How Does Music Affect Student Learning in Language Arts and Throughout the Day?

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Teaching Context
I conducted my inquiry in a self-contained kindergarten classroom at Gray’s Woods Elementary School in Port Matilda, Pennsylvania. The classroom consists of twenty-two students, eleven boys and eleven girls. In this classroom, students write every day in a group of 5-6 mixed-ability students working with one adult for 30 minutes. We use Kid Writing, a program in which students write independently using their knowledge of letters and words, as well as conventions of print, before a teacher adds the ‘adult spelling’ or ‘book spelling’ beneath the students’ writing. There are also visual clues around the room to assist students with their writing (e.g. A lion named The King of Ing, a ball of string called The Fuzz of Was, and our friend The Wiz of Is, among others). The class has a group of six high-performing readers and writers and a group of six lower-performing readers and writers, with the rest of the students in between. Three students visit the IST specialist for help with letters and letter sounds, and two visit the speech therapist 1-2 times per week.

There is one student in the class who has been diagnosed with ADHD and four other students who have pronounced sensory needs. All of these students have a hard time staying seated on the carpet, keeping their hands to themselves, and sitting or standing still. One student often hums and sings, causing distractions to himself, classmates, and teachers. It is a busy class, to say the least, and I am constantly searching for new ways to manage lessons in order to provide the most valuable learning experience for each student in my class.

Wonderings and Questions
In January, I observed my students in their music special and noticed that many of them (including the two who are often most behaviorally disruptive in our classroom) were engaged, participating, and appropriately enthusiastic about the songs and movements that they were doing with the music teacher. I have always loved music, and I wanted to know what the effects of music integration would be on my students’ conceptual understandings and behaviors throughout the day, particularly in the language arts realm.

I knew some information about phonemic awareness and thought that I would concentrate on this area: the understanding or insight that a word is made up of a series of discrete sounds (phonemes). This awareness includes the ability to pick out and manipulate sounds in spoken words. However, I soon realized that it was not phonemic awareness, but phonological awareness that I would be investigating. Phonological awareness is an “umbrella” term that includes phonemic awareness, or awareness of words at the phoneme (sound) level. It also includes an awareness of word units larger than the phoneme. These are not the same, but both contribute to language arts understandings. (Blevins, 1994, p. 4)

Through my pre-inquiry research, I found an article by Laura Woodall stating that young children seem to be naturally ‘wired’ for sound and rhythm. Besides providing enjoyment, music can play an important role in language and literacy development. Also, according to her article, EEG (electroencephalogram) tests show that music can change brain waves and make the brain more receptive to learning (Woodall, par. 2). This led me to my wondering and sub-wonderings:

**Main Wondering**
How does music affect student learning in language arts and throughout the day?

**Sub-Wonderings**
1. Are my students engaged differently when music enters the learning equation? If so, how?
2. What are the effects of using different music integration strategies (i.e. source, type, and medium) during language arts and how do they influence my students’ writing?

3. What are the effects (regarding information retention and recall) of integrating music into different instructional settings?

4. What kinds of stimulation do students with sensory needs get when they are engaged in music and movement in the classroom? Will this help and/or motivate these students to concentrate differently? Will it help them to listen, and most importantly, will it help them to understand?

**Data Collection & Analysis Process**

*I. Pre-Skills & Post Skills-Inventory*

These two assessments compare a selection of the students’ language arts understandings (word family/common word recognition, letter sounds) before and after inquiry. After the first inventory, I used a stoplight system to color-code each student’s performance. After the post-skills inventory, I examined and compared each student’s understandings using the same four-group system and noted changes from beginning to end. This assessment showed the effects of integrating music into LA instruction and I was able to use the information to find which lessons were most helpful and memorable. When analyzing the changes from pre- to post- inquiry, I looked at all 22 students for word knowledge, and a sample of eight students (two from each color group) for letter sounds. I created Excel spreadsheets and charts for each inventory to make the data easier to understand. See Appendix A for more details.

*II. Student Products*

a. Student Work Samples

Students write every day in our classroom and use a variety of the word family sounds that we’ve discussed during the inquiry process (-et, -am, -at, -an, -ay), as well as a number of the 37 most common rimes in the English language, according to Wylie & Durrell (EnchantedLearning 2007). Many students have shown through their writing that they can now
successfully use a number of the word families that we have discussed. During and after inquiry, I looked through the writing folders of all 22 of my students to find correct and incorrect spellings of these word family words before and after the inquiry lessons. Since each student did not use every word family multiple times, I also compared the work to the pre- and post-skills inventory knowledge that students demonstrated in February or April. See Appendix C.

b. Student Surveys

I conducted three surveys in my classroom, two before inquiry and one afterward. Before, I asked students if they enjoy using music in the classroom and if they use visual clues that are available in our learning environment (e.g. The King of Ing, the cup of up, the fuzz of was). Afterward, I asked which inquiry lesson was their favorite and why. I compiled all of this data and compared it with notes on engagement and performance on the post-skills inventory. These surveys told me which integration strategies were most enjoyable and helped me to understand students’ attitudes toward learning with music. See Appendix F or Appendix B for results.

c. Small Group Activities and Weekly Interviews

Each week, students in a small group completed an activity to review the letter sound or word family for that week. At the end of the week, I interviewed/assessed 1-2 students from the small group and 1-2 from the whole-group lesson to gauge levels of understanding, retention over time, and interest in the music. These assessments related back to the effectiveness of different instructional settings, music integration methods, whole and small group activities, and student engagement overall. In order to analyze the interview results, I looked back over all of the interview forms and wrote down note-worthy observations. See Appendix E for information about the small group activities and Appendix K for a few excerpts from weekly interviews.

d. At/An Comparison Lessons
During week 3, I taught two inquiry lessons: The first was a shared reading activity using The Cat in the Hat to discuss the –at family (without music), and the second was a song that the students and I made up together for the –an family. Each lesson had a small group activity. At the end of the week, I asked 16 students to write three -at words on the front of a note card and three -an words on the back. I evaluated students based on the number of words that they wrote correctly, and then used the information to compare the effectiveness of the music lesson (-an) versus the non-music lesson (-at). See Appendix D for At/An comparison results.

III. Teacher Products

   a. Weekly Reflective Journal Excerpts

      As a part of the inquiry process, I kept my own weekly update journal to note important happenings, figure out potential claims, communicate progress and ideas with my mentor teacher and advisor, and keep the process moving. My inquiry was constantly evolving. These updates allowed me to evaluate the effectiveness of the lessons, take notes about student responses, and determine the next steps in my inquiry. See Appendix L for excerpts from weekly journals.

   b. Pictures, Videos, Visuals from Lessons (See pocket for CD with videos)

      I asked classroom visitors to take pictures and videos during a few inquiry lessons. I also took pictures of the visuals that we used and the survey results as they appeared in the classroom setting. These visual pieces of evidence relate back to each wondering, and the overarching question of music integration’s effects on language arts learning. See Appendix B for pictures.

   c. Teacher Notes at Writing Stations

      During writing time throughout the inquiry, the adults in my classroom took notes regarding student use of visuals and clues around the room, particularly noting the students who referred to the word family houses, the word wall, or the letter sounds sheet (components of my
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inquiry). I wrote dates on all of the notes and they later contributed to my claims about effective integration strategies and instructional settings. See Appendix G for teacher notes.

d. Teacher Surveys

Early on in my investigation, I sent out a teacher survey among experienced kindergarten and primary teachers at Gray’s Woods Elementary School. I used these surveys as a means to discern how experienced teachers incorporate music into the day, and what they see as the benefits of teaching with music. In addition, I asked about their students’ (and their own) favorite songs to sing in class, what mediums of music they use, and at what time of day music is most utilized in their classrooms. I learned a great deal from these surveys through the analysis process in which I put all of the answers together in one survey form. They showed me a great deal about the benefits of music integration in a variety of settings, and how to go about implementing these changes in my own classroom. See Appendix H for teacher survey results.

Explanation of Findings (Including Claims and Evidence)

Claim 1:
The level of enthusiasm and engagement (of the teacher and the students) surrounding each music-oriented lesson throughout the course of this inquiry was notably higher than usual.

Evidence:

1. Teacher journal excerpt:

   I noted on multiple occasions how much I was enjoying preparing for this inquiry project and how I liked incorporating music in my kindergarten classroom. Each lesson was an adventurous learning experience for myself and for my students. Here is an excerpt from an early journal entry (February 28) when I was looking for songs to use in my classroom:

   “This week, I was on a search for sources and music. I found some great sources at the 5th floor Paterno library, including about 10 CDs by Jack Hartmann (who I heard about at the Math Gearing Up program last week). I listened to many of his songs, and I love them. I fully intend to
eventually buy his CDs, because I do Hope to use music in a variety of ways no matter which grade I end up teaching”.

II. Video (See Appendix B, Still Image of Nutrition Puppet Show & Learning Letter Sounds): In both of these whole-group lessons, most students show engagement and interest through participation in movements, eye contact with the speaker, singing along, and raising their hands to speak. The body language that the students show reflects an interest in the material and the songs at hand. After the nutrition lesson (a musical puppet show that I wrote), I asked students multiple questions about the puppet show and many of them were eager to respond, particularly the student with ADHD. He walked into the room during the lesson and came right up to the front of the group to sit by the puppet theater. He asked questions and raised his hand to offer his own thoughts when the puppets or I had a question. See Appendix B for still images, see Appendix I for Nutrition Puppet Show lyrics.

