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MOVEMENT IN THE SIXTH GRADE CLASSROOM

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative research study discusses the observed and reported experiences of a sixth grade music classroom that began each day with a movement activity that directly related to the music objective of the class. Twenty-nine sixth grade students participated in the study that involved moving in various ways to music. This study explored student preferences, participation, effort, and achievement while including movement activities in the classroom. Results indicated that including movement has many positive outcomes. Some of the outcomes include: student excitement, positive participation, achievement, and student confidence. The author has also given suggestions for future research that could be done about including movement in the sixth grade music class.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iv
RESEARCHER STANCE	1
LITERATURE REVIEW	8
Introduction	8
Music and Brain-Based Learning	8
Active Learning and Movement.....	9
Benefits	10
Leading Advocates.....	11
Beginning Movement in the Classroom.....	12
Considerations	14
Student Preference	15
Underutilization of Movement.....	16
Words of Encouragement.....	17
Conclusion	17
METHODOLOGY	19
Introduction	19
Setting	19
Participants	19
Procedure.....	20

Data Sources	27
Biases	29
Trustworthiness Statement.....	30
MY STORY	32
Before the Study: An Introduction	32
The Study Begins	33
Off We Go	35
Things Get Worse	39
The Movement Activity Turns Around	42
Class Is Getting Better	46
... And Better.....	48
Performance Day	51
Finishing One Unit and Starting Another	56
The Most Challenging Activity Yet.....	61
Success.....	63
They Just Keep Getting Better	66
The Dance Continues.....	68
The Finishing Touches	69
It Comes to an End.....	72
ANALYSIS	75
FINDINGS.....	78

Introduction	78
Effort.....	78
Student Preference	79
Positives.....	80
Achievement	82
Teacher Interactions.....	84
Frustration	85
NEXT STEPS	88
CONCLUSION.....	90
REFERENCES	91
RESOURCES	95
APPENDIXES.....	96
A Human Subjects Internal Review Board Consent.....	97
B Principal Consent.....	98
C Parent Consent.....	99
D Student Consent.....	100
E Survey #1.....	101
F Cup Game.....	102
G Observation Log.....	103
H Participant Log.....	104
I Survey #2	105

LIST OF FIGURES

1 The Movement Begins	35
2 Cooperative Groups at Work	45
3 Preparing for Presentations	52
4 Our work	55
5 Movement Chart	59
6 Student Reactions	60
7 What's Your Reaction?	65
8 Bins.....	77

RESEARCHER STANCE

“Sit down in your seats and stop talking,” I remember telling my little sister and our baby dolls, as we were getting ready to play school. Throughout my childhood, I remember playing “school” with my sisters, cousins, and my baby dolls as well. My mother was a teacher, and while we were growing up, she would bring home old math worksheets and phonics books for us to use. These resources helped us to become very successful “teachers.” I was the perfect teacher. My students did not talk back and did what I asked them to do, at least in my mind they did. My mother would tell me, “You are going to be the perfect teacher.” I distinctly remember quickly responding, “I’m never gonna be a teacher. It’s too easy!”

The years passed and I never gave thought to being a teacher. I wanted to be everything imaginable except a teacher. I remember entering college with the notion that I would go to school to be a music major focusing on organ performance. I did not think that there was anything else that I was qualified to do. When one of my teachers told me that I might want to reconsider being an organ major and a music major at that, my future looked grim. I decided to continue with music and organ at a different college and add education to the music major.

I guess I assumed that if I could not play the organ well, that I might as well teach. After all, how hard could teaching be? As I continued through my college education, I realized that the teaching part of the program seemed to be the easiest for me. I remember my student teaching where I did very little work planning. My cooperating teachers would tell me what it was that I was going to teach and I did just that. I loved teaching. I never had any anxiety in front of the students and my advisors when I was in the classroom. Everyone seemed to like me and life was grand.

I graduated from college with nothing but wonderful recommendations from my advisors and cooperating teachers. However, interview after interview, I felt less and less adequate. It seemed as though I might never get a job. Maybe I was not as good a teacher as I thought I was. Finally, I was offered a job teaching elementary music, grades K-5.

There was another music teacher at that particular elementary school. We connected the very minute that we began working together. We would share ideas, concerts, and stories of our teaching. Not only did I learn a lot from her, but also became very comfortable sharing problems that I had in my music classroom with her. We would brainstorm ideas and try things out together.

Along with creative ideas, concepts, and teaching strategies, we often had similar dilemmas in the classroom. One particular problem we encountered quite often was motivating the fifth grade students to participate in music class. My colleague and I would discuss the students' "attitude" and different ways that we could deal with it in our classroom. Much to our dismay, some students would rather be any other place than music class.

Three years later, I was offered a job teaching at an elementary school approximately sixty miles south of the school in which I began my career. I looked forward to the change of students, staff, and physical space that I was about to partake. At the same time, I was quite nervous to be in an unfamiliar place and not only teaching grades K-5 but sixth grade as well. I knew that I graduated college certified to teach music of any type to grades K-12, but I was quite unsure where to begin with teaching sixth grade.

The majority of the students welcomed me to the new school with bright eyes and smiles on their faces. We sang, read music, and participated in various musical activities. The students in grades K-5 were having fun and learning musical concepts. My spirits were high until I met sixth grade.

I wrote lesson plans that I thought would be interesting and fun for the sixth grade students according to the school curriculum. As I walked into my first class, the sixth grade students looked at me with no expression on their faces. I was very positive and felt that I did my best to reach the students. Unfortunately, I do not think that I was successful. I spent many hours reflecting on what I did during that class and thought that maybe they just did not like to sing.

I then decided that I would try to do different projects that included using the Internet, coloring, and working in groups. The students did not seem to like music any more than before and started misbehaving in class. By that time, I decided that it was too late. I would teach the students I had the best I could and would give students who did not behave consequences. Some of these consequences included missing recess, writing reports, and calling home. Class after class, my attitude toward the students became worse. By the end of my first year at this new school, I loved the students in grades k-5, but dreaded going to the sixth grade classes.

When my second year of teaching sixth grade came about, I wanted to try something different. I thought that I would treat the sixth graders as if they were in middle school right from the start. I told the students what I expected. Although we did more written work than any

other grade, I told the students that singing was necessary and that they were going to do it whether they wanted to or not. This worked to an extent, but I still had students who just were not happy to be in my music class. I thought that I had done everything possible to motivate and make music interesting for my students but it just was not working for the majority of my students.

Based on experiences with the other grades I teach, I have found that when students participate more frequently in activities, they retain musical concepts better. I particularly remember teaching the National Anthem to fifth grade. I presented the “Star-Spangled Banner” using a variety of activities. Some of these activities included singing, rewriting the song in their own words, playing games, reading and discussing the history of the song, and completing worksheets. I found that the students who participated in these activities performed better on tests. The tests included singing or writing the words and answering questions about the history of the song. Based upon my knowledge of participation, one big question ran through my mind: how were sixth grade students going learn if they would not participate in activities?

I still have a “hard time” finding activities that my sixth grade students are interested in participating in. I feel that this is a big problem. It is important to me that the students not only learn musical concepts but

also gain appreciation for music as an art. If they are not interested to be in music class, this could be a difficult task to accomplish.

In order to help solve this problem, I spent a great deal of time reflecting on my teaching. I found that as my students progress in grades, I spend more time treating them like adults. I expect higher levels of behavior and learning from my sixth grade students. This is not necessarily a bad thing. However, I tend to forget that they are still children. I find that I use less variety in relating musical concepts to them. Most classes consist of writing, singing, and occasionally playing musical instruments. The difference between this and the younger grades is that I include a lot of movement in the primary grades but less as the grades increase. By the time students are in sixth grade, there are very few movement activities. I think that one of the main reasons that this has happened is because I have been treating the students more like adults, and after all, grown-ups should participate in music activities that are more serious and do not include movement.

After doing research, I have found that movement is a motivator for students of all ages. Carlson (1992) found that fifth graders responded more favorably to the music program when included in movement activities. This is one of many examples of the benefits of movement in the music curriculum.

Because I want my students to be motivated and enthusiastic about music, I have chosen to do my thesis study on movement. I wanted to see if beginning every class with a movement activity would make a difference. Therefore, my research question is: What are the observed and reported experiences when a sixth grade music class begins with a warm-up movement activity that relates with the music objective?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

An overarching goal in education today is for all children to learn. Not all students learn in the same fashion. Teachers need to vary their teaching styles in order to reach all students. It is the teacher's responsibility to provide ways for students to learn best and be able to utilize their talents in order to help them learn (Lancaster & Rikard, 2002). This is true for all subjects including music.

Music and Brain-Based Learning

Research has shown that there is a distinct connection between music and whole-brain, or brain-based learning. Templeton and Jensen (1996) explain that Brain-Based learning occurs when students are challenged to recall, integrate, expand, and develop new concepts. It has been observed that many teaching strategies favor learning with only the left side of the brain. Music makes connections that encourage whole-brain learning. Including music can have an effect on achievement in many disciplines because of the way that it affects the function of the brain (Kay, 2000).

Templeton and Jensen (1996) suggest a learning environment that promotes brain-based learning should include three different things. The first factor is developing a classroom environment. Students should feel

relaxed, content, and involved in the learning process. Communication is also a factor. The teacher must communicate with the students about activities, progress, and achievement. The final aspect of a brain-based learning environment is where the learning experiences connect with real life experiences. This ensures that the learning in the classroom will be meaningful.

Teaching music includes the elements of music as well as music appreciation. In order for students to learn these elements, music must have meaning for it to be relevant (Carlson, 1984). Students need to feel that their encounters in music have purpose. By including purposeful musical experiences, the students' achievement in learning musical concepts increases (Aronoff, 1980).

Active Learning and Movement

There is an increased emphasis on active learning in today's education. In the research done by Hughes (1992), the active listening approach proved to be more beneficial for students than just sitting and taking in information. Some people learn by watching, while many others learn by doing (Lancaster & Rikard, 2002). Movement offers students the chance to experience music. By learning through movement, the students understand music as more than just notes on a page (Carlson, 1984).

Movement is an integral part of everybody's life. Humans learn to

move before they develop any other forms of communication (Lee, 1993). Many people naturally move in some way when they hear music. It has become apparent that when most children hear music, they automatically respond through movement (Andrews, 1982). A few of these responses include tapping of the feet, dancing, and clapping.

Benefits

There are many benefits to adding movement in the classroom. Overall coordination is enhanced when including movement. It helps to develop balance, coordination, strength, and endurance (Palmer, 2001). Movement not only helps with physical coordination, but with inner communication. Moving to music allows a better communication between the ear, eye, body, and mind (Mead, 1996). Hetland (2000) conducted a study where students, ages 3-12, participated in various movement activities. Results showed that students who were active in movement activities improved their spatial performance. Connections with cognitive experiences can be enhanced when teachers allow their students to experience kinesthetic movement (Rohwer, 1998).

Movement not only stimulates brain development but also uses the multiple intelligences (Kim, 1995). This is one of the many reasons that movement instruction is a vital ingredient in the music curriculum (Westervelt, 2002). Including movement can not only help with

coordination, but can also enhance critical thinking. Chen and Cone (2003) state that critical thinking and physical movement involves students focusing on problems before and during movement activities, generating different movement responses, creating solutions, and refining movements based on given criteria.

Movement can offer students other experiences as well. Through movement, children can explore different aspects of the world and discover the different ways that they relate to it (Kim, 1995). Students can hear music from various cultures and learn ways in which they move musically every day. Including movement in the music classroom can not only be an exciting way to learn about music, but can also give students another avenue in which they can succeed (Ludowise, 1985). In a study done by Templeton and Jensen (1996), students revealed that movement helped them to be better listeners, to focus better, and to complete their work in a shorter amount of time.

