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INTRODUCTION: REMIXING TEACHING THROUGH MUSIC

Intertextuality and Intersubjectivity in the Recontextualized ELA Classroom

INTRODUCTION

We—Lindy and Chris—met following a presentation that Lindy gave at the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) convention in 2012. As many good conversations at conferences do, ours led to an idea of future collaboration. We ultimately decided to propose a one-day workshop on the varying uses of music in the teaching of English. To our surprise and good fortune, "Using Music to Teach English, from A to Jay-Z" was accepted and as we pulled together speakers for the session in 2013, we tossed around the idea of putting together a book that could help teachers—new and experienced—adopt and apply a framework for using popular culture in their classrooms that would hold the potential to further the practice. As high school teachers, we both used music to teach our students; we also both enjoyed a great deal of autonomy in using creative approaches to teaching English. However, we now sense that teachers—new and experienced—feel like they have less space in the curriculum to use music. For us, that's a problem because we know how much good can come out of a class of adolescents who are engaged in analyzing and writing song lyrics.

For example, when I (Lindy) was teaching 9th grade English in Boston Public Schools, my biggest challenge was getting my students excited about school. When 1st period started every morning at 7:20 am, my students would shuffle in the door, lay down their heavy backpacks, and put their heads on their desk. Most of them had started their day at 5 am in order to catch a bus to get to the "T," so that they could catch another bus before finally arriving at school. I knew I had to do something to help with the transition in the morning, so I began playing music during their warm up/journal writing activities. My students loved listening to music and quickly began offering suggestions for our class playlist. Later, when I discovered that my students found the required reading of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* completely uninteresting, I started to bring in other popular culture texts my students might be more familiar with. For example, I'd play a clip of "I Feel Pretty," from the film *West Side Story*. And, almost unconsciously, my students would begin to hum along with Maria during the familiar chorus.

L. L. Johnson & C. Z. Goering (Eds.), Recontextualized, 1–10.
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After showing the *West Side Story* clip, I'd introduce various remixes: the stone-faced Maria Sharapova in the Nike ad gearing up for a tennis match in New York City, a clip from *Anger Management* where Adam Sandler sings "I Feel Pretty" to Jack Nicholson as they sit in traffic on the Brooklyn bridge, and finally, *Web Site Story*, an internet film written and performed by college students that directly reflected students' own media-saturated culture. After playing the clips, I'd ask my students: "What's going on here? What did you notice? Students immediately would mention the connections to *Romeo and Juliet*. They'd talk about why white actors were portraying Puerto Ricans in *West Side Story*. They'd talk about how all the clips deal with the American dream. After watching these clips, I'd ask my students to talk about how the "classic" text of *Romeo and Juliet* had been reinterpreted and remixed in contemporary culture. And, slowly, my students begin to find studying Shakespeare much more appealing.

In 1971, John Lennon asked his listeners to "Imagine" what a shared world might look like. With this book, we hope to help you imagine innovative ways to not only engage your students in reading, writing, discussing, and listening to popular music, but to also inspire them to critically analyze the music and world that surrounds them, and to become creators of music themselves.

The powerful connections between learning and music date back thousands of years. One only has to think about how quickly children learn their ABC's for an example. Music is the universal language. Songs stick with us, sometimes for a lifetime, and the structures and sounds involved hold the power to fuel a revolution, swing voters in a presidential election, and express the deepest and darkest emotions in times of sorrow.

TOWARDS POPULAR CULTURE PEDAGOGY

Over a decade ago, Mahiri (2001) wrote that a "popular culture pedagogy" referred to learning that involved media such as television, music, film, etc. Thus an expanded definition of popular culture pedagogy should include not only the content of popular culture, but also an experiential aspect. Because popular culture is based in the experiential and multimodal, it involves a range of senses that contributes to one's emotional investment in learning. If we describe experiential learning as one that involves an actual visceral experience—an intense emotional response—whether laughter, sadness, anger, etc., it makes sense to use popular culture.

If we look, for example, at the Nike ad featuring Maria Sharapova, we can see the attempts to invoke a strong, emotional response—especially among women. In fact, that is what most advertising seeks to draw upon—a powerful emotional response from the viewer. In creating this powerful emotional response, they seek to harness this power as a way to remember their product—or whatever it is they are selling. So, why not harness this potential power? Doing so could increase students' investment in the classroom and provide a way for them to witness first-hand the legitimacy of their popular culture.