III. Student Survey, Observations (February 27th, April 11th)

On February 27th, I conducted a class survey during opening and found that 15/22 students enjoyed using music in the classroom, and seven did not. On April 11th during a post-inquiry survey, 21 students did choose a favorite song (1 student was absent), showing a change of attitude toward learning with music. I also noticed some of the students who had responded ‘no’ to the original survey question dancing and singing to the letter sounds song during week 5. On April 9th during language arts stations after a lesson on the –ay sound, one female student came up to me with a book and said, “I found an –ay word”, and showed me the word way with a smile. She was proud, excited, and had clearly transferred the information from the lesson to her own independent reading.  See Appendix E for student survey results.

IV. Teacher Notes, Lesson Observation, Lynn Dobash (April 9th)
On April 9th, my mentor teacher observed the students during an inquiry music lesson and wrote in her notes, ‘They were very engaged’. This observation is impressive for this group of students.

Claim 2:
Whether music is pre-packaged, written by the teacher, or composed as a class, effective music integration often leads to increased levels of student retention and mastery with regard to literacy skills.

Evidence:

I. Pre & Post-Skills Inventories:

According to the post-skills inventory, students’ recognition of –et words (Mr. Vet was a pre-packaged song) improved drastically (10 more students read ‘pet’ afterward than before). In fact, the post-skills inventory showed gains in almost every word family that we discussed. Another pre-packaged song, Learning Letter Sounds A to Z, led to gains in letter sound fluency for all eight students who I assessed in that area. See Appendix A for Pre- and Post-Skills Inventory results.

II. –Ay Family Teacher Notes, April 10th:

It is evident that lessons in which strategies are combined are more effective than those that employ only one teaching strategy. For example, for the –ay word family, I taught a song that I had made up and then the students created their own song. In the post-skills inventory, 10 students recognized the –ay word after only working with it for 2 days. During a class meeting on the 2nd day of -ay, the students were enthusiastic about spelling –ay words for my mentor teacher, and even some of the lower-performing students were raising hands and spelling –ay words correctly. See Appendix G, Teacher Notes.

III. Including students in the writing process, Teacher reflection, Survey
In second place for the students’ favorite song in the post-inquiry survey, there was a tie between –an and –ay, both of which are songs that the kindergarteners made up. Many students said that they chose this song because they made it up and they were proud of it. During these lessons, my mentor teacher and I noted that behavior issues were at a minimum, participation was up, and eye contact was higher than usual. I believe that the students had a degree of ownership for these songs, which is why they were so involved and invested in their own learning processes for these word families. See Appendix B for the students’ –ay song.

IV. Teacher Survey

When asked to explain the benefits of music integration, some of the teacher responses included a calming effect on students, skill reinforcement, memory development, motivation, and teaching to multiple intelligences. While the survey applies to multiple claims in my inquiry, I’m taking this opportunity to point out the variety of ways in which teachers can integrate music into their classrooms. These teachers have found many mediums and tools to help bring about these positive changes in their classroom environments, and I have experimented with an additional strategy, involving students in the music-writing process. See Appendix H for teacher survey results.

Claim 3:
Over time and with repeated exposure to songs in a variety of instructional settings, students will begin to retain information and will be able to recall and apply it more readily. This can include whole-group or small-group instruction in language arts and throughout the day.

Evidence:

1. Student Work in Small Group Activities, Pre- & Post-Skills Inventory
There were multiple instances in which students participated in a small-group activity as well as the main lesson and retained the information more strongly and over a longer period of time than those who had been present only for the whole-group lesson. For example, one female student participated in a small group activity for the –an sound, and drew a picture for our word family house. In the pre-skills inventory, she did not know the -an sound, but she did recognize it in the post-skills inventory, showing evidence that she had learned. She even mentioned her contribution to the –an house, showing that the small group activity was helpful. There are many similar instances to further support this claim.

The only inconsistency with word families that we discussed on the post-skills inventory was the fact that –am fluency went up for only two students. It seemed upon reflection as though the Jam of Am lesson was less effective. However, when looking at the students who participated in the small group activity, all four of these students readily recognized the –am sound after the lesson, showing that their additional experience with the sound was beneficial for them. See Appendix A for Skills Inventories, and Appendix E for Small Group Activities.

II. Student Work (Writing Samples)

All of the writing samples in Appendix C show evidence that students were learning word families over the course of the inquiry process. Whether they were writing their stories independently or with the help of a visual aid in the classroom, they demonstrated gains through writing or they were able to recognize the word during the post-skills inventory. See student work (before & after inquiry) in Appendix C.

III. Teacher Notes, Reflection
Through my inquiry, I was also looking for ways to incorporate music throughout the day. I tried out a variety of music methods, including a short song for Computer Down Time (to get students’ attention in the computer lab), various transition songs, and musical activities during opening. As I wrote in my notes and reflections, all efforts were met with student enthusiasm, timely responses, and significantly fewer behavior issues. See Appendix G for notes.

In addition, I began a math lesson in which I used a menu to show the station choices for the day with the song ‘On Top of Spaghetti’. The students came to their spots on the rug and joined in on the song very quickly, as I reflected upon in my lesson plan ‘reflection’ section. See Appendix J for Math reflection.

IV. Pictures (Opening Notes)

I made an effort to incorporate inquiry word families in a variety of settings, including opening or morning meeting. On multiple occasions, I wrote the morning note to my students to include sounds that we were working on. They responded with enthusiasm, anticipation to participate, and pride in their new understandings. See Appendix B for some examples.

Claim 4:
As multiple intelligence research suggests (Gardner 1993), different students benefit in different ways and at different levels with regard to music integration. Teachers can—and should—use strong visuals, repetition of songs and concepts, incorporation of technology, and the VAKT approach when planning for a diverse group of learners.

Evidence:

I. Applying the VAKT Method, Teacher Reflection

The VAKT approach to teaching allows visual, auditory, tactile, and kinesthetic learners to participate and become engaged based on their own learning needs. This enables students who have sensory needs to connect with a lesson on a variety of levels (Encyclopedia 2000 p. 393). When I taught the Word Wall lesson (which involved popping balloons), each student got a
balloon with a word inside. I introduced the activity with a song, then asked all students to pop balloons (one color at a time) and share their words with the class. This lesson was engaging for many, if not all, of my students and was based on the ideals of the VAKT method. However, there is a potential for too much stimulation and teachers need to be aware of the limitations. A lesson with too much excitement (like this one) can lead to sensory overload. This would be the only case where music could be detrimental to the success of a lesson and needs to be used with caution. See Appendix L, Teacher Reflection Journal from 4/4 (Balloon Activity).

**II. Pictures of Visuals, Skills Inventories, Teacher Notes**

Visuals were used in conjunction with each music lesson in my inquiry. From word family houses, a Power Point slide show and notes during opening, to worksheets in small group practice, there were countless visuals for students to connect with their music learning. As evidenced at writing stations and during whole group meetings, students did begin to use the visuals that I had exposed them to. While I had hoped that they would utilize these tools more often, I noticed that many of them did not. However, even without necessarily referring to the visuals, the post-skills inventory showed that more students were able to recognize the words that we had discussed. This increase in recognition showed me a degree of success in my inquiry.

**III. Incorporation of Technology, Student Survey**

The fact that students chose ‘Learning Letter Sounds A to Z’ as their favorite music lesson reaffirms in my mind that technology integration in lessons can be such an effective teaching tool. My students have been very receptive to the projector and anything that I have shown them on the ‘big screen’ this year, and this slide show was no exception. When I asked what students liked about the song during the post-inquiry survey, some said the song itself or something that they liked in the song, but many said that they liked the pictures. This was
another example of a lesson that I used VAKT and multiple approaches to teach, because we sang, watched a slideshow, used a worksheet with all of the pictures, words, and letters during writing time, danced to the song, and repeated the song multiple times (during whole group and small group time). This lesson did not provide the over-stimulation that the balloon lesson held in store for many students, and it was an effective, engaging, way to get students involved with music and learning together in the classroom.

IV. Weekly Interviews

During a weekly interview after the initial Learning Letter Sounds A to Z lessons, I asked students if they could recall what the baby (B) was wearing. Three out of four students remembered that the baby was wearing a colorful outfit, or more specifically, tie dye. This tells me that I have some very visual learners in my classroom and I’m glad that I was able to assist them with their learning experience by providing more visuals in this lesson. See Appendix K for Interview excerpts.

Reflections and Future Practice

My inquiry experience has led me to many reflections. I realize now that the inquiry process (at least for my chosen wondering) is ever-changing based on your group of students, new wonderings that stem along the way, and perhaps a new stance on the importance (or lack thereof) of a certain piece of evidence or sub-wondering. I have gained a further appreciation for wordplay and music integration, I have learned the limitations and benefits of incorporating music into the classroom. I have learned about inquiry itself, and how I can use it in my teaching.