Leading Advocates

Although there are many leading advocates for including movement in the music room, most teachers base teaching practices on two main experts in the field. The first is Emile Jaques-Dalcroze. The Dalcroze method focuses on using the body through movement to portray the music (Kay, 2000). Dalcroze inspired his students to feel music through

movement. This movement is called “eurhythmics.” The Dalcroze method is used by many educators, actors, dancers, therapists, and musicians around the world (Mead, 1996).

The other leading advocate to movement in music is Carl Orff. The Orff method uses movement and literature to promote creativity and improvisation (Kay, 2000). Children engaged in the Orff-Schulwerk method of learning music use speech, movement, and music activities that integrate into their regular learning process. It emphasizes the importance and awareness of these activities in their everyday life (Andrews, 1982). Both the Dalcroze and Orff-Schulwerk methods stress that thinking about the music is not as important as feeling and being part of the music (Kay, 2000).

Whether following a specific method or creating one of his/her own, it is the educator’s task to give the students the musical experiences necessary for success. A music educator is in a great position to direct the students' natural responses of music toward real learning (Neil, 1990). There are many different approaches that an educator can use to incorporate movement into the music classroom.

Beginning Movement in the Classroom

It is vital that students have some basic knowledge prior to participating in movement activities. Before "jumping" right into movement,

the educator should teach the students two concepts pertaining to movement (Andrews, 1982). The first concept is basic body awareness. Body awareness involves allowing and helping the students to become aware of the number of ways in which the body can move and help to make them aware of how to connect those movements. One way to teach body awareness is through the use of dances. Dances provide steps that are already created. This allows students to learn the "basics" and still feel safe. Secondly, the teacher has to model to the students how to focus on the music. This takes a great deal of repetition. Students need to learn how to listen to music rather than just hear it. By listening to music, students are able to focus on various music elements and experience the purpose and message of the music.

Some simple general movement vocabulary should be addressed before beginning any music movement activity. Common terms included in the movement vocabulary are space, force, and time. Finally, techniques for group management should be addressed (Mueller, 2002). This might involve the use of different signals. In order for students to stop moving, they need to know what the teacher's signal is to do so. By addressing these techniques, students and teachers alike should be prepared to actively engage themselves in productive music movement.

Considerations

Once the basics of movement are taught, the teacher must then remember some important factors. There is no one correct type of movement. A variety of movement should be used (Ludowise, 1985). This includes stationary movements, as simple as clapping or patting the beat, to creative dances that the students design. It is probable that using a variety of different movements in the classroom will give everyone a chance to succeed (Carlson, 1984). Various musical styles should be incorporated. When choosing the music for movement activities, one must use high quality selections from various styles, cultures, and historical periods (O'Hagin, 1998). The tempo or speed of the music should also be considered. A variety of tempi appear to have a positive effect on capability and performance of students (Rohwer, 1998). Although a variety of tempi are recommended, students generally do not prefer and have greater difficulty moving to slower tempi (O'Hagin, 1998).

In order to help children to develop reflective responses to music, gender is an important factor. Boys tend to have more trouble than girls in the area of psychomotor skills and physical coordination in music related experiences (O'Hagin, 1998). When beginning movement activities with students, it may be beneficial to begin with music that the students are

familiar with. Boys, in particular, prefer songs that are familiar to them (Siebenaler, 1999).

Student Preference

Student preference should be considered when teaching any lesson. When a student feels threatened, he/she may become overly emotional or will focus on a certain aspect of the situation rather than being able to see the broader picture (Templeton & Jensen, 1996). If teachers pay attention to student preference, motivation may be increased.

The orthodox methods by which students are introduced to music are often uninteresting (Carlson, 1984). Because of this, students in the upper elementary grades are sometimes less than excited to participate in class activities. Elementary students' positive attitudes toward music class decline as the grade level increases (Bowles, 1998). Teachers need to pay close attention to those students. Although some skills and concepts are considered to be important music objectives, students may not be interested in learning them because they do not see value in learning it (Bowles, 1998). If the students do not value the objectives and concepts, meaningful learning may not take place.

Research has given suggestions to some of the preferences teachers should consider. First and foremost, students want a comfortable

environment. Students prefer an environment with less friction and competitiveness (Templeton & Jensen, 1996). Students also like songs that are familiar to them (Siebenaler, 1999). This does not mean that they cannot be introduced to new material. The teacher should find a balance between the two. Research has also shown that students prefer to work with a partner rather than by themselves or with a large group (Bowles, 1998).

There are different studies that have shown movement as a motivator for students. A study done by Carlson (1984) showed that fifth grade students enjoyed their music class more when the lesson included physical activities. Creative movement was also a preference of students across grade levels (Bowles, 1998). By asking the students what they prefer and utilizing that to some extent can increase their motivation to participate in music activities. Student history of successful experiences enhance their motivation and affect the possibility of taking risks in future experiences (Legette, 1998).

Underutilization of Movement

It has been shown that movement is one way to motivate and engage students in learning music. Unfortunately the use of movement is not often used in the classroom (Lacina, Morris, Calder, & Soileau, 1991). There are many reasons that movement is underutilized in the classroom.

Some teachers argue that there is a lack of space or that they are worried about the students' getting hurt while moving around the room (O'Hagin, 1998). Others state that including movement will encourage inappropriate behavior and lead to an increase of behavior problems. Many teachers simply do not feel comfortable with movement (Neil, 1990).

Words of Encouragement

It must be learned and taught that there is no wrong way of moving. This is because the interpretation of the movement is up to the individual (Aronoff, 1980). When including movement, teachers should start with small tasks. Simple folk dances offer possibilities for teachers with limited experience to present students with meaningful movement activities (Neil, 1990). If the teacher is an active participant and is enthusiastic about the movement, the students will follow. Teacher enthusiasm can set the tone for a rich, meaningful movement experience in the music classroom (O'Hagin, 1998).

Conclusion

Students of all ages should be given the opportunity to express their knowledge of music through movement. They can gain a greater sense of music as a whole rather than a specific element of music. Students' perceptual and conceptual learning in music is improved when including movement in the classroom (Mueller, 2002). In order for learning

to take place, students need repeated experience of these activities. It is important that students have the chance to be engaged in the experiences over and over again (Mead, 1996). Many teachers have found that integrating music listening skills and movement leads to better musical understanding.

The reward of including movement in the classroom will come when teachers see the understanding and motivation from the students. When the teacher is able to offer experiences that meet the learning needs of the students in positive ways, the students will use those experiences as building blocks for further study in that area (Carlson, 1984). After all, the goal of the music educator is not to teach movement but to help students gain musical understanding through movement (Andress, 1991).

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

In order to conduct my qualitative research study, I carefully chose movement activities and strategies that would be beneficial for my students. The research design of my study is as follows.

Setting

The school in which I teach is located in a rural town in southeastern Pennsylvania and consists of grades K-6. The school has approximately 500 students who come from predominately upper-middle to upper class families. The student population is of about 98% white and 2% other ethnicity. The music room was renovated three years ago and includes special acoustical ceiling tiles. There are no desks in the music room, and the chairs are set up in the shape of a U to encourage group involvement.

Participants

The students who participated in this study were sixth grade students between the ages of 10 and 13. Fourteen boys and 15 girls participated in this study. All ability level students were included in the class as well. There were four students who had Gifted IEPs. The overall behavior of the class was fair, and the students' motivation was low.

Procedure

I saw this sixth grade class once on every Day 1 of a five-day cycle for 45 minutes. The students had lunch immediately after music class; therefore they brought their lunches with them. This study took place over the course of two major units. The overall objective was given at the beginning of each unit. All of the movement activities described directly related to the given objective. Within each lesson, the movement activity related to the rest of the lesson.

There were certain steps that I took before my study began. Bogden and Bicklen (2002) suggest that one way to ensure that students are free from harm is to follow specific guidelines. I have followed these guidelines by filling out forms and having my study approved by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board at Moravian College (see Appendix A) and my school district's Curriculum Board and School Board. I have also made sure that the principal, parents, and students were clear about my study and signed consent forms (see Appendixes B, C, & D).

Also, prior to beginning movement in the music classroom, students were given a survey (see Appendix E). The purpose of the survey was to show student preferences involving movement activities

Unit 1: Steady beat

Objective: Students will demonstrate steady beat by singing, clapping, and moving to music of various tempos.

Activity #1: Folk dance, "The Virginia Reel".

Students did this dance to the song "Fiddler's Tune".

By beginning class with a folk dance, students were able to move to music without feeling threatened. The steps to the dance were already given so that all they had to do was try to keep a steady beat and do the steps provided. The remainder of this lesson involved different activities in which students had to keep a steady beat. Within the various activities, students had to be sure that they could demonstrate the beat by tapping and clapping hands. By performing the folk dance, students were not only introduced to basic folk dances, but could also understand the importance of "keeping up" with the music.

Activity #2: Walk along

Students were asked to walk at their own pace around the room, in any direction, without copying anyone else's tempo. They students were then asked to notice if anyone else was walking at their speed. If so, students were invited to become their walking partner. As the activity progressed, the entire class was asked to adjust to the same speed and

find a tempo for the group that was comfortable for all students. This activity was to be performed silently.

As we continued the unit on steady beat, this activity showed the students how important it was to the music. In the remaining activities during this lesson, students were asked to pay attention and give helpful suggestions to classmates so that all 29 students were keeping the same steady beat during each activity to follow.

Activity #3: Poem reading

Students were asked to read the following poem while keeping a steady beat:

Chester, have you heard about Harry?
He just came back from the army-
Everyone knows that he tickles his toes
Hip, hip, hurray for the army!

Once students could read this poem to a steady beat, they were asked to identify all of the body parts mentioned in this poem. The poem was done again. Students then pat the steady beat on the body part given during the poem. The tempo was increased to challenge the students.

During this lesson, students were challenged to keep a steady beat in more difficult ways. The challenge when performing, was to keep a steady beat, but also "move the beat" to different parts of the body. This

activity helped students to keep a steady beat on various parts of the body.

Activity #4: This is a...

Students sat in a circle with legs crossed. Each student was given an object. If for example, a student was given a penny. He/she said to the person on his/her right, "This is a penny." The person on the right responded, "A what?" The first responded, "A penny." The second person responded again, "A what?" and the first, "A penny". The second then said, "Oh a penny" and took the object. While the first person said this to the person on his/her right, the second at the same time said the same thing to the person on his/her right except with a different object. Therefore, everyone said "this is a" at the same time. Everyone also said "a what" at the same time. The challenge was that students needed to do this while keeping a steady beat and looking at the person they were speaking to, even though that person was not looking at them. This continued until the original item returned to the person who had it when the activity started.

This was an interesting way to keep a steady beat. Not only did it demonstrate the importance of one person keeping the beat but everyone doing it at the same time and working together to do so.

Activity #5: "Dry Bones"

Students were asked to follow along with the song once. They then identified all of the body parts indicated in the song. Students were then instructed to sway to the steady beat during the first section, tap the correct body parts to the second section, and move in a circle to the third. Students were reminded that they had to keep a steady beat while moving to and singing the song. This activity gave the students a chance to sing and move at the same time.

Activity #6: Poem reading

We finished the steady beat unit by reviewing the poem reading from the third class period. Because of the time constraint, it was important that the students were familiar with the activity.

