

Literature Review Assignment

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Literature Review Assignment: Critical Review #1

Junda. (2013). *Sing and Shout! The Study of History and Culture Through Song. College Music Symposium*, 53. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26564918>

Mary Ellen Junda, professor of Music at the University of Connecticut, describes the need for new instructional approaches to facilitate learning of music-making, history, culture and community by higher-education, Millennial students. The Course, "Sing and Shout!" was created as a semester-long, general-education, college course, to provide Millennial students musical experiences, singing, composing, and moving while learning and reflecting on historical traditions found in and through Pan-American folk songs.

In the article Junda shares highlight moments of an actual class, "Sing and Shout!" she taught at University of Connecticut), its development and an overview of the course content, requirements, its administration, results with some student responses. After the Abstract, the article begins with a brief, introductory narrative of a typical class and is organized by topics: Background; Content and Structure; Oral Tradition; Communal Singing; Creativity and Improvisation; Results; Notes; Bibliography and a biographical sketch of the author. Included, within the text of *Content and Structure*, is a figure course *Goals and objectives* and another figure of *Selected course readings*. Within *Oral Tradition*, is a figure of a Sample lyric sheet, and under *Results*, the author has included a few samples of student work.

With the *Institute for Teaching and Learning* at the University of Connecticut, Junda was able to create course experiences 'that make ideas real' through authentic music-making, group assignments, and reflective practice." By inspiration of "recent publications by theory faculty," because they focus on creative and cooperative composing and improvisation, Junda was able to use this as an impetus to create a new course that combines making music with lecture in an "experiential and engaging" way.

Some questions posed in the creation of the course include: "Who are millennials? Where does music fit into their lives? How can one structure a course to meet their changing needs? How can

we ensure that the instructional experiences students receive will accurately reflect the realities of the cultures studied?" Junda quotes Laura I. Rendón (of the sensing and thinking or participatory action research camp of Columbian sociologist, Orlando Fals Borda) for the importance that learning "...be authentic, collaborative, creative, and reflective." Rendón posits these skills as those recommended by the National Center on Education and Economy. Junda cites and describes her own teaching experiences as ascribing to Conway and Hodgman's, *Teaching Music in Higher Education*.

The class utilized American folk song because Junda believes the content is "accessible to all." Junda explains that the course, "Sing and Shout! was a seminar, a participator performance class, and a songwriting course all in one." The goal to create experiential learning for all required: singing repeatedly throughout the semester, introducing students to the emotional and historical relevance of the music they sang, and providing students with knowledge of the diverse events, cultures and family/community singing traditions of their ancestors.

The author explains that she limits the class to 60 students and that typically, 40-60 percent of students are male. All students were required to attend a weekly, two-hour lecture-demonstration and an additional one-hour, smaller group (20 student) class led by a graduate assistant.

History was taught using lectures, videos and readings. Music was taught by doing; group singing, moving, and student response. Singing games (e.g., London Bridge, Farmer in the Dell etc.) were re-enacted because they required continuous singing to keep the game alive. The students recreated folk songs in more contemporary text or music, but ultimately composed their own songs based on the folk song styles they learned in class. (Examples given in Results section of the article of students changing the singing game, "A Tisket A Tasket into a hip-hop song, *A Laser A Tazer*, about the latest cell phone..." of the day). Students always had class time to practice and to provide verbal and written reflections.

Notation was not used as part of the course because it could have created divisions between the reading students and the non-readers. Communal singing became a vehicle to consider underrepresented minorities such as “African Americans, Native Americans, Mexicans and others.” Oral tradition was taught by using contemporary song, (e.g., Bruce Springsteen), as well as folk song. Students learned to imitate vocal qualities of performances on recordings and considered several vocal stylings and ways of singing. Students used their voices for expression and exploration without the restriction of pitch accuracy and assessment. Junda describes her grading percentage ratios and the student goals and objectives in two of the figures featured in the *Content and Structure* section of the article.