As I enter into the teaching field, I intend to use music in my teaching, and I now have evidence to show that it is beneficial for my students and for me to do so. I will incorporate music into other areas aside from language arts, but that was a great place to start. This process
has been an adventure and I’ve had a lot of fun with each step of it, from collecting music resources (Jack Hartmann is wonderful!) to deciding which language arts concepts to focus on with my students, and even making claims based on the data that I had collected. As I expected, the music aspect of this project was fun. However, I was still surprised at the level of engagement from my students and the excitement that I felt before each lesson. I have also been a fan of music and poetry (listening, reading, and creating) myself since I was a young child. I now recognize that I have a talent for writing and teaching with these creative tools at my side, and I intend to create and share them throughout my teaching career. Perhaps I’ll even start compiling children’s poems and songs and eventually publish them.

I finish this inquiry project feeling more confident as a teacher, and knowing that I will incorporate inquiry into my own teaching later on, but I will do it a little bit differently. The only frustration that I experienced during this process came from the large amount of data that I had been collecting, and trying to decide what was most important and what was not, as well as how I would analyze all of the information. I felt as though every piece of evidence supported a claim, but I was slightly overwhelmed by the number of claims that I could support (I chose those that were most important to me, although I could have easily written 6 or 7). I wonder if I could have made the data collection simpler, both for the process of assessment (namely interviews, which took a significant amount of time) and analysis. Next time I conduct a teacher inquiry project, I will focus on 2 or 3 methods of data collection, fewer sub-questions, and a simpler set-up for my data collection and analysis.

I recognize the fact that during kindergarten, students are learning. In the spring semester, we’ve done a variety of activities to help our students learn the letters of the alphabet and common words and word families. Many of these lessons did not integrate music. It is quite
possible that the students were learning as they would without music, and I am aware of this possibility. However, I do know that the students were enjoying the learning process and I was helping to make the lessons more memorable through music, and that was worth the extra effort.

I know now that I need to be careful that I don’t go too far in the sensory realm, particular with more sensitive learners. Music can be a wonderful tool for management, teaching concepts and skills, and for transitions. However, it is ineffective when paired with too much stimulation in other areas. I also realize that the time frame for this inquiry was not realistic, and I do plan to continue with music lessons this year, bringing back some of the lessons that I’ve already taught for review and further practice. I wonder if my students will remember these songs throughout their childhood and into adulthood, as my older sister can recall the Fifty Nifty United States song, and we all know our ABC’s. Music is a very powerful tool, and I now see that it’s more than just a fun activity to do; it’s an effective way to help students learn in the classroom!

Lastly, as I was preparing for my inquiry project, I contact a previous PDS intern who also conducted a similar inquiry, looking at the effects of music on learning in a 5th grade classroom. One of the claims that she found was that music does not help all learners, which made me wonder if that was the Same in kindergarten, and in my classroom (Stewart 2006 p. 29). Indeed it was the case in my data that music did not significantly increase the language arts knowledge of students in the lowest stoplight group. However, when watching these students during lessons, I could tell that they were engaged and entertained, and while they may not have transferred the information from the lessons to their reading and writing (and especially over time), I do believe that they were engaged and having a good time, and those are the first steps to learning and retention.

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“Music gives a soul to the universe,
   Wings to the mind,
   Flight to the imagination...
   And life to everything”.
   --Plato
Appendix A
Pre-Skills Inventory & Post-Skills Inventory Results (Word Families & Common Words)

Word Families That I Taught Through Inquiry:
-et (Pre-packaged)
-am (Teacher Written)
-an (Student Written)
-ay (Teacher/Student written)
- at (Read Aloud, worksheet, NO MUSIC- Week 3 Comparison)

Word Families/Common Words That I Did Not Teach Through Inquiry:
Cup  Sing  Zoo  Bug  Is
Was  Bed  Are  For

-Am Before & After:
In the original post-assessment, I changed the –am word to ‘ram’, and only 14 students were able to correctly recognize it. I was surprised, so I decided to re-assess using ‘jam’ and 18 students correctly identified it. I think that the students are more familiar with the word jam than the word ram. In addition, 2 of the students who had originally missed it said ‘am’ words (jam, ham) that were not ram and therefore were ‘wrong’ even though they did recognize the family.

A Note About –Ay:
I decided to teach the –ay word family during the inquiry, after noticing that many students used and misspelled words like day and play in their writing. I did not pre-assess for ay.
The above chart provides a comparison between the pre-skills and post-skills inventory results for each student. Students are lettered A→V for confidentiality and all words from the pre-skills inventory are included (not just inquiry music words). Many students did improve between the pre- and post-skills inventories, but some maintained their score and others declined. This could be due to testing conditions, guessing, or other human error factors, or perhaps students just “forgot”.
Students H & Q were placed in the green (highest performing) category based on the results of the pre-skills inventory.
Students T & J were placed in the yellow (above average) category based on pre-skills.
Students D & R were placed in the red (average) category based on pre-skills.
Students N & C were placed in the brown (low performing) category based on pre-skills.
*All 8 of the students in the letter sound sample maintained or increased their letter sound knowledge throughout the course of the inquiry.

Appendix B
Pictures & Video Clips
QuickTime™ and a TIFF (LZW) decompressor are needed to see this picture.

Nutrition Puppet Show (Gauging music interest, Concepts learned through music pre-inquiry)
Learning Letter Sounds A to Z (Movement, Technology, Engagement, Visuals)

QuickTime™ and a TIFF (LZW) decompressor are needed to see this picture.

Word Family Neighborhood
QuickTime™ and a TIFF (LZW) decompressor are needed to see this picture.

‘Ay’ Song (Student-made) Students look at A to Z sheet (Importance of strong visuals)
Opening Notes (Incorporating word families in multiple instructional settings)

Pre-Inquiry Survey Results

Post-Inquiry Survey Results

(It’s a trick! There’s no –at song)

Beware of sensory overload! Word Wall lesson with balloons.
Small group activity for –et family. Students sing their ‘ay’ song for bus buddies, April 14th.

Appendix C
Student Work

Before lesson: (All of these students proved through writing or post-skills inventory that they could spell/recognize these sounds after the inquiry lesson).
A few students were able to spell –ay beforehand. Most were not.

- Et

Comparison:

BEFORE LESSON

-Ay, same student

AFTER LESSON
QuickTime™ and a TIFF (LZW) decompressor are needed to see this picture.

Learning Letter Sounds A to Z (using worksheet during writing time), Ay & At after
During Week 3, I taught two word family lessons: one that involved music (–an) and one that did not (–at). I chose –at and –an because they had similar results on the post-skills inventory and they were both common word families in students’ writing. I taught a main lesson and a small group activity for each word family. At the end of the week, I assessed 16 students by asking them to write three –at words and three –an words. Of the 48 –at words, the students as a group correctly wrote 37, or 77%, compared with 79% (38/48) of the –an words. This evidence shows that the lesson involving music was slightly more effective than the lesson that did not. While it was not a significant difference and therefore not a strong indicator of the benefits of music integration, it is important to note that the music –an lesson was much more fun to plan, and took less time overall. In addition, the students enjoyed it more and were more invested in the resulting song, as they worked together to create it as a class.

Part of the reason that both numbers are so similar could be attributed to the fact that I was trying to plan two good lessons, regardless of the presence of music. I read ‘The Cat in the Hat’ (Dr. Seuss) as a shared reading activity, then asked the small group to complete an –at worksheet (see below). The small group for the –an lesson drew pictures of our Dan and Jan song, including labels to show that they understood the –an word family.

Appendix E:
Inquiry Lesson Overview (with small group activities)

Pre-Inquiry: February 18th
NUTRITION PUPPET SHOW
**Week 1: February 20th**

ET WORD FAMILY

*Pre-Packaged song, on CD, KidRhymes, Used poster, made word family house #1 (-et)

Mr. Vet had a pet that was wet (later added ‘E-T’)

Mr. Vet had a pet that was very, very wet

Mr. Vet had a pet that was wet

Small Group Activity: Write –et words on white board (Student H, Student G, Student E, Student F)

**Student H missed –et on pre-skills, but got it on post-skills!**

**Week 2: March 4th**

AM WORD FAMILY

*Written by the teacher, made word family house #2 (-am)

The jam of am

We like to sing the jam of am

If we just use it while we’re writing,

We can spell words that rhyme with am (A-M!)

Can you spell jam? (j-a-m)

Can you spell ram? (r-a-m)

Can you spell Sam? (Oh yes, we can!)

You just take the letter you’re hearing (S) and you add the A and M (that’s Sam!)

Small Group Activity: Students drew pictures to put onto word family house.

**Student I missed –am on pre-skills, but got it on post-skills!**

**Students B & T missed –am on pre-skills, but got it in Weekly Interview and on post-skills!**

**Week 3: March 17th**

AT & AN WORD FAMILY COMPARISON LESSONS

3/17: AT

Read The Cat in the Hat (pretended that the cat came and covered –at words, shared reading)

Small Group Activity: Cat in the Hat worksheet

*Made word family house #3 (-at)

**Student C & Student I both missed –at on the pre-skills inventory, and missed it again on the post-skills. However, Student C said ‘cat’ when she saw ‘hat’, so at least she recognized the word family.**

3/19: AN

*Student-written, made word family house #4 (–an)

We wrote a song as a class about Miss Levenson’s friends Dan & Jan (Tune and lyrics by students)

Dan and Jan had a friend named Stan

They all went to the park and ran
Out in the sun, they got a tan  
Then they went to buy a fan  
They also got a frying pan  
They had a plan!  
Dan and Jan got in the van  
They went to the beach and played in the sand,  
And they were never happier than  
When they spent that time with their friend Stan!

