TUNING INTO STUDENTS’ INTERESTS: USING SONG LYRICS TO TEACH LITERARY AND WRITING CONCEPTS

By

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to analyze the attitudes of students comparing the use of textbook instructional and music lyric instruction to teach figurative language concepts. The research includes findings that answer the questions, “Is there a significant difference in students’ attitudes when using the Houghton Mifflin English textbook (1999) or the Write Source textbook (2005) to teach figurative language concepts?” “Is there a significant difference in students’ attitudes when using song lyrics to teach figurative language concepts?”, and “Do students prefer to learn figurative language concepts using textbook instruction or song lyric instruction?” The research was conducted using an anonymous Likert Attitude Survey (Popham, 2002) distributed to 12 6th grade students during their Communication Arts class. The findings were analyzed through Microsoft Excel and A Statistical Program (ASP) software. Findings indicate that there is a difference of when comparing instruction using the Write Source (2005) and Houghton Mifflin English textbook (1999) in comparison to song lyric instruction to teach figurative language concepts in some areas of the Likert Attitude Survey (Popham, 2002). Several questions from the survey showed significant differences in students’ attitudes when comparing pre- and post- survey results after both song lyrics and textbook instruction had been implemented. Based on the data gained from students’ completion of the Likert Attitude Survey (Popham, 2002) it was determined that students preferred song lyric instruction to textbook instruction when learning about types of figurative language. Further research is recommended in order to determine if the type of instruction used influences students’ achievement as well. Additionally, the district may want to consider the ideology behind students’ attitudes towards textbook instruction and consider the implementation of an updated curriculum textbook in the area of Communication Arts due to publication dates of the textbooks currently used.
INTRODUCTION

Background, issues, and concerns

A rural school district located in the Midwest, has expressed concerns with the types of resources available to teach grammar and writing skills in the upper grades. The school district has two English textbooks used to teach grammar and writing skills. They are Houghton Mifflin English (1999) and Write Source (2005). Students do not enjoy practicing grammar skills from these books. They especially find it difficult to relate to the examples given in the Houghton Mifflin English (1999) text. Many students today find the lyrics to the songs that they listen to on the radio relatable to their own lives. They exhibit a personal connection to songs that help them through a challenging life event or remind them of an unforgettable memory in their lives. By taking advantage of this strong natural connection, song lyrics may also be utilized to teach students important literary and writing skills in a style that they can relate to. The school district is evaluating the best practices for grammar and writing instruction in the upper grades. This project will involve a survey of student attitudes when comparing textbook instruction to song lyrics instruction when teaching figurative language techniques. The analysis of survey results will determine if there is a difference in students’ attitudes based on the format of instruction that is used.

Practice under investigation

The practice under investigation will be looking at students’ attitudes based on the type of instruction that is used to teach figurative language. There will be an investigation to determine if there is a significant difference in student attitudes based on the type of instruction used. Survey data will be analyzed in order to determine if differences are apparent in student attitudes based on the instruction type.
School Policy to be informed by study

In the state of Missouri, every school district must meet AYP standards. Student performance is a large factor that plays a role in this decision. Each and every student learns differently, so it is vital that teachers grow to understand their student’s interests and learning styles. By gaining a better understanding of how students learn best, they may differentiate instruction in order to reach all of their students as a result.

Conceptual underpinning

Each and every student in the classroom learns a little bit differently. Some students may learn best through discussions, visuals, and hands-on activities, while others may respond to puzzles, writing about the topic, or learning through songs. Howard Gardner has developed a theory of multiple intelligences the focuses on the different learning styles that students may possess. Because students are able to learn in a variety of ways, it is important that information is presented in a manner that reaches multiple learners and their styles. In his theory of multiple intelligences, Gardner introduces eight different learning styles: Musical, Visual-Spatial, Intrapersonal, Interpersonal, Bodily-Kinesthetic, Logical-Mathematical, Naturalist, and Linguistic (Lorenzi, 2011). In order for students to master and comprehend important skills and concepts, teachers must provide instruction using a variety of strategies and techniques in order to accommodate students and their learning styles. Educational concepts, such as figurative language, may be presented using varied instructional structures that would benefit students who learn best through a variety of learning styles. One of these learning styles that Gardner coined is the Musical intelligence style. Students who show strong characteristics of this learning style respond well to concepts being introduced through musical resources. It can be theorized that by using song lyrics to teach figurative language concepts, those students whose learning style are
musical in nature, could benefit as a result. Students who possess qualities of a musical learner would respond well not only with their attitudes towards the presentation of these concepts but may excel academically as well. By varying instructional strategies that are used and incorporating Gardner’s multiple intelligences into lesson plans, teachers will be more adequately prepared to meet the learning needs of all of their students.

