strong interest in implementing the lesson was apparent.

Based on the review of the literature and the review of sample lessons, I have modified and further developed a curricular unit that is aimed at upper elementary students but can be modified for all grade levels (See Appendix B).

Significance

The Review of the Literature, interviews, and sample lesson review have given me guidance on this professional journey. The combined research has inspired me and lent direction to my continuing path.

Along the way, I have taught a few of these lessons to my students and have been inspired by the results. Students shared powerful insights and enjoyed the break in
rote activity offered by listening to music. It was exciting to see students who are not always the shining stars of the classroom come out of their shells and soar. Teaching with music particularly seems to reach those students who fall into the musical category of the multiple intelligences and supports differentiation. Differentiation is needed to meet the needs of all students. As cited by Nava (2001), “Another false assumption of mechanistic education is that all children learn in basically the same way at the same pace” (p. 27). Anyone who has spent any time in a classroom knows this is not true. What we have to get away from is the “teach to the middle” mentality. When we “teach to the middle,” our struggling students fall farther behind while our gifted students become bored and check out. We all have different strengths and weaknesses, and I aim to try to meet the needs of all students with consideration of their needs and gifts. Nava puts this into perspective while confirming my vision, “Holistic education celebrates and makes constructive use of evolving, alternate views of reality and multiple ways of knowing. It is not only the intellectual and vocational aspects of human development that need guidance and nurturing, but also the physical, moral, aesthetic, creative, and in a nonsectarian sense,
spiritual aspects” (p. 42). By teaching with music, I hope to address the moral, aesthetic, and creative aspects of each student and inspire those who may not have been inspired before.

Limitations

While the study offered valuable feedback on the development of my unit, it was not without limitations. Interviews and sample lesson reviews were given to a small, non-random sample. The subjects all teach the same population of students in a fairly homogenous school. This limited feedback could skew results or narrow the findings so that the unit would only apply to a small population of students. Personal history of individual participants also may have affected the outcome of the study.

Recommendations

I would like to follow up this study by branching out and interviewing a variety of teachers from diverse teaching populations and from all grade levels. It is my hope that this unit can benefit all students, not only students at Rolling Ridge Elementary.

In the future, I will implement the entire unit in my own classroom to collect more in-depth data on the unit’s effectiveness. I will take notes on class discussions,
read student journals, and evaluate essays and other class assignments. I will look for cohesiveness as well as effectiveness and make any necessary adjustments. By collecting data in the classroom, I hope to gain firsthand input that will validate my theory and my dream.

Ultimately, I would like to publish a book based on this unit. It is clear that there is a need for moral and peace education and the use of song lyrics will bring the unit life and soul. The completion of this project has affirmed my ideas and given strength to my long-term goal.

As I envision myself as an educator, I hope to always teach who I am. This unit is an extension of myself and "holds a mirror to [my] soul," as noted by Parker Palmer (1998, p. 2), "As I teach, I project the condition of my soul onto my students, my subject, and our way of being together." When my students know Ms. Corbett, the human being, rather than just Ms. Corbett, the teacher, they feel more comfortable being themselves and are more open to learning and sharing. I love to share pieces of myself with my students and sharing the lyrics of a powerful song is the perfect way to open this door.
APPENDIX A

FIRST DRAFT TEACHER PACKET
Introduction to Teachers

The purpose of this curriculum is to provide you with materials to introduce you to an integrative unit for peace education that is based on analyzing song lyrics and developing critical literacy. The next two pages provide an outline and brief description of five levels of wholeness that the unit is divided into. These levels build upon each other and are interconnected could be used in isolated teaching situations.

One sample lesson is attached including student worksheets that support the lesson. The student worksheets can be reproduced and used in conjunction with the provided sample lesson. The worksheets are designed to engage the student and facilitate student thinking while providing depth and complexity.
Teaching Peace Education
with Popular Song Lyrics

I. The Whole Person
*These lessons focus on the person as an integral being with six essential elements: physical, emotional, intellectual, aesthetic, social, and spiritual.
A. Wonder by Natalie Merchant
B. Flowers are Red by Harry Chapin
C. I Hope You Dance by Lee Ann Womack
D. Better Way by Ben Harper

II. Wholeness in Community
*These lessons focus on the quality of human relationships including school, town, friends, family. It emphasizes establishing and maintaining appropriate human relationships.
A. You’ve Got a Friend by James Taylor
B. Lean on Me by Bill Withers
C. Stand by Me by Ben E. King
D. Who I Am by Jessica Andrews
E. Just the Two of Us by Will Smith

III. Wholeness in Society
*These lessons focus on the need to educate people for world citizenship and participatory democracy. It emphasizes the need to create a global society based on values of sustainability, cooperation, peace, and balanced development.
A. The Sound of Silence by Simon and Garfunkel
B. Bomb the World by Spearhead
C. Where is the Love by the Black Eyed Peas
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*These lessons focus on universal love, brotherhood, unconditional freedom, peace, and compassion.