Defining Popular Culture

We use the term popular culture to refer to "mass-generated print and nonprint texts (e.g., comics, anime, TV shows, movies, videos, young adult books, music lyrics) that use multiple modes (e.g., linguistic, visual, aural, performative) to communicate an intended message" (Hagood et al., 2010, p. 81). The very notion of pop culture itself implies a level of intertextuality since pop culture functions in a way that is instantly recognizable, easily comprehensible, and self-referential. Intertextuality, a term coined by French philosopher Julia Kristeva, refers to how texts cross-reference each other (Hagood et al., 2010). It can also include an author's borrowing and transformation of a prior text or to a reader's referencing of one text in reading another. Presenting a variety of multimodal texts focuses student's attention on how different texts reference each other, which may lead to deeper critical thinking skills, engage students in challenging interpretation practices, build students' content knowledge, and invite diverse perspectives (Hagood et al., 2010). Inviting diverse perspectives is especially important given the increasingly diverse experiences, languages, and backgrounds students bring to school.

For example, the "I Feel Pretty" texts provide multiple opportunities for students to engage in interpretive practices. For example, after viewing *Web Site Story*, a teacher could lead students through an analysis of intertextual references, helping students trace the re-appropriation of the master text, so that they better understand the concept that many stories are derived from just a few meta-narratives. In traditional print-based text, for example T.S. Eliot's, "The Wasteland," it is almost essential to have a wide and deep knowledge of other literary texts such as the Bible, Shakespearean plays, and Hindu myths, to deeply understand the thematic content. The video clips discussed here, because they have been designed to appeal to the masses, work on multiple levels. They are instantly recognizable, self-referential, and, at least on a surface level, easily understandable. Because they function as texts, they allow for all the sophisticated and complex thinking traditional texts invite. But, because of their sensory form, "reading" these texts provides a profoundly different and we argue, more appealing experience.

Intertextuality as a Way to Build Intersubjectivity

What we find most compelling about the rich intertextuality of popular music is that it can potentially provide teachers and students with possibilities to form relationships characterized by multiple states of intersubjectivity, or a shared understanding or common focus in the classroom (Matusov, 2001). Experienced teachers know the importance of building relationships with their students and creating a community in their classroom. This idea of building some sort of shared purpose and understanding seems central to the success of any classroom teacher, yet it isn't always easily achieved and it is often difficult—even for experienced teachers—to articulate why some classes seem to more naturally and easily form a

community than others. Researchers have focused on several different "threads" of intersubjectivity (Matusov, 2001). Some threads emphasize the communal nature of intersubjectivity as developing a common (i.e., similar) sense in a joint sociocultural activity (Cole, 1991). Another thread focuses on intersubjectivity as a shared situational understanding (Wertsch, 1985). A third thread suggests that establishing intersubjectivity is a fluid process because participants must constantly adjust their assumptions and expectations in reaction to each other's contributions (Rommetviet, 1985). What is common to all of these approaches to intersubjectivity is that the experiences of the participants are valued (Matusov, 2001).

Incorporating pop culture, and music specifically, can help create "a temporary shared social world" (Wertsch, 1985, p. 161). Through the use of popular music, we have the potential to generate "joint sociocultural experiences" (Matusov, 2001, p. 386) in the classroom. Doing so can potentially create intersubjectivity not only between teacher and student but among all members of the classroom, thus leading to a more cohesive community of learners. Wertsch writes that "intersubjectivity exists when interlocutors share some aspect of their situation definitions. Typically this overlap may occur at several levels, and hence several levels of intersubjectivity may exist" (1985, p. 159). Wertsch argues that one must invoke this notion of intersubjectivity in order to understand the adult-child interaction in Vygotsky's concept of the zone of proximal development (ZPD). Vygotsky (1987) described the ZPD as the difference "between the child's actual level of development and the level of performance that he achieves in collaboration with the adult" (p. 209). When Vygotsky wrote about the ZPD, he was referring specifically to the relationship between a teacher and student but more recent researchers have expanded the definition of the ZPD to take into account the social contexts of learning. For example Moll (1993) describes the ZPD as a "collective zone of proximal development" that takes into account "the sociocultural system within which children learn, with the understanding that this system is mutually and actively created by teachers and students" (p. 20).

In thinking about creating a social system that functions as a ZPD, it seems the concept of creating multiple states of intersubjectivity becomes even more crucial. Creating intersubjectivity is vital not only to connect with students and build community, it is actually necessary for learning to occur (Smagorinsky, 2011). If a teacher fails to develop intersubjectivity between and among her students, it can make learning difficult at best. We suggest that using pop culture might be a way to create space for a collective ZPD. While we've often used pop culture as a "hook" to get students interested in a lesson, doing so limits its function. Thinking about music as a way to create multiple states of intersubjectivity within a collective ZPD can help students expand and connect popular culture to curriculum in lasting and meaningful ways.

While there are countless ways to build intersubjectivity—depending upon what each student and each teacher bring to the relationship—using popular culture in the classroom is a powerful pedagogical tool that can greatly increase states of intersubjectivity between and among teachers and students. Because of both its

multimodal form and its content (in order to be "popular" it must draw on common frames of reference), popular culture can provide multiple entry points for students to engage in the classroom discourse and can help create a joint sociocultural experience.