Unit 2: Rhythm

Objective: Student will demonstrate knowledge of rhythmic notation by reading, playing instruments, clapping, and moving to music using correct values and maintaining a steady beat.

Activity #7: Rhythm Complex

The following chart was posted on the board.

Movement	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Stomp			X		X			
Pop	X						X	
Whistling		X	X	X		X	X	
Pat Legs	X				X			X
Snap	X			X		X		X

Students chose five types of movement to be listed in the first vertical column. They then chose the beat on which each particular movement would be performed by placing an "X" in the box under the chosen beat. The class was divided into groups and each given one movement to perform. When the teacher called the numbers 1 through 8 in a steady beat, the students performed their movement at the designated times. When the students were able to perform this successfully, teacher created various rhythms from the numbers for the students to perform.

Activity #8: Cup game

Students read a rhythm pattern that used eighth, half, and quarter notes. When then students were able to clap the rhythm well, they were challenged to perform the rhythm by using plastic cups (see Appendix F).

Activity #9: Pass the rhythm

Students stood in a circle for this activity. Each student created his/her own rhythm pattern that consisted of four beats, using quarter notes and eighth notes. Each student clapped his/her own pattern. The next person in the circle then clapped a different four beat pattern, without skipping a beat. The activity continued around the circle until someone missed a beat.

Activity #10: Head, shoulders

Students echoed the teacher's movement and words. The teacher said and tapped the following: Head, head, shoulders, shoulders. The students echoed. The teacher then said, "Shoulders, shoulders, knees, knees." The students then echoed. This continued in a similar fashion using different body parts and rhythms. Once the students were successful, they tried to complete this activity in a canon or a round.

Activity #11: Opposites attract

Students performed several different rhythm patterns to the song "Opposites Attract" by Paula Abdul. Each rhythm consisted of sixteen beats all-varying in difficulty level. Movement was added to each line.

Activity #12 & #13: "The Twelve Days of Christmas"

For the singing of the song, "The Twelve Days of Christmas", students were given a special task. Students were assigned to sing one of the numbers (i.e. 6 geese-a-layin') from one to twelve excluding one and five. The students were instructed to stand and sing when his/her number came about in the song. In addition to their number, all students stood and sang numbers 1 and 5.

Data Sources*Observation Log*

Arhar and Holly (2005) state that, "observation is foundational to all good research" (p. 142). The observation log consisted of two columns (see Appendix G). The first was what I observed in class that day. This column represented what happened in class, student comments and reactions and any other information that I saw. The second column consisted of my thoughts and reactions to the information in the first column.

Participant Log

The participant log recorded participation and enthusiasm (see Appendix H). The log consisted of student names vertically and thirty boxes horizontally. After each class, a mark was put in one box for participation and a second for enthusiasm shown during the class period. A + represented high, a \surd represented moderate, and - represented low level of participation and enthusiasm for each class activity.

Survey

Hubbard and Power (2003), suggest the use of surveys be used as a photograph of part of the class that, in combination with other data, can be used to tell the story of what happens in the classroom. There were two surveys used in this study. One (see Appendix E) was administered during the first class. The purpose of this survey was to gain information on student preferences. It consisted of four questions, all having to do with movement. The second survey (see Appendix I) was given at the end of the study. This survey consisted of five questions. The purpose of this was to compare student's ideas prior to the study to their ideas after the study had taken place. It also gave the students a chance to reflect on all of the movement activities done in the study.

Written Work

Finally written work, such as questionnaires and raps, gave me another avenue to explore my data. I could examine written work in combination with the observations and surveys to find common themes. Written work could also help me to make connections with motivation, enthusiasm, and achievement.

Biases

Ely (1997) suggests that it is important to consider what may be cause for bias and what to watch for during the study. Upon examination, there are numerous biases that may affect my study. First, I have been teaching these students for the past three years. There are a few new faces but I knew the majority of my students before they walked into my classroom. Every year I have to wipe out any unpleasant memories or incidents with some students. I have to remind myself that it is a new year and we start with a clean slate. In order to prevent this bias, I treated every child with an equal amount of respect and made sure that they knew that we start new.

Another bias was my experiences with sixth grade students. As previously stated, I have had many unsuccessful experiences with sixth grade students that may have given me a bad attitude. I had to remind myself that these sixth grade students are still children and whether they

admit it or not, still want to have fun in music class. Everything does not always have to be extremely serious. I had to make my classroom a safe place where the students were willing to “come out of their shell” and do some silly things. I think that by doing so, students were more engaged and the experience of learning music was more educative.

I was prepared to enter each class with an open mind. I wanted to rejoice when unexpected events and findings evolved rather than grumble because things did not go the way I expected them to. I was also open to ideas from my students and encouraged them to be creative. It was important that my students knew that while there were expectations and guidelines in my classroom, they were encouraged to be themselves and express themselves accordingly. I wanted to give my students the best possible experiences in music education that I could. By being aware of these biases, I could be more cautious to not let them interfere with my study.

Trustworthiness Statement

There are different ways that I have ensured that my study was trustworthy. First, I have followed the guidelines offered by Holly, Arhar, and Kasten (2005) to design consent forms. These forms were given to the principal, my students, and their parents. In these forms I described the purpose and a brief description of the study. Also in the forms parents,

students, and the principal (see Appendixes F, G, & H) were informed that student confidentiality would be preserved. This was accomplished by using pseudonyms to hide the identity of the students. They were also informed that at anytime students could withdraw from the study. There was no penalty for withdrawing or not participating in the study. Finally in the forms were phone numbers of my college advisor and me if the parents had any questions regarding my study. The Human Subjects Institutional Review Board and the School District's Curriculum Board and School Board read and approved those letters.

Another way that I tried to ensure trustworthiness was through the use of triangulation. Hubbard and Power (2003) suggest that by using multiple sources, conclusions and findings can be supported. I have used data from an observation log, two student surveys, and a participant log.

Lastly, I have ensured my students that I was doing this research to help them. As suggested by Bogden and Bicklen (2002), I treated the students with respect and looked for their cooperation during the study. I did not lie to my students or secretly record information. By telling the truth to my students and writing only the truth, I have built a trustworthy relationship and have produced trustworthy results.

MY STORY

Before the Study: An Introduction

I remember the mixed emotions I felt as the beginning of the year approached. I was excited to begin a new year and to try something new, but at the same time anxious about what might evolve. After months of preparation, my research study was about to begin.

The students entered the room on the first day in clumps of two or three students. As the students entered the room, a wave of memories overwhelmed me. I wondered if students like June, Jim, Lauren, and Rachel would participate this year, unlike previous years, or if Dominick, Jeff, and Billy were going to continue to be behavior problems. It was also important to make sure that students like William and Butch understood that they were equal to, not better than, the other students or activities in class. I immediately cleared my mind and walked into class with an open mind.

All but two of the students previously participated in class with me. I was interested to see whether one of the new students, who was from a completely different place, would conform to fit in with our student population or try to transform our students into his culture. The other student was quiet and did not appear to be the kind of person who was

interested in singing. Nonetheless, I greeted them and welcomed them to our school and music classroom.

In order to be sure that everyone in the class began with the same knowledge base, we started from the beginning. I spent most of the first class going over routines and classroom procedures. I also went through what I expected from the students and what they could expect from me. I wanted the students to be sure that we were in class to learn, and if we worked together, great results could occur. With expectations, introductions, and routines set in place, I felt comfortable beginning my study.

The Study Begins

Every year, I spend the second music class getting to know my students a little bit better. In sixth grade this is accomplished in three ways. The first is by the students completing a survey about themselves. The questionnaire involves questions about their family, likes, dislikes, and musical background. The second is by listening to the students sing individually for me. It is important for me to know the students' vocal range and ability to match pitch. This not only helps me to choose appropriate songs for class, but also could indicate the confidence level of students when singing in class. Thirdly, I am able to learn what the students know as far as music terms by asking them to complete a matching worksheet.

The worksheet includes 19 musical terms in one column, and, in the other, the matching symbol or definition. The worksheet helps me to understand what the students know, and what must be taught and mastered by the end of the year. Finally, for the purposes of my study, the students completed a movement survey that asked them questions as to movement preferences in class.

As I began voice testing, I was very pleased with the quality of voices and surprised that at least two of the boys' voices had already changed. This was something that I could not recall ever happening at the beginning of the year. Nonetheless, most of the students put forth a good effort when singing for me.

Students had the opportunity to work either with a partner or individually on the questionnaire and matching sheet while I completed voice testing at the piano. Everyone, with the exception of two boys, stayed at their seats and worked diligently the entire time. Mick and Mike had trouble focusing on their work. One of the ways that this was apparent was that they were playing "swords" with their pencils. Also, I observed them numerous times out of their seats bothering Billy and William in the rear of the classroom. After two warnings, the boys returned to their place and finished their work.

The class ended with an explanation of my research study. I told the students that like them, I was a student and I wanted to try something new to see what would happen. I made sure that I read through the consent forms and finished by telling them that I would be writing about them and what they do in class. Bobby asked, "So you are the author, but who is the main character?" I tried to explain that it is not a story specifically about one person but was going to be the story of their class during music time. The students were told that I needed forms back by the next music class. I was sure to take the permission slips to the students' homeroom so that the students would be sure to take them home, rather than lose them at lunch time.

Off We Go

The Movement Begins

MRS. GRAY: Good morning ladies and gentlemen. In a moment I am going to ask you to move your chairs and lunches back. NOT YET! Billy, not yet!

BILLY: Sorry.

MRS. GRAY: After you move your chairs back, please find a partner and stand in a circle next to him or her. You have one minute, GO!

MARLEY: I don't have a partner. I'm not going to be Billy's partner.

MRS. GRAY: Could you please be his partner? He won't bite!

MARLEY: Fine.

MRS. GRAY: We are going to start by doing a folk dance, not a square

dance, called the "Virginia Reel." First thing we need to do is hold hands and take four steps in toward the middle of the circle then four steps backward.

PETER: I don't want to do this.

JUNE: Neither do I.

BILLY: Just shut up and do it so that we can be done.

MRS. GRAY: That is not appropriate language for this classroom. Next time you will get a problem report.

(The students did what they were told, laughing and talking the entire time)

Next you will do-si-do. Take a look. This is how you do it.

(Mrs. Gray demonstrated do-si-so)

Then swing your partner. At no time should anyone be on the floor.

Let's begin.

(All students complete the dance once. William and Butch fall on the floor.)

Go back to your seats!

WILLIAM: Why?

MRS. GRAY: You are not doing the dance appropriately.

BUTCH: But its not our fault we just tripped.

WILLIAM: Yeah we didn't do anything.

MRS. GRAY: I saw you swinging inappropriately and then you fell. Please don't argue and return to your seats. (The boys go back to their seats and the class continues). Okay, let's try it one more time. (The music begins)

BOBBY: Mrs. Gray, watch Jeff and me. We are the best do-is-doer's ever.

JEFF: Yeah! We're the best.

MRS. GRAY: Good job guys!

Figure 1. This play that shows student participation during the first movement activity.

This first activity set the stage for a tough class to come. I was irritated because of the students who had to return to their seats and the way they were goofing around. At this point I began to worry that adding movement would encourage negative behavior rather than positive participation, as I had hoped.

A great deal of the remaining time was spent working with steady beat. We did this by reviewing a rhyme that I called the "McDonald's Rhyme.

