Incorporating Song and Pneumonic Devices into Learning a Foreign Language

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Introduction

In my self study, I explored incorporating music into lessons within a Foreign Language Classroom.

Through out my high school career, I often had foreign language teachers that used songs and pneumonic devices to help better teach the French language. Today, I still remember all of the different songs that I learned. I realized they helped me better understand the French language and its grammar rules.

As a student teacher, I wanted to bring this awareness that music helps students who are learning a new language and build it into the lessons.

Research Questions

In what ways can I incorporate music into the Foreign Language classroom? When used, how does music impact student engagement?

Context

- Public High School (Freshmen-Senior)
- 1900 Students
- Self study conducted in Two French III Classes
  - 2nd Hour (8:10)
  - 6th Hour (11:45)
- 44 Students Participated
  - 33 Females
  - 11 Males

Literature Review

- Music/rhythm are strong tools that aid in language learning, memory, and recall (Fonesca-Mora, M.C. & Toscano-Fuentes, C. & Wermke, K., 2011).
- There is a similarity between learning to express oneself through music and learning to express oneself through language (Fonesca-Mora, M.C. & Toscano-Fuentes, C. & Wermke, K., 2011). Fonesca-Mora, et. al. state there are three modes of expression:
  - Spoken.
  - Gestures
  - Writing
- All people have musical intelligence (Gardner, 1983).
- Music and learning together involves both hemispheres of the brain (synthesis) (Salcedo, 2002).
- With the introduction of headphones, music has become both symbolic and deeply personal to young adolescents (Cheong-Clinch, 2009).

The Study

Description

- Qualitative study that incorporated music into three Lesson Plans (September–November).
- With first lesson, used song as "hook" or introduction to lesson.
- With second lesson, used song as pneumonic device
- In third lesson, incorporated three songs from "The French Top 20."
- Asked students to complete student Exit Slips that provided their feedback on the lessons.

Data

- Cloze activities
- Five songs
- Lesson plans
- Quotes/actions
- Short writing samples (imperfect)
- Pneumonic device
- Exit slips

Findings

- Incorporating popular music from the target language was well received by students. Several students downloaded the songs to their iPods.
- Using music in conjunction with a pneumonic device helps student recall when teaching grammar concepts.
  - Students indicate they enjoy having music as part of the lessons.
  - To identify ideas for including music, it is helpful to collaborate with experienced teachers and peers.