After reading her student responses about their experiences in the course, Junda is confident it was successful. “Participatory musical experiences can inspire learning about and understanding of American history and culture (Junda).” And quoting Thomas Turino, (*Music as Social Life: The Politics of Participation*), Junda affirms that these experiences seem to be “valuable for the processes of personal and social integration that make us whole.” Not as much content was covered as would be in a typical lecture-style course, however, students actively engaged in “recreating cultural traditions” motivated their own learning and were able to broaden their understandings of how musical traditions can unite diverse cultures and peoples.

Literature Review Assignment: Critical Review #2

Rideout. (2005). Whose music? Music education and cultural issues: debates about what music to study can raise questions related to the very purpose of music education. *Music Educators Journal*, 91(4), 39–.

Roger Rideout begins by describing “political realities of school music,” using examples: students who don’t sing the national anthem, students who don’t sing about some holidays, and students asked

or required to sing songs that are not representative of their own cultural heritage. These political realities influence how music teachers plan and question music for classroom and concert use. With his 2005 *Music Educators Journal* article, "Whose Music? Music Education and Cultural Issues," Roger Rideout, professor and program director of music education at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, asks professional and aspiring educators making value judgements about music to teach, and/or perform, to consider "three positions" or (schools of thought), and be able to "...state clearly and effectively what [they] believe should be the purpose of music education" to the end that our "...instruction lead[s] children to a greater understanding of the power of music in their lives."

"Three Positions," are featured in bullets: The aesthetic position, the sociological position and "Our pragmatic political reality." Rideout provides the reader with a very brief summary of Bennett Reimer's aesthetic music education as found in the editions of *Philosophy of Music Education* and focuses on Reimer's writings that espouse great musical works as seminal to "our musical heritage," and as standing "...outside any cultural or political association." The assertions of the three positions are:

- "The aesthetic position is based on the argument that humans inherently strive to improve themselves, to move upward in their knowledge and perspective. By studying musical masterworks, students will grow toward new understandings and perceptions."
- "The sociological position is based on the belief that, first and foremost, all music reveals aspects of a particular society and culture. The goal of music education should be to help students understand how music expresses cultural values."
- "Our pragmatic political reality is that the real goal of music education is to provide a musical experience for all involved and to ensure public support for continuing the school music program."

These first two positions are compared and contrasted using terms "we" for the aesthetic position and "opponents" for the sociological view. Including David Elliot in "some scholars" of the sociological position, Rideout discusses their call for music teachers to seek out kinds of music that students connect with outside of school, rather than works from the "European art-music tradition." The

latter tradition being viewed by sociological proponents as overly, and wrongly, esteemed by teachers of the aesthetic position for music education. Beyond the initial question Rideout asks, “Whose music to study and perform and why?”, he also posits the sociologic position of music education as one that “leads outward” to expose students to musical culture outside of their own culture, then asks, “Which view has the greater merit? Aesthetic music education or a middle ground?”.

Before providing a solution, Rideout reminds us that music education is not beholden to “...any one musical tradition over another” and returns to our “pragmatic political reality” of searching for concert- worthy music and community support. The deus ex machina for the argument of aesthetic verses sociologic music education according to Rideout comes out of studying the three positions for ourselves, and a “middle ground” by way of John Dewey. In *Art as Experience*, John Dewey believed students will learn to care for the music they make; they will “come to value that which they experience as valuable (Rideout). The community, families and students make their own decisions about how they value music and the “...actual works of music are just the catalysts, ... not the objects of learning.”

Roger Rideout provides his readers, (music teachers) with direction to read philosophies of music education beyond Elliott and Reimer and become knowledgeable enough to answer questions: “Who owns the music we study? Whose musical tradition and values are we presenting to our community? Is the essence of music learning personal enlightenment or cultural immersion?” The conclusion is that we need to continue exploring our own values of music education so we can effectively provide students with opportunities to expand and formulate their values with a “greater understanding of the power of music in their lives.”

Critical Review #3

Ward. (2003). The extent to which American children’s folk songs are taught by general music teachers throughout the United States at the beginning of the 21st century. In *The extent to which American children’s folk songs are taught by general music teachers throughout the United States at the beginning of the 21st century*.