McDonald's rhyme is a game that requires students to keep a steady beat. If they do not maintain the steady beat, they are eliminated. Also, at the end of the rhyme, one student must pull his/her hand away on the last word or the student is eliminated. There was one practice round before the eliminations began. With the exception of a few glitches, the steady beat was maintained. As the activity progressed and more students were eliminated, the tempo increased. This led me to believe that the students were very eager to make the task difficult for the remaining students. When students were eliminated, they sat eagerly to see who would be the next person out. After the last person was eliminated, the students stood up, picked up their lunches, and started walking to the door. I was very quick to exclaim to the students that class was not over yet and they were told to return to their seats.

We ended class by singing, "Washington's Hat." Jeff had remembered this song from years previous. He burst forth with "Washington's hat, imagine that. Washington's hat." He sang the refrain perfectly. I asked him to sing alone for the class, and he was happy to do so.

We practiced the refrain as a class, and then went through the entire song together. Marie was the only student to read the verses. She read them very loudly and slowly. Although the students were not motivated or interested in singing the verse, almost all of the students sang the refrain. Bobby and Jeff decided to add a "who" at the end of the refrain. By the end of the song all of the students sang the refrain and added the "who" at the end. Watching all of the students enjoy singing almost made me forget about how annoyed I had become before the song began when the students decided that class had ended when it had not.

Based on the first day of including movement, I was quite unsure of what the remaining classes would hold. There were many parts of the class that pleased me, but also many that did not. The students clearly demonstrated that they could keep a steady beat through the "McDonald's Rhyme," which was the main objective of the class, but I worried that the movement activities would encourage the negative behavior that I saw today.

Things Get Worse

The first movement activity of the study was not as successful as I thought that it would be. The students were loud, goofy, and not all participating as I expected them to. Because of this, I decided that I would remind the students about walking and moving around the room using their space. It can be difficult for 29 students to move around the room without touching someone else but they have to remember the basics of moving in music class. I began our second warm-up activity, "walk along," by choosing four volunteers: Billy, Mick, Mike, and Joe. I was not concerned that boys were chosen because I knew that eventually everyone in the class would get a turn.

The boys were asked to move around the room without imitating the same pace as anyone else. When the four boys began, Joe jogged, Billy stood still, Mick walked at a normal pace, and Mike took very small steps. One by one I asked the students to join them, making sure that their tempo was different than all of the others. As more and more students joined the group, more students had trouble doing something different. It was almost impossible for 29 students to move around the space being sure that there were no identical tempos.

The activity continued. Joe changed his jog to crawling on the floor. Mike and Mick stopped moving altogether and stood in the middle of the

room, zipping and unzipping each other's fleece shirts. This was not appropriate participation. I walked over to the boys and gave them a look of confusion. They looked back at me, and decided to walk in different directions.

The students were asked to freeze. They were then instructed to move at the same tempo as the rest of the class without making one sound. Billy said, "We should all just stand still." He was instructed that he was not allowed to talk and asked not to ruin things for the entire class. I reminded the students that no one was allowed to make a sound, and that moving does not mean standing still. The students were given the magic word, "GO."

Lisa, Amanda, and Jenny began to move together. No one else in the class moved the way they did. At the same time, other small groups of students began moving together. There were many different groups, but the objective was for the entire class to move together. Finally, Bobby and Jeff began making a train. Mick, Mike, Tom, Jim, and Peter attached onto the "train." One by one other students joined in. The students turned their train into a circle. Just as I was about to congratulate the students for accomplishing the given task, I heard feet moving at different paces and beginning to pick up speed. The faster the students moved, the louder their voices rose, and the more the tempo and paces of students changed.

I asked the students to freeze, and remember the directions, which were to remain silent. They must move at the same steady beat. The students were then told to try one more time. They began and once again, almost had it, but then got faster and started to be silly again.

I stopped the movement activity and asked them to return to their seats. They were so close to accomplishing the task, twice. However, by observing this change in behavior, I concluded that the students could not stay focused on the task; therefore I decided to stop the activity before I lost control of the class. This resulted in the students failing at the second half of the activity as well. After the students returned to their seats, they were asked to reflect on the activity. They agreed that it was not easy walking at different paces because there were so many other students to watch. Lexi stated, "The second one would have been easy if the boys weren't so worried about getting faster all of the time." Marley asked, "Why are we talking about steady beat again? Didn't we do this last year?" I responded, "Yes, but this year we are going to apply it differently. You'll see."

Class continued by reading the history of rap music and listening to a song called "Rappers Delight." The students instantly transformed from active, rowdy, students who seemed to be out of control, to a group of completely unemotional students. They sat very still, with blank stares on

their faces while we listened. Butch did not look at his song sheet. Mike and Mick looked around the room made faces at each other. Jeff and Bobby whispered to each other, Joe yawned very loudly, and Marie played with her hair.

Overall, I thought that the entire class period was a failure. I thought that the students would be more successful with the warm-up activity. Again they participated but appeared to have difficulty participating appropriately. I do not think that the content made the class a failure, but the way that it was presented to the students may have made the class period to be a failure. Perhaps I could have taken another approach when going over the history of rap music and listening to the song, such as reading in groups or doing their own research, but regardless, I expect the students to behave and participate no matter what the activity.

The Movement Activity Turns Around

I was excited for this class to begin. I knew that the warm-up activity was fairly simple, and also that the students were going to begin working in cooperative groups. I was sure that this class period would be much different than the previous ones. When the students came in and settled in their seats, I asked them to follow along as I read the poem, "Chester Have You Heard," that was posted on the board.

Once all of the students could read the poem in rhythm and tap the steady beat, I asked the students to find all the references to different body parts. Half of the class were raising and shaking their hands to give an answer. I was so overwhelmed by their enthusiasm that I almost forgot that they were in sixth grade. It almost seemed as though we were in first grade again, with at least half of the class so eager to give an answer.

I called on several students who correctly identified the parts of the body in the poem. Some answers included: chest from the word “Chester,” hair from the word “Harry,” ear from the word “heard,” and arm from the word “army.” When they had identified the main body parts, Joe called out, “But we can add tickle too, like under your armpits.” I complemented his creativity and we added that as well.

I asked the students to find a place in the room to stand and gave the instructions about how we were going to tap the beat on the given parts of the body. Jessica, Amanda, Bobby, and Jeff were among some of the students who seemed excited to do this. However, Jenny remained in her seat. She was not feeling well and was going home in a half-hour, I did not make her stand and do the activity with us.

I demonstrated the appropriate steady beat movement to the poem. We tried it slowly as a class. All of the students participated and were successful at moving and maintaining the steady beat. I was glad to see

that even Jenny, not feeling her best, could not keep herself from participating in music activities.

As we finished the poem the first time through, Peter raised his hand. When called upon he said, "We should tap our forehead on the word for." I was very impressed with his creative idea. All of the other students also applauded his creativity with responses such as, "Yeah," "That's good," "Lets do it." We practiced that part of the poem, and then practiced the whole poem three more times, each time increasing the tempo. It seemed as though the students were more engaged in the activity the faster the tempo got. I was excited to see that every student participated, and that they enjoyed themselves, as evidenced by all of the smiles I saw at the end of the activity.

When the activity ended, we spent some time reading examples of raps written by some of my previous students. The raps were read in unison by the entire class. After reading, the students were asked to examine the compositions and indicate what characteristics made some of them high quality. Chad responded, "The raps that flowed were better." I asked the students what made a rap "flow." Lexi responded, "Ones that rhyme and keep a steady beat," and the other students agreed.

The students were given a rubric that explained the criteria for the raps that they were to compose, and they were given their assigned

groups. When students were in their groups, they were asked to assign each person in their group numbers 1 through 5. The number correlated to different jobs: 1- timekeeper, 2- taskmaster, 3- encourager, 4 & 5- recorders. I then explained to the students the requirements and expectations of each job, I asked the students to get to work.

The remaining class time was spent working on the assignment. The students were not happy that they could not choose their own groups and seemed to be upset with some of their peers that they got “stuck” with. Throughout the remainder of the class, I observed many disagreements and arguments among group members.

Cooperative Groups at Work

We need a title first.

You shouldn't be writing you're not the recorder.

Not-uh every line doesn't have to rhyme.

We aren't saying stuff like we are punks. What about my ideas?

Mick, Mick come.

Everything he says is stupid.

Well at least I'm doing something.

We are never going to get this thing done.

Figure 2. This poem shows comments from group members during the beginning of cooperative groups.

I reminded the students that they must work with their assigned groups. Working in a group meant that everyone accepts others ideas and

input. I also reminded the students that everyone is treated with respect in the music room and that they needed to work through their problems rather than argue. Freire (1970/2000) stated “Any situation in which some individuals prevent others from engaging in the process of inquiry is one of violence” (p. 85). I explained to my students that I would not tolerate students denying their peers a chance to share their ideas and have them heard.

Class Is Getting Better

The students entered the room today quietly and quickly. Before I could say a word to the students, Joe, Jeff, and Nick began, “Chester have you heard about Harry.” In my surprise, I did not know how to react. Before I knew it, every single student in the class sat in their seats showing the movement and saying the poem from the previous week. I was surprised and pleased that the students remembered a poem and the movement that accompanied it from a week previous. I let the students finish before I thanked them, greeted them, and introduced the fourth movement activity.

I asked for a volunteer to come to the front of the room. At least half of the students’ hands immediately went up. I asked William to come help me. All eyes were on us. There was not one student whose attention was elsewhere.

William was given the directions to respond to my first two statements with “A what?” and the final statement with “Oh, a card.” And so we began: I had a card in my hand and said, “This is a card.” William gave me a look as if I were crazy and responded with “A what?” I said again, “A card.” Again William’s facial expression was priceless as he said, “A what?” I said again, “A card.” Finally he said, “Oh, a card” and took the card from me. The students’ attention remained on us. I asked William to try the activity one more time maintaining a steady beat, and we showed the class one more time.

I asked the students to sit in a circle on the floor. I gave each student a small item such as a paper clip. Bobby asked for something other than a rock, and Jessica was very excited that her item was a ball. I reminded the students that they would not have the same item for the entire activity.

We practiced the activity one time extremely slowly. Marley sat next to me saying, “I get this, it’s pretty neat.” We continued to practice the activity, gaining speed and trying it several times consecutively. As the students caught on and became more comfortable, we did not stop until the item returned to the original owner. All students were engaged. The longer we continued with the activity, the louder and more excited the students became. However, even though they were louder and more

excited, everyone kept the beat without a glitch. Once we received our original item, at least half of the class began to clap and cheer that they had accomplished their task.

Although this activity took longer than I had anticipated, the students seemed motivated to work for the rest of the class. I told them that they had that class period and next week to decide what their rap was going to be about and write it. The students got into groups, listened to each other's ideas, and came up with a topic for their rap. Although the students took longer to get a good start on their raps, I had confidence that all of the groups would be successful.

... And Better

I was interested to see what class was going to bring today. The movement activity that was planned for the day not only involved movement, but singing as well. As I handed the books to the students, Jenny, Lindsey, and Amanda began saying, "This is a book, a what, a book." I smiled at the students and let them continue until I finished handing out the books. Once all the books were handed out, I instructed the students to turn to "Dry Bones" in their books. The girls quickly stopped what they were doing and turned to the designated page.

I introduced the song by teaching it in sections. I asked the students to listen to each individual section then asked them to sing it with

me. All of the students sang with me. Mick, Jim, Butch, and Mike appeared to be moving their mouth and singing extremely quietly, but nonetheless, they were singing.

The middle section of the song involved different parts of the body. As we sang that section, Amanda tried to snap her fingers on beats two and four of the measure. Unfortunately, singing new words and snapping was a difficult task for her to try right from the beginning. While Amanda was doing her own thing, Bobby, Jenny, Jeff and Joe pointed to the different parts of the body as they sang.