Returning to the earlier example from Lindy's classroom, *Web Site Story* references many other texts and thus provides many different entry points for students to enter into the conversation. Some students might identify with using Facebook to find out more about a person you're interested in (whether romantically or otherwise), other students might connect with the musicality of the piece or references to bands like OIT or the music site Pandora. Other students might relate to the dancing sequences, or the DIY production and distribution of the film itself. Any of these points can help students and teachers to develop shared "situation definitions" which can help teachers develop powerful and positive relationships with their students.

LINKING MUSIC AND LITERACY

Teachers have been using music to teach English for decades, likely pre-dating Steven Carter's 1969 piece in *College Composition* where he used The Beatles' music to help teach writing. Working toward "better writing skills" studying "common rhetorical elements of voice, tone, structure, continuity" (p. 228) present in music, Carter found music motivating and applicable to his students. The Beatles aren't the first band that most teachers think of in 2016 when they are searching for lyrics to use with their students (though we think "Eleanor Rigby" and "A Day in The Life" each have multiple applications). Hip-hop music and culture have garnered significant interest in the last fifteen years. For example, Morrell and Duncan-Andrade's (2002) *English Journal* article focused on the ways in which hip-hop lyrics can be used to teach irony, tone and diction. Brock Deither's book *From Dylan to Donne* (2003) highlights several uses of music in the college classroom. Alan Sitomer and Mark Cirelli wrote about *Hip Hop Poetry and the Classics* (2004), and there are a number of pieces focused on using music to teach literature such as *The Pearl* (Caswell, 2005), *1984* (Rubin, 2011), *The Grapes of Wrath* (Goering, 2009), and *Of Mice and Men* (Goering et al., 2009).

Perhaps the most interesting and revealing detail about all of the work completed in this area is that there isn't a unified structure or understanding of the various ways teachers use music in teaching English. Other disciplines would have been quick to categorize such practices, creating hierarchies of understanding and taxonomies. However, English teachers typically shy away from attempts to bound their curriculum. Our framework isn't meant to put students or teachers into boxes or favor one approach over others. Instead, we see this book providing encouragement to try new approaches, consider other perspectives, and stretch ourselves as teachers when we incorporate music into our teaching.

We hope this book helps teachers foreground their students' experience. As we have discussed earlier, we believe that because of the inherent intertextual nature

of music, it provides unique affordances to help teachers develop multiple states of intersubjectivity with their students. Giroux (2009) writes that one of the most essential pedagogical practices that teachers undertake is foregrounding students' experience. He urges teachers to help students "draw on their own voices and histories as a basis for engaging and interrogating the multiple and often contradictory experiences that provide them with a sense of identity, worth, and presence" (p. 453).

Although many teachers are eager to incorporate pop culture because it is fun and can engage students, they have not always had the time to historicize and contextualize the study of popular culture. In his discussion of culture and power, Giroux (2009) writes that prospective teachers need "to understand the systems of meaning that students employ in their encounters with forms of dominant school knowledge and social relations. It is important, therefore, that student teachers learn to analyze expressions of mass media and popular culture, such as music videos, television, and film" (p. 451).

Part of developing a framework for using pop culture involves understanding the various definitions and meanings historically associated with popular culture. By analyzing these meanings, teachers can focus on the cultural meanings that students, themselves, use to understand texts. Using a framework for pop culture has the potential to "better equip student teachers to understand how the process of reading occurs within a particular student's cultural history and in the context of his or her own concerns and beliefs (Giroux, 2009, p. 450). Understanding how meaning is constructed with text can also help preservice teachers to begin to develop a critical theory of learning that includes an analysis of how students produce rather than just receive knowledge" (p. 450).

Providing a recontextualized framework for using music in the ELA classroom, we believe can help teachers bring in and build on students' everyday experiences, while also helping them critique the power dynamics associated with the production and consumption of any text. We echo Morrell (2004), who states that an American Cultural Studies approach to pop culture "allows educators to talk about pop culture in ways that acknowledge students' non-school lives, while also providing the tools to make sense of how pop culture can serve to limit, or marginalize, and help to maintain social inequality" (p. 31). Morrell argues that it is important for teachers to develop a framework for understanding pop culture for the following reasons:

1. It will help teachers make the case for the inclusion of pop culture into traditional literacy curricula and will help teachers contend against negative reactions to teaching pop culture.
2. It helps them understand how to reposition young people as producers and participants in pop culture, rather than passive consumers.
3. Being exposed to the frameworks helps to broaden the scope of what teachers might do when teaching pop culture.
4. Helps to lead to potentially more generative discussions between teachers and students about pop culture as a site of resistance.

