

Assignment 9 Discussion - Music

There are numerous issues today that revolve around the use of music, recordings, iPods, and MP3 players, in the curriculum. Identify one or two current issues in either music education or in the general curriculum areas that may impact the selection and use of such related technologies. Describe how you would utilize such technology tools with students.

At the elementary level, music is often used as a tool to motivate and engage students learn course content. Learning in these grades seems to be enjoyable, fun, relevant, and meaningful. Who does not remember learning the alphabet singing the ABC's song? However, once students reach the middle school level or higher, the strategy of using music as a teaching-learning tool is usually abandoned, in particular in mathematics. Typically, students at these levels struggle to grasp and retain abstract math concepts and skills, and it is also when usually math anxiety begins. We (math teachers) often focus our instruction solely on content and improving students' mathematical reasoning skills or abilities; therefore, learning in the math classroom mostly emphasize the cognitive domain and ignore the other domains of learning (i.e. affective and psychomotor).

According to Brewer (n.d.), music could be used as a powerful tool to create a classroom atmosphere where students feel excited about learning. He also mentioned that music motivates thinking and feeling, and improves students' attention and retention of information. Harris (n.d.) stated that music can activate students' prior knowledge and serving as a hook to stimulate interest in learning new content. In addition, she encouraged the use of music to create a multi-sensory learning environment, where the more the senses are used, deeper and broader learning will be. Zhan (2008) indicated that music stimulates a specific area of the brain that is useful for mathematical thinking.

There are many benefits of using music in the classroom and these should not be ignored. Music, like games, is a natural part of our students' lives; therefore, teachers should find ways of integrating it in the learning process to motivate and engage students learn mathematics. Technology is available to easily integrate music in the classroom. Apple Learning Interchange (n.d.) website suggests using their products to personalize learning math facts, taking advantage of students' interest in music by letting them create their own memory rhymes or songs. The following websites are examples of how teachers have taken the innovative idea of creating music for teaching mathematics: mrduely.com, songsforteaching.com/mathsongs.htm, and mathmadness.org/index.html. We (math teachers) need to stop relying so much on traditional instructional approaches (i.e. lectures) and become more creative on how to meet the learning needs of our students. Music has proved to be effective in elementary school, so why not use it the other levels?

References

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