Statement of the problem

If student performance differs during the Figurative Language Unit, then teachers need to know how to differentiate instruction in order to reach a variety of students’ learning styles and motivate them through their interests.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study is to determine if there is a significant difference in student achievement using the Write Source (2005)/Houghton Mifflin English (1999) textbook instruction compared to song lyric instruction to teach figurative language. The information gained will help faculty to understand how to gear instruction to better meet the needs and interests of students.

Research question(s)

RQ#1: Is there a difference in student attitude between students taught by using song lyrics to teach figurative language compared to students taught by using the Write Source (2005)/Houghton Mifflin English (1999) textbooks?

Null hypothesis(es)

Ho#1: There is no difference in student attitudes between students taught by using song lyrics to teach figurative language compared to students taught by using the Write Source (2005)/Houghton Mifflin English (1999) textbooks.
**Anticipated benefits of the study**

If there is a difference in student performance during the Figurative Language Unit, teachers will need to differentiate instruction in order to accommodate for students learning styles and motivate them through their personal interest.

**Definition of terms**

Differentiated Instruction- changing and adapting instruction to meet the needs of different groups of students so every student is able to successfully master the skills and objectives in the lesson.

AYP- Adequate Yearly Progress- The No Child Left Behind Act, established in 2000, creates specific goals for school districts to achieve in order to show growth student performance.

Figurative Language- Language that uses words or expressions with a meaning that is different from the literal interpretation. Describes something by comparing it with something else.

Examples of figurative language are: similes, metaphors, personification, alliteration, onomatopoeia, hyperbole, idioms, and clichés.

**Summary**

A study was conducted in order to determine if there is a significant difference in student attitudes using the Write Source (2005)/Houghton Mifflin English (1999) textbook instruction compared to song lyric instruction to teach figurative language. If the chi-square analysis concludes there was a significant difference, teachers should differentiate instruction and adapt their lessons to the multiple intelligences learning styles, as well as students’ interests, so that more students may obtain high levels of achievement. Because students have different learning styles and interests, it is necessary to utilize a variety of teaching methodologies to help all students become successful. After the completion of this study, if a significant difference is
found in students’ achievement and perceptions, then the district may consider additional training on incorporating Gardner’s multiple intelligence theory into the classroom through the differentiation of instruction in order to reach a variety of learning styles.
Every student has their own “innate passions and interests that motivate his actions and behaviors.” (Lorenzi, 2011, p.83) These are important components of a child’s personality, and they provide significant clues as to how the child best processes information about the world. Gardner’s theory of Multiple Intelligences has been used in schools in order to identify student’s primary type of intelligence to help them learn more intuitively (Lorenzi, 2011). However, with the new Common Core State Standards, teachers are being asked to teach an overwhelming amount of standards to ensure student mastery. The expectations that students are being held accountable for now may be too much for some readers and writers, thus making the use of scaffolding in the classroom an important component of daily instruction. (Goering, 2012) As a result of these increased expectations comes the question of student readiness to master these concepts with the increased rigor. In a statement from the National Council of Teachers of English from 2004 dealing with their position on adolescent and young adult literacy, they claimed, “Adolescents read in multiple ways, both in and out of school, with texts ranging from clothing logos to music lyrics, from weblogs to comic books, from the Harry Potter series to The Scarlet Letter” (NCTE, 2004 para. 7). Through the use of music lyrics, teachers may better reach those students who are uninterested with the appeal of traditional classroom texts. (Goering, 2012) “Music and reading go together because singing is a celebration of language” (Harp, 1988, p.454). By taking advantage of children’s natural interest in music, literacy skills may be taught as well.

With the accessibility of music and students ability to relate to its lyrics, music is a natural means of engaging students in their learning. (Lesson idea, n.d.) Ron Butzlaff (2000) explores several hypotheses that support music instructions positive impact on students’
acquisition of reading skills. Three different hypotheses were presented the first being that both
music and text require the student to read from left to right in order to gain an understanding of
what is being said. A second hypothesis discussed was the comparison of music and literacy
both requiring an acute attention to auditory discrimination. In music, the student must listen to
the rhythms and beats which may be directly compared to implementing phonological awareness
skills while reading. The most influential hypothesis that Butzlaff (2000) considered directly
related to the topic of this action research study was the realization that when students are
learning song lyrics they are in fact becoming actively engaged in reading as a result. Because of
the repetitive nature of songs, lyrics help to nurture important reading skills in students. The
final hypothesis pointed out that when students are involved in a musical group such as band a
sense of responsibility and comradely are instilled in them. The Correlational study results did,
in fact, show the students had higher test scores when they were studying music as well.
However, the causality was not able to be established through this study. It can be expressed that
music has a “powerful appeal” on our language. (Kolb, 1996) Children are able to respond to the
beats and rhythms that they naturally hear in music which as a result makes it a prime
instructional tool with the varying assets of our language: listening, speaking, reading, and
writing. Music allows ideas to be expressed in a meaningful way, provoking an emotional
reaction. (Kolb, 1996)