After the entire song was taught, I showed the students the movement that accompanied the song. I was a little nervous and unsure of how the students would react, but I did not see any negative reactions as I demonstrated the movement. When I finished, the students moved to a place in the room to stand and move to the song. All of the students in the class participated in the activity. I would estimate that approximately one half of the class seemed to be excited and very engaged in the activity, and the other half participated but showed little enthusiasm. Students like Jim, Mick, and Mike participated but moved very slowly and made very small movements.

After the movement activity, we moved to the computer lab where the students were to finish and print their raps. With the exception of

Marley and Greg, the students were on task. Marley chose to work on her spelling work until I quickly told her to stop, and Greg sat at a computer next to his group and did not do much of anything. He claimed that he was helping his group, but did not make conversation with them. Numerous groups asked me for help. With finding rhyming words to fit into their rap, I gladly provided a little bit of guidance so that all of the students understood their task and could continue to work.

When there were five minutes remaining in the class, the students were instructed to finish their raps, print two copies, save their work, and begin cleaning up. As the students began to clean up, Amanda came bouncing up to me asking if she could read her rap. She did so and was very excited about it. I congratulated her on a job well done. Amanda then took her paper and bounced away.

Overall, I was pleased with the way that most students worked with their groups. Marley and Greg were the only students who I saw completely off task. I could definitely see leaders in each group but for the most part, the students worked together very well. I knew that I had to allow the students time during the next class to print their raps due to a little glitch at the end of this class, but was confident that things would still work out well.

Performance Day

Because of the extra time that it had taken the students to start working productively in groups, the class was one lesson behind the timetable for my study. I did not think that it would be appropriate to move on to a rhythmic movement activity before the steady beat unit was complete, so after reflection and consideration, I decided to allow the students to choose their favorite warm-up activity to do today. The students have appeared to enjoy previous activities, but they only had one chance to do them. By giving the students this opportunity, they could choose their favorite movement activity to do one more time.

When I told them about this, Jeff and Bobby immediately said, “Do-si-do.” Before I could comment, Jenny, Fay, and Lindsey began, “Chester have you heard about Harry.” William, Billy and Linda quickly joined in with the poem. Because so many students began to chant the poem, we decided that it would be the warm-up activity. I interrupted them and said that we had to start together and do it as a class.

I placed the poster on the board and reviewed the activity, which turned out to be unnecessary because everyone in the class remembered what they were doing. I asked the students again to move to a place in the room and stand. All students moved to a place and participated in the

activity. They were very content that they had the opportunity to choose and recreate a movement activity done in a previous class.

The students were given ten minutes to prepare to present their raps for their peers. The following poem indicates various cooperative groups putting the finishing touches on their raps.

Preparing for Presentations

How about we all clap?

You clap.

No, they're doing pat, pat, clap.

Lets pretend we're melting.

No, you go like this.

Don't forget the chorus two times.

If something goes wrong, just go with it.

Our rap is the bomb.

Do you wanna hear it?

Can we go first?

Figure 3. This Patai poem demonstrates student conversations with each other while preparing for their presentations.

After the students were given time to prepare, they were asked to find a seat and prepare to be an audience. I gave each student a paper and pencil so that they could give input as to how they thought each group performed. They were given the task of evaluating their peers' performances by answering the following three questions about each

performance: Do they keep a steady beat? Is everyone participating? If not, who? and Does the rap flow with rhyming lines?

The presentations began. Bobby's group performed first. The students looked at each other and Bobby said ready go. When the students began, they had trouble staying together, and asked to start again. Although some of the group members did not participate throughout the entire rap, William and Bobby finished the rap, maintaining the steady beat.

The second group was Amanda's group, it was quite apparent that Amanda was absent. Marie and Lisa performed the words to the rap while Mick and Greg read the "who" response. The students were successful at keeping a steady beat but their performance lacked Amanda's enthusiasm and bounciness.

Jeff's group followed and performed very well. Jeff read most of the rap. The rest of the group read the chorus. They projected their voices and kept a steady beat. They ended with the Eagles chant and a "cheerleader" pose by Jenny.

Joe's group went to the front of the room next. The students came to the front of the room, read their rap, not keeping a beat at all, then returned to their seats.

Although Peter's group showed no emotion when they performed, they did complete the requirements and keep a steady beat. Each student read his/her part. When they were finished, Lexi quickly put her paper down and said, "That was awful!" and they returned to their seats.

Dominick's group was the last to perform. The students were very successful reading and keeping a steady beat. The only thing that was very different was that Dominick did not face the class. When I asked him about it he responded, "I just feel a little more secure in myself like this." He did a great job and we could hear him just fine.

All groups finished performing and all students finished grading each group. I congratulated each group on a job well done. I was very sincere about that. Although the all of the students did not demonstrate great enthusiasm for the task at hand, the ability to read and keep a steady beat seemed to be better than previous classes that I have had. I was really impressed with the results (see Figure 4) of the performances and the writing of the raps in general.

Our Work

The Sick Song

What do you do when your sick?
 Do you cough? Do you sneeze?
 Do you have a disease?
 Do you have to eat soup?
 With the ABC's
 Or the 1,2,3's
 You through up
 It smells like sox.
 You go get a checkup.
 You find out you have chicken pox.

EAGLES

The linebacker put up the big hit
 And we take them down bit by bit
 Wide receiver making the big catch as he burns him it's a
 mismatch.
 (CHORUS)
 We are the Eagles were going all the way.
 We make all the teams pay everyday.
 You all know my man Brian Dawkins he is the best
 We all know he's better than all the rest.
 You al like big Jevon.
 He practices till dawn.
 (CHORUS)
 We are the Eagles standing strong
 We are gonna be in Super Bow for very long.
 SO we decided to sing this song.
 This is why they call us the E-A-G-L-E-S

JOB TIME

I'm number 1 and I'm the time keeper.
 My mom thinks I'm the biggest sleeper.
 I'm number 2 and I'm the taskmaster
 When I'm on task everything goes faster.
 I'm number 3 the encourager
 I'm number 4 the recorder.
 Everything I do has to be in order.
 I'm number 5 the rhymer and everywhere I
 go I bring my timer.
 Yo Yo Yo

"My Stupid Life"

I missed the bus I had to walk to school
 In the rainy wheather it was not cool!
 Boom boom clap
 Boom boom clap
 I got to school and the teacher was mad
 I had to stay in for recess and I was sad.
 Boom boom clap
 Boom boom clap
 School was done I had to go home
 I did my homework and talked on the phone.
 Boom boom clap
 Boom boom clap
 The next day I felt sick because I ate my dinner really
 quick!!!!
 Boom boom clap
 Boom boom clap

The Chocolate Rap

The lovely brown
 Will never let you down.
 Chorus: didda didda boom dada didda didda boom
 Eat it fast
 While it lasts
 Chorus
 If you really want more
 Eat it with your s'more
 Chorus
 It's mighty sweet
 It's a really good treat
 Chorus
 Put it in your milk, eat it with ice cream
 Throw it all over and watch your mom scream.
 Chorus, Chorus
 BOOM!!!

HALLOWEEN

Halloween it's my favorite day!
 It makes me want to scream Hurray!
 A-WOOOOO
 I like to trick or treat and get some candy.
 It tastes so good and makes me feel dandy.
 A-WOOOOO
 The moon is big and very bright.
 You'll be trick or treatin' all night.
 A-WOOOOO
 It's the end of the night and we go to go in
 What a great Halloween it has been!

Figure 4. Student Raps

Finishing One Unit and Starting Another

I was very pleased with the way that the students completed the steady beat unit and writing their raps. I thought that before we started our warm-up activity, I would give the students the opportunity to give feedback about the unit, so I gave them a questionnaire. At the bottom of the questionnaire I asked the students to write the names of all of the students in their groups. I then asked them to consider all of the work that they had done throughout the last few classes and give them grades in the following categories: cooperation, attitude, participation, and achievement. I stressed the importance of honesty. I thought that this would be a good way for me to compare my notes to what students in the groups thought.

As the students began to complete the papers, William raised his hand. When called upon, he asked in a confused manner, "You really want us to be honest?" I responded with the answer, yes. Jenny then raised her hand and asked, "Are you going to tell on us?" I made sure to clarify that she meant I was not going to tell the other group members what her response was and assured her that I would not tell anyone. All students were working quietly and diligently.

After approximately eight minutes, I asked the students to finish their papers, hand them in and return to their seats. While the students finished their work, Amanda approached me with her paper. She said,

“Mrs. Gray, I am not giving Mick bad numbers because he is a boy, I just don’t think that he did anything good.” I reassured her that she should be filling in numbers that she thinks are appropriate for the corresponding category. Amanda gave me a smile and handed in her paper.

I thanked the students for their input and we began our warm-up activity for the lesson to follow.

As the students finished handing in their papers, I asked them to think of eight different movements that make a sound. Many hands immediately went up in the air. I decided that I would call on the first person and that student would then pick the next person. Jessica said that the first one would be clapping followed by Billy who chose stomping, Nick chose patting his legs, William whistling, Jenny snapping, Joe making a popping sound with his mouth, and Fay patting her cheeks.

We then went through the process of deciding on which numbers we would perform each movement. I called on students who usually do not offer to answer questions in class to tell us when we were going to do each movement. Because there was no right or wrong answer to this, I thought that it would be a safe way to involve and promote more class participation. I asked June to fill in the boxes for clapping, Rachel stomping, Lauren patting legs, Lisa whistling, Tom snapping, Chad popping sound with mouth, and Butch patting cheeks. Once the chart was

complete (see Figure 5), I divided the class into eight groups of students who were already sitting next to each other.

When I heard moaning and complaining from a number of students, I knew that the students would have preferred to pick the movement activity they were to perform. Based on previous experiences with this activity, I have found that the students are more successful when sitting with other students who are doing the same movement. Once the directions were given, we attempted the rhythm complex. I counted to eight and the students performed their sound together.

I was quite impressed with the way that the students performed the composition. I was very pleased when Ashley raised her hand and said, "We knew we were right when the only thing we heard on number 5 was a stomp." I told the students that we were then going to try the composition without out saying the numbers out loud. They were instructed to listen carefully to the steady beat. I said, "One, two, ready begin." The students once again successfully completed the composition. The students agreed that it was a somewhat easy task to accomplish.

Because the students were doing so well with the task, I challenged them to perform the composition using different rhythms. Butch

Figure 5. Chart that demonstrates student movement chart

Movement	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Clap		X				X	X	X
Stomp			X		X			
Click	X						X	
Pat Legs		X	X	X		X	X	
Whistling	X			X				X
Snap	X			X		X		X
Pop	X	X		X				X
Pat Cheek	X	X	X	X		X	X	X

immediately said, “Oh, this is gonna be simple.” I counted the numbers in rhythm: 1 2 34 5 6 78. The students echoed the pattern then added the movements. This was not a success the first time as it was before. After approximately three attempts the students were finally successful.

Between the second and third attempt, I heard various conversations between students. The following poem includes bits and pieces from those various conversations.

Student Reactions

This is harder than I thought it would be

Yeah but it's kinda neat

It's almost like we are doing these using different rhythms.

Tell me about it. My fingers are butter.

I can't do my part anymore.

I can't remember what the rhythms are.

This is too hard.

Figure 6. This Patai poem that shows students reactions to the movement activity.

I asked the students if they thought that this was something extremely hard or merely challenging. The students overwhelmingly said that it was just challenging. I then asked if they were ready for something a bit easier. All students responded, "YES!"