Small Group: Students draw –an pictures for the house and to illustrate our –an song.  
Student B, Student H and Student C missed –an in pre-skills inventory, and got it in the post-skills inventory.  
Claims: More interest/engagement/OWNERSHIP when the students helped to create the song!  
Activity: 1 group drew a picture of the Dan & Jan song, 1 group drew cards with a picture of one  
*End of week: Asked 16 students to write 3 –at words (at, mat, cat) and 3 –an words (Dan, man, tan). Yes: at- 37, an- 38

Week 4: 3/24
LEARNING LETTER SOUNDS A to Z  
Song: Jack Hartmann’s Learning Letter Sounds A to Z  
We sang this song multiple times throughout the week to review and practice letter sounds. I created and showed a PowerPoint slideshow along with the introduction of the song. We used many integration strategies and tried to reach out to a variety of learners. I created a paper based on the song/slide show and placed it in the students’ writing folders to see how they would utilize it, if at all. Student O, Student E, Student J, & Student I used it for writing.  
*Technology integration was well-received.  
Small Group Activity: In pairs, students created short words for their partners to decode using the letter sounds in the song. Students also had a chance to use writing folder sheets independently.  
Interviews: VISUALS (tie-dye baby)

Week 5: 4/2
WORD WALL  
Used music for introduction only  
(To the tune of Mary had a little lamb)  
In our room we have a tool,  
We can use at our school.  
It is called the big word wall,  
It helps us when we call…

Students each got a balloon with a word inside. They had to sit on the balloon, find the word, and point to the word on the word wall. Day 1 got a little bit out of hand, but day 2 went very well. Each student had a chance to find his/her own word again and we looked at the words together as a class.  
*Moved houses this week!  
Small Group Activity: Balloon worksheet (Student A, Student Q, Student J, Student S, Student D, Student I, Student C)
* Sensory overload with too much going on, can be bad for teacher and students (Student M, Student L esp.), noise

Week 6: 4/7 (LAST WEEK)
AY WORD FAMILY
Hook: Ay Partay (Shayna), invitation, make up a song with at least 5 -ay words to get in
Tuesday- teach The Ay Book song/activity:
(to the tune of ‘If you’re happy and you know it)
   At the end of this word, I see a-y (that’s play)
   At the end of this word, I see a-y (that’s jay)
   I see May, I see say
   I see way and I see day.
   At the end of all these words, I see a-y (that’s pay)

On Wednesday, students wanted to make up their own a-y song, so they voted on a tune, decided on Christmas, Christmas from Alvin and the Chipmunks, and ended up with this song:
   I like in the month of May
   To play with a blue jay.
   And I pay for horses’ hay,
   So that they can eat and play.
Small Group Activity: -Ay worksheet, pictures for the –ay house.
* Talked about the tricky exceptions: They and hey
In small groups, I asked students to complete a worksheet with ay.
   Student B, Student G missed it on pre-skills and got it on post-skills.

Other music activities included:
- computer down time (in the computer lab)
- Opening activities (the birthday song, Jack Hartmann)
- Playing music during math and quiet time (calming, some students migrated toward the music)

Appendix F
Student Surveys

1. Do you like using music in our classroom? (February 27th)
   Yes: 15 students
   No: 7 students
2. Do you use writing clues around the room? (February 28\textsuperscript{th})
Yes: 15 students
No: 6 students (1 absent)

3. Which song is your favorite (Mr. Vet, The Jam of Am, Dan & Jan, At [trick- no at song],
Learning Letter Sounds A to Z, The Word Wall Song, The –Ay Book Song, I Like in the Month of May)? Why?
*All students gave an answer, including one who couldn’t decide because he liked them all.
Nobody said that they do not like any songs. Attitudes toward music have changed.

* Et (3)
  - I have pets, so I like the et song best.
  - Which one’s Mr. Vet? I like that one best.
  - Mr. Vet

* Am (0)

* An (4)
  - It rhymes, and we helped make it
  - We made up a song

* At (0)

* ABC’s (6) *most popular
  - I like the pictures (x2)
  - ABC because B is in my name.
  - I like the song
  - I like the pictures, especially the desert (confused between another lesson using PowerPoint
    and the projector. INCORPORATION OF TECHNOLOGY)
  - I liked the sound and pictures
  - I liked the animals (this student did not often participate in the music lessons, but was on his
    feet for this activity when we did it. He was on the ‘No’ side of the L1 survey, but really
    enjoyed this song, as evidenced by his body language and facial expressions.

* Word Wall (3)
  - we got to play with balloons
  - I love balloons
  - We got to pop balloons.

* Ay (4)
  - I like the -ay song

?: (1)
  - I can’t decide, I like them all. (From the student who is often humming/singing in class, but
    said that he does not like music in the beginning survey).

(Absent: 1 student)

Appendix G
Teacher Notes

1/23- Music Observations
- Sit up tall
- Silly- Student O (not singing, bent over chair, bathroom sign, standing, turned around, hit chairs with rhythm sticks), Student C (legs crossed), Student Q (talking, rubs sticks on chair like fire),
- Scales=staircases, sing little pumpkin, snowman, little one song
- STUDENT M- SITTING STILL (VERY well behaved)
- Involved in music: Student J (wiggles down for snowman song)
- Student A sees Student O, starts to make faces too and is not singing.
- Student M listening (right, left sticks up in the air- correct!)
- Student A shaking in her chair backward (toward Student O)
- Student O threw stick.
- Student M- doing the quiet signal and shouting “Guys, quiet signal”!
- Game:
  - Student O on knees on seat, seated by himself in the back corner
  - Sing all together: Student O loudly sang something else.
  - Student Q- sitting on feet on chair
  - Video with animals at the end of class- now Student O is interested, talking to Student A about animals. He acts like the animals, movements and noises, Mrs. Corl comes over and asks him to stop so peers can hear.

3/4- Computer Lab visit
- If I need everyone, I’ll sing ‘Computer down time’, and they’ll repeat back, ‘Computer down time’. While they sing, they’ll put both hands into their laps and look at me, ready for instructions.
- This was a great way to get the students’ attention. They enjoyed the echoing nature of the song, and responded quickly and appropriately.
- I’ll definitely use this attention-getting method in the future.

4/9-
- Mrs. Dobash observed 1st –ay lesson, and said that, “Students are very engaged”.

4/10-
- Sang –ay songs for Mrs. Dobash in the afternoon. Students raised hands to tell her how to spell multiple –ay words. Many students participated and everyone spelled the words right. I even asked a ‘tricky’ question to see if they could spell the word ‘they’ and many hands were up. The student who spelled it got it right!

Writing Station Notes:
Overall, these notes show a variety of instances in which students referred to visuals around the room for assistance. At the beginning of inquiry, students refer to objects such as the King of Ing, but with time (and movement of our word family neighborhood), they begin to refer to the word family houses as well. This was a more difficult data collection method to maintain.

Appendix H
Teacher Survey- Music Integration

Name: ________________________________ Grade: _______________
Dear Gray’s Woods Kindergarten and Primary Teachers,

As interns in the PDS, we learn to question our teaching practices. My current inquiry relates to the use of music in our kindergarten classroom and how my students relate to it as they learn concepts throughout the day, particularly with regard to language arts. I would value and appreciate if you could take a few minutes to fill out this brief survey regarding your own teaching practices and beliefs involving music in the classroom. Thank you for your help. I will be sharing the claims and evidence that I find at the Inquiry Conference on April 26, 2008.

Sincerely,
Shayna Levenson
Room 28 Intern
sml28@scasd.org

Please return surveys in person or in Lynn Dobash’s mailbox by Thursday, March 6th. Thank you.

1. Do you use music in your classroom?  YES- 7/7  NO-

   If so, how?
   a) I play it while the students work (usually classical) and we also do motions to silly songs I have on CD.
   b) Songs to remember concepts (math, etc.), music on during writer’s workshop and morning work
   c) Gross motor skills, transitions, teaching letter sounds and word families, to reinforce unit concepts, to make us smile and laugh, to welcome guests (community skills), to learn names, exercise.
   d) Morning/gathering activities, transitions, writer’s workshop
   e) Morning meeting, language arts skills, Living in Harmony topics (reinforce concepts)
   f) Transitions
   g) Background music, singing, dancing, students playing instruments, community building

2. Circle the subjects/topics/aspects of the day (any/all that apply) where you regularly incorporate music into your instruction (i.e., more than just playing music in the background during DEAR/SSR, etc). Put an ‘X’ over any where you pointedly do NOT pull in music.

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<tr>
<td>SOCIAL SKILLS</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
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</table>

OTHER (please specify):  No responses
3. At what time(s) of day is music used most in your classroom?
   a) During work time mid-morning and mid-afternoon
   b) Math (daily) and writing
   c) Morning
   d) Morning during Writer’s Workshop
   e) 1st Thing- Morning Meeting
   f) Transitions
   g) Opening song every day

4. At what time(s) of day is music used least in your classroom?
   a) During reading stations
   b) Spelling, Book time (reading)
   c) End of the day
   d) Afternoon
   e) AM other times
   f) During quiet working time
   g) Varies every day

5. Do you feel that using music in the classroom is beneficial for students?    YES (6)      NO (0)
   Both Yes & No (1-e)
   a) It calms them, quiets them, and makes for a fun way to release energy.
   b) It is calming. Also, songs help us remember things (days of the week, etc.)
   c) It helps with the concepts in #1 (gross motor skills, transitions, teaching letter sounds and
      word families, to reinforce unit concepts, to make us smile and laugh, to welcome
      guests/community skills, to learn names, exercise)
   d) motivation, behavior, skill reinforcement, social skills, listening skills
   e) It depends on the class and their viewpoints on music~ Some years it works well, other years
      all I hear are moans and groans.
   f) Children can remember facts and concepts easier when introduced and reviewed in a song.
   g) Teaching to multiple intelligences

6. What kinds of music resources have you used in your classroom this year? (Circle all that
   apply and provide information about ‘favorites’ if possible)
   RECORDS                      AUDIO CASSETTES (5)   CDs (7)   MP3s   iTunes
   VIDEOCASSETTES (4)    DVDs (1)   WEBSITES (5)   LIVE INSTRUMENTS (1)
   ANY EDUCATIONAL MUSIC PROGRAMS (such as KidRhymes, etc --- provide below)
   OTHER (please specify): d- Various titles from Living in Harmony unit

7. Do your students have any favorite song(s) or music activity/ies?
If so, please clarify.
a) They love the silly songs like Tooty-ta and My Mother is a Baker. They also enjoyed a Hanukkah song I played frequently.
b) Days of the Week (to the tune of The Addams Family)
c) Welcoming guests with the song, “I’m a Little Teapot”.
d) blank
e) Not this year. They don’t seem to enjoy it as much as in other years.
f) Big Book- My Dog, transition songs
g) Playing xylophone, dance, Chee Chee Cha

8. Do YOU have any favorite song(s) or music activity/ies to use with students?

If so, please clarify.
a) I have fun doing the silly songs by Dr. Jean, but I also really like LeAnn Adams- she’s a storyteller that really captures their attention.
b) Washington’s Hat (for President’s Day), School House Rock songs.
c) I like the movement songs recorded by Greg & Steve. They teach gross motor skills and help get the wiggles out.
d) My classical CD that we play quietly during writers’ workshop.
e) Songs/music must fit with curriculum. I like upbeat, lively songs ~interactive ~ have used sign language with some songs in the past, too.
f) Same as students (Big Book- My Dog, transition songs)
g) No favorites- just a love for music

9. Please feel free to provide any additional comments/suggestions you wish to share..

Analysis of Teacher Survey
- All but one teacher (9/10) indicated music use during language arts time.
- All chose language arts, spelling, and/or spelling (all LA skills)
- Purposes (#5)- calming=focusing

Appendix I
Puppet Show Lyrics

Nutrition Intro Puppet Show (Tuesday 2/12)
There are **lots** of different foods that we can eat
Like **grains**, fruits, veggies, milk, and meat
And **once** in awhile we can have a treat
**Giving** ourselves something really sweet!

Our **buddies** have names and like different foods
**You** and I have preferences too.
They **came** here to visit and to share their rendition
Of this **wonderful** song that they call, ‘Nutrition’!

**READY?** Let’s learn about GRAINS:

My **name** is Gingy, and this is my song
I **work** in a bakery all day long
You **think** I make cookies? Well you’re misled
I **actually** spend my days making BREAD!

I am a porcupine, my name is oodles
As you **can** maybe guess, I like pasta and noodles!
They’re **oh-so**-yummy and hit the spot
I’d **eat** them all day, but I cannot

**Grains** are foods that we need to grow
They include bread and pasta, as you may know. 
Cereal, Oatmeal, and crackers, too.
Grains are really good for you (in moderation)!

Now let’s talk about VEGETABLES:

I’m a rabbit and my name is Reggie
My favorite food is carrots, they’re a kind of veggie.
Vegetables are yummy, like broccoli and greens,
But I also like potatoes, and crunchy green beans.

(still Reggie)
Veggies are nutritious, and some are round-
They always grow up out of the ground.
You should eat different vegetables every day,
It’s really important, that’s what I say.

Now let’s talk about FRUITS:

I am a monkey and my name is Toots
I like to eat all kinds of fruits
These are foods that grow on trees,
Like bananas, apples, oranges, and kiwis.

Now let’s talk about MILK:

My name is Lil and I’m here to say,
I drink my milk every day
It’s good for me, I can’t leave it alone
And I know if I drink it, I’ll have strong bones!

We are the blind mice, and we sneeze…*ah choo*
Whenever we’re around any kind of cheese
We’re lactose intolerant and have allergies… *ah choo*
We can’t have milk, yogurt, ice cream, or cheese
(What can we have if we can’t have milk or dairy?)

Now let’s talk about MEAT & BEANS:

I’m a firefighter, my name is Pete
My favorite kind of food is meat.
Beef and pork are examples of this,
And beans, chicken, turkey, eggs, and fish.

My name is Miss Levenson and I like eggs along with turkey and chicken legs!
The name for this food is a special word
It is called poultry, that’s food from a bird! (but it fits into the MEAT group)

Let’s talk about TREATS FOR NOW & THEN:
We are the birds who like to tweet
We count with you whenever we meet
There are foods you can have again and again
But our favorites are sweets for now and then!

We like anything that you can bake
Like chocolate chip cookies and vanilla cake
Pudding’s good too, and jell-o is fun,
We think tweets…oops, treats…are number one!

(Healthy Herbie)
The important thing is that when we’re done
We’re eating lots of different foods and not just one
If we exercise and eat right, we can say…
We’re making healthy choices every day!

What’s your favorite kind of food?
What puts you in a happy mood?
Could it be grains, veggies, fruit, milk, or meat?
or perhaps a once-in-a-while treat?

Appendix J
Math Stations Lesson Plan Reflection

After using the song *On Top of Spaghetti* as a transition into our math stations one day, I reflected on my lesson plan with the following excerpt:

“The introduction for this lesson was a lot of fun for the students and for me, and I noticed them checking the menu throughout stations time to see where they could go. It allowed me to work with the students at my own station without being interrupted by others who did not know what to do, and truly helped them to be more independent in their learning! The transition into the lesson was effective, and the students enjoyed singing ‘On Top of Spaghetti’. Stations time was organized and fairly quiet, and I felt very good about the whole thing. I think that the review of the activities was great for the students, and the lesson did meet my goals and objectives.

Appendix K
Weekly Student Interview Excerpts

Sample Interview:
Inquiry Interviews- Friday April 4th, 2008
1) Word Wall

Please spell these words for me: (cover words, student writes on line)

It ______________
Me ______________
You ______________
Big ______________
He ______________

Where could you find these words in our room?

* Mention word wall? YES NO

What was the word inside of your balloon? ________ Can you spell it for me? ______

If not, what letter does it start with? _____

2) Letter sounds

Do you remember what the letter B stands for in the letter sounds sound? (baby)

What is the baby wearing?

Could you tell me what I saw on my safari trip that started with:

E ______________
P ______________
I ______________
O ______________
U ______________

3) Writing

Please use the letter sounds that you know to sound out the following words:

a. Apple _______________________

b. Man _______________________

c. Cot _______________________

Levenson 39
5) REVIEW:
Could you spell these words for me?

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ham</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tan</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Interviewees were more likely to spell the week’s word family correct than one that we had already discussed, but some were able to recall the previous lessons, showing evidence of retention.

* Many students did reference the word family houses and the related songs. Many were also able to sound out the words fairly well.

* Students who I (or my PDA) interviewed were more likely to recognize words on the post-skills inventory because they were able to practice word families in an additional setting.

* Learning Letter Sounds A to Z- Baby wearing tie-dye (3/4 got it first week)

**Appendix L**

**Reflective Journal Excerpts**

1/28-
“This week, I was on a search for sources and music. I found some great sources at the 5th floor Paterno library, including about 10 CDs by Jack Hartmann (who I heard about at the Math Gearing Up program last week). I listened to many of his songs, and I love them. I fully intend to eventually buy his CDs, because I do Hope to use music in a variety of ways no matter which grade I end up teaching”.

2/1-
On Tuesday this week, we had a ‘Gearing Up for Math’ program at Easterly Parkway elementary school. A few kindergarten teachers presented some of their methods for teaching, with a concentration on teaching math. One of the women told us that she recently went to a national teaching conference in Las Vegas and found out about 2 wonderful CD’s which she uses in her class every day. They include *School is Cool/Singing with Shari* (Shari Sloane), *Math All Around Me* and *Rhythms and Rhymes for Special Times* (both by Jack Hartmann), and *Circle Time Songs* (Lakeshore Learning Materials). I think that these would all be wonderful resources for me to check out and possibly use in my classroom.
I decided this week that I am very interested to see where more music in my classroom will take the students’ learning, as well as my own understandings and views as a teacher. I do want to make sure to concentrate on conceptual understandings, and I need to make sure that I am looking for songs that teach information as well as those that are fun to sing and dance to. I’m not sure where this wondering will take me, but I am excited to see how my students react to it and what they can learn from the wonders of music.

2/8-

The main change in my thinking and planning for inquiry this week was the decision that I made upon suggestion by my mentor and PDA to concentrate on a certain time of the school day, language arts. This is a great time to focus my efforts, especially because I know that we have a few songs that we use in language arts (such as The King of Ing and Mr. Chair/Shark/Thumb). These songs are very helpful, and students often recall the tune and words during writing stations, instantly knowing what to do in their own writing. I would love to see more of this, and give them a way to connect music to writing in a variety of instances. I hope that this would create more independence during writing time, and a little bit more fun for the students (and for me)! I would still like to incorporate music into other parts of the day, and I’m finding many great songs in my quest for kid-friendly CD’s.

2/22- Updates

1. I heard back from Steffani Bryan, a previous PDS intern who did a similar Inquiry project. She is mailing me her paper and it should be arriving soon. She also said that she’d be happy to answer any questions that I may have, and that she has a great website that she will send to me!

2. On Monday, my mentor teacher helped me with a nutrition puppet show that I wrote about food groups. I asked a paraprofessional (in the morning) and a parent volunteer (in the afternoon) to videotape the students as they watched the show, and I later watched the video. All of the students were completely captivated by the show, and it was obvious in their body language, eye contact with the puppets, and their answers to my questions after the show and throughout the week. I think that music is a wonderful way to get information to my students, and this is a huge piece of evidence for my inquiry project.

When students did refer to the food groups, they often connected the group with the puppet that represented those foods, and sometimes even referred to parts of the song. Upon viewing the video of the lesson, I could tell that the students were engaged. Was it the music? The puppets? The change of location in the room? All of these factors combined? In any case, the students were learning, and I wanted to find out how to make that happen in language arts as well.

2/29- Updates

1. Survey: I distributed the teacher survey on Thursday afternoon, and I’ve already received 4 of them back. I will be looking over them this weekend and next week to find out how other primary and kindergarten teachers at Gray’s Woods use music in their classrooms.

2. Mr. Vet/Interviews: I decided to concentrate on one word family (et) this week instead of 2, and the initial lesson involved a ‘prepackaged’ Kid Rhymes song, which we sang together 3 times before listing other –et words. I then pulled one group aside after an initial lesson to review the song and write more –et words on a small white board. On Friday, interviews showed that the student who was in the small group remembered the song and was able to spell multiple
et words. Another student (at a similar level in language arts) wrote ‘sat’ instead of set and ‘mat’ instead of met, showing that the small group instruction would have been beneficial for her.

3. Kid Writing Notes: I have asked all of the teachers to take notes about student utilization of the sound clues around the room. I asked one student how he figured out the word ‘for, and he said, “It’s an f, and then or from the door of or. Actually, it’s easy to write because almost all of the words we use are around us in our room”. I’m glad that he’s noticing!

3/20-

The schedule that I wrote tentatively at the beginning of my inquiry has changed a great deal as the investigation has gotten under way. In the music lesson this week (an), the students created the tune and the words for a rhyming song called Jan and Dan had a Plan. They were engaged during the non-music lesson (in which I read The Cat in the Hat and they helped me uncover the at words and make a list on the board). However, I think that they felt more ownership for the -an song, and I can tell that they’re proud of it

- Kid Writing Notes: All 4 teachers have been taking notes at writing stations regarding student use of cues around the room and references to songs. A few students have referred to the songs, but they are more likely to refer to visual clues. Therefore, pairing a song with a visual on a word family house is more effective than simply teaching the song. I wonder if this could turn into one of my claims.

4/4- (Reflection on Balloon Word Wall Activity)

This Wednesday, I taught a lesson for my inquiry project with the goal of reminding students that our word wall is available as a resource in the classroom, and that they can use their knowledge of letter sounds (think of our song from last week) to help them figure out what the words are. I incorporated music in a different way, using it simply to introduce the activity through a song about how we have a tool in our school called the big word wall and it will help us when we call, to the tune of Mary Had a Little Lamb. Students were engaged with the song, and even more so when I handed each of them a balloon with a folded piece of paper inside. As I called out each of 5 different colors, students would sit on their balloons or pop them with a pipe cleaner (safer than scissors, for sure) and find their words. Then we would share each color’s words and find them on our word wall. That’s how it was supposed to go, anyway. So what went wrong?

The students were so excited about the balloons that as the 1st group was trying to share their words, the rest of the students could not sit still. In retrospect, the popping should have happened in 2 quick sessions, so that we could get the noise and the craziness out of the way. By the time the 1st group had shared their words, I had lost almost every students’ attention and quickly decided to call out colors to pop balloons. Once all balloons were popped, students were so over stimulated that they could not concentrate on the activity. This is what we call sensory overload, and it was present as Justin was asked to leave for his lack of attention to the teacher, refusal to stop talking, and removal from the group by the classroom paraprofessional. The effects of the already-stimulating morning plus the balloons and the song and the popping and the words flying lasted through lunchtime and finally eased back as we prepared for our quiet time. However, this lesson was somewhat disastrous. It was memorable, and many students did remember their own words, but the popping session was too long and the finding words session was not long enough.
On Thursday, I invited students back to the rug and asked them to come up and point to the word that they had on the word wall. We all read the word together, and it was calm. It was a learning experience, and I think that the lesson should have been split up to begin with. In addition, it should have been conducted in small groups, and I say this because I truly wanted students to know what their own words were, and some did not. I did not want to embarrass anyone and I didn’t want to sit there and talk to them about the word while everyone else waited restlessly. Some students just needed one-on-one attention, less pressure, and more time to figure it out, and I felt badly not being able to give these things at the original lesson. Perhaps I did not think it through all the way. I know that anticipation is one of the things that I need to work on this semester, and I guess that I just didn’t expect to have to cut the lesson short.
Appendix M
Bibliography


Appendix N
Brief & Annotated Bibliography

*Note: There were many changes to my inquiry as it progressed, and the original plan (while it was a great starting point and provided a strong basis for my study) is very different from what actually happened. However, it’s important to see how the inquiry started and how my ideas changed over time. Below is the brief that I wrote in February for my planned inquiry project.*

**Incorporating Music into Language Arts in a Kindergarten Classroom**

Room 28, Gray’s Woods Elementary School, SCASD
Inquiry Brief

**Context**

The kindergarten class that I teach has 22 students between the ages of 5 and 6 years old. 15 students are still 5 and 8 of them will not turn 6 until the summer months, making this a fairly young class for kindergarten. In the classroom, this means that students are more active and have a difficult time concentrating when it is time to listen and learn.
One of the students in my class has been diagnosed with ADHD and has a paraprofessional who works with him daily in our classroom. There are 4 other students in the class who have pronounced sensory needs. These students have a hard time staying on their spots on the carpet, keeping their hands to themselves, and sitting or standing still. Three students visit the IST specialist for help with letters and letter sounds, and two visit the speech therapist 1-2 times per week.

One student lives in a household in which English is not the primary language. Her family is from Egypt, and it is clear that they are very supportive of her schooling. In the fall, she struggled to write independently, but has been gaining independence. Another student, a boy who is the only African American student in the class, is extremely quiet in the classroom, but his good listening skills are eminent through his enthusiasm and responsibility for classroom jobs. This semester, he has become much more talkative and social with peers, but still remains quiet during group time unless the teacher calls on him. He does not excel in Language Arts, but he also does not struggle. I do not see either of these two students smiling much, but I do think that I’ve seen them smiling more recently than in the Fall.

One student often sings and has, on multiple occasions, taken on the responsibility of conducting group discussions. His performance skills are high and the teachers think that he will be an actor or a singer one day. He is always willing to come in front of the class and he loves to share his thoughts. He is also one of the students with strong sensory needs and he has a fairly late birthday (in April). It seems as though he is often distracted by his own thoughts and has difficulty listening and completing tasks in an appropriate manner. I am constantly looking for ways to engage him in lessons so that he will not be a distraction to himself or others.

The class is full of students who are busy, but interested, and ready to learn. Regarding Language Arts, there are 7 who struggle with letter and/or sound recognition. However, along with the students who struggle, there are those who excel, including 8 students who have strong reading and writing skills.

**Rationale**

The teachers in our classroom believe that kindergarten students should have as much writing experience as possible, so we plan about 40 minutes each day for writing stations. During Kid Writing time, 4 teachers work with small groups of 5-6 students to produce drawings and stories with kid writing and adult spelling. Sometimes students utilize the writing resources around the room (e.g. the word wall, the king of ing, the cup of up, etc.) and sometimes they do not. I have noticed that for many of them, the king of ing has become a permanent part of their spelling knowledge. I wonder if it is because my mentor teacher introduced it as a song at the very beginning of the year. How would the use of more music (both connected to the objects in the room and simply connected to letter sounds) affect the students’ reading and writing skills?

I have noticed my mentor teacher’s successful use of music in the classroom, and the fact that many of the students are focused during their Music special. This includes the student with ADHD, the star performer, and many other students who have a hard time doing so in the classroom. I only noticed one student who really seemed to have trouble behaving, participating, and sitting the correct way in his seat. I wonder how he would respond to an increase in the use of music in our classroom than other students.

I also recently performed a musical puppet show for my students and recorded the audience throughout the show, noting their attention on the show, enthusiasm for the topic (nutrition and food groups), and their recall for the information afterward. After watching the
show one time, they were able to recall details that I did not expect them to catch right away. It could have been the puppets, the theater, the atmosphere when we turned the lights out in the classroom, or the music itself, but something captivated every member of that audience and allowed them to learn.

I want to know if that engagement can be carried over to language arts (reading and writing) skills. If I incorporate the music component of that puppet show to teach basic rimes and common words, how will that affect the quality of the students’ writing? How will music affect the students with sensory needs when it comes to language arts and writing?

**Main Wondering**

How might I make the most of music to help my kindergarten students learn language arts and writing concepts throughout the day?

**Sub-Wonderings**

1) Are my students differently engaged when music enters into the learning equation? If so, how?
   (Data collection methods: anecdotal notes, weekly student interviews, video clips of lessons with and without music, skills inventory for letter and rime sounds, reflective journal)

2) What are the effects of using different music integration strategies during language arts and how do they play out in my students’ writing?
   2a. Using songs that I write myself or ‘prepackaged songs’:
   Does pairing a unique tune with each new concept make it somehow more or less useful for students?
   2b. Writing songs together as a class:
   How ready are my students for making up and using their own songs for language arts learning? How will students experience varying levels of success/frustration? Who and why? How might I come to effectively differentiate my expectations for students (re: rhymes, rhythm, syllable count with Student P, content, accuracy, etc.)
   (Data collection methods: Anecdotal notes before, during, and after each lesson, interviews, survey, recordings, journal)

3) What are the effects (re: information retention and recall) of integrating music into instruction:
   a. in stations with small groups during language arts time?
   b. in a whole-group setting?
   c. at different times throughout the day?
   (Data collection methods: Observations, anecdotal notes, interviews, skills inventory, survey, recordings, journal)

4) How could I use music to meet the sensory needs of my students while increasing conceptual understanding? What kinds of stimulation do students with sensory needs get when they are engaged in music and movement in the classroom? Will this help and/or motivate my students to concentrate differently? Will it help them to listen, and most importantly, will it help them to understand?
(Data collection methods: observations, surveys, skills inventory, recordings)

Projected Timeline

February 11\textsuperscript{th}-15\textsuperscript{th}
- Observe interest/involvement in 100 Days music/counting activity
- Bibliography and brief drafts due Wednesday 2/13
- Continue to collect music resources
- Find more research that will inform my inquiry (for bibliography)
- Inquiry Journal

February 18\textsuperscript{th}-22\textsuperscript{nd}
- Videotape Nutrition Puppet Show (Monday. 2/18)
- Watch and analyze puppet show video
  * Create a consistent music time twice a week to teach rime and common word songs
  * Music Time: Hands Up for Letter Sounds (Jack Hartmann)
- Continue to collect music resources
  * Begin to use music more during opening time, closing time (Jack Hartmann)
- Inquiry Journal

February 25\textsuperscript{th}-29\textsuperscript{th}
* Music Time: Learning Letter Sounds (Jack Hartmann)
- Mister Vet (had a pet that was wet)- introduce during opening on Wednesday
- Writing- Observe students writing and note use of sound resources around the room
- Interview Teddi Corl (kindergarten music teacher)
- Small group activities during Language Arts time
- Inquiry Brief & Bibliography due Wednesday 2/27
- Miss Mog (put a hog on the log)- introduce during opening on Thursday
- Morning Meeting Yes/No Survey with students (2 days- Wednesday and Thursday)
- Friday: Student interviews (4 students)
- Inquiry Journal

March 3\textsuperscript{rd}-7\textsuperscript{th}
* Music time: That’s Rhyming/discuss rhymes (Jack Hartmann)
- Introduce ‘The Jam of Am’ song
- Miss Big (put a wig on the pig) ask students if they would like to use a different tune for Miss Big.
- Have alternative tune ready.
  - Mister Jot (had a pot that was hot)
- Whole-group activity
  - Record Miss Big lesson
- Friday: Student interviews (2)
- Inquiry Journal

March 10\textsuperscript{th}-14\textsuperscript{th} (SPRING BREAK)
- Data analysis (so far)

March 17\textsuperscript{th}-21\textsuperscript{st}
* Music Time: Are the sounds the Same? (1) (Jack Hartmann) listening
  - Mister Sop (saw a cop with a mop)
  - Mister Dan (saw a man with a fan)
Wed. 3/19- Seminar: Data Analysis Part 2 (bring data) & Writing up your Inquiry Results  
Small group activities during LA time  
Use sound chart during opening  
Introduce ‘The At Hat’ song  
Thursday: Student interviews (2)  
Inquiry Journal  
*No School Friday

March 24th-28th  
*Music Time: Vowel Sound Student Uba (Jack Hartmann)  
Mister Nat (had a cat that was fat)  
Miss Pug (put a bug on the rug)  
Introduce ‘The Paw of Aw’ song  
Small group activities during LA time  
Friday: Student interviews (2)  
Try to sound out words without the sound chart during opening  
Inquiry journal

March 31st-April 4th  
Mister Zag (saw a bag with a tag)  
*Make up our own rhyme/song (as a class)  
Collect data during writing time, how often do students refer to songs?  
Station- call each student to the nonsense word chart and ask to sound out the words. (use 3 rime words to go along with songs- ret, sog, mig- and 2 common words- day and his). Record data.  
Interview all students  
Inquiry journal

April 7th-11th  
Data analysis, Work on Inquiry paper draft  
Sat. 4/12- Inquiry Paper Draft Due (share via email to peer editor and PDA)

April 14th-18th  
Wed. 4/16- Peer editing inquiry papers and tips for inquiry presentations

April 21st-25th  
Practice Inquiry presentation  
Wednesday, 4/23- Final Inquiry paper due (Hardcopy due to grader)  

Saturday, April 26th - PDS Inquiry Conference at Park Forest Elementary

Data Collection Methods

Before:  
Survey my class twice during morning meeting. Use a yes/no survey to ask students if they like when we use music in the classroom. The next day, use another yes/no survey to ask if the songs that we use in language arts (such as the king of ing) are helpful to them when they are writing
and whether they would like to learn more songs. If students say ‘no’, note who they are and ask them why later. Take a picture of the survey results for data.

Record my students as they watch a musical puppet show about nutrition. Watch and analyze the video and determine how it went in terms of audience member behavior (during) and recall (afterward). Use a sticker chart and add a sticker each time students refer to the nutrition show/song throughout the nutrition unit. Write notes at the bottom of the chart: Do students remember details of the song? Does the connection to puppets make recall easier for them? (If so, perhaps puppets will be added to my inquiry later in the process?)

Kindergarten Skills Inventory- I am meeting with each student beforehand to find out whether they know their letter sounds. I am also holding up cards with some 3-letter words for students to try to sound out. I am keeping a checklist of each question that they answer correctly and what they miss. I will use this information as a baseline for my inquiry, looking at the same test again in April to find out the effects of music on language arts understandings.

Note student utilization of classroom sound resources for 1 week. How many times do students refer to classroom resources? Which ones do they refer to most often? Do any resources go unnoticed? Ask students when they’re done writing whether they used resources or not (they may have written it down without the teacher noticing).

Videotape lessons- Use video camera at school to record multiple lessons, both with and without music. Watch videos and analyze student behavior, apparent interest, and connections with later interviews/surveys/skills inventories.

During:
Teachers should place music note stickers on the upper right-hand corner of students’ stories if they refer to a song that I introduced for language arts instruction. (or to the king of ing, which also has a corresponding song).

Music reference charts will allow teachers to write brief details of each reference to the music that they encounter. For example, if a student uses the new ‘jam of am’ song to help spell the word ‘ham’ during writing time, the teacher should put a music note on that paper and write down the student’s name, date, song referenced (jam of am), and word written (ham) on the reference chart.

Observation/anecdotal notes- I will be collecting notes from my mentor teacher and paraprofessionals regarding reference charts and use of the key words for the week in their writing. These observations and notes will come from during the music/language arts lessons, . These include my own reflective notes and lesson plans, and those of my mentor teacher/paraprofessionals/PDA.

Outsider observation/reflection conference- As I introduce new content through music and movement, I hope to have another adult come and observe a lesson that I teach (my mentor, my PDA, another intern, etc.). After the lesson, I would like to sit down with that person and discuss
the positives and potential improvements of the lesson, and to add their observations to mine for
the lesson (inevitably, they will see something that I do not). I would like this person to be
watching my actions as well as those of my students.

Student input surveys/interviews- As I teach these new sounds and language arts concepts with
music, I will pull a few students aside at the end of each week to ask questions about the content
that was involved. Can they recall the information? I will also ask students about their
enjoyment/interest in the music/language arts lessons? Is there something that they would like to
do with music to learn about language arts? Maybe we could make up a song together? These
interviews may be conducted by my PDA or another adult to account for the tendency for kids to
give the answer that they think the questioner wants.

Reflective journals- As I go through the inquiry process, I will be writing weekly journals to
reflect on new experiments in my teaching and how they went. I will use these journals to take a
deeper look at the journey and whether my students are changing as a result of this inquiry. I will
also look at how I am changing as a teacher.

After:

Interviews with students- Along the way, I’ll only be interviewing 2 students per week. At the
end, however, I’d like to interview all 22 students. At this time, I will ask them a series of
questions about some of the letter sounds, rimes, and common words that we’ve been learning
about. I will also ask them to sound out 3 nonsense words.