Music may be used in the classroom to teach a variety of reading based concepts even
prereading skills for young children. Balkin (1999) states that, “nothing in the curriculum is
more important to the child’s early education than those experiences which reinforce the learning
of literacy. By literacy, I mean not just reading, but writing, thinking, talking, listening, and
creating.” (para. 1) Music may be used to take advantage of children’s natural interest in music
and using it to teach literacy skills. Through the use of pocket charts, visual representations, repetition, and the introduction of print, gradually skills may be introduced to young children through the use of lyrics. Kolb (1996) breaks down the process further focusing on the following reading concepts and presenting instructional practices for each: book concepts, sight vocabulary, reading comprehension, and fluency. Shared book experiences and book talks were presented as ways to help build students’ knowledge of book concepts. Using song lyrics word sorts, word games, and word banks can be used to help student learn sight words taking advantage of the direct connection to music. Song lyrics may also be used to create cloze technique passages to help with students reading comprehension. Story maps can be created in order for students to identify important story elements that are often found in song lyrics. Music response journals are a means for children to journal their thoughts and responses to songs as well. Lastly to support fluency, choral and echo reading of song lyrics as well as chants and jingles help to create fluent readers. Compton (1998) used similar strategies in her first grade classroom to boost students’ reading achievement. Chart paper was used to display lyrics allowing students to read and become familiar with the words that made up a song of the week. Compton (1998) explained that “During the songs, we discussed punctuation, capitalization, and other details that would help us sing with greater feeling” (Compton, 1998, p. 379). Students became enthusiastic to read the song lyrics during their independent reading time, were motivated to find additional songs that they suggested for song of the week, and began to have an active role in their own learning by creating the lyric charts. Through the discussion of context clues and unfamiliar words in lyric charts, students were learning reading and language skills in a meaningful and authentic manner. “Natural readers are those who are exposed to reading/books/language arts in a natural way at an early age” (Compton, 1998, p. 379). By
integrating musical into curriculum instruction of the above listed components, children’s natural love of music may transfer over to a life-long love of literacy as well.

Literature and poetry are two areas that many educators strive to incorporate music into their instruction. Songs, charts, and recordings may accompany a book. Music allows children to practice skills such as spelling, the alphabet, numbers, and colors in an authentic way. Some children’s literature incorporate phonics concepts using familiar melodies with new words that practice letter sounds. By evaluating the title of a book and looking at its pictures, children may be led to make predictions an important reading strategy. Through the natural repetition in music, children may begin to recognize and remember sequences, an important skill that may transfer to reading as well. Rhythmic chants help students to become comfortable with playing with words and their sounds in a natural way. Although some books may not be accompanied with music, children may be encouraged to incorporate their own musical elements such as chanting when turning the page. By incorporating recordings or sounds, books are enriched and children are able to practice auditory discrimination skills in the process. Flohr (2006) gives a variety of examples to enrich books with music such as adding instruments or rhythms; creating movements that emphasize the story; creating shape books; and exploring a variety voices, pitches, volumes, and sounds. Storytelling is another example of how music may be used to enrich language arts instruction. “Storytelling and music combine to make experiences that are both engaging and help children increase their attention span” (Flohr, 2006 p. 15). Through the use of storytelling, language arts skills such as predicting, sequencing, and auditory discrimination may be practiced in an authentic manner. Balkin (1999) in his composition project *Tune Up To Literacy*, developed a program of 80 songs that can be used to help students comprehend and understand complex literacy concepts such as: pronouns, verb, sentence,
punctuation, word choice, as well as rhyming. Music may be used to make a difference in the educational life of a student by finding ways to apply music to fundamental learning concepts that students must master. Music can be used in the classroom to enrich language arts with “high quality and developmentally appropriate music experiences” (Flohr, 2006 p. 12). By incorporating music into language arts instruction, learning is made more meaningful for children and allows them to practice reading skills using a natural and developmentally appropriate approach.