A. Imagine by John Lennon
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E. I'd Like to Teach the World to Sing by the New Seekers
Sample Lesson Plan
Level One: The Whole Person

Title: "Better Way" by Ben Harper

Objectives:
- The Student Will Be Able To interpret song lyrics into the message conveyed by the artist;
- TSWBAT identify literary devices including metaphor, personification, simile, and refrain;
- TSWBAT analyze the artist’s message and relate it to their real life experiences.

Materials:
- CD- Both Sides of the Gun by Ben Harper containing the song “Better Way”;
- copies of “Better Way” cloze worksheet;
- copies of “Better Way” comprehension worksheet,
- pencils.

Procedures:
A. Introduction
1. Gain attention by asking students, By a raise of hands, how many of you enjoy listening to music? After students raise hands ask, Who can share with me the benefits of listening to music? Guide students to the topic of lyrics and messages conveyed.
2. Today we are going to listen to a song by Ben Harper. Ben Harper is a local artist, he grew up in Claremont and his family still owns a music shop there. Distribute Imagination Activator worksheet. Review the worksheet with the students. I want you to first listen to the music and enjoy the song allowing the music to form an image or images in your mind. When you are finished listening to the song, you will write down your thoughts and give each track a title. Students close eyes and listen to the song. Allow students to share first impressions of the song and its meaning after they take notes on Imagination Activator worksheet.
3. State, Now I am going to pass out a worksheet with many of the words to the song on them but you will notice many of the words are missing. We are going to listen to the song two more times and you will fill in the missing words you think you hear. Remember to focus not only on the words that you hear but also the message of the song. Ask yourself, “What is the song about? What is the artist trying to say?” Be prepared to discuss this.
B. Listening for Meaning
1. After passing out cloze lesson worksheets, teacher plays song one time through. Teacher walks around the room while monitoring students’ fill ins and helps students to keep up with the song by pointing to the stanza of the song that is playing. Remind students prior to the activity, the chorus is the stanza repeated throughout a song, this usually sends a strong message.
2. Before playing the song for the last time remind students, Now that you have most of the lyrics, you should focus on the meaning of the song and continue to fill in any words you still need. Play song again. Monitor student listening, participation, and focus.
3. Correct song sheet with complete lyrics with the students. Tell students to fill in correct answer if they missed it. Teacher reads words already filled in and asks for student responses to what they wrote about what they heard. Correct entire song.

C. Exploration of Feelings
1. Taking one stanza at a time, read aloud with students and ask for their interpretations of the meaning of that stanza. Ask the following questions at the appropriate point. Probe and challenge students for deeper meaning as needed.
   *Stanza 1 - What metaphors do you notice in stanza 1? What does it mean to be “pushed to the edge”? What is your “will”? What does it mean if your “will is stone”?
   *Stanza 2 - Who is Harper talking about when he says, “Fools will be fools and wise will be wise”? What literary device does Harper use in the line “I will look the world straight in the eyes”? What does he mean by that line?
   *Stanza 3 – What does it mean to “take a stand”? What is meant by the line, “What good is a man who won’t take a stand”? What does the word cynic mean? What is meant by the line, “What good is a cynic with no better plan”?
   *Stanza 4 – What literary device is used in the first line, “Reality is sharp”? What does Harper mean when he says, “Reality.....cuts me like a knife”? In what way do you think everyone could be “in the fight of their life”? Why do you think Harper screams this stanza rather than singing it like the rest of the song?
   *Stanza 5 – When Harper says, “Take your face out of your hands and clear your eyes” does he mean that you should really-physically- wipe your eyes or is he saying something else?
*Chorus – A repeated line in a poem or song is called a refrain. What message do you think Harper is trying to get across with the refrain, “I believe in a better way”?
2. Ask students, *If this was written during a struggling time, what do you think the artist was feeling and experiencing overall?* Write on board.

3. Ask students to think of a time in their own lives when they have been disappointed in the way things were while wanting to make a change? Ask, *How did you feel and what inspired you to stand up and live freely?* Allow for student response. Relate to the song.

D. Closing Activity:
   1. Students will complete “Better Way” comprehension worksheet.
   2. Share and discuss when students are finished, pay particular attention to questions that have not yet been addressed.

E. Optional follow-up activities:
   1. Students can paint a picture to illustrate the meaning of the song;
   2. Students can write a poem on the topic of their choice that uses one or more of the literary devices reviewed in the lesson.
   3. Students can journal or write an essay about what they believe is “A Better Way.”
Imagination Activator
A music listening exercise

For this exercise you will be doing two simple things: listening and writing. You will be listening to selected music and then writing about the images that it conjures up in your mind’s eye. To do so follow these instructions:

1. Listen to the selection for a full minute without doing anything else...just close your eyes and listen. By closing your eyes you will be able to shut out any outside visual distractions. During that minute allow the music to form an image or images in your mind.