Skills Inventory- At the end, I will re-conduct the skills inventory to find out if students know
their letter sounds and some of the words with rimes that are around the room. Do they refer to
the songs?

Analysis and Student Uptes of student work- Looking back at the music reference charts, how
does student use and utilization of resources around the room compare to before the music
lessons? Looking at the stickers on student work, how often did students recall information from
new song that has been introduced? Has writing quality and fluency changed?

Observe writing for 1 week- Note use of resources again, as well as evident use of songs while
writing.

Lesson Plans- I will use my lesson plans from inquiry-related lessons, particularly the analysis
and reflection sections, to gauge effectiveness and student performance.

Analysis of journals and process- How has the inquiry affected me as a teacher and my
students’ language arts learning experiences?

Appendix O:

Annotated Bibliography:

Books/Printed Materials:
In this teacher’s guide to Kid Writing, the authors emphasize the importance of students’ emotional involvement in writing workshop time.

“Emotion seems to drive attention, which drives learning and memory and then creates a positive emotional environment for learning to occur at a higher level”. (p. 29)

Feldgus and Cardonick share a list of High-Frequency Words (p. 48) and basic rimes (p. 49) that I will utilize throughout my inquiry. A ‘High Frequency Sound-Symbol Relationship’ chart (p. 109) and a list of books with familiar letter chunks (156-161) will also be helpful. Kid Writing is not about the connection between writing and music, but it does provide me with the background for the Kid Rhymes program, which are written by the Same authors, and it gives me the phonics assistance that I need to determine which sounds to concentrate on in my songs.

In each of nine books in this series, students meet a new character and learn a new . In the first book, Mr. Vet had a pet that was wet, and students work together to come up with additional ‘et’ sounds. All of the songs are set to the tune of ‘If You’re Happy and You Know It’ and concentrate on a different rhyme family (Mister Vet, Mister Zag, Miss Pug, Mister Nat, Mister Dan, Miss Big, Miss Mog, Mister Sop and Mister Jot). This resource will help me to address a sub question about whether or not pairing a unique tune with each new concept is somehow more or less useful. The teacher resources guide provides ideas for teachers to incorporate these books and songs into classroom lessons and activities.

Joyce Gromko completed this study at Bowling Green State University in to determine whether music instruction was related to significant gains in students’ phonemic awareness, particularly in phoneme-segmentation fluency. After a 4-month study in four different classrooms, she determined that the students who received music instruction showed significantly greater gains in phoneme segmentation. She explains that this study was done to test the hypothesis that music instruction emphasizing the development of aural perception leads to significant gains in kindergartener’s phonemic awareness skills, and the results were consistent with the hypothesis. Gromko explains at the end of her paper that she could see the next step of this project being an inquiry about music and language arts, so I think that it will be helpful for me to refer back to her research while working on my own inquiry.

This source is a wealth of information about the benefits of incorporating music into the classroom. The creators of this program explain how music can help teach children skills in perceptual-motor development, attention and limit-setting, relational concepts, number concepts, and language development, among others. Included in the package from the Pattee-Paterno library on Penn State’s campus is the book itself as well as 5 cassette tapes with 42 different songs/activities that teachers can use to teach a multitude of concepts. I think that this resource will be very helpful to me, as I ask a similar question in my own classroom: How can I use music in this particular context, with my 22 kindergarten students, to teach language arts concepts and incorporate music into other areas to add understanding and fun to our school day?


I can combine these letter and rime-based poems with simple tunes to look further into the sub question that refers to the difference between introducing a poem versus introducing music into language arts. Will my students’ recall be any different from one form of speech (poetry, music, etc.) to another? This book provides a chance for students to practice these sounds together in a fun way and suggests lessons for teachers to use along with each poem.


This book is full of activities and games to use with children, all of which can be changed and adapted for classroom use. From page 171-192, the activities are all related to music, and some are language-based. For example, in ‘The Lyric Game’, we would all sing a song that the students enjoy (e.g. The Wheels on the Bus). Then, we would choose 2-3 words in the song to write on note cards or pieces of paper, such as Wheels and Bus. As we sing the song, students would hold up the cards, so that we can all gain familiarity with the words and connect them to their place in the song. This book is a resource that I can refer to as I plan musical activities in my classroom throughout my inquiry project.

**Videos/DVDs:**


When I found this book, I did not realize that it primarily focuses on pre-school aged children until I watched it. However, despite the difference in age and the somewhat dated material, the points that Thomas Moore makes in this video are still quite valid today and in the kindergarten classroom. This video reminds me that music can elicit so many different moods, and that as a teacher, we should introduce as many different kinds of music to our students as possible (not just our favorite kind) because students can develop a sense of their favorite instrument and kind of music too.

Companies, Inc.

This collection of DVDs contains every Schoolhouse Rock episode and song ever made and would be a great resource in any elementary or middle school classroom. The well-known Grammar Rock episode relates to language arts through songs such as ‘Conjunction Junction’ and ‘Interjections’, but these concepts are slightly beyond the Kindergarten level and are not the focus of my wondering. I will keep this source in mind when looking at the sub question about incorporating music into different subjects and different parts of the day, because there are songs about money (which we touch on later in the year), science and nutrition.

Inquiry Sources:

This inquiry paper, written by two former PDS interns, focuses on a similar wondering: “Can 5th grade students learn facts more easily and efficiently through songs?” Ms. Stewart and Ms. Bryan compiled their evidence to state four claims:
1. Music enhances students’ ability to remember factual information.
2. At the fifth grade level, using music to teach factual information can be implemented in various subjects.
3. Using music to teach factual information is not beneficial for all students.
4. A song is more easily remembered if it rhymes or if a familiar Student P accompanies it.

I was particularly interested in claim three, and read in detail about a few students who were embarrassed singing in front of their peers or confused when they tried to use the songs to recall information. I wonder if my kindergarten students will be embarrassed about singing or whether the age difference plays a role in their musical confidence. I also wonder whether music will positively affect a majority of my students as it did in these two classrooms. According to their paper, the teachers introduced songs in a variety of subjects, and then did a post-assessment for each to determine its effectiveness. After one math lesson about acute, obtuse, and right angles, students were heard singing the song outside of class time, and “clearly enjoyed learning the song”.

“The students were assessed on content two days after learning the angle song. For the definition part of the test, 100% of students got all of the definitions correct for all three angles. During the measurement part of the test, the students were asked to use a protractor to measure three different angles and correctly identify the type of angle. 92% of students got a perfect score. Only one student missed two out of the three problems on this portion of the test.”

I have been in contact with Steffani Bryan and she continues to be an available resource if I have any additional questions. She sent me a copy of this inquiry paper in the mail and I am sure that I will refer to it as an informative resource as I find evidence and make claims regarding my own inquiry question. How will this translate to kindergarten? What will the similarities and differences be?

Internet Sources:
This website includes a collection of resources that encourage teachers to incorporate music into their teaching. There are submissions by Eric Jensen and Hap Palmer, among many others, and all of the sources come from well-known sites and publications. One link leads you to an article called ‘Promoting Literacy Through Music’ by Laura Woodall and Brenda Ziemboski and in the second paragraph, it says that “Young children seem to be naturally ‘wired’ for sound and rhythm. Besides providing enjoyment, music can play an important role in language and literacy development”. They also note that, “According to research done during an EEG (electroencephalogram), music can change brain waves and make the brain more receptive to learning.” This is just one source from this helpful website that I’ll be able to use when working through my wondering and my inquiry.

If the sources aren’t helpful enough, there is a link called ‘Tips for Teachers: How to Incorporate Music into Teaching and Lesson Plans’, which I know that I’ll be able to use.

**Audio/Music Sources:**


Other Jack Hartmann CD’s Available at 5th Floor Paterno:
- Shake, Rattle, N’ Read
- Alphabet Zoo
- Rhymin’ to the Beat
- Hip-hop Alphabop

Jack Hartmann has recorded over 500 educational, learning-based songs for children that focus on four main areas: Math, Social Skills/Character Education, Transitions, Holidays and celebrations/diversity/body movement and relaxation, and Reading. His website, www.jackhartmann.com, describes who he is and has information about his music. I heard about him for the first time this semester, and I would like to see how his music affects my students’ language arts understandings. A few of the ‘Reading, Phonics, and Phonological Awareness Skills’ that he focuses on are:

- Rhyming
- Word families
- Beginning, middle and ending sounds
- Blends and digraphs
- Counting sounds and syllables

His songs are catchy, informative, and fun, and I think that students will enjoy getting to know Jack Hartmann through his music in our classroom. In addition, the pamphlet in each CD case is a great resource for teachers, with the lyrics and how to incorporate each song into the classroom. He suggests lessons to go along with many of the songs, and they seem to be pedagogically fitting for my kindergarten class. I am not sure whether the students will utilize the information from Jack Hartmann’s music more or less than the Kid Rhymes lessons or songs that I make up (or we make up together), but I am interested to try out different music-based activities, including CD’s.
Other CD’s:
*Disney Songs and Disney Karaoke: Volume 1*, (2000). Walt Disney Records, Burbank, CA USA
www.disney.com/DisneyRecords


More information available at http://www.troutmusic.com/