We finished class by reviewing some simple rhythms. Before we began talking about challenging rhythms, we reviewed quarter notes, eighth notes, quarter rests, and half notes. Joe, Mike, Fay, and Chloe were among some of the students called upon to read various rhythms. All students participated in this activity. Some students put forth more effort than others by raising their hands and offering information when questions were asked. Overall, I was very pleased with how the class participated

and thought that they were ready to begin harder rhythms the next time we met.

The Most Challenging Activity Yet

The activity scheduled for the class proved to be the most challenging activity thus far in the study. I wrote the rhythm to the “Cup Game” (see Appendix F) on the board. I asked students to read each line one at a time. Joe read the first line, Linda read the second, Amanda read the third, and everyone read the fourth. As a class, we read all four lines three times, each time getting faster. When asked if the task was easy, the students overwhelmingly responded with a “yes.”

After all of the students gave me their attention, I demonstrated the cup game. By using a rhythmic pattern and maneuvering plastic cups in different ways (see Appendix F), the students had various reactions. Some of them include: “Cool,” “That’s too hard,” “Neat,” and “No way man.” I asked the students to take one cup and pass the remaining cups around the circle. All of the students took a cup, put it on the floor, and gave me their attention, with the exception of two students, Joe and Mick. I did not say anything but did give them a look of discontent and they stopped what they were doing.

We took the rhythm activity very slowly. We practiced each rhythm individually. Based on the concentration in their eyes, most of the students

were paying attention and wanted to be successful. Again, everyone gave me his or her attention except Mick and Joe. I decided that I would not let the two of them ruin the activity for the whole class and asked them to return to their seats. They did so and sat quietly for the remainder of the activity. They actually were very attentive when they were not allowed to participate in the activity. This made me think that they understood that they made a wrong choice and were sorry for it. The rest of the class continued to get better with the cup activity. After approximately 30 minutes, almost half of the students were beginning to “get” the activity. The others struggled yet were determined to be successful. This was indicated when I told the students that we had to move on and the students moaned because they wanted to continue. I did tell the students that we would try this activity again during the next class, after our warm-up activity.

The students were then given a set of rhythm flash cards to read with a partner. Since Mick and Joe decided to work together, I closely monitored them as to be sure that they were staying on task. I think that because they were aware of this, they did stay on task and read through all of the flash cards.

All of the students did a great job working with the flash cards. Linda and Lauren were done before the others in their class. I challenged

them to not just clap and say the rhythms, but to perform the rhythms using movements and body percussion. They were quite creative and completed approximately three flash cards. Once all of the students had completed the flash cards, I collected them and we finished with a silly seasonal song called “The Turkey Tango” as a reward for a good class of hard work.

Success

We began our next class with a review of quarter notes and eighth notes. I then asked the students to think of a rhythmic pattern consisting of four beats and using only quarter and eighth notes. I explained to the students that they were going to move their rhythm pattern around the circle by saying their rhythm pattern and looking at the person to their left. The next person would continue with their rhythm and do the same. The object of the activity was to move different four beat rhythm patterns around the circle without interrupting the steady beat. After I explained the activity to the students, I asked Amanda to begin. She said “ta ta ta ti-ti” and looked at me for assurance. I smiled and looked toward Joe, who was next in the circle. He said, “ta ti-ti ti-ti ti-ti ti-ti ta” and immediately looked at Peter. Peter repeated the exact rhythm. Unfortunately, the pattern did not consist of four beats but totaled six. The two began to laugh. This laughter caused Dominick to laugh and the steady beat to be lost.

At that point I stopped the activity, clarified the objective of the activity, and told the students that it needed to be taken seriously in order for it to be fun and successful. I asked Bobby if he would begin by passing the rhythm to his right. The boys who often misbehave or act silly were standing to his left. I thought that the girls might take the activity more seriously and would show the boys that the activity could be successful and fun at the same time. Bobby began and passed the rhythm around the circle. The rhythms continued around the circle, through all of the girls, Chad, Brent, and Tom, using four beat rhythm patterns and keeping a steady beat. When Tom passed the rhythm to Billy, Billy neglected to pay attention to the activity and spoiled the entire activity by breaking the steady beat and not performing a rhythm. The girls were upset with him. Jenny said, "Man, Billy, you ruined everything." I quickly changed the pace and asked the students to sit so that we could review the cup game.

We slowly reviewed the steps to the cup game. Unlike the previous class, Joe and Mick were very attentive and paying close attention to every move that I made. We tried the cup game four times. The first was a trial. The second through fourth time were performed consecutively. All of the students participated and put forth a great deal of effort.

Class ended by examining various rhythmic patterns that were posted on the board. I had divided the pattern into different colors. We

went through the rhythms one pattern at a time. Similar to the cup game, the students thought that the patterns were simple. A few students were confused about the rhythm with dotted-eighth patterns, but other than that, all of the students could clap and say each rhythm. I was overwhelmed with joy and satisfaction.

I asked the students to pay close attention to the different colors and asked for volunteers to play various instruments. This was the first time that every student in the class actually volunteered. I chose Tess. She was then asked to pick a boy. She chose Joe. Joe chose a girl and so on until all parts were filled.

I taught each set of instruments their part. Once all parts were secure, we played through the entire rhythm pattern to the song, “When I’m 64” sung by the Beatles. The students really enjoyed this activity.

What’s your reaction?

This is really cool.
 I know it’s the Beatles.
 I like it too but can’t remember where I boing.
 You are the brown x’s.
 Awesome.
 Hey Mrs. Gray, can we show this to our teacher?
 It depends; we are already late for lunch.
 PLEASE!

Figure 7. This poem shows student reactions to the musical activity.

Class did end five minutes late. The students were so engaged and really wanted to show their teacher. I did not have the heart to say no to them. We performed once for their teacher. She was quite impressed with the students and said that it was well worth ending late. I would definitely agree.

With the exception of some of the students not taking the warm-up seriously, this class may have been the greatest class that I had ever experienced with a sixth grade class. It is an overwhelming feeling when you struggle with a specific grade level of students and realize that it is possible for students to want to participate in music class and even feel so great about themselves that they ask to show their teacher.

They Just Keep Getting Better

The activity during this class was a quick warm-up activity. I began the movement activity, "Head, head, shoulders, shoulders." At first I would tap and say different parts of my body, for example, head, head, shoulders, shoulders. The student echoed me. All students participated. Mick, William, Billy, Jim, June, and Marley stood in the back and barely moved while the other students showed great enthusiasm. After practicing numerous patterns, we completed the activity in a canon. I started and the students echoed me but two beats later. We continued through the entire activity successfully and continued our lesson by reviewing "When I'm 64."

Once again, all of the students were very eager to participate in this activity. I gave students who did not play an instrument during the last class a chance to play first. We played through the entire song three times, switching parts each time. Because students were required to perform a different part each time through the song, they continued to be engaged in the activity.

The remainder of class was spent discussing and learning about tied notes. The students participated in a brief lesson, discussion, and dictation activity to demonstrate that they understood the concept. I used Vygotsky's (1978) advice with the students that had difficulty with the new concept of a tie by basing the discussion and lesson on the students' previous history and knowledge of rhythm. In order for all of the students to understand the concept of a tie, I had to build on their prior knowledge and help them through scaffolding to reach the correct answers and understanding.

Once again the students showed that they could remain engaged, enthusiastic, and on task throughout an entire class. I am beginning to no longer worry about sixth grade coming into my classroom, but am looking forward to what class will bring.

The Dance Continues

The movement activity that started our next class not only involved rhythm but also was closer to a dance type of an activity. The first task of the activity was to read through four different rhythm patterns. Ashley read the first line successfully, followed by Chad reading the second, the third by Nick, and the fourth Fay. After each student read the designated rhythm correctly, the entire class was asked to read it together. In approximately five minutes all students were able to clap and read the rhythms together. In our routine fashion, the students were asked to find a place to stand.

I showed the students the movement for each line; the students watched once before trying it with me. One line was learned and perfected at a time. We completed the activity by adding the movement to Paula Abdul's "Opposites Attract."

As we began the movement, I was unsure of which students were going to enjoy and participate in the activity. Bobby and Jenny immediately began moving back and forth when the music began. Billy looked to William and rolled his eyes. William gave a nod of acknowledgement to Billy. Once the movement began, all students' participated, but to different extents. Other than June, all of the girls were moving, smiling, performing correct rhythms, and seeming to be having

fun. Most of the boys were doing the same. Peter, Jeff, Brent, and Mike were among those who seemed to enjoy the activity. Mick, Butch, William, and Billy, on the other hand, did not show a lot of excitement. The students who showed excitement and interest in the activity were successful performing the rhythms correctly.

Class continued by reading rhythm sheets that would be their test in two weeks. The students practiced saying and clapping all patterns on the page with a partner. Once most of the students appeared to have completed reading their rhythm paper, we went through each rhythm individually. Students were asked if they had any questions, then I collected the papers and handed out the Holiday Packets.

The Holiday Packets contained winter, Christmas, and Hanukah songs. I asked the students to choose three songs from the packet. The students were very excited when the packets were handed out, whispering excitedly and smiling at each other. They chose "My Dreydl," "Nuttin' for Christmas," and "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer." All students participated and sang very well, ending our class in a positive way.

The Finishing Touches

Unlike the previous class, we began this class with some Holiday songs. Our school has a traditional Holiday sing-a-long assembly on the afternoon preceding the winter break. I am responsible for preparing every

grade level to sing a song for the entire school and also to plan other songs for the entire school to sing together. The sixth graders were going to sing "The 12 Days of Christmas." Because the students seemed to enjoy singing and moving, I decided to have the students sing the song in an interesting way.

Each student was assigned a number (i.e. 6 geese-a-layin') from one to twelve excluding, one and five. The students were instructed to stand and sing when his/her number came about in the song. In addition to their number, all students stood and sang numbers 1 and 5. I explained my expectations to the students but then made sure that I demonstrated what I meant before the song began.

I asked if there were any questions. I was unsure if the students were going to be motivated to participate in the activity. One of the primary reasons was that since there were only approximately two students assigned to each number, they were practically singing alone in front of the whole class. Luckily Jenny was a "number two." When it was her turn, she stood and sang, "two turtle doves" as loud as she could. This set the stage for the remainder of the song. Almost every student stood and sang their number with pride. Jeff had a hard time remembering to stand when it was his turn. It seemed as though by the time he stood to sing "six geese a layin," the entire class sang "five golden rings." The enthusiasm

and energy the students put into the song was an enjoyable way to begin class.

Class continued by singing three more Holiday songs. The students were quite content singing these songs. Just as one song was about to end, numerous hands went up to pick the next song. It seemed as though everyone had their favorite song in the packet and needed it to be sung. Unfortunately, we did not have time to sing all of the songs, but I did ensure the students that as we had time, we would get to as many as possible.

The remainder of the class was spent playing a rhythm review game. The class was divided into two groups. One person from each group went to a line marked on the floor. I clapped and counted a rhythm; the first person to get to the board and write the rhythm correctly and the fastest received a point. I made sure that the rhythms read were level appropriate for the students at the line. I also made sure that the students competing against each other were at the same level.

The students cheered for their teammates. In turn each student quickly went to the board to write the rhythm. It appeared that no student wanted to let his or her team down. It just so happened that the game finished in a tie. I told the students that everyone would be rewarded for their efforts, but the students were not happy that I allowed the game to

end in a tie. I eased their unhappiness by giving each student a Jolly Rancher for their great cooperation and effort in class. Our class period was over and it made for a nice way to finish the class. The students were informed that they were going to be quizzed on rhythm the next time they had class. I told the students that if they wanted to take a rhythm paper to practice with, they could do so.

