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## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effectiveness and impact of a culturally responsive general music curriculum on student engagement and standardized skill acquisition. Over the course of two nine-week marking periods, I worked with eighth grade general music students to develop curriculum and instruction that employed their prior knowledge and reflected their interests. I used surveys, interviews, and class discussions to collect information about my students' musical experiences and their perceptions about home and school music. I used that information to work with students to create projects and assignments that both aligned with state and national standards and their own musical goals. I continued using surveys, interviews, and class discussions in conjunction with an observational field log and student work to gauge the effectiveness of these changes. My findings suggest that culturally relevant instruction may accelerate the acquisition of standardized music skills and that student choice in holistic assessments plays a significant role in student engagement.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study is dedicated to all of my students. To my former students who always politely reminded me that I still have a lot to learn. To my current students who guided me through this process with patience, grace, and enthusiasm. To my future students who will carry the torch and continue to bring life and energy into my classroom.

This wouldn't have been possible without the endless support and guidance of my professors at Moravian College. From the first day of my undergraduate career until the last day of my master's program, they encouraged me to be a lifelong learner and prepared me to be continuously committed and reflective in my practice.

Thank you to all of my friends and family who offered me unwavering support and patience through this. To Andy for listening to me think aloud for hours on end and challenging me with thoughtful questions that helped me redirect and refine my work. To Becky for a safe place to vent my stress and recover from my exhaustion. To my family for being patient and understanding when I seemed to disappear for a few months while I was buried in literature and data. To my dog, Ella, for hanging out with me through the long hours of data analysis and writing and reminding me to take breaks to enjoy the fresh air.

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