2. When the song ends, write down any thoughts that came to mind in the space provided.

3. Give the song a title.

Have Fun!

Thoughts and Ideas:
"A Better Way"
Comprehension Worksheet

1. What metaphors do you notice in stanza 1? ____________________________________________

What does it mean to be "pushed to the edge"? ________________________________________

What is your "will"? ________________________________________________________________

What does it mean if your "will is stone"? _____________________________________________

2. What literary device does Harper use in the line "I will look the world straight in the
eyes"? ________________________________________________________________

What does he mean by that line? ____________________________________________________

3. What does it mean to "take a stand"? ______________________________________________

What is meant by the line, "What good is a man who won't take a stand"? _______________

What does the word cynic mean? ____________________________________________________

What is meant by the line, "What good is a cynic with no better plan"? _________________

4. What literary device is used in the line, "Reality is sharp"? ____________________________

What does Harper mean when he says, "Reality.....cuts me like a knife"? ________________

In what way do you think everyone could be "in the fight of their life"? _________________

Why do you think Harper screams this stanza rather than singing it like the rest of the
song? ________________________________________________________________
5. When Harper says, "Take your face out of your hands and clear your eyes" does he mean that you should really-physically- wipe your eyes or is he saying something else? Explain.

6. Chorus – A repeated line in a poem or song is called a refrain. What message do you think Harper is trying to get across with the refrain, "I believe in a better way"?

7. What emotions does this song express?

8. What social issues does this song address?

9. Which is your favorite line? Why?

10. Has your impression of this song changed after looking at the lyrics more closely? Explain.
APPENDIX B

REVISED TEACHER PACKET
Introduction to Teachers

The purpose of this curriculum is to provide you with materials to introduce you to an integrative unit for peace education that is based on analyzing song lyrics and developing critical literacy. The next two pages provide an outline and brief description of five levels of wholeness that the unit is divided into. These levels build upon each other and are interconnected could be used in isolated teaching situations.

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Unit Outline

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Level One: The Whole Person

Title: “Better Way” by Ben Harper

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Materials:
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Procedures:
A. Introduction
1. Gain attention by asking students, By a raise of hands, how many of you enjoy listening to music? After students raise hands ask, Who can share with me the benefits of listening to music? Guide students to the topic of lyrics and any messages that may be conveyed in the lyrics.
2. Today we are going to listen to a song by Ben Harper. Ben Harper is a local artist, he grew up in Claremont and his family still owns a music shop there. Distribute Imagination Activator worksheet. Review the worksheet with the students. I want you to first listen to the music and enjoy the song allowing the music to form an image or images in your mind. When you are finished listening to the song, you will write down your thoughts and give each track a title. Students close eyes and listen to the song. Allow students to share first impressions of the song and its meaning after they take notes on Imagination Activator worksheet.
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B. Listening for Meaning

1. After passing out cloze lesson worksheets, teacher plays song one time through. Teacher walks around the room while monitoring students’ fill ins and helps students to keep up with the song by pointing to the stanza of the song that is playing. Remind students prior to the activity, the chorus is the stanza repeated throughout a song, this usually sends a strong message.

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*Stanza 5 – When Harper says, “Take your face out of your hands and clear your eyes” does he mean that you should really-physically-wipe your eyes or is he saying something else?

*Chorus – A repeated line in a poem or song is called a refrain. What message do you think Harper is trying to get across with the refrain, “I believe in a better way”?
2. Ask students, **If this was written during a struggling time, what do you think the artist was feeling and experiencing overall?**
   (Incorporate history lessons that may relate to your grade level...civil rights movement, American Revolution, Civil War, the Spanish coming in to California, etc.) Write on board.

3. Ask students to think of a time in their own lives when they have been disappointed in the way things were while wanting to make a change? Ask, **How did you feel and what inspired you to stand up and live freely?** Allow for student response. Relate to the song.

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2. When the song ends, write down any thoughts that came to your mind in the space provided.
3. Give the song a title.

Have Fun!

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"A Better Way"
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What is your "will"?

What does it mean if your "will is stone"?

2. What literary device does Harper use in the line "I will look the world straight in the eyes"?

What does he mean by that line?

3. What does it mean to "take a stand"?

What is meant by the line, "What good is a man who won't take a stand"?

What does the word cynic mean?

What is meant by the line, "What good is a cynic with no better plan"?

4. What literary device is used in the line, "Reality is sharp"?
What does Harper mean when he says, "Reality.....cuts me like a knife"?

In what way do you think everyone could be "in the fight of their life"?

Why do you think Harper screams this stanza rather than singing it like the rest of the song?

5. When Harper says, "Take your face out of your hands and clear your eyes" does he mean that you should really-physically- wipe your eyes or is he saying something else? Explain.

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8. What social issues does this song address?

9. Which is your favorite line? Why?
10. Has your impression of this song changed after looking at the lyrics more closely? Explain.
REFERENCES