It Comes to an End

It was unbelievable to think that the last day of my study had come. Class began with a review of the “Twelve Days of Christmas.” Just as the song was about to end, another teacher entered the music room. This teacher is a great supporter of music education and loves to stop in to see what we do in the music room. Because she did not see the entire song, she asked if the students would mind singing one more time so that she could see it.

The students overwhelmingly said that they would love to sing again for her. The song began and the students transformed themselves from the sixth grade students that I knew in class to world-class performers. The other teacher and I stood back, laughed, smiled, and just really enjoyed their performance. The students were so proud of themselves when they received a round of applause from the other teacher and me.

I hated to change the mood, but it was test time. I gave the students the final movement survey. I asked them to complete the paper on their own, making sure that they were honest. When they were finished the students were to work on a holiday worksheet with a partner. As the students worked on their papers, I called individual students to my desk for their rhythm quiz.

While students read rhythm patterns for me, the remaining students worked diligently on their survey and other worksheets. Overall I was very pleased with the students' success in reading rhythms. The most common problem in the rhythm reading quiz was that students did not read the rhythm keeping a steady beat. They knew what the notes were and identified them correctly, but did not receive full credit because they did not keep a steady beat.

We had ten minutes of class remaining after the quizzing was complete. This was just enough time to go over the answers to the worksheet that they were working on. Before the students left, I wished them a great holiday break and told them that I looked forward to hearing them at the sing-a-long. I was pleased when Jenny, Fay, and Jessica asked if they could have a blank worksheet to take home. I told all of the students that if they wanted an extra worksheet that they would be on a music stand outside of my door after lunch. The students left my room,

some saying thank you, others saying Merry Christmas, and others just with a smile on their face. I could not have asked for a better way for my study to end. It was hard to believe that these were the same students that I struggled with in September.

ANALYSIS

Hubbard and Power (2003) state, “Data analysis is a way of ‘seeing and then seeing again’” (p. 88). As I began collecting data, I realized that it was vital for me to examine and analyze my data numerous times and in a variety of ways, otherwise known as triangulation.

The primary source of my data came from an observation log. As suggested by Hubbard and Power (2003), I began indexing or coding my log very early in my study. Ely et. al (1997) describe coding as creating labels or making notes in margins “that identify a meaning unit” (p. 162). As I began coding my log, I found meaningful words that described important events in my log. I placed the codes into an alphabetical list and indicated the page and line that the code could be found. Throughout my study, I tried to use similar codes for the remainder of my log if possible. Coding of my log began after the third class of observation.

When my study was completed I sorted codes that related to each other and placed them into bins. Ely et. al (1997) state that bins are the “the first broad categories... into which the coded data can be given an initial rough sort” (p. 162). I then arranged the bins into a graphic organizer. This organizer allowed me to examine commonalities within the bins to find themes that may have emerged. From those bins and themes, I created theme statements about my data (see Figure 8).

Along with coding, bins, and themes, I used my participation log, the student surveys, questionnaires, and achievement grades to analyze my data. I carefully examined answers to surveys and questionnaires, then compared them with my observation and participant log. By doing so, I could examine similarities and commonalities that might relate one with another.

I also analyzed my data by reading and studying various educational philosophers. Through the reading of Delpit and Dowdy (2002); Dewey (1938); Freire (1970); and Vygotsky (1978) I could reflect on my experiences and find support in the work that I have done.

As information was analyzed throughout my study, I used various forms to show understanding. Ely et. al (1997) suggest the use of various literacy forms such as poems, vignettes, and layered stories to describe and show meaning of information. Throughout my story, various writing forms were used to describe and show meaning to the events in my study.

Through the use of different analysis forms, I could successfully make conclusions and tell the story of my study.

BINS

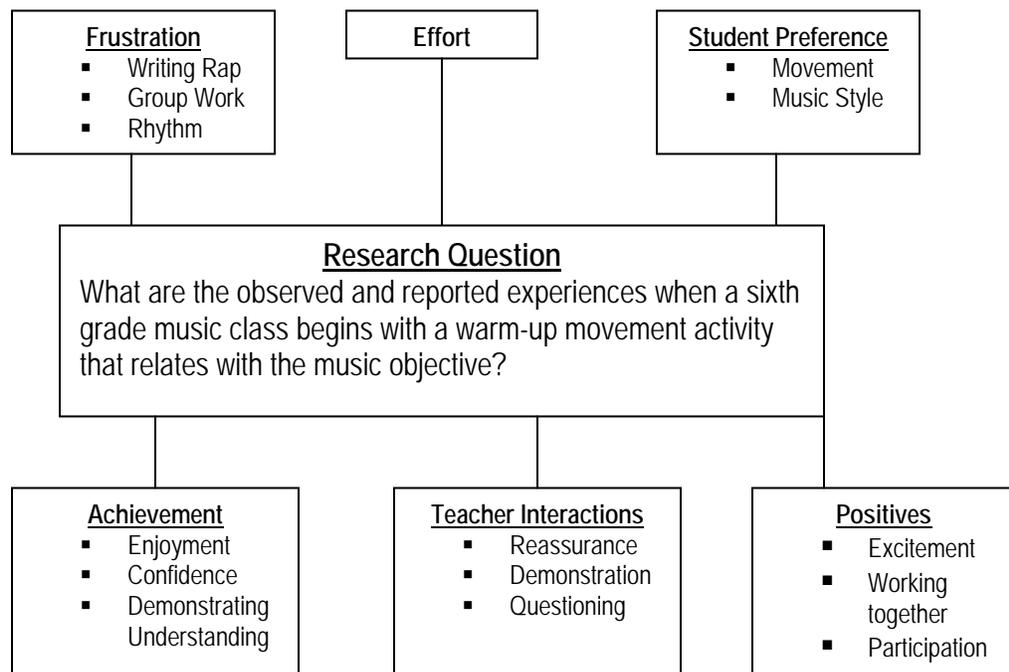


Figure 8. Bins

FINDINGS

Introduction

The findings from the study were divided and categorized through bins, codes, and then put into theme statements. Each theme statement is supported by various findings and examples throughout my study.

Effort

Student effort rarely matches the level of student participation. It is important to note the level of effort put forth by students in comparison to participation. Effort was defined as visible attention to the task at hand whereas participation was defined as students actively contributing to the activity. Student effort was recorded primarily based on a combination of observation and teacher knowledge of the students. It was found that the number of effort points awarded to the students varied from those of participation. Students were awarded 0, 2, or 4 points for each class. Zero shows little or no effort and 4 is above and beyond what was expected.

Students overwhelmingly received lower points in effort than participation. Eight students' level of participation matched their effort, one whose levels were equal, and all others were lower than participation. Out of a possible 56 points for participation, the average number of effort

points was 36. Although this number was above average, it demonstrates that the students did not try as hard as they could have.

It was also noted that the students who had the lowest number of effort and participation points, received the lowest grade from their peers for completing their raps. It was interesting to see that the students noted the same things that I did.

Student Preference

Students prefer to learn music in a classroom environment that promotes methods other than stationary singing exercises. There are various methods that I used to measure student preference. The primary methods included student questionnaires and surveys. The final method was through teacher observation.

Movement

Based on the beginning of the year questionnaire, 11 of the 29 students in the class said that they wanted to participate in movement activities throughout the year. Also the pre-study survey indicated that 15 of the 29 students said that they would like to do movement activities in class. The difference between the questionnaire and survey was that the questionnaire did not give the students a variety of preferences to choose from, whereas the survey only asked the students specifically if they would like to participate in movement activities. After completing the study, 22

students said that they had enjoyed the movement activities. When asked why some students answered, “It was fun,” “It got us ready for music,” “It helped us learn steady beat and rhythm better,” and “it was cool.” Finally based on my story and observations, all of the students participated in many of the movement activities, which may have been based on their learning preferences.

Music Styles

When planning activities for music class, I used a variety of music styles. Based on the questionnaire given to the students, almost one-quarter of the students preferred rap music to any other. This was beneficial when completing the raps assignment. Because it took many class periods to complete, it was important that the students enjoyed the music that they were writing about.

It was also indicated that rap, hip-hop, and R&B were some music style preferences. I tried to include various styles to broaden the students' exposure to music and preferences.

Positives

Movement activities strengthen positive outcomes. I have noted in my log that almost every day that the students entered the classroom they had a smile on their face. Based on student excitement, helping, honesty

and responsibility, I concluded that there are benefits to adding movement in the music classroom.

Excitement

Students demonstrated that they were excited about the movement activities numerous times. They were not only excited about the activities, but continued the excitement in other activities. One example of the students showing excitement toward the activities was when the class began doing the movement activity from the previous class without a cue or word from the teacher. The students were clearly excited about what they had done in the previous class and were eager to repeat it.

Working Together

Throughout the study students demonstrated that when they put forth the effort and worked together, they could succeed. The students completed most of the warm-up activities by working as a large group. Students also had the chance to work with small groups and partners throughout the entire study. Through working together, students demonstrated that they could write and perform original compositions, successfully read and perform rhythms, and sing songs.

Participation

Positive participation had a greater result than any other topic in my study. When recording participation, I looked for students who were

involved in the activity. The students who contributed in a negative way were also given credit for participating, but penalized for not putting forth effort. When marking participation in my log I placed the letter “p” or “n” indicating positive or negative behavior. Results in my participation log states that the average points of the students’ participation is 42. The highest number of participation points a student could receive was 56. Therefore the class as a whole had an above average of participation.

Achievement

Student achievement was evident through different avenues of performance. Numerous examples in my log stated that all students understood the concepts delivered. This was evident by noting examples of increased student enjoyment, confidence, and demonstrating understanding.

Enjoyment

“The less stress and the more fun connected to the process, the more easily it is accomplished” (Delpit, in Delpit & Dowdy, 2002, p. 40). Students used different means to demonstrate that they participated and understood concepts because they were fun. Based on the beginning of the study survey (see Appendix E) 15 students indicated that they enjoyed movement activities in music class and two stated that sometimes they enjoyed movement activities in music. Seventeen of the 29 students in the

class also indicated that the activities helped them learn concepts better because they were fun.

Confidence

Students demonstrated that they had confidence in the activities presented. This included the movement activities and other activities presented during class time. Bobby showed confidence in the work he had completed on his rap by stating, "Mrs. Gray, our rap's the bomb. Wanna hear it?" Jenny and Tess showed that they were confident to sing loud enough that all of the students could hear them during the "12 Days of Christmas" song. Their confidence set the stage for the rest of the class to participate.

Demonstrating Understanding

Students used many different methods to display their understanding of steady beat and rhythm. Other than daily observation of students moving to the steady beat successfully, students also showed their ability to keep a steady beat through the performance of their raps. The rap assignment showed that students understood the concept by receiving grades ranging from 80% to 100%. Maintaining a steady beat was 50% of that grade.

Students also demonstrated their knowledge of rhythm by clapping and saying rhythm patterns for the teacher. As indicated in my story, the

students could correctly identify and read the rhythms. The only problem was that some students had trouble keeping a steady beat at the same time. I think that with a little more practice all of the students would succeed.

Teacher Interactions

A variety of positive teacher interactions are necessary to ensure student success. Throughout the study I have found that interaction with the students helped them to succeed in learning and completing tasks.

Reassurance

It has been noted in my log that when I tell the students that they are doing well, or give them positive reactions to comments, their participation and effort increase. One example of this is when I told Amanda that she was doing a great job. Before I may not have given her the assurance she needed causing her to get silly and off task. After I reassured her that she was doing well and was on the right track, she returned to her seat and worked diligently for the remaining class time.

Demonstration

It was apparent that by demonstrating and participating in the movement activities gave the students a sense of guidance and reassurance to help the students succeed. The movement activities that were not successful in my study had one commonality. During the

particular activities, I instructed or told the students what to do. I did not demonstrate what it would look like and I did not participate, but observed the activities. In activities, such as the cup game or “this is a…” there are notes in my log that state, “all eyes were glued on me” or “all students watched and participated.”

Questioning

Students seemed to understand information better when they were lead, through questioning, to discover the answers rather than handed the answers. This was apparent numerous times during my study. One example was when I heard Marie reading triplets as eighth notes. When I guided her to discover that she read both rhythms identically, she could use the knowledge she had and a basis from my questions to read the rhythm correctly.

Frustration

Although the movement activities directly related to the music objective, students sometimes felt discouraged when learning concepts. Throughout the study the students have demonstrated various avenues to share and make their frustrations apparent.

Rap

Many students felt frustration while writing their rap. Seven students stated that they did not like the assignment because they were frustrated,

it was too hard, they couldn't rhyme, or there was not enough time. Other students who stated that they enjoyed the assignment also stated that it was fun yet frustrating and difficult to fit rhyming lines in with rhythm.

Rhythm

Students demonstrated that they were frustrated with reading and performing rhythms in various ways. First, during the rhythm complex activity, the students demonstrated that they were frustrated by making comments such as, "This is harder than I thought it would be," "I can't remember what the rhythms are," and "This is too hard."

Students also demonstrated some frustration with rhythm when reading the rhythm flash cards and sheets for their quiz. With guidance from the teacher, their frustrations dwindled.

Group Work

Students became frustrated when assigned to a group. As noted in the first day of writing raps, the students had difficult time adjusting to their group. Many groups attempted to solve their discontent by arguing or refusing to listen to other's ideas. It was also apparent that students were frustrated with particular members of their groups when they had to give each a rating from one to five. Overwhelmingly the students who I saw not participating and being involved in their groups, received low scores from their peers. This indicated to me that although all groups completed the

assignment and were successful, they were not happy and somewhat frustrated about the amount of work contributed by group members.

NEXT STEPS

My findings have brought about many exciting discoveries that I did not anticipate or expect. Although some of the results were not what I had expected, I can take the information to use in future research or reflections.

I was overwhelmed with the fact that the students did not participate in warm-up activities as well when I did not demonstrate or participate in the activities. Vygotsky (1978) stated, "Children can imitate a variety of actions that go well beyond the limits of their own capabilities. Using imitation, children are capable of doing much more in collective activity or under the guidance of adults" (p. 88). This makes me wonder if the students were not capable of some of the activities that were done. It also makes me wonder if my vocal directions were not clear for the activities in which I did not participate or if I was encouraging the students to not think as much when I did demonstrate. On the other hand, it would be interesting to do a study on the power and effect of teacher demonstration in relation to learning music.

Although the amount of student participation and effort was above average, it was important to note that effort was lower than participation. This makes me wonder if there is something that I can do to increase effort. I tried to use activities and music styles that students preferred. It

would be interesting to see a study done with these students that measures motivation and effort rather than participation. I think that it would be interesting to see similarities or differences in the results.

I would also be interested to see the differences or similarities in results if the study was done over a longer period of time and with the three sixth grade classes that I have. I wonder if the students in other classes would share in the positive results that I found in this study.

Based on the results of my study, I would like to do more research on cooperative groups in the music classroom. I noted in my findings that the students were frustrated working in groups. It would be very interesting to do research on cooperative groups and do a study incorporating them into the music classroom.

Finally, students demonstrated knowledge of concepts through different methods of assessment. However, none of the methods were written tests. I wonder if the students would have been as successful with written exams as they were with performance.

All of the above are things for me to consider and pay close attention to in future lessons, not only with my sixth grade classes, but also with all of my classes. They are also important considerations for me to examine for future research.

CONCLUSION

Overall, I am very pleased with the results of my study. The students demonstrated that they not only learned concepts but generally showed excitement in the activities. As the year continues, I will most definitely consider continuing with a more varied choice of movement activities. As well as continuing with similar activities in the study, I would like to add movement activities that include more singing and possibly adding instruments. I would highly suggest to any music educator who is not including movement with their older students to try to add some in their daily lessons.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A



August 13, 2005

Sara Gray
2124 Snyder Ave.
Bethlehem, PA 18105

Dear Sara Gray:

The Moravian College Human Subjects Internal Review Board has approved your proposal: Movement in the Sixth Grade Music Classroom. Given the materials submitted, your proposal received an expedited review. A copy of your proposal will remain with the HSIRB Chair.

The HSIRB committee, however, requests that you consider the secure location in which you plan to store data. It is preferred that this location be off of school grounds.

Please note that if you intend on venturing into other topics than the ones indicated in your proposal, you must inform the HSIRB about what those topics will be.

Should any other aspect of your research change or extend past one year of the date of this letter, you must file those changes or extensions with the HSIRB before implementation.

A hard copy of this letter will be sent to you through U.S. mail shortly. If you do not receive the letter by the time you need to begin gathering data, please do not hesitate to contact me. Also, please retain at least one copy of the approval letter for your files. Good luck with the rest of your research.

Debra Wetcher-Hendricks
Chair, Human Subjects Internal Review Board
Moravian College
610-861-1415 (voice)
medwh02@moravian.edu

APPENDIX B

CONSENT FORM

Dear [REDACTED]

I am completing a Master of Education degree at Moravian College. My courses have enabled me to learn about the most effective teaching methods. One of the requirements of the program is that I conduct a systematic study of my own teaching practices. This semester, I am focusing my research on movement. Hence the title of my research is "Movement in the Sixth Grade Music Classroom". My students will benefit from participating in this study by discovering that movement is another avenue with which to learn music.

As part of this study, students will be asked to complete two surveys, and participate in fifteen movement activities. The study will take place from August 29, 2005 through December 22, 2005.

A student may choose at any time not to participate in this study. However, students must participate in all regular class activities. All activities in this study are part of the regular class. Data from non-participants will not be analyzed or included in the research study. In no way will participation, non-participation, or withdrawal during this study have any influence on students' grades, activities, or any other aspect of music class.

The data will be collected and coded, and held in the strictest confidence. No one except me will have access to the data. My research results will be presented using pseudonyms- no one's identity will be used. I will store the data in a locked cabinet outside of school. At the conclusion of the research, the data will be destroyed.

We welcome questions about this research at any time. Student participation in this study is voluntary; refusal to participate will involve no penalty or consequence. Any questions you have about the research can be directed to me at school or at home, 610-317-8254, littlered120@hotmail.com, or my advisor; Dr. Charlotte Rappe Zales, Education Department, Moravian College, 610-625-7958, crzales@moravian.edu.

Sincerely,

I attest that I am principal of the teacher participating in the research study and that I have read and understand this consent form, and received a copy. Sara Gray has my permission to conduct this research study at [REDACTED], Pa.

Principal Signature

Date

APPENDIX C

CONSENT FORM

Dear Parent/Guardians:

I am completing a Master of Education degree at Moravian College. My courses have enabled me to learn about the most effective teaching methods. One of the requirements of the program is that I conduct a systematic study of my own teaching practices. This semester, I am focusing my research on movement. Hence the title of my research is "Movement in the Sixth Grade Music Classroom". My students will benefit from participating in this study by discovering that movement is another avenue with which to learn music.

As part of this study, students will be asked to complete two surveys, and participate in fifteen movement activities. The study will take place from August 29, 2005 through December 22, 2005.

A student may choose at any time not to participate in this study. However, students must participate in all regular class activities. All activities in this study are part of the regular class. Data from non-participants will not be analyzed or included in the research study. In no way will participation, non-participation, or withdrawal during this study have any influence on students' grades, activities, or any other aspect of music class.

The data will be collected and coded, and held in the strictest confidence. No one except me will have access to the data. My research results will be presented using pseudonyms- no one's identity will be used. I will store the data in a locked cabinet outside of school. At the conclusion of the research, the data will be destroyed.

We welcome questions about this research at any time. Your child's participation in this study is voluntary; refusal to participate will involve no penalty or consequence. Any questions you have about the research can be directed to me, Sara Gray, 215-257-6272, littlered120@hotmail.com, [REDACTED], or Dr. Charlotte Rappe Zales, Education Department, Moravian College, 610-625-7958, crzales@moravian.edu.

Sincerely,

I agree to allow my son/daughter to take part in this project. I understand that my son/daughter can choose not to participate at any time.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Student Name

APPENDIX D

STUDENT AGREEMENT

Dear students,

I attend school outside of [REDACTED]. Every week I travel to Moravian College to learn to be a better student and teacher. In my classes I am learning new things that I can do to help you learn better and be more successful. It is important to me that I am the best teacher I can be in order to help you learn.

As a part of my college, I am required to complete a research study. This study involves trying something new in the classroom and reporting on what was done and what you thought of it. This year I am going to report on movement activities that we will be doing in class.

In order for me to report what we do and what you think, I have to have your permission to write about it. You have the choice to participate in my study. If you choose to participate, I will not tell any one your real names and will keep all of my research in a safe locked cabinet until it is done. Once it is finished, I will destroy all of my data.

You may choose not to participate in my study. If this is the case, you will still participate in all class activities, but I will not write about you in my study. Also, if you choose not to participate, your grade will not be affected and I will not think any less of you because of it. If you choose to participate and want to drop out at any time you have that option as well.

If you think that you want to participate, you must have a signed consent form from your parents. I have these for you and will make sure you get one. I think that this is going to be an exciting study and hope that you will consider being part of it. If you have any questions or problems at any time please feel free to come talk to me.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Gray has told me about the research she is doing for college and I am interested in participating. I know that I cannot participate unless my parents/guardians sign a form that indicates it is all right with them.

Student Signature

Date

APPENDIX E**MUSIC and MOVEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE**

1. Do you like movement activities in music class?

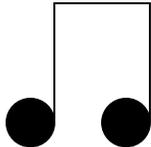
2. What type of movement activities do you prefer (i.e. dances, stationary, games, partners)?

3. How do you think that you learn best in music class (movement, singing, playing instruments, other)?

4. Would you prefer to create your own movement activities or have them provided by Mrs. Gray?

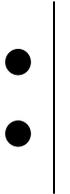
APPENDIX F

The Cup Game

					
Clap Hands	Clap Hands	Tap The cup (bottom)	Tap	Tap "	

			
Clap hands	Tap Floor w/ Left Hand	Pick the cup up then put it down with right hand	

				
Tap Floor w/ Right hand	Pick up cup w/ left hand	Tap drinking side w/ right hand	Tap bottom of the cup on the floor	

			
Place bottom of cup in right hand	Tap floor w/ left hand	Place cup (w/right hand) in beginning position on the floor in front of the person on the left	

APPENDIX G

OBSERVATION LOG

What happened today? (What did the students actually do and say?)	What did I think/feel? (What are my reactions?)

APPENDIX I

Movement Survey

1. Did you like starting each class with a movement activity? Why?

2. What was your favorite type of movement activity (dance, stationary games, partners) in the course of this study? Why?

3. Do you think that these movement activities help you learn about steady beat, rhythm and meter better than singing or playing instruments? How?

4. Now that you have participated in numerous movement activities provided by Mrs. Gray, what types of movement activities would you like to create?

5. If you were to do this again, what suggestions would you give to Mrs. Gray in order for you to enjoy and learn music more?
