

Ricky Covey

Mary Warner

San Jose State University

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The Power of Poetry and Music in Today's World

Poetry and Music have become an outlet for addressing common issues in today's world. When one goes through a massive change in life, for better or worse, one will want to get their feelings out and express them in an artistic way. Each poem/song has the power to inspire people to get through whatever challenge they are facing. As a teacher, I want to show my students the power of creating art when they write poetry or even songs. By giving them different examples of poetry and songs, they are able to write/read different genres of poetry/music. In this Unit of Study, I focused on a song and a poem of very different styles of inspiration that students can relate to. Students are able to be opened up to different pieces of work that they are not exposed to. I chose to mainly show music because it is poetry that students listen to every day.

I want students to know that poetry is not the end of the world. It can actually be therapeutic. I want to explain that they are exposed to the death trap they believe is poetry every single day, or even when they are walking to class. Students take to music when they are in different moods. Whether they are celebrating, or in a depressed mood, they are listening to music that is reflecting what they are feeling. A canonical piece of work that I want to focus on that you can listen to in any mood is "Faded" by Alan Walker.

"Faded" is a song about a lost soul that is searching for someone/something they once had. When you grow up and learn more about the world, the less you find the joy you once thought you needed to be happy. It is as if the thing that once made you happy was all but a disillusion to reality

Introduction:

I would introduce the topic by showing two pieces of work, the poem *Mother to Son* by Langston Hughes, and playing the song "Carry You" by Ruelle featuring Fleurie. I would point out that these two pieces of poetry are a motivation to anyone who is facing adversities in their lives, and ask them how they can see it within the writing. If no one has ideas, I will state how *Mother to Son* is essentially an inspirational poem. The Mother in question is describing her song about all the misfortunes of her own life and gives examples of them. However, does not let her son be deferred by this and gives him the inspiration to live a better life. I will have the students write their own version of the poem, titled a *(From) to* poem. They will understand the power of words they can have on one another. They pick the person they want to write to, whether it be fictional or real life, and choose who is writing it, again whether it is fictional or real life. The song "Carry You" by Ruelle discusses the passing of a loved one, and how they will remain with you.

Activities:

After reading the poem and song, I will incorporate some activities that will help students understand the power of poetry and songs

- The students will read, listen to, and analyze the song "Heartbreak Girl" by Five Seconds of Summer. This song is an example what every high schooler starts to learn to go through: Heartbreak. After analyzing the song, I have them read what they believe the song means to them. Everyone may have a different answer. I will stress that there is no wrong answer when it comes to defining music. Music is what makes people feel a little less alone, and anyone can have a different interpretation to the song.
- The students will then take their favorite songs/pieces of work, analyze and submit for a grade. As they do this, I will also analyze my favorite song, "Dear Maria" by All Time Low, and have them grade it as if they are my teachers. I will not tell them who wrote my paper and let them review it as a class and vote to give it a grade. After I receive the

grade, I will thank them for their critiques and take my grade gracefully. By letting them be a critic of what could be considered a “professional”, they gain a sense of trust that I respect their opinions.

- Students will be given the task to write their own poetry, and submit to be reviewed by the class. Each assignment will be anonymous, so the only person who knows who it is is their own self. I will give the option to either release the name of the author at the end, or if they do not wish, let it remain anonymous. The only grade they receive is by merely turning it in. Having them write a piece of work can motivate them to think outside of the box.

Concluding the Unit

I would show them two episodes of season two of *High School Musical: The Musical: The Series*. The reason for this is to give context to the song I want them to analyze, “Let You Go” by Joshua Bassett. The show follows many different aspects to teen life, which includes first loves, and heartbreak. By showing them a show that accurately shows the life of high schoolers, they can relate on a higher level to the piece. The last activity I do is discuss the song “Let You Go” and have them deconstruct it piece by piece, and analyze it critically.

Working Beyond the Text

As the unit concludes, I want to use other pieces to show how poetry and music are used in modern day. By giving them modern day examples, they can understand better of what the text is saying, rather than a really old piece of work.

Move Along - The All American Rejects

The song “Move Along” is about depression, a big issue worldwide. Each year, more than 700000 people commit suicide worldwide. Most of these people suffer from clinical depression or related mental illnesses. As mental illnesses are still considered taboo in a lot of societies, they go unaddressed and untreated. This song begs for people to not give up and keep moving along. The message of the song is that there might be better days ahead. But you’ll only know

those days if you keep strong and keep moving along. If you give up very soon, you might not get to know what the future holds for you. (Summary from Sharpens)

To Be or Not To Be - Hamlet

The soliloquy is about Hamlet questioning the topic of life and death, specifically about his own life and whether it is worth being alive, or ending it all, and the effects of doing both. The message in this soliloquy is that everyone battles the topic of life and death, and whether or not it is worth living on the topic of mental health, which is an everyday issue in this modern world

I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter - Erika Sanchez

I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter follows the trauma first-generation children go through.

A topic many different students can relate to.

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