Music may also be used to help students understand complex writing concepts and poetic devices. Many songs contain elements of persuasive texts. By analyzing the lyrics, older students may find examples of appeals to emotion and few, use of logic, rhetorical questions, and statement of facts. By looking more deeply at the song lyrics, students may be able to gain a better understanding of their lyrics. Through the analysis of song lyrics, students may practice summarization skills as well as creative writing when responding with their own interpretation of the song. Often, song lyrics may be used to tell a story. Student may be able to connect with the stories within the lyrics and share examples of their own stories as well. (Lesson idea, n.d.) Another natural element of music is poetry. Lim (2010) demonstrates how lesson plans can be tailored to students needs when teaching complex figurative language techniques through the use of music. Popular music titles may be used to introduce figurative language, poetic form and sound devices. Often songs may be filled with “rhyming couplets, similes, or lines with a certain number of syllables to match the rhythm of the music” (Lesson idea, n.d., p. 2). Snippets from song lyrics may be printed so that students may mark the text identifying poetic devices such as metaphors, similes, hyperboles, allusion, persona, rhyme schema, and alliteration. Some students learn best through visuals. (Lim, 2010) After students have learned
a variety of poetic devices in class, they may demonstrate their knowledge by analyzing the use of these devices in popular song lyrics. (Lesson idea, n.d) Music videos provide an excellent visual for students allowing them to have a concrete reference for an abstract concept. Students are most familiar with contemporary music; however, it is also important that they are exposed to classics as well. In order to provide students with this experience, they may be asked to analyze a current song’s lyrics and then compare the themes and elements in the lyrics to those of the lines of a famous poet. Popular music is an excellent technique to teach poetic devices because it’s a great way to liven up the class and to show kids that many of the themes expressed in the classes are still salient today (Lim, 2010). Through the use of current application such as Songify, students may also create their own lyrics to help them remember elements from complex concepts. Songs are an excellent resource to teach concepts using an instructional style that student can understand more thoroughly. (Lesson idea, n.d)

Song lyrics may also be used in the classroom as a resource for engaging students in quality discussions and exploring historical concepts. In depth study of the meaning and message behind a song’s lyrics can help students meet the high academic standards they face today. Because of students’ natural interest in music, they may naturally discover the hidden meaning and connections to more classical works. Using music lyrics as a connecting piece effectively grabs student’s attention and helps to prepare them for more difficult and challenging texts. (Goering, 2012). Song lyrics can help students recognize the theme and as a result make connections to their own lives while working with complex texts. Students are more likely to participate in discussions of classical literature when it is made relevant to their own lives. Goering (2007) Lyrics of songs are reflections of our culture. (Cooper, 1991) Although lyrics may challenge our beliefs, they may help us to gain a better understanding of our social heritage.
as well as events in America’s history. Educators can use the lyrics of popular songs to create a meaningful learning experience for students that reach across the curriculum. By using popular lyrics, such issues as oral history and social commentary may be further explored. Although lyrics in songs may not be historically accurate, journals, novels, and newspapers may act as supplementary resources to help develop background information from the time period. Lyrics throughout history have embarked upon exploring rather controversial topics such as concerns about war, freedom, and equality to foreign policies, racial discrimination, and woman rights. Using lyrical material to explore these controversial concepts in the classroom can “stimulate debates, to encourage essays, to illustrate time lines, and to promote examination of contemporary social issues” (Cooper, 1991 para. 10). Lyrics may also be used to evaluate our heritage through the use of nursery rhymes. Educators may explore in conjunction with communication arts how these lyrics may borrow story lines and literary imagery from classic fairy tales and nursery rhymes. Cooper (1991) relates to popular song lyrics and the role that free speech plays in their creation. Through discussions, students may consider lyrical contents influence on different members of their families and their community through the use of words, ideas, and images expressed in songs. “Aesthetic quality, redeeming social value, political perception, and moral standards cannot be honed in students without open discussion and debate on a variety of topics,” and musical lyrics provide educators an excellent opportunity to do just that (Cooper, 1991 para. 20). By pairing pieces of musical lyrics with classic pieces of literature that share similar messages, students will be able to see these connections in a more meaning context than before. (Goering, 2012). By connecting song lyrics and literature through complex discussions, students’ comprehension can be increased as a result. (Goering, 2007)
With the increased expectations of the Common Core State Standards, it is vital to remember that each and every student learns differently. Through Howard’s Gardner’s Multiple Intelligences Theory, teachers are able to gain a better understanding of a learning style that meets the needs of their students. In order for students to master and comprehend important skills and concepts, teachers must provide instruction using a variety of strategies and techniques in order to accommodate students and their learning styles. (Lorenzi, 2011) Complex texts are suggested as resources of teaching higher order reading skills, yet musical lyrics are never among those texts that make these lists. (Goering, 2012) The expectations that students are being held accountable for now may be too much for some readers and writers, thus making the use of scaffolding in the classroom an important component of daily instruction. Music lyrics may be used as this scaffold to support students’ acquisition of reading skills. (Butzlaff, 2000)
RESEARCH METHODS

Research design

A quantitative study was conducted in order to determine if there was a difference in student attitudes when comparing instruction using song lyrics to teach figurative language concepts compared to instruction using the Write Source (2005)/Houghton Mifflin English (1999) textbooks. A survey was administered in order to gauge students’ attitudes both before and after the figurative language unit’s completion. The independent variable being tested was the timing of when the students answered the survey, while the dependent variable tested was the type of instruction being used. A Chi Square Analysis will be conducted in order to compare students’ attitudes towards instruction using song lyrics and instruction using the Write Source (2005)/Houghton Mifflin English (1999) textbooks.

Study group description

The study group for this research consisted of twelve 6th grade students from a rural school district in Midwest Missouri with 387 students. The elementary school has 158 students in a K-6 setting as well as 38 preschoolers. The school is a Title school, with 40% of the students in the elementary receiving free or reduced lunch. At least 44 students in the elementary are at-risk students. 96.4% of students are Caucasian in the district.

Data collection and instrumentation

A teacher created Likert Attitude Survey (Popham, 2002) was distributed to students both before the introduction of the figurative language and after the conclusion of the figurative language unit. The Likert Attitude Survey (Popham, 2002) consisted of ten questions in order to gauge students’ attitudes and perceptions towards using the Write Source (2005) and Houghton Mifflin English (1999) textbooks compared to musical lyrics when learning about figurative
language concepts. Questions were answered using a scale of 1-5, where students responded if they strongly agree, agree, are neutral, disagree, or strongly disagree to each of the statements. The numbers gained from this survey were posted to an Excel spreadsheet in order to complete a statistical analysis using the Chi-Square data analysis test.

Statistical analysis methods

A Statistical Package (ASP) software was used to complete the statistical calculations in this study. Additionally, Microsoft Excel was used in order to compile the survey results and quiz score data. A Chi-Square Analysis was conducted in order to find out if there was a significant difference in student attitudes when comparing Write Source (2005) and Houghton Mifflin English (1999) textbook instruction to musical lyrics instruction when teaching figurative language concepts. The Chi-Square Analysis will assist in identifying the frequency of each response, the percentage of students who responded in each category, as well as identifying the chi square value and degree of freedom. The Alpha level was set at 0.25 to test the null hypothesis: There is no difference in student attitudes between students taught by using song lyrics to teach figurative language compared to students taught by using the Write Source (2005)/Houghton Mifflin English (1999) textbooks.
FINDINGS

A Chi-Square Analysis was conducted in order to determine if there was a difference in student attitudes when comparing instruction using song lyrics to teach figurative language concepts compared to instruction using the Write Source (2005)/Houghton Mifflin English(1999) textbooks. The tables, graphs, and charts that follow depict the organized findings based on statistical data gained from the Likert Attitude Survey (Popham, 2002) that was completed by twelve 6th grade students. The Likert Attitude Survey (Popham, 2002) was distributed to students both before the introduction of the figurative language and after the conclusion of the figurative language unit in order to determine if there was a difference in students’ attitudes based on the type of instruction that was used.

To determine attitudes and perceptions of students the Likert Survey (Popham, 2002) began with a question asking students to reflect on their attitude towards instruction using the Write Source (2005)/Houghton Mifflin English(1999). All twelve 6th graders were required to answer this question.
A chi-square analysis was completed in order to compare students’ pre- and post-unit attitudes concerning whether they liked to use the Write Source textbook (2005) to study types of figurative language in Language Arts. On both the pre- and post Likert Attitude Survey (Popham, 2002) none of the students responded that they strongly agreed with this statement. On the Pre-Likert Attitude Survey (Popham, 2002) no students responded that they agreed with this statement, while on the Post 2 students or 16.7% responded that they agree. 33.3% or 4 students responded that they were neutral to this question initially, while only 1 or 8.3% responded neutrally on the Post Likert Attitude Survey (Popham, 2002). 3 students or 25% responded that they disagreed with the statement, while only 2 students or 16.7% responded that they disagreed during the Post Likert Attitude Survey (Popham, 2002). Initially during the Pre- Likert Attitude Survey (Popham, 2002) 41.7% or 5 students responded that they strongly disagreed. This increased to 7 students or 58.3% during the Post

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Sign = or < 0.25
Likert Attitude Survey (Popham, 2002). Because the p-value is 0.227647 this means that the null is rejected and that there is a significant difference in students’ attitudes about the statement, “I like it when we use our Write Source textbook to study types of figurative language in Language Arts.” Based on student responses to this question on the survey it can be determined that students do not enjoy learning about figurative language using the Write Source textbook (2005). After receiving instruction with both the textbook and song lyric based instruction, numbers on the post survey showed that the majority of student disagreed or strongly disagreed with liking instruction using this text. It can be determined that students prefer song lyric instruction when learning about types of figurative language rather than instruction from the Write Source (2005) textbook.

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The second question on the Likert Attitude Survey (Popham, 2002) explored students attitudes toward using song lyrics to study types of figurative language. A Chi Square Analysis
was run in order to compare students’ attitudes on the Pre- and Post Likert Attitude Survey (Popham, 2002). On the Pre- 25% or 3 students strongly agreed with this statement. This increased to 91.7 on the Post- with 11 out of 12 students stating that they strongly agreed that they liked using song lyrics to learn about figurative language. Six students or 50% stated that they agreed initially with this statement, while one the post only one student or 8.3% agreed. On the Pre- Likert Attitude Survey (Popham, 2002) 8.3% or 1 student was neutral and 16.7% or 2 students disagreed. The null hypothesis for this questions is that there is not difference in student attitudes when using song lyrics to learn about figurative language. Because the p-value is 0.0109779, this means that the null hypothesis is rejected. There is a significant difference in student attitudes when using song lyrics to learn figurative language concepts. When comparing students’ pre- and post survey data it can be determined that students liked song lyric instruction rather than textbook instruction. After receiving both types of instruction to learn types of figurative language, all students responded that they strongly agreed or agreed that they liked learning about figurative language using song lyrics rather than textbook based instruction.
The third question on the Likert Attitude Survey (Popham, 2002) posed the question on how students’ felt about using the Houghton Mifflin English textbook (1999) when studying types of figurative language. The number of students who said they strongly agreed with this statement was the same on both the Pre- and Post- Likert Attitude Survey (Popham, 2002). 16.7% or 2 students chose this response. No student agreed with this statement on either the Pre- or Post-survey. Three students or 25% were neutral initially. This was reduced to only 1 student or 8.3% on the Post survey. Six students or 50% of the students disagreed with this statement on the Pre-Survey. This choice was only chosen by 2 students or 16.7% on the Post-Survey. Only 1 student strongly disagreed with this student at 8.3%. After the unit on the Post-Survey 7 students strongly disagreed or 58.3%. The null hypothesis states that there is not a significant different in students opinions about using the Houghton Mifflin (1999) textbook to study types of figurative language. This null hypothesis was rejected because the p-value of 0.0575585 is lower than the alpha level, 0.25. This shows that there is a significant difference in student

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attitudes towards using the Houghton Mifflin English (1999) textbook to study figurative language types. The majority of student disagreed with this statement stating they did not enjoy using this text to study figurative language types.

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</table>

The fourth question on the Likert Attitude Survey (Popham, 2002) ventured to discover how students felt about using worksheets and textbook problems in their Writer’s Notebooks to study concepts using the Write Source textbook. On both the Pre- and Post-surveys no students chose strongly agree as their choice. 16.7% or 2 students chose agree both times the survey was given. Similarly, 2 students or 16.7% chose neutral both times as well. On the Pre- survey 33.3% or 4 students disagreed with the statement, while on the post survey this dropped to only 3 students or 25%. Strongly disagree was chosen by 4 students or 33.3% on the Pre-Survey. The Post Survey numbers increased to 5 students strongly disagreeing with the statement or 41.7%.

The null hypothesis for this question is there is no difference in student attitudes when answering the question, “I like the worksheets and textbook problems that we complete in our Writer’s
Notebooks when we study with the Write Source textbook.” The null hypothesis is not rejected because the p-value of 0.96844 is more than the alpha level, .25. This shows that there is not a significant difference in students’ attitudes when responding to worksheets and textbook problems in their Writer’s Notebooks when using the Write Source (2005) textbook. Attitudes did not vary or change significantly from the Pre- to Post Survey results after instruction using both textbook and music lyrics.

The fifth question of the Likert Attitude Survey (Popham, 2002) dealt with students’ attitudes towards completing activities and projects when study figurative language concepts using musical lyrics from songs. A Chi Square Analysis was run in order to compare attitudes for both the Pre- and Post surveys. On the initial survey, 41.7% or 5 students claimed that they strongly agree with this statement. On the Post survey this number increased to 10 out of the 12 students strongly agreeing or 83.3% of students. 2 students, 16.7%, agreed with this statement on both the Pre- and Post Surveys. 5 students or 41.7% were neutral during the Pre-Survey.

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<tr>
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Table 5
Pre-Likert Survey Question 5: I like the activities and projects that we complete when we study figurative language in Language Arts using musical lyrics from songs.

Summary of Chi Square Analysis

The fifth question of the Likert Attitude Survey (Popham, 2002) dealt with students’ attitudes towards completing activities and projects when study figurative language concepts using musical lyrics from songs. A Chi Square Analysis was run in order to compare attitudes for both the Pre- and Post surveys. On the initial survey, 41.7% or 5 students claimed that they strongly agree with this statement. On the Post survey this number increased to 10 out of the 12 students strongly agreeing or 83.3% of students. 2 students, 16.7%, agreed with this statement on both the Pre- and Post Surveys. 5 students or 41.7% were neutral during the Pre-Survey.
before music lyric instruction had been used in the classroom. No students chose this response on the post survey after the delivery of song lyric instruction. Disagree and strongly disagree were never chosen on either of the surveys pre- or post. The null hypothesis states that there is no difference in student attitudes about enjoying participating in activities and projects when studying figurative language using musical lyrics from songs. The null hypothesis is rejected because the p-value of 0.035674 is less than the alpha level of 0.25. This shows that there is a significant different in students’ attitudes when participating in activities and creating projects when studying figurative language concepts using song lyrics. After instruction was provided using song lyrics 83.3% of students claimed they strongly agree with this statement showing that song lyrics instruction preferred by students.

The sixth question stated “I like the worksheets and textbook problems that we complete in our Writer’s Notebooks when we study with the Houghton Mifflin textbook.” A Chi Square Analysis was completed in order to determine students’ attitudes when answering this question.
During the Pre-Survey, 25% of students, or 3 stated they strongly agreed with this statement. This number decreased to 16.7% or 2 students on the Post Survey. No student said they agree with this statement on the Pre-Survey, while only 1 student or 8.3% agreed on the Post. 16.7% of students, or 2, were neutral to this statement, while no students chose this option on the Post Survey. 6 students, or 50%, disagreed with this statement on the initial survey. This selection dropped slightly on the Post Survey and was chosen by 33.3% or 4 students. Only 1 or 8.3% of students strongly disagreed on the Pre-Survey. This number increased to 5 students or 41.7% on the Post. The null hypothesis for this question states that there is not a significant difference in student attitudes when using worksheets and textbook problems from the Houghton Mifflin textbook (1999) in their Writer’s Notebooks. The null hypothesis is rejected because when the p-value of 0.180099 is compared to the alpha level of 0.25 it is smaller. This means that there is a significant difference in students’ opinions pertaining to this question. 9 out of 12 students stated they disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement after receiving both textbook and song lyric instruction.
The seventh question pertained to students’ attitudes towards trying to use writing concepts that they had learned from the Write Source (2005) textbook on their own by incorporating them creatively into their writing in their Writer’s Notebooks. On the Pre- and Post-Survey only 1 student or 8.3% said that they strongly agreed. 5 students initially stated that they agreed with this statement or 41.7%. This dropped on the Post Survey and was only chosen by 1 student or 8.3%. 4 students said they were neutral to this statement on both the Pre- and Post-Survey for 33.3%. On the Pre-Survey only 1 student said that they disagreed and did not enjoy practicing skills they had learned in the Write Source (2005) text in their Writer’s Notebooks. This number increased to 2 student or 16.7% on the Post Survey. Only 1 student or 8.3% on the Pre-Survey said that they strongly disagreed with this statement. This number increased to 4 or 33.3% on the Post. The null hypothesis for this question is there is not a significant difference in students’ attitudes about

Table 7

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</table>

Using Song Lyrics  27
trying to use writing concepts that they have learned from the Write Source (2005) textbook on their own by incorporating them creatively into their writing in their Writer’s Notebook. The null hypothesis is not rejected because the p-value of 0.308441 is more than the alpha level of 0.25. This means that there was not a significant difference in students’ attitudes pertaining to using skills taught using the Write Source (2005) textbook in their own writing in their Writer’s Notebooks.

A Chi Square Analysis was ran in order to determine if there was a significant difference in students’ attitudes when considering if they liked to use writing concepts that they have learned from the Houghton Mifflin English (1999) textbook on their own by incorporating them creatively into their own writing in their Writer’s Notebooks. 3 students or 25% said they strongly agreed with this statement on the Pre-Survey. This number dropped to 2 students or 16.7% on the Post. 16.7% or 2 students claimed to agree with this statement on the Pre-Survey.

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However, no students agreed with this statement on the Post-Survey. 3 students or 25% were neutral to this statement on both the Pre- and Post-Survey. 25% of students, or 3 students, claimed to disagree with this statement initially. This response decreased in the Post-Survey and was only chosen by 2 students or 16.7%. Only 1 student or 8.3% claimed to strongly disagree with enjoying to use the Houghton Mifflin English (1999) textbook in their Writer’s Notebooks. However, this response increased on the Post-Survey and was chosen by 41.7% or 5 out of the 12 students. The null hypothesis for this question is that there is not a significant difference in students attitudes towards using skills they have learned in the Houghton Mifflin English textbook (1999) in their own writing in their Writer’s Notebooks. Because the p-value of 0.280525 is larger than the alpha level of 0.25 this means that the null hypothesis holds true. There was not a significant difference in students’ attitudes pertaining to this question.

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The final question on the Likert Attitude Survey (Popham, 2002) analyzed students’ attitudes when analyzing song lyrics to identify forms of figurative language and recording these examples in their Writer’s Notebook.
examples in their Writer’s Notebooks. On the Pre-Survey 4 student or 33.3% strongly agreed with this statement. This choice increased on the Post being chosen by 6 or 50% of students. 1 student or 8.3% agreed with this statement on both the Pre- and Post-Survey. Initially 7 or 58.3% of students were neutral to this statement before the unit began. 3 students or 25% remained neutral on the Post Survey. No student disagreed with this statement on the Pre-Survey, while only 1 student or 8.3% disagreed on the Post. Similarly, no students strongly disagreed on the Pre-Survey, and only 1 student or 8.3% strongly disagreed on the Post. The null hypothesis for this statement is there is not significant different in students’ attitudes towards analyzing song lyrics to identify example of figurative language and recording these in their Writer’s Notebooks. Because the p-value is 0.406006 and this is larger than the alpha level of 0.25, the null hypothesis is correct. There is not a significant different in students attitudes towards this statement.
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The null hypothesis stated that there is no difference in student attitudes between students taught by using song lyrics to teach figurative language compared to students taught by using the Write Source (2005) /Houghton Mifflin English (1999) textbooks. The results of this study indicate that there are areas of significant difference in students’ attitudes concerning the type of instruction used. The two types of instruction compared in this study was the use of textbook instruction with the Write Source (2005) or Houghton Mifflin English (1999) to the use of song lyrics from music to teach different types of figurative language. In fact, students’ attitudes were significantly different between Pre-and Post-Chi Square comparison for 5 out of the 10 statements on a Likert Attitude Survey (Popham, 2002) administered to students both before the unit began and at the conclusion of the unit.

There is a significant difference in students’ opinion about the use of the Write Source (2005) textbook to study types of figurative language. After both textbook and song lyric instruction had been used to teach figurative language, the majority of students, 58.7%, strongly disagreed with this statement. This makes it evident that the examples and exercises provided in this textbook are not of interest to students. Similar results were found about students attitudes towards the Houghton Mifflin English textbook as well. Over half, or 58.3% of students strongly disagreed with the statement that they liked this method of instruction after both instruction types had been implemented. It was also noted that students did not perceive worksheets and textbook problems completed in their Writer’s Notebooks from the Houghton Mifflin textbook (1999) as enjoyable. This discovering could warrant further research as to why student’s perceptions of these textbooks are so negative. Based on the publication dates of 1999 and 2005, it may be noted that these textbooks are 14 years and 8 years old respectfully. The examples in these texts
may be becoming irrelevant to students’ interests and daily lives due to their outdated nature. Further research could be conducted in order to determine if there is causal effect between the publication dates and students perceived attitudes discovered from this study.

There was also a significant difference in students’ attitudes towards using musical lyrics from songs to explore figurative language concepts. This was not an instructional strategy that students had experienced before but still in the initial stages of this study students responded positively to the realization that song lyrics were to be used as texts instead of textbooks. This was evident by 50% of students agreeing with the statement before the instruction had even occurred. Song lyrics make learning relevant to students’ interest and daily lives. With the accessibility of music and students ability to relate to its lyrics, music is a natural means of engaging students in their learning. (Lesson idea, n.d.) After both textbook and lyric instruction had been implemented students attitudes changed greatly when responding to this topic. 11/12 students strongly agreed that they liked music lyrics as a text to learn about figurative language concepts. The only other student stated they agreed with the statement. As a result, it can be stated that all students responded positively to song lyrics being used as a text to find examples of figurative language concepts. Similarly, students also responded positively to song lyrics being used in activities and projects based on figurative language concepts. Similarly to the previous question, at the conclusion of the unit 10 students strongly agreed with the statement and 2 students agreed. This makes it evident that all students responded positively to this method of instruction.

The conceptual underpinning of theorist Howard Gardner is strongly supported by these research findings. The multiple intelligences theory explains how students learn differently. There are significant differences in students’ attitudes when varying the type of instruction to
include the use of song lyrics. The benefits of differing teaching strategies and using a variety of approaches to engage students actively in their own learning greatly outweigh a sole textbook centered approach. Teachers should implement different learning styles into their lessons to allow all students to be successful in mastering the skills and concepts at hand.

After concluding this study there are some further studies that could be conducted. Although it is evident that students’ attitudes were influenced by the type of instruction used, additional research could be conducted in order to determine if they type of instruction, song lyrics or textbook instruction, had an influence on student achievement as well. This research focused solely on the incorporation of song lyrics as a text to teach figurative language. Further research could be conducted in order to explore music influence on student achievement when used to teach complex skills such as theme and historical relevance. Song lyrics can help students recognize the theme and as a result make connections to their own lives while working with complex texts. (Goerhing, 2007) It has also been suggested that song lyrics can be used to assist in helping students master foundational skills of reading. Lyrics 2 Learn (2012) is a program that is made up of short passages that are presented in a musical format. Students listen to and read the song stories three times before answering a series of questions to test their comprehension. This program also has a data graphs process to help track student growth. The stories presented have embedded within them other cross-curricular concepts as well. This program is built upon the fact that music directly inspires emotion helping to increase long-term memory. Through the use of music, student’s interests are engaged and learning is made new and relevant. Further research could be conducted using this online program as well as a reading curriculum based measurement to monitor student’s fluency, accuracy, and words per minute rate. This research would tie into the fact that music is of interest to students, and it makes
learning relevant to them. By using *Lyrics 2 Learn* (2012) it could be explored if students’ fluency could increase as a result of music lyrics based instruction.
REFERENCES