The problem statement of Marilyn Jo Ward's dissertation "...is to determine the extent to which songs of the American children's folk heritage are taught in general music classes in the United States." The crux of the problem lies in the need to adhere to the National Standards for Arts Education (1994) which states that music teachers are to instruct students to "understand music in relation to history and culture." Teaching college students, Ward realized that few music education majors knew (few if any) American folk songs. This begged the questions of her study, "Why teach our children songs of their American folk heritage?" and, "Why use songs in the teaching of history and culture?"

Citing John and Alan Lomax, curators of American folksong, Ward asserts her research study was designed "to determine the extent to which general music teachers in America..." are "...teach[ing] the next generation of Americans the children's folk songs of their heritage. As answer to the question, primary sources are given on these topics: Historically; Philosophically; Educationally; and Interrelationally.

In this descriptive research, a large sample was needed. The study utilized a stratified random cluster sample of self-reporting, general music teachers, 80 from each of the 50 United States, (belonging to MENC/NAfME) but did not include US territories or possessions. Anonymity and lack of funding influenced the low response rate. Other delimitations were that the research sample did not involve recording behavior of music teachers, nor did it test the students' memorization of the songs in question.

Ward's review of the literature begins in Chapter Two, beginning with an historical background, containing precedents and present purposes for the literature. Ward claims, "Preference and placement was awarded to the most current research.", however, it does not appear to be arranged in that order.

Ward supports the need for the study in the Background of the Problem (p.6) where primary sources are used to addresses Educational Trends; National Issues; and Social Concerns. Some of these

sources are Carolyn Willis, Charles Seeger, Alan Lomax, Ruth Crawford Seeger, Zoltán Kodály, Carl Orff, Béla Bartók, Lowell Mason, and many others. Ward includes wisdom from Charles Seeger, former music librarian for the Library of Congress: “the one essential basis of music education in a country is the folk music of that country.”

The term “Extent taught” is defined as the amount of time a teacher spent teaching each song and measured by how many students could sing each song by memory. The survey terms: “Practically All, Most, Some, Few, Practically None” are explained as well as terms: American (meaning U.S. citizens); Children’s songs; Folk; Heritage. She points out that “This study is based upon songs which are actually a part of the American children’s folk legacy, tradition, ancestry, birthright, and inheritance, ...which distinguishes this study from other studies.” Also, these latter terms are defined by use of primary sources.

In chapter two, an historical background is given in a chronological fashion and Ward includes “precedents to the research, including present purposes to be served by the review of the literature.” In her third chapter Ward provides “methodology and procedures of the research” and explains its design. In Ward’s fourth chapter factual information is given to “enable the reader to achieve a clear perspective...and come to her own conclusions.” Music songbooks and textbooks from 1700-1950 were scoured for American children’s folk songs to provide Ward a list of 500 songs. With assistance of music specialists from 30 states and recommendations from elderly people (62 years and over) of 40 states, the list was truncated to the 100 most frequently known American folk songs. The factual information in chapter four of Ward’s dissertation reveals the results of the study, by state.

Several instruments for the study are provided and include surveys, probability curve, tables, U.S map with knowledge ratings by state. It is a truly fascinating study.

The author’s major conclusions: “1) Very few students in the US can sing a few American children’s folk songs by memory. Most students in the U.S. are not being taught songs of the American

children's folk heritage. 2) Some students, (but not a majority) in the nation can sing patriotic songs, including the national anthem by memory."

"Implication is that students who were taught needed more time in class to learn the songs. 3) Few students in the nation, and in some states, practically no students can sing American folk songs (e.g., "Home on the Range", "I've Been Working' on the Railroad", and "Over the River and Through the Woods" by memory). 4) Few students in the nation can sing American children's songs (e.g., "Mary Had a Little Lamb," "Old MacDonald," and "Bingo") by memory."

One of the author's generalizations is that a majority of general music teachers are not teaching American folk songs. Author's implications: "There is much room for improvement to which general music teachers are teaching songs of the American children's folk heritage. NO state or region scored well enough to refrain from taking action." General music teachers need lists of "Songs to be memorized." Parents and day care facilities need song lists—much like summer reading lists). Song lists could be developed for each grade. The author provides several more suggestions for promoting the teaching of American children's songs to the children of our nation.