5. Legitimates the study of countercultures and subcultures in the English classroom.
6. Opens up spaces for students to engage in independent study projects of cultural practices within their own community (p. 30).

OVERVIEW OF THE BOOK

We agree that teachers need a framework for teaching pop culture. In our work, we've found the four models of teaching with pop culture outlined by Marsh (2008): utilitarian, cultural capital, critical, and recontextualized, to be a helpful lens for teachers to critically reflect on the different ways they are using pop culture–and music, specifically, in their classroom. The utilitarian model seeks to connect school content seen as irrelevant to students' lives. The cultural capital model seeks to build on the experiences of students who have been marginalized by the educational process. Instruction focuses on how people use pop culture to make sense of their worlds. Teachers invite students to bring texts to school that are normally ignored in schools such as comic books, and music lyrics. (Hagood, Alvermann, & Heron-Hruby, 2010). The critical model views pop culture texts as everyday culture and believes they should naturally be part of the curriculum to develop critical awareness. This model views popular media as serious sites for social knowledge to be critiqued. The recontextualized model combines aspects of the other models, but with a specific focus on providing opportunities for students to become creators, rather than just consumers, of popular culture texts.

Each of the chapters in the book correspond to one of the four models outlined by Marsh (2008). Each chapter provides a rationale for the teaching method, followed by specific lesson plans, strategies, and activities that teachers can use in their classrooms. Each of these models represent an opportunity for teachers to consider and expand their current methods for including music in the class.

In the first Chapter, "It's Like When the New Stuff We Read Mixes with the Old and Becomes One": *Pop Music and* Antigone" Nutt, Goering, and Gerhardson employ a utilitarian model to teaching with pop culture music to connect to traditional literacy practices that are often seen as irrelevant to students' lives. In Chapter two, "Critical Hip-Hop Music as Texts," Lavoulle takes a cultural capital approach to using music in the ELA classroom. She defines hip-hop texts and provides numerous examples of how hip-hop music can be used to engage students in critical literacy. In Chapter three, "Mix it Up: A Language Framework to Incorporate Popular Music and Critical Conversations in the ELA Classroom," Santiago uses a *language-based* approach grounded in functional grammar (Fang & Schleppegrell, 2008) to make the lyrics of English songs accessible and meaningful to ELLs through the conceptual unpacking of language. This critical approach to teaching with music focuses on how language strengthens content area instruction (Schleppegrell & de Oliveira, 2006) and allows learners to negotiate and construct "meanings in context" (Lock, 1996, p. 1). In Chapter four, "M.A.S.T.E.R.ing the Art of Music in the English Language Arts Classroom," Duggan, a professional musician and literacy professor,

takes a recontextualized approach to the teaching of music by positioning students as creators and producers of music. Duggan provides a strategy for music integration called M.A.S.T.E.R. that refers to six different methods through which students generate musical responses to literature: Mnemonics, Adaptation, Setting, Theme, Exploration/Extension, and Recital.

In Chapter five, "Woody and Me: Connecting Millennials to the Literature of the Great Depression", Sewell, takes a utilitarian approach to teaching music by exploring how teachers can use music to help connect students to some of the themes in literature traditionally taught in public schools. Using the strategy of multimodal intertextuality (Ivanic, 2004) Sewell explores ways to use the life, music, and visuals of poet-singer Woody Guthrie as a tour guide to the Great Depression. In the journey, students discover ways to see, hear, and feel the pathos of the era while making connections to their own lives. In Chapter six, "Music Experiences as Writing Solutions: Grace for Drowning" Boggs and Corral explore the ways that they use music to create space that helps students transition back and forth from every day to schooled conceptions of elements of writing (Wertsch & Stone, 1985). In Chapter seven, "Hip-Hop and Social Change: Critical Pedagogy in the Classroom" Rhym focuses on using a critical approach to using music in the ELA classroom. He discusses how he uses hip-hop artists such as Jay-Z, Nas, and Kanye West's music in his classroom as a tool of liberatory praxis (Freire, 2011).

In Chapter eight, "From Lennon to Lenin: Using Music to Revive the Classics," Myers and Vest discuss how they use popular music as a way to help students to create and support claims in a relevant context while building the necessary skills for successful rhetorical and literary analysis writing. In Chapter nine, "A Punk Pedagogical Approach to Genre," Buchannan explains how teachers can use punk pedagogy situated in the authenticity and DIY ethos of punk music to challenge students to re-examine texts and create writing that moves beyond traditional school genres. And, finally, in Chapter ten, "Language Power: Saying More with less through Songwriting," Goering shares a recontextualized approach to teaching with music. He shares his experience teaching song writing to 10–12th grade students in a creative writing class.

We hope that the numerous examples and models provided in the following chapters will inspire you and your students to become not only critical consumers of music—but also creative composers